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of Ontario



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Mercredi  
15 mai 2024

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Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Trevor Day

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 15 May 2024

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 15 mai 2024

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Next, we'll have a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### BUILDING A BETTER ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2024

#### LOI DE 2024 VISANT À BÂTIR UN ONTARIO MEILLEUR (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 13, 2024, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 180, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 180, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

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

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Bon matin, monsieur le Président. Bon matin, tout le monde. Il y a des matins où, il me semble, on se lève et on est pas mal plus rouillé. Bien, pour moi, c'est un matin comme ça. À matin, ça m'aurait pris quatre ou cinq cafés avant de décoller.

Je peux vous dire que j'aimerais remercier—souvent on oublie les personnes qui travaillent pour nous. Si vous me permettiez juste de remercier mes assistants qui ont travaillé, j'ai Adriana Naffa qui est ma législative. Mais aussi, hier j'étais à OLIP et j'ai une nouvelle assistante qu'on a pour la première fois, et je voudrais la remercier pour son travail : Kaitlin Gallant. Je sais qu'elle va faire de belles choses dans sa vie. Fait que, je voulais la remercier ce matin.

En fin de semaine, j'ai fait un Sportsman and Trade Show à Kapuskasing. Ça faisait six ans qu'on n'avait pas eu le Sportsman and Trade Show, et j'ai eu la chance de rencontrer beaucoup de mes concitoyens. Quand je demandais à mes concitoyens ce qu'ils voudraient que j'apporte à Queen's Park, qu'est-ce que je pourrais faire—et que j'étais pour débattre le projet de loi 180, ce qui est le budget, présenté par le gouvernement—la plupart nous disaient qu'ils étaient concernés avec le coût de la vie. Ça va sans dire.

Puis, je leur ai demandé la question, une question bien simple : j'ai dit, le gouvernement annonce des millions ici et des millions par là—puis, écoute, ce sont des sommes considérables. Je leur ai demandé : « Bien, votre vie, est-elle mieux? Ça va mieux dans votre vie? Le gouvernement fait-il un bon travail? Vous sentez-vous que tous ces investissements-là améliorent votre vie? »

Savez-vous la réponse que j'ai eue? C'était non. Ils ne voyaient pas que leur vie s'améliorait, que ce soit en santé, que ce soit en éducation ou le coût de la vie qui, comme on le sait, est très élevé. Je peux vous dire que beaucoup de mes concitoyens ressentent l'effet de tout ça. On a un budget, dont je vais parler, qui affecte—veux, veux pas—mes concitoyens.

Dans le Nord, on oublie que—moi je dis souvent : « Loin des yeux, loin du coeur. » On est très oublié.

Pourtant, les richesses viennent d'où? Elles viennent des régions. Nos richesses—j'entends le gouvernement parler des investissements pour toute l'énergie verte qu'on veut faire, comme les automobiles électriques, les batteries. On vient de faire une autre grosse annonce encore. Pourtant, les ressources viennent du Nord, et on prend toutes les ressources et on les amène dans le Sud. Pourquoi ne pas générer—tu sais, développer—dans le Nord? Prends ces matériaux-là qu'on prend du Nord, et on pourrait avoir ces usines-là dans le Nord. Bien, non, on amène tout ça dans le Sud. On paque pour le Sud. Pourtant, ça vient tout de—puis, ça, je le dis souvent en Chambre : on est les enfants pauvres de la province. Pourtant, les richesses viennent de chez nous, que ce soit les minerais, que ce soit tout ce qui va créer ce développement économique pour la province. La nourriture vient des régions; elle ne vient pas de la ville.

On parle de bâtir, quoi, 1,5 million de maisons dont on a besoin, des loyers dont a besoin, puis d'accueillir le monde qui a besoin de logement. D'où est-ce qu'il vient, le bois? Le bois, le bois de charpente, il va venir d'où? Il vient des régions. Beaucoup vient de chez nous. Puis, encore, on voit le manque d'investissements pour le Nord.

Je peux parler d'infrastructure. Je parlais justement à Mario—ce n'est pas Villeneuve? C'est Mario Villeneuve; excuse-moi, Mario—qui est président de Ontario Roads. C'est lui qui bâtit les chemins. Il est président. Son père était président. Justement, Claude a été reconnu par l'association comme un des pionniers. Il me dit : « Guy, on parle de tous ces beaux minerais-là qui viennent des régions du Nord, mais on n'a pas nos routes pour absorber tout l'impact que ça va avoir. »

Quand j'étais justement au « trade show », je parlais, puis j'avais des pétitions. J'avais une pétition sur la santé,

j'avais une pétition sur le coût de la vie, et j'avais une pétition sur nos routes : les conditions de nos routes et la sécurité de nos routes. Devinez quelle pétition le monde voulait signer en premier? Les conditions de nos routes.

J'entends souvent le ministre dire qu'on a les routes les plus sécuritaires dans l'Amérique du Nord. Mais je peux vous dire, prenez le temps d'aller voir—il y a un site qui s'appelle « la 11/17 tue » : « Highway 11/17 kills. » Prenez le temps de vous abonner et de voir la réalité de ce qui se passe sur nos routes, surtout sur la 11/17.

Je regardais, justement, quand j'étais à Kapuskasing au « sports and trade show ». Ils montraient un vidéo où on voit un camionneur—et ça, c'est à Matheson. C'est dans le comté de mon collègue Vanthof, qui est de Temiskaming Shores. Il y avait plusieurs camions qui se suivaient de proche. Il y a une personne qui est sortie devant un des camionneurs. Fait que, qu'est-ce que tu penses est arrivé? Ça s'est tout mis à braker. Les trucks ont dépassé. Il y avait un camion qui s'en venait, puis tu voyais sur l'écran les camions se barrent sur un bord. Écoute, il a eu la chance : il a fait deux face-à-face; il s'en est sorti par miracle.

Mais ça, c'est une réalité qu'on a. Pourquoi? Parce qu'il n'y a pas assez de voies de dépassement.

Le gouvernement a dit qu'il y avait un projet-pilote. Je pense que c'est la ministre Mulroney qui avait fait ce projet-pilote, et on la remercie. Mais je pense qu'il est grand temps qu'on passe d'un projet-pilote à d'autres choses, parce que c'est un besoin.

Ça fait longtemps qu'on demande un 2+1. Ce que ça va faire c'est de donner des voies de dépassement tous les 10 kilomètres. Ça va aller sur un bord, puis ça va aller sur l'autre. Ça va éviter des situations comme ça. Ça va améliorer notre infrastructure quand ça vient à nos routes, parce qu'elles sont en piètre état.

Le monde me dit qu'ils ont peur d'embarquer sur nos routes maintenant, parce que veux, veux pas, on n'est pas comme dans le Sud où tu peux faire des « bypass » et tu peux avoir tout ça. Quand j'ai demandé une question cette semaine à un des—je ne me souviens pas quel député—ils ont parlé des millions d'investissements. Ces millions d'investissements, c'est pour les « bypass » qu'ils vont construire—quoi, la 413?

*Une voix.*

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Oui, la 413. C'est bien. Écoute, faites-le pour le Sud. Tant mieux pour le sud de l'Ontario. Mais le Nord a besoin aussi des investissements.

Et on a besoin de garder les richesses qu'on crée dans le Nord. Il va y avoir les mines. Il va y avoir du développement. Mais bien souvent, ces minières ont des gros, gros camps pour accommoder le monde, mais les communautés ne bénéficient pas du développement économique.

Je vais vous donner un exemple. Je dis souvent que je viens du petit village de Dubreuilville qui a une population—dans mon temps, c'était d'à peu près 1 100. Quand je suis parti, c'était à peu près 700 de population.

Ils ont deux grosses mines d'or. Dans ces deux grosses mines d'or-là, il y a deux gros camps pour accommoder

les employés. Ils ont bâti des « bunkhouse », si on peut utiliser le terme en anglais—deux grosses « bunkhouses ». Mais ça n'aide pas la communauté à avoir des familles.

**0910**

Dans cette petite communauté-là, il y a un beau « high school », une belle école primaire, un bel aréna, mais il manque d'enfants, il manque de tout pour remplir ces installations ou ces infrastructures. Puis c'est dommage, parce qu'on voit que c'est une communauté qui se tient beaucoup, qui a tellement à offrir. Mais on a un gouvernement qui dit : « OK, c'est correct de bâtir ces “grouperies”; je comprends qu'il y a un manque de main-d'oeuvre. » Ça, on le réalise tous. Tu sais, que ce soit des hommes de métier—c'est important de comprendre que les minières ont des demandes qu'il faut comprendre. Mais vous ne me ferez pas croire, on dirait, comme exemple, qu'il faut que 25 % de tes employés vivent dans ces communautés-là. Je vous donne l'exemple de Dubreuilville, mais on peut parler de Chapleau, on peut parler de—la liste continue. Ce sont toutes des communautés qui sont isolées dans le Nord.

Fait que, pourquoi n'est-on pas capable, comme gouvernement, de dire à ces minières-là : « Vous allez investir dans la communauté. Vous allez bâtir des maisons pour des familles pour aider à payer les taxes »? Elles payent des taxes assez élevées pour des petites communautés. Pourquoi? Bien, il n'y a pas la population. Les infrastructures sont après de tomber. Les municipalités font face à augmenter les taxes. Mais pourquoi, comme gouvernement, on n'est pas capable de dire à une compagnie qui va venir : « Prend les ressources, puis elles vont générer de l'argent »—et c'est correct qu'elles fassent de l'argent. Ce n'est pas ça mon problème. Mais pourquoi est-ce qu'on n'est pas capable de regarder un concept et de dire : « Écoute, il y a un pourcentage—que tu sois un camionneur où que tu sois un “labourer”. » Pourquoi ne peut-on pas investir dans ces communautés-là ?

Et dans le budget, on ne voit aucune mention de tout ça. On ne voit pas la vision—la simple vision—de tout ça dans le budget. Pourtant, ça aiderait cette communauté-là. Ça l'aiderait à générer des taxes, à ramener du nouveau sang dans la communauté, remplir les écoles, aider l'aréna et tout ce qui est attaché avec ça. Mais dans le budget, on ne voit pas ça.

Il faut le reconnaître : on voit de l'investissement dans l'industrie forestière. Puis moi, mon comté est un comté qui a beaucoup d'industrie forestière. Je suis content de voir l'investissement dans la biomasse, parce qu'on sait, dans l'ouest de l'Ontario, ils en faisaient beaucoup; moins dans mon coin, dans l'Est. On sait que c'est 20 %, 25 % ou 30 % qu'on use là-dessus, qu'on utilise de notre forêt. Ça, ça va augmenter.

Je sais qu'à Kapuskasing, on regarde un nouveau projet, de bâtir une grosse biomasse pour aider la papeterie, pour générer de l'électricité, pour pouvoir générer du chauffage et tout ça qui va venir à aider à réduire leurs coûts et, peut-être, à survivre—parce qu'on a vu dans l'industrie forestière



qu'on a perdu deux usines à papier, deux papeteries, une à Espanola et une à Terrace Bay.

Quand tu regardes ce que le gouvernement fait pour essayer de sauver cette industrie-là—écoute, n'oublie pas, j'étais à l'OFIA, qui représente l'industrie forestière, et j'ai écouté la Finlande parler de comment ils utilisent leurs produits. J'étais assis justement à côté d'un consultant qui me disait qu'au Canada, on n'utilise pas notre forêt comme on devrait utiliser notre forêt, puis en particulier pour la biomasse.

Donc, je regarde une situation comme à Terrace Bay et je me dis, pourquoi est-ce que le gouvernement n'a pas dit : « Écoute, avant de vous en aller, qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire pour vous? » Ils disent qu'ils l'ont fait, mais je peux vous dire que quand tu parles au maire, tu parles aux travailleurs et tu parles aux personnes, ils disent que l'effort ne vaut pas la chandelle, comme on dit en français.

Nous, sur notre bord, on travaille avec les travailleurs, les Steelworkers; ils veulent trouver des solutions. Moi, je me souviens de quand on a sauvé Kapuskasing. Il y avait le gouvernement, qui était un gouvernement NPD, il y avait des travailleurs, et il y avait la municipalité—tout le monde est embarqué là-dedans, et même, on y a fait une grosse protestation. On a investi, puis aujourd'hui, l'usine « run » encore. Ça a sauvé la région, il faut le dire. On a fait la même affaire avec Sault Ste. Marie quand c'est venu au « steel plant ».

Alors, pourquoi ne pas approcher de la même approche, de dire : « Écoute, on parle de biomasse »—s'asseoir avec l'employeur, parce qu'eux autres voulaient faire une rayonne, puis probablement que les coûts sont élevés—plus, l'énergie; on sait comment elle est élevée et comment ça coûte cher. Pourquoi ne pas avoir regardé et leur amener l'idée, pour dire : « Êtes-vous intéressés à faire une biomasse à côté, parce qu'on a l'argent pour le faire? » Créer une biomasse pour prendre ce produit-là qu'on n'utilise pas et créer de l'énergie qui peut réduire leurs coûts d'énergie, baisser leurs coûts de chauffage, et peut-être même si la biomasse est assez grosse, fournir un peu pour la ville, puis le vendre sur le « grid » : c'est quoi qu'il y a de mal avec ce portrait-là? Il n'y a rien de mal avec ce portrait-là. Au contraire.

C'est pour ça qu'on travaille pour ça à Kapuskasing, parce qu'on sait que nos papeteries sont rendues très âgées. Ce sont des usines où il n'y a pas eu de grands investissements et qui peuvent être en péril si elles ne font rien. On voit tous les investissements qui sont faits dans l'industrie EV et ailleurs, et qu'on a une industrie qui est souvent laissée mise de côté. On devrait avoir plus d'investissements parce que je peux vous dire qu'il y a beaucoup de communautés qui en dépendent. Mais quand on ne réalise pas que quand il y a une industrie comme une papeterie qui tombe, il y a un « domino effect » qui affecte les industries parce que le sciage—qu'est-ce que tu fais avec tes chips? Tu ne peux pas les passer. Ça, ça veut dire des fermetures encore. Puis, après ça, tu as l'industrie forestière qui bûche et qui coupe tout ce bois-là, qui aussi est impactée. Ça fait qu'il y a beaucoup de monde impacté,

quand on pourrait avoir une solution qui est là, qui pourrait survivre et avoir encore plus une industrie intégrée.

Là, je regarde mon temps—la santé. J'ai rencontré justement—puis le monde dit « Écoute, on n'a rien qu'à penser à Hearst; 70 % de la communauté de Hearst de 4 000 de population n'a même pas de médecins de famille. » Ce sont tous des orphelins. Puis, quand j'entends la ministre qui nous dit qu'elle n'a aucune concerne pour le manque de médecins—aucune concerne pour le manque de médecins. Écoute, on a un manque de médecins pour 70 %. En plus de ça, c'est une communauté francophone. On sait qu'on a déjà de la misère à avoir des médecins francophones. On sait qu'on a de la misère à avoir du monde francophone.

Je traite avec, aussi, dans la santé pour les soins de longue durée—j'ai parlé au ministre Cho. Vous avez fait en grande pompe en 2022—aux dernières élections, vous avez annoncé 68 nouveaux lits à Kapuskasing pour les soins de longue durée. C'était une bonne chose. J'étais content de l'entendre parce que ça voulait dire de l'investissement. Ça voulait dire un nouveau—parce qu'ils ont déjà 60 lits. Ça voulait dire de bâtir de nouveaux soins de longue durée, Extendicare, pour améliorer—parce que c'est un « C home » puis je peux vous dire qu'elle est en piètre état.

J'ai parlé dernièrement, parce que le gouvernement a annoncé encore—tu sais, c'était à 15 piastres et Extendicare a dit que ce n'était pas assez pour bâtir. Là, ils ont monté ça à 35 piastres. Bravo, ça aide la situation. Ça vient répondre aux besoins qu'on a. Puis, Extendicare me dit : « Mais, Guy, tu sais, on a d'autres “C homes” qui sont plus en piètre état. Peut-être que tu ne le croiras pas, mais on veut demander une extension. » Une extension? Mon monde attend deux ans pour avoir une place dans ce soins de longue durée-là.

Le maire d'Opasatika, Jacques Dorval, a écrit une belle lettre, un mémo comme quoi sa mère était là et qu'elle fait un petit peu de démence. Elle était supposée d'avoir ses deux bains. Elle attendait pour son bain. Ils l'ont oubliée. Elle n'a pas eu son bain cette journée-là. Jacques, il a été obligé d'aller changer son lit, faire son lavage. La madame parle seulement le français. On a des infirmières des agences qui rentrent dans ce soins de longue durée-là puis qui ne parlent pas français. Qu'est-ce qu'on fait, là? On le sait, là. On sait que dans les soins de longue durée—j'en ai parlé hier. Je pense que pour un lit de soins de longue durée—pour les anglophones, c'est 170 personnes pour un lit. Pour les francophones, savez-vous combien c'est? C'est 3 400. Où est la justice là-dedans? Où est l'équité quand ça vient aux soins de longue durée, qu'on n'a pas les mêmes droits que les anglophones? Depuis quand, ça? Puis on n'entend pas le ministre. On n'entend pas le ministre des Soins de longue durée en parler de ça. Mais pourtant, c'est un besoin qu'on a en communauté. Ce n'est pas juste chez nous, là. Ce sont tous les francophones en Ontario. On veut un lit, on est—comparé aux anglophones, 3 400 comparé à 170 pour les anglophones. Et ça, c'est juste? Ça, c'est « fair »?

Puis, là, on voit la situation qui se crée, le manque de communication. On a du monde qui, des fois, ils ont de la misère à s'exprimer puisqu'on sait que quand tu tombes dans la démence, même si tu étais bilingue, tu vas retomber à ta langue maternelle, qui est le français. Tu n'es pas capable à t'exprimer. Tu n'es pas capable de dire si tu as du mal, parce que tu n'es pas capable de communiquer. La personne ne t'entend pas, ne comprend pas. Puis, on a un ministre qui dit : « Il n'y a pas de problème. Ça va bien. Ça va bien. » Je peux vous dire que ça ne va pas aussi bien que ça. Le monde le voit très clair.

0920

J'ai rencontré la « CEO » de l'hôpital, puis je lui ai demandé : « Tous les millions qu'ils investissent, où est-ce que ça va, cet argent-là? » Elle dit : « Ça va dans les agences, Guy. Ils nous donnent moins que l'inflation. Ils nous donnent 4 %. » Ça a l'air des gros chiffres quand on parle des 900-quelque chose millions qu'ils ont investi pour les hôpitaux, mais ça ne représente rien que 4 %, même pas l'inflation. Comment tu veux qu'un hôpital—puis Kapuskasing est quasiment rendu un hub. C'est ça qu'elle m'expliquait. Elle a dit : « On est rendu un hub pour la région et on n'est pas reconnu comme un hub. Saviez-vous que, nous autres, chez nous, on a un centre d'obstétrique. On est le seul. Puis, si on perd notre centre, si on perd notre médecin obstétricien, de Thunder Bay à North Bay, il n'y en a pas. » Ça, ça veut dire, où est-ce qu'elles vont, les femmes, pour accoucher? On a des femmes qui ont été obligées d'aller à Timmins pour accoucher, parce qu'on n'était pas capable de les prendre à Kap. Elles ont été passer deux ou trois semaines avant ces accouchements à Timmins pour être capable d'absorber—parce qu'elles étaient incapables de le faire avant.

Mais si on perd notre centre d'obstétrique, il n'y a plus personne qui peut le faire dans le Nord. Les communautés comme Hornepayne, comme Hearst, comme tout ça. Puis Hearst, c'est encore pire—quand j'ai parlé de 70 % de la communauté qui n'ont pas de médecins de famille.

Il y a des bonnes choses dans le budget. Je ne suis pas ici pour dire qu'il n'y en a pas. Tu sais, dans tout ce qu'ils présentent, il y a de bonnes choses. Mais il y a des choses qui manquent, qu'au moins je m'attendais à voir dans le budget, que ça soit sur les routes, que ça soit pour la santé pour le Nord, que ça soit le développement quand on parle de l'infrastructure, que ça parle pour les Premières Nations—et la liste est longue. La liste est longue, mais souvent, on voit qu'on s'occupe seulement du Sud, puis souvent le Nord est oublié. Pourtant, les richesses viennent toutes de chez nous.

#### HOUSE SITTINGS

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the deputy government House leader on a point of order.

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** On a point of order, pursuant to standing order 7(e), I wish to inform the House that tonight's evening meeting is cancelled.

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

#### REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** While I have the floor, I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: a report entitled Economic and Budget Outlook, Spring 2024, from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

#### BUILDING A BETTER ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2024

#### LOI DE 2024 VISANT À BÂTIR UN ONTARIO MEILLEUR (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to thank the member for Mushkegowuk—James Bay for his address this morning. I know he's always passionate about issues in the north. In this budget, he spoke about the north extensively—and affordability. I have to ask the member—in this budget, we are extending the reduction of the gas tax until December 31, 2024. I come from a rural riding, as he knows well, and there are no places more than rural and remote ridings such as yours and mine that the cost of gas is more relative.

I ask the member, does he not agree that this initiative in this budget, which continues and extends that gas tax reduction until the end of this calendar year—does he not agree that this is vitally important to his constituents in Mushkegowuk—James Bay?

**M. Guy Bourgoïn:** Merci à mon collègue pour la question. J'apprécie tout le temps ses questions, puis j'aime beaucoup l'entendre parler aussi. Il est passionné souvent. Des fois, on a ça en commun. On aime s'emporter.

Ce qu'il me demande est sur l'essence, le prix d'essence qu'ils ont baissé de 11 cennes ou de 10 cennes. Mais ce que j'aimerais voir, moi, c'est plus de réglementer le prix du gaz. C'est là qu'on va voir la différence.

Commencez à réglementer. On l'a proposé souvent; vous ne l'avez jamais accepté. On le baisse de 10 cennes ou 11 cennes; il est monté de 11 cennes. Le monde ne voit aucune différence. Au contraire, je pense qu'on prend ces 11 cennes ou 10 cennes-là et ils les mettent dans leurs poches—les grosses multinationales se les mettent dans leurs poches puis disent : « Merci beaucoup. On apprécie beaucoup le surplus d'argent que vous venez de nous donner. »

Mais la réalité des choses, c'est que le concitoyen ne le voit pas. Mais si on réglemente pour dire qu'à grandeur de la province, ça va être le même prix, que tu sois à Toronto, que tu sois à Kapuskasing, que tu sois à Thunder Bay ou que tu sois à Geraldton, le prix va être le même. Puis là, baissez-les de 11 cennes. Là, on va dire que vous avez fait la bonne chose—

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

**M. Joel Harden:** Merci à notre collègue de Mushkegowuk—Baie James pour ces commentaires ce matin. C'est excellent comme toujours.

Question : la question de la biomasse, de fabriquer la biomasse et les emplois pour les travailleurs et les travailleuses—je crois qu'il y a d'autres exemples pertinents ici; sinon, sûrement toujours les États-Unis, pour un autre exemple. On a aussi l'exemple de la Norvège. En Norvège, il y a une grande industrie de biomasse. Il y a la capacité de générer totalement l'électricité dans ce pays—renouvelable—à cause de l'hydroélectricité et la biomasse, et de la biomasse au nord du pays de la Norvège.

Est-ce que cet exemple-là, mon ami, est un bon exemple que l'Ontario pourrait suivre?

**M. Guy Bourgoin:** Merci à mon collègue pour la question, et une très bonne question, parce que quand j'étais à l'OFIA, il y avait la présentation de la Finlande, et de la Suède—surtout la Finlande qui était là. Puis comment ils utilisent la biomasse, on devrait prendre comme exemple. Ils produisent beaucoup d'énergie—beaucoup d'énergie. C'est une solution à notre manque d'énergie.

Écoute, il faut reconnaître que ce que le gouvernement propose, c'est un début, mais on aurait dû être beaucoup plus agressif, beaucoup plus agressif sur le dossier—ce que l'industrie forestière, en même temps, précise. On pourrait développer beaucoup plus d'énergie, puis non seulement ça : c'est gérer notre forêt comme il faut. Ça viendrait aussi aider aux feux de forêt, parce que la biomasse qui reste là, ou le résidu qui reste là, est très sujet aux feux de forêt. Souvent, ça cause encore plus—de brûler plus d'hectares.

Mais on a une solution qui pourrait aider non seulement l'industrie forestière, mais qui pourrait aider nos coûts d'énergie et créer plus d'énergie, surtout avec tout ce qu'on veut faire avec les véhicules électriques. Très bonne question. Je l'apprécie beaucoup.

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

**M. Andrew Dowie:** Merci au membre de Mushkegowuk—Baie James pour son discours. Je t'entends à propos de la main-d'œuvre francophone qui existe; c'est partout en Ontario. Je connais dans le Sud que nos travailleurs qui parlent français, on doit les importer des autres pays. Dans ce budget-ci, on a quand même—je ne sais pas comment on va résoudre ça, autre que de prendre des immigrants d'autres pays qui parlent français, ou qu'on inspire ceux qui sont dans les écoles francophones de rester en Ontario, de pratiquer en français. Alors, je crois qu'il y a des mesures qui sont possibles; elles ne sont pas nécessairement budgétaires, mais plutôt inspirationnelles.

Dans le budget, ça parle des travailleurs autochtones dans le Nord : 7,3 millions de dollars pour assister avec la main-d'œuvre. Est-ce que tu supportes ça?

**M. Guy Bourgoin:** Merci au député de Windsor—Tecumseh pour sa question. Comme j'ai dit, il y a de bonnes choses dans le budget. On n'est pas ici pour dire que le budget n'est pas bon, mais il y a certaines choses

qu'on trouve—il y a beaucoup qui manque. Il manque de vision sur bien des points de vue.

Les Premières Nations, oui, il faut investir dans les Premières Nations, la main-d'œuvre. On sait que c'est la population qui grandit le plus. Mais quand tu vas dans nos communautés autochtones, par exemple, ce qu'on dit et ce qu'on fait, ce sont deux choses. C'est un peuple qui vit dans la pauvreté. Pourtant, ils sont sur leurs territoires ancestraux; pourtant, les richesses viennent de leurs territoires, et ils sont les plus pauvres. Je pense que c'est mon collègue de Kiiwetinoong qui en parle le plus souvent. On a le peuple le plus riche, puis on vit le plus pauvre en Ontario. Leurs enfants sont obligés d'aller dans des secondaires en dehors de leur ville parce qu'il n'y a même pas d'écoles secondaires, souvent, dans leur propre communauté. On a de la misère quand nos enfants partent pour le collège quand ils ont 18 ans. Imagine-toi quand tu t'en vas au secondaire; tu viens de finir le primaire et tu t'en vas au secondaire. Vous trouvez ça juste? Trouvez-vous ça juste que dans des communautés qui sont—

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My thanks to my colleague for his presentation today. I would ask him if he could talk a bit more about the impacts of this budget on his riding with regard to health care and education. You were just talking about education, but perhaps you could expand further.

**Mr. Guy Bourgoin:** Thank you to my colleague. Great question; une très bonne question.

Quand ça vient à la santé et en éducation—juste en santé, j'ai parlé d'une communauté comme Hearst : 70 % orphelins, qui n'ont pas de médecin de famille. On a des solutions comme—qu'ils proposent, en passant. Justement, j'ai rencontré la directrice de l'hôpital de Kapuskasing. Elle dit : « Guy, on pose des questions. » J'avais la médecin Kwapis aussi qui était là, qui est la « chief of staff ». Elle a dit : « On pose toutes les questions, mais on n'a pas de réponses. Il n'y a pas de suivi. » Ils proposent des solutions, ce que le gouvernement leur demande de faire, mais ils ne les implémentent pas et ils n'ont pas le financement pour être capables de faire les choses qu'ils devraient faire.

**0930**

Pourtant, ils imposent à l'hôpital de Kapuskasing d'être un « hub » régional. Puis, on a un hôpital à Hearst qui a un manque de médecin pour répondre aux besoins. Ce sont des « locums » qui viennent qui, souvent, ne parlent pas français. On a un manque de médecins et un manque d'infirmières, français. On paye des fortunes pour des agences.

Et la question que je leur ai demandée : « Où vont les millions qu'ils vous proposent? » Ils disent : « Ça va dans les agences. »

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

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Our colleagues know very well that enabling water systems is key to housing and a critical part of the construction process. This budget allows for a

system fund of \$200 million to \$825 million over three years, which is quite substantive.

I'm just wondering if the member will stand with our government to support these endeavours so we can get building going.

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Bien, c'est sûr que je suis pour construire de l'infrastructure. On a tellement une pénurie de logements dans mon comté. Mais ce que je ne comprends pas, par exemple, c'est qu'on vous a proposé—et même vos développeurs vous disent qu'ils ne seront pas capables de fournir ou de construire des coops, des logements soutenus, des logements pour les personnes handicapées. Tous ces logements-là, ils disent : « On ne peut pas le faire. Ça doit être le gouvernement qui le fait. » Le gouvernement conservateur avant vous l'a fait et encore vous vous acharnez à dire : « On ne le fera pas. »

L'infrastructure, c'est bienvenu, mais ça ne s'arrête pas là. Vous avez une responsabilité comme gouvernement de construire ces logements-là pour répondre aux besoins pas juste dans le Sud, mais dans le Nord, parce qu'on a une grande pénurie. Il y a du monde qui voudrait s'en aller dans ces centres-là, vendre leur maison pour s'en aller dans une maison de transition, comme j'appelle, avant de s'en aller aux soins de longue durée—s'il y avait des logements qui pourraient les accommoder. Il n'y en a pas.

Où est-ce que vous êtes là-dedans? Zéro. On ne vous voit pas là-dedans. Vous faites de belles annonces, mais quand c'est le temps de délivrer et de répondre aux besoins que même—

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

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** I'm honoured to rise today to talk about Bill 180, the Building a Better Ontario Act, our budget measures for 2024.

I want to start by saying that we have to go back to where this session of Parliament started. I remember the throne speech from Her Honour Madam Dowdeswell that day very well. I remember words that she spoke about Ontario's unofficial anthem in 1967. If some of us remember that—I was a little baby, so I was very young, but I remember hearing it later. It talked about our aspirations. In 1967—this was Canada's centennial—it talked about our aspirations for what we wanted our province to look like. The words and the lyrics were: "A place to stand and a place to grow."

This budget today in 2024 takes its roots from 1967 and that theme song. We want to build an Ontario so we have a place to grow, and that is very, very important. This is why we're building a better Ontario. It's a better Ontario for everyone in Ontario. It's a better Ontario for the people that are coming to make Ontario their new home. It's a better Ontario for families like mine that trace their roots back here in Ontario for over 100 years. It's a better Ontario no matter what culture we come from, no matter what our religion is. It's a better Ontario for absolutely everyone.

I want to thank the Minister of Finance for his leadership in recognizing that when we have a better Ontario for everyone, this is something of a legacy that we

will leave another generation. That's exactly why I'm speaking today.

Building a better Ontario is about acknowledging the continuity from generation to generation. It is about understanding the continuity that everyone's welfare is important. It's understanding that the historic investments that we make today will be there for another generation to enjoy.

Part of the greatest honour that any of us can have, being elected to this Legislature, is touring Ontario. No matter what side of the House we are on, those who have had the ambition and the opportunity to tour see something amazing.

I think about my tour last year in the riding of Timiskaming—Cochrane. I asked my colleague my friend from Timiskaming—Cochrane to meet me in Cochrane. It was the first time I was there, even though my wife's family historically traced its roots to South Porcupine in the riding of Timmins.

What fascinated me there in Cochrane was not only a warm community and a great fire service and a great OPP detachment, it was actually understanding the route that people take up to Moosonee in the summer on the rails and how our government, as an example—and we've mentioned this before—is making investments to make travel to the north that much easier. You understand the distances by going there to see for yourself.

That's why we are, as Premier Ford has said so many times in this Legislature, a government that has never raised one tax. That will be etched into the indelible record of the Legislature that people in other generations will understand.

Our budget clearly reflects the need for Ontario to allow for a stronger future. For me, as the Solicitor General, the honour of a lifetime is that every day I work hard so that everyone has an inherent equal right to live safely in their own home and communities, budget 2024 continues on with this fundamental theme as well.

For me, on the public safety side—every time I have an opportunity to debate on anything, I always want to acknowledge everyone who keeps us safe each and every day because without them, we have nothing; with them, we have everything. So we say thank you to the police officers and the firefighters; the corrections, probation and parole officers; the special constables; the auxiliary officers, civilian and sworn; the animal welfare inspectors; and I'll never forget those 911 call operators.

Public safety matters. Public safety in the themes for building an Ontario for everyone matters because of who we are.

Madame la Présidente, la raison de leur service est pour faire une différence dans la vie des gens lorsqu'ils ne s'y attendent pas, et parce que nous croyons en notre province et notre avenir. Ensemble, nous bâtissons l'Ontario.

Because we believe in our province, and together, we will build a better Ontario.

Today, whether we're talking about the historic investments that our government has made—when we look at

how we transformed our investments on infrastructure, it is really quite impressive.

As questions from the member from Nipissing–Renfrew–Pembroke mentioned, our government has stood up against a wall of opposition from the federal government to fight against the carbon tax. Day after day in this Legislature, questions are asked of ministers, including myself as Solicitor General: What negative impact does the carbon tax mean on our lives?

On public safety, I have said this many times: It means that the police officers have fewer resources to put more cars on the road; the fire departments have fewer resources because they have to spend 21.5 cents per litre for diesel to fill up an average fire truck, which is 200 litres. When you do the math, it's substantial.

I've also said in this Legislature, it's obvious who's for the carbon tax and who's against it. To be clear, and for the record, our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, is against it. It's unfortunate that the leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario is for it because, as the mayor of Mississauga, she knew both on the police and the fire side how much this impacted them. But we're going to stand up against the carbon tax each and every day.

**0940**

And we're going to stand up for seniors. We're going to stand up for seniors so that they have places of residence that are dignified for them. They were there for us; we will be there for them, and I'm proud to say it as a son who is also caring for my own parents, who are seniors.

I want to talk about some of the highlights of the bill, which is important: GO Transit and TTC and Brampton Transit and Durham Region Transit and York Region Transit—the common theme now is that daily riders will save \$1,600 per year through our One Fare program. I want to thank my colleague the Associate Minister of Transportation, who has led, until his voice is hoarse—to stress how important this program is.

Our government's philosophy of putting more money back in people's pockets is absolute and constant.

We're ready to build the roads and the bridges and the highways and the transportation infrastructure for another generation. Never before in the history of Ontario have we seen something this ambitious. It's quite exciting.

To my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh—and I've been down to see him in Windsor–Tecumseh, to see how wonderful his constituency is: Shovels are already in the ground to expand Highway 3, with planning well under way to build a new interchange connecting the 401 to the Lauzon Parkway. I think when I was there, I saw that area, and I know how important it will be for the flow of traffic.

We're also supporting a new interchange at Banwell Road and the E.C. Row Expressway to support the NextStar Energy EV battery plant. Why is this so important? Anybody can go to St. Thomas to see the area that will help revolutionize what an Ontario of the next generation will look like from our historic investments in EVs, and I have to tell you, it is mammoth; it is on a scale never imagined. And it took the vision and the ambition of Premier Ford to move this forward. It is something to see.

I've seen this for myself. I've been to St. Thomas. I've seen the land area, and it's unbelievable. To have the third-largest building on the entire planet in St. Thomas is a testament to the conviction of Premier Ford and Minister Fedeli to actually move this forward, and I really wanted to acknowledge that.

In order to build this envisionment of what our economy will look like, we need to have the infrastructure, and that's the transportation, as well. That's why, locally, in the GTA, we are advancing Highway 413, which will provide much better relief to commuters. Others have said it's not necessary. Others have told us to stop. Others have said, "Wait. You're not looking at this with a clear lens." They're dead wrong, because we know, unless we have an aspirational dream of seeing people live all over Ontario, to combat our housing shortages, to have the ambitions that members in this Legislature had, to set a target to build homes—you know what? We need the roadways. The roadways will be done and enjoyed by generations to come, and I'm proud of that.

In Niagara region—all we have to do is see the commute from Toronto to Niagara, and we know it's already congested, because people want to live there. Houses are being built there. Hospitals are being built there. That's why we're moving forward with the QEW Garden City Skyway bridge twinning project, and I'm really proud of that.

We're replacing a bridge that I myself have been to, in Little Current—the swing bridge on Manitoulin Island. I've been on that bridge, and I'm happy that our government is announcing we're replacing that, as well.

In northern Ontario, we're making infrastructure improvements on the roadways. We're doing this absolutely everywhere.

The other thing that I want to comment on, that I think is very important as we look to the future is, how do we envision the other infrastructures that are required to build homes? You need roadways, but you also need the critical infrastructure, and the Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing have spoken to this. That's why we're not stopping. Again, we are not stopping.

The member from Mushkegowuk–James Bay spoke passionately about communities in his riding. I've been to some of them. He spoke about the sensitivities in the resource sectors, which are absolutely real. Governments can't control commodity prices. If we could, then we'd have a lot more certainty. But we are a government that believes in free enterprise, and the markets dictate commodity prices. But governments have to be there to provide the support as well when we have the fluctuations that provide uncertainty for communities.

I do believe, very much so, that our government has stood up—has stood up for the communities in Hearst, has stood up for the communities in Kapuskasing, has stood up for the communities in Thunder Bay and in Sault Ste. Marie. I've had the privilege of visiting some of these communities myself, and I know how important they are to the fabric of Ontario.

I sit right next to the minister of northern affairs. Our government believes the north is important to the south of Ontario. This is important, and that's why, as a member of provincial Parliament from the greater Toronto area, one of the greatest privileges I have had is to tour the north to see for myself.

Our investments that we're making are important, are historic and will leave lasting benefit to the communities. The \$50 million for northern and rural communities to recruit and retain health care workers is important. The \$45 million over three years to enhance the Northern Health Travel Grant is important. We have to look seriously to make sure that health care is provided to everyone in Ontario. The Minister of Health and Deputy Premier has said that everyone who has an OHIP card, that is their proof of payment, and that is important. That's why our government continues to make record investments in the health care system.

Madam Speaker, if it's okay with you, I want to give a shout-out to the Humber River hospital in my own riding of York Centre because I see how transformational this hospital has been to our local community. I see the passion in the people that work there. I see the fact that this is one of our first digital hospitals, a hospital of tomorrow, built to help communities like mine today.

Whether we're talking about assisting with over \$128 million to help enrolment in nursing spaces, to have more nurses graduate—we're building new medical schools. We're dealing with the fact that the investments we need to make in mental health and addictions are the largest in the history of Ontario, over \$400 million over three years. I'm proud to sit alongside Ontario's first Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. How important is this, that the topic of such serious concern is represented by a person in our cabinet? I think this is very important.

We're going to continue in new special education projects. We're going to continue to make investments, especially—and I want to go back to public safety because there's one thing that's very important. Just as the people who think it's okay to steal our cars at 5 a.m., to knock down our doors and to demand our keys—and you know what? It's not acceptable. That is why the government came forward with a \$51-million auto theft grant. And now, in this budget, in Bill 180, we're now announcing monies to support police services across Ontario by having aerial support and purchasing new helicopters for the GTHA, as an example. This is very, very important.

I want to also give a special shout-out to our firefighters. Between our firefighters, I have to tell you, it has been an honour of a lifetime to stop the car—as I like to say—and visit fire halls.

**0950**

We listened to the stakeholders at the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. We listened to the stakeholders of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, the OPFFA. I want to give a shout-out to Deputy Chief Rob Grimwood, from Mississauga, and the president of the OPFFA, Greg Horton. These are amazing people. We talked about what we can do to help the fire services, and

we came forward in this budget to provide \$30 million so that, through a grant-based program, fire services can have the protective equipment. This is very important.

Et pour moi, madame la Présidente, c'est personnel.

I am so happy that our government reimagined not only our province—go back to 1967. For some members around the Legislature—I don't want to age them, but the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will have a better, clearer memory than I or the member from Eglinton–Lawrence will have—because we're the same age. What did Ontario in 1967 envision the Ontario of 2024 to look like? We said it should be a place to grow, a place to stand and a place to grow.

I think our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, has provided that stability, that constancy, the integrity to say we are building an Ontario not only for today—because we're living today, we need to have it for today—but for tomorrow and generations to follow. It has been a privilege for me to rise to speak on this bill.

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

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Je vais poser une question, parce que je sais que son français est très bon, au solliciteur général.

Vous dites que vous êtes à l'écoute du monde du Nord. Si « à l'écoute » c'est qu'on a une communauté comme Hearst où 70 % de la communauté sont orphelins, n'ont pas de médecin de famille; si c'est « à l'écoute » des gens du Nord quand, en 2022, vous avez fait une annonce pour plus de lits et un nouveau foyer de soins de longue durée, qui était supposé d'être bâti en 2025 et qui n'est toujours pas bâti, qu'on a des listes d'attente qui ne finissent plus quand ça vient aux soins de longue durée, qu'on voit la situation dont j'ai parlé, qu'Extendicare ne veut pas bâtir—et ça, c'est une liste—et le prix du gaz, quand on pourrait le réglementer. Si ça c'est être « à l'écoute », je ne voudrais pas voir si vous ne nous écoutiez pas, parce que je pense qu'on ne serait pas pire que ce qu'on est. Parce que, comme c'est là, la communauté souffre. Le monde a besoin d'aide et ils s'attendent—

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

**L'hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Je voudrais remercier mon collègue pour cette question pertinente.

Health care is important everywhere in the province. I think when we look at the seeds that we're planting that will help alleviate the doctor shortages across the province, we're represented by the investments that we are making in medical schools. We need to have more doctors graduate, and the way we're doing it is, again, envisioning the seriousness in which we believe by building the medical schools. I want to, again, acknowledge the leadership of the Minister of Colleges and Universities and the Minister of Health. But we need these doctors. We need these nurses. That's why we're working tirelessly to make sure that they are here, that they are in our Ontario to serve not only the south but the north as well.

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to thank the Solicitor General for his address this morning. That was really fantastic. It just shows how you are into the job that you are doing and the work you're doing for those that you represent.

Recently, I spoke to a gentleman in my riding, a lifetime Liberal, who said this budget was a great budget on the part of Premier Ford and the Ontario government—not so happy with the federal government. I was subsequently speaking to a fire chief who said no government has done more to stand up for firefighters than our government, under Minister Kerzner.

Minister, could you elaborate on some of the things that we've done for firefighters here in the province of Ontario under your leadership?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** I'll start by saying we're treating the firefighters with respect, the respect that they deserve. And we're acknowledging the volunteer firefighters as well: the member from Brantford—Brant and Sarnia—Lambton and others who have served in this place who have on their licence the emblem of a volunteer firefighter.

Madam Speaker, when we look at what we're doing for the firefighters, we're looking at treating them with respect; as an example, by changing the rules of inclusivity for those who have suffered esophageal cancer on the presumptive cancer elements. We have to treat them with respect, and that's why the Fire Protection Grant will go a long way to make sure smaller services have the equipment that they need.

I'm listening to the stakeholders every single day, and just in the last 24 hours, I've spoken to both of them and I'm asking them, "What are we doing in 2025? What are your priorities?" So I encourage everyone, stand up for our firefighters.

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

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Good morning, Solicitor General. I heard you say, "Everyone's welfare is important," and I agree. I'm hoping you will also agree that the welfare of sexual assault survivors is also important in this province. As you will know, almost 3,000 sexual assault cases were thrown out of the justice system due to underfunding.

We had a bill, Lydia's Law, by Catherine Fife—the MPP for Waterloo's bill—that was going to bring sexual assault survivors to this House today, and this government discharged that bill directly to committee and didn't allow those sexual assault survivors the opportunity to be heard.

So while you talk about how you're tough on crime, and auto thefts are important, I would imagine that the welfare—I mean, these are property crimes, but we're talking about sexual assault crimes that have allowed sexual assault perpetrators and rapists to go free in our province, and you cannot be happy with that.

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** No, we're not happy that anybody feels it's okay to commit a sexual crime, or any crime. And it's not okay for human traffickers to feel that they can get away with it either.

Our government is tough on crime. Our government has set a priority that there is no crime, there is no form of criminality that we will accept.

To those victims and to the survivors, we are very, very empathetic and we're sincere in saying that what you went through is not acceptable. That's why we're making investments to support victim services. That's why we're making sure there is education at the Ontario Police College. And that's why we will always stand up for the survivors and victims who have been victimized so inappropriately.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** Je suis contente que notre gouvernement reconnaisse l'augmentation inquiétante de la criminalité que nous observons se dérouler dans nos communautés. Même dans ma propre communauté, mes électeurs expriment leurs inquiétudes quant à la sécurité de leurs quartiers. J'ai organisé, et je sais bien que le ministre le sait, dans la mairie avec des membres de la communauté et notre police à la région de York—parce qu'il y a une augmentation de la criminalité dans nos quartiers.

Donc, ma question pour le ministre, s'il peut nous raconter: qu'est-ce que c'est, dans le budget de 2024, qui va garder et protéger nos membres de nos communautés?

**L'hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Je voudrais remercier ma collègue pour cette question excellente. Comme je l'ai dit récemment lors de la conférence à Ottawa sur le vol de voitures, je prends la sécurité publique très au sérieux. Nous sommes préoccupés par l'augmentation récente de vols de voiture.

Madam Speaker, our communities matter. Our government is not stopping with investments in public safety. Whether that's the \$51 million to fight auto theft or the monies that we're committing to buy the helicopters, we are taking public safety to a whole new level. And I'll tell you why: Because everyone in their community has an equal right to live safe in it.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Yesterday, Conservatives used the rules of this House to silence women, to ignore survivors and to shut down debate, sending Lydia's Law to committee to die. Is the Solicitor General against having the Attorney General report on criminal sexual assault cases that have been held up, analyze the reasons for the delays and address them?

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**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Madam Speaker, we're here in a Legislature, in a public Parliament of democracy, and part of the democracy is the committee process. When we go to committee—I was at the committee last week on the PUPS bill. People from the opposition asked me questions on the PUPS bill. That was their right.

So I'll say it again, and to the member who asked the question prior: When it comes to supporting people who have been so brutally victimized, we take this matter seriously. We'll make the investments in victim services,

as we have done. We'll work across the different ministries to make sure it's an all-of-government approach. We'll teach the education at the Ontario Police College. And we will not stop until everyone who feels it is okay to commit these crimes is behind bars.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** We are out of time for questions and answers.

We will continue debate.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** It is my honour to speak to this budget this morning. I want to start my debate to say that, based on the government's own numbers, you are spending big. I mean, it's right here in your own budget. This is a budget that has increased the debt and the deficit to extraordinary measures. In fact, this is the most indebted province of Ontario has ever been.

By your own numbers, this government is paying more interest on the debt than ever before. This government has a net debt-to-GDP that is approaching 40%, which actually doesn't even meet your own numbers. And so, this ratio—how much debt you owe to how much the province is earning, the GDP—is higher than when Kathleen Wynne left office.

So let's be clear: Your government is indebted. I would say you are now the most indebted sub-sovereign government in North America. Currently, you have a \$9.8-billion operating deficit. Your total net debt is \$439 billion. That is your current net debt, and that has grown under your government since 2018 by almost \$200 billion, so you are piling debt upon debt on the backs of our future generations.

But let me be clear: What are you spending this on? Because you are also underspending in every category that is important to people. When we look at health care, this government spends the least for every individual in Canada on health care. You're pulling up the rear when it comes to spending on health care. In education, you're spending the least in the provinces of Canada. All of these things that people rely on—health care, education, the social services that we all rely on—you are underspending. So you have this huge debt and deficit, but you're not spending it on people, so where is this money going?

And I would just like to say that it's quite obvious that this government is not working for the people, they are working for the insiders. They are working for connected donors of the Premier, the developers who went to Vegas and got massages, the developers it was identified that you gave preferential treatment to. That's who you're spending your cash on. You're also going to spend almost \$15 billion on a highway, Highway 413, that nobody really wants except those developers whose land in and around the 413 was going to skyrocket in price, never mind all of the interchanges that will host Costcos and Home Depots. All of that is working for your insiders, but we know, by your own numbers, you are underspending on health care, education and social services.

But let's go back to where you're also spending, because the member from Ottawa South talks a lot about the gravy train, and I just have to say that it bears up, what he says, because now we see a Premier's office that has

ballooned in spending—ballooned in spending. There seems to be no limit on the spending when it comes to the Premier's office. In the Premier's office, there are 48 staff who are on the sunshine list—48. They're earning a combined \$6.9 million. That's 48 people, up from 20 in 2019—so, yes, no problem spending money on your insiders.

We also see appointments to boards, to positions and lobbyists that were previous employees of the Premier or who were the friends of the Premier, like Dean French, like Jenni Byrne, like Ron Taverner, who now are receiving exceptional salaries in public appointments. That's more taxpayer dollars—so absolutely no compunction, no problem spending money—

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I apologize to the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

I recognize the member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** I'd like to suggest that the member is actually talking about imputing motive and ask that, pursuant to standing order 25(i), the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas return to the subject matter of the bill and that she not talk about imputing motives. She's actually said "the Premier" several times in her allegations of motives.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I will allow the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas to continue.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you very much, Speaker. Yes, I have mentioned the Premier a number of times because this is the Premier's budget that I'm quoting from. Through the Chair, I am actually referring to the budget. I'm actually just quoting directly from the debt measures that the government uses that they are not meeting. I'm actually quoting from the consolidated finances of the province's budget that show exactly how indebted this government is.

In fact, to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence—she may not like to hear the facts and the figures, but unfortunately, they come directly from your own budget. I don't know what point of order that you are referring to, but when I'm talking directly about your spending and your budget, and I'm reading directly from the charts—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I will remind the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas not to use props.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Speaker, through you, I agree with you that this budget is a prop. I would agree with you on that one, absolutely.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I will ask the members to come to order.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I got a tiny little giggle over there, Speaker, just a tiny little giggle.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I see I've hit a nerve, because this government likes to say that they are fiscally responsible, and their own budget numbers show that you are spending big in the province. The people of Ontario will eventual-



ly—or are seeing through. You know why they're seeing through? Because in our schools, breakfast—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The government side will come to order.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I don't know what's going on with the government side this morning. If they are ashamed of the performance of this government, heckling me is not going to change it. I suggest that you have more influence on the Premier and cabinet and put in measures that will actually make you proud of this budget, because quite clearly, you're ashamed of this.

Evidence that this budget shortchanges the people of province of Ontario: Student nutrition programs are being cancelled all across Ontario—feeding kids. In Hamilton, at a high school in my riding, Westdale, they have a Bring Back Breakfast program that is aimed to make sure kids aren't going to school hungry. They served over 45,000 meals last year by fundraising through volunteers, but because of the one-time cut of the provincial funding, they have had to close this. We thankfully have the Bulldogs Foundation that will fill the gap for hungry kids, but this is something that I think should be the responsibility of the government, not fundraisers and not private foundations.

I also want to say, shamefully, that patients are now being diagnosed with stage 4 cancer, metastasized cancer, in emergency rooms. Dr. Grewal said, "The emergency department is a terrible place to receive this type of diagnosis."

1010

Why is this happening? I'll tell you why this is happening. Again, from the government's own numbers, comparing 2023 interim actuals with this budget, the government plans to spend \$1 billion less on health care at a time when we're seeing longer wait times in hospitals, ER closures and patients being diagnosed with cancer in emergency rooms. Imagine if that happened to one of your loved ones—but I'm sure it won't, because you've got the inside track.

Finally, I have to talk about Lydia's Law and funding for the justice system in this province. As we know, there were almost 3,000 sexual assault cases between 2022 and 2023 thrown out of court because of the underfunding of the justice system. Now, you have a billion-dollar courtroom, but unfortunately you don't have any staff in that courtroom. So how is this the case? How is that a good use of taxpayer funding?

What I want to say is, we had a bill yesterday that was going to bring attention to the lack of funding in this justice system. The member from Waterloo, Catherine Fife, her Lydia's Law—she had almost 100-plus women that were going to come and talk about their experience of being—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I would think that the member from Eglinton–Lawrence would like to repeat what she just said on the record. Would you like to repeat that on the record?

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I will ask the member to address her questions through the Chair and

remind her not to use names but rather references to members, prior to that—just the riding—and for the government side to please come to order.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you, Speaker.

So, in the short time that I have left, despite the interjections—which I can only assume are because this is an uncomfortable subject for the government because we know that this government has failed women and continues to fail women. It took you years, kicking and screaming, to maybe consider declaring intimate partner violence as an epidemic in this province.

Oh, and we had a bill coming forward that was a very proactive bill that would represent the women who didn't have justice served to them in your justice system, then you discharged that bill—the second time they have been denied justice by this government.

You talk tough on crime, but you're more concerned with Land Rovers than you are concerned with victims of sexual assault in this province. It's shameful. So I would suggest that you need to look at this budget through the lens of sexual assault survivors, through people that are seeking justice from this government and are denied time and time and time again.

What I would like to end with is by saying, what does this government really have against women? Because we see you underfunding women's services time and time again. You've cut sexual assault agencies, their funding. You did not want to declare intimate partner violence as an epidemic in this program. You spend all kinds of money on highways and helicopters, but you are allowing rapists and sexual assault perpetrators to walk free. You're denying them justice, and you use this Legislature to victimize women and sexual assault survivors a second time.

So I would say—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** The member from Eglinton–Lawrence: "Oh, the humanity"—absolutely. This is about humanity. I think that you saying, "Oh, the humanity" is exactly the case. You should show your humanity in this House and bring forward a budget that keeps women and sexual assault survivors safe in this province.

Let me once again say how absolutely outraged and disappointed this side, the opposition and women and women's agencies across the province are in your cowardly move to shut down debate in this Legislature—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I have to apologize to the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. It's now time for members' statements.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## MOTHER'S DAY

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Speaker, I'm delighted to share with the House a heartwarming celebration of Mother's Day from my riding of Markham–Unionville.

This Mother's Day, I introduced a special certificate to recognize the outstanding mothers in our community. The response was overwhelming. We received numerous nominations from individuals, families and organizations, all eager to celebrate their mothers, wives, grandmothers and sisters. It was a wonderful opportunity to honour the incredible women who build and nurture our community through their love for their children and families. This initiative served not only as a celebration but as a vivid reminder of the unique and unconditional nature of a mother's love. It highlighted the resilience, care and selflessness that define the amazing mothers among us.

I'm grateful for the enthusiastic participation from the families in Markham–Unionville. Their engagement has made this Mother's Day truly memorable. Such community spirit reinforces the values that strengthen Ontario and supports the fabric of our shared lives. Let's continue to celebrate and support the pivotal role of mothers in our communities, not just on Mother's Day but every day.

## CITY OF PORT COLBORNE

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Residents of the city of Port Colborne commemorated the 15th anniversary of its designation as a fair trade town last week at the farmers' market. Port Colborne was the first municipality in Ontario to achieve this certification in 2009. Now, over 2.1 million Canadians reside in 16 fair trade towns across the country.

According to the Fair Trade Programs, "Becoming designated as a fair trade town is a great way to unite your local population with the global community of fair trade advocates by making a commitment to support the principles of fair trade through ethical and sustainable purchasing choices."

At the annual Top Hat Ceremony, which signifies the opening of the Welland Canal and the start of shipping season, the city's fair trade committee and its members host the popular fair trade pancake breakfast every year as the first ship passes through the canal. Those looking to support Port Colborne's fair trade should visit the local market at 59 Charlotte Street every Friday from 7 to 12 p.m.

Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't congratulate all levels of government, the city of Port Colborne and Niagara's project team in landing a \$1.6-billion lithium ion battery separator plant investment announced yesterday—great news on a productive Niagara Week here at the Ontario Legislature.

## CORNWALL CURLING CLUB

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** This weekend, I attended the Cornwall Curling Centre's Italian night fundraiser. The sold-out venue of 300 supporters enjoyed a delicious six-course meal, lots of wine and live music by the County Lads on the curling pads. The overwhelming support of this evening allowed the Cornwall Curling Centre to donate funds to each of their two teams headed to the seniors' nationals this August in Quebec City.

The Cornwall Curling Club is one of the oldest curling clubs in Ontario. The earliest recorded curling activity in and around the Cornwall area was in the 1850s. In its initial stages, curling was played on the St. Lawrence River. Our curlers now enjoy six beautiful sheets of ice, where curlers of all ages enjoy the great sport. The centre offers a large variety of leagues that accommodate a wide range of curlers. Whether you're a recreational player or a competitive one, if you're six or 96 or anywhere in between, the Cornwall Curling Club has a league for you.

I cannot stress the importance of the club in our community. It is a place where our seniors go to keep active and socialize. The sport of curling is also thriving with our youth.

Curling is a game of strategy, finesse and strength, which brings our community together. I would like to invite anyone who is interested in seeing some of the world's best curlers to come to the Shorty Jenkins Classic that is held every September in Cornwall. Last year, the classic welcomed some of the best curlers in the world. I look forward to this year's classic and hope to see some of you there.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
AND HARASSMENT

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** This afternoon, we were supposed to be debating my private member's bill, Lydia's Law, and this government chose to silence the voice of survivors.

The justice system is failing survivors, especially of sexual violence. In 2022 alone, 1,326 cases of sexual assault were thrown out before the trial date. Behind this number are survivors who will not get their day in court.

For a government that claims to be "tough on crime," this government has denied justice to so many survivors and their loved ones. They have deliberately starved the justice system. For the survivors who have the courage to come forward, court backlogs, unavailable courtrooms and staffing shortages mean that many do not get their day in court and never see justice.

## 1020

A few years ago I received a desperate call from Lydia's mum. She was reaching out to help her daughter. She told me, "My daughter was sexually assaulted. One of the bravest things she ever did was come forward about it and file a police report."

Lydia asks this Legislature, "How do we expert young girls and women to have faith in the system? Why would they report, knowing how painful the court experience is?"

Our goal with this bill is to answer Lydia's question of what can we do to help, so that Ontario's justice system no longer fails survivors, because every survivor deserves justice. They say you can curse the darkness or light a candle. Lydia's Law was that candle.

### MOTHER'S DAY

**Mr. Amarjot Sandhu:** This past weekend, on May 12, we celebrated Mother's Day. On Mother's Day, we recognize the immeasurable contributions that mothers make to our lives and society as a whole. Mothers play a vital role in shaping our world, not only through their nurturing and guidance within families, but also their influence as leaders, educators and contributors in all aspects of society. Mother's Day provides us with an opportunity to express our gratitude for the love, sacrifice and unwavering support that mothers offer every day. It is a day to honour their resilience, strength, courage and boundless love.

As we celebrate Mother's Day, let us also recognize the progress we have made in supporting mothers and families, while acknowledging the ongoing challenges they face. It's essential that we continue working towards creating a society where every mother is empowered to fulfill her potential and thrive.

Speaker, on this special day, let us come together to celebrate the invaluable contributions made by mothers to make this world a better place to live, and let's cherish their invaluable role in our lives. Happy Mother's Day to all the incredible mothers out there.

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Each one of us is on a personal mental health journey. We all face different challenges at different times. Through the years, there has often been stigma associated with mental health. We've made great strides in overcoming that stigma, but this is only a piece of the puzzle.

What is most important is ensuring that someone who is struggling in this province has the resources and supports they need. Building a robust and accessible mental health system—one without wait-lists or financial barriers—is the work that remains ahead of all of us. Whether it is a crisis of acute mental distress or a lifelong struggle to find balance, we all deserve a government that funds the resources we need when we need them.

In Durham region, we are very fortunate to have strong voices who advocate for mental health and youth mental wellness. I am happy to welcome Mike Shoreman back to Queen's Park. Folks here will know Mike as the adventurous spirit who overcame physical and mental obstacles to become the first person with disabilities to cross the five Great Lakes by stand-up paddleboard. Across Lakes Erie, Huron, Superior, Michigan and Ontario, Mike used his platform to sound the alarm on the youth mental health crisis in Canada, and he has not stopped.

Young people are consistently facing barriers to the mental health care that they deserve. When youth have the courage to reach out, Ontario needs to be there with the excellent professional care and support that we are capable of providing.

For Mental Health Week 2024, the CMHA chose the theme of compassion, the kindness which connects us all. So I call on the government to recognize the power of compassion and invest in the mental well-being of all young Ontarians.

### RIDING OF SCARBOROUGH CENTRE

**Mr. David Smith:** While spring is here and summer is approaching, I'd like to share the beauty of my Scarborough Centre riding and five great ways to experience its diverse culture and richness:

The Aga Khan Museum showcases Islamic art, culture and heritage through its extensive collection and engaging exhibits;

Thomson Memorial Park's beautiful vegetation and historic charm provide a peaceful atmosphere;

Discover the new Scarborough Town Centre for a variety of shopping options;

The Scarborough historical museum provides insights into the area; and

Finally, savour culinary delicacies from all over the world in the bustling Kennedy, Lawrence and Eglinton Avenue road strip, which is home to a variety of ethnic restaurants and cafés.

As the elected representative for Scarborough Centre, it is my pleasure to welcome all, on behalf of my constituents, organizations and businesses, to explore the richness of our offerings, where we will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Taste of Lawrence block party, which will take place from July 7th to the 9th, Scarborough Ribfest in Thomson park and my grand annual community picnic and barbecue. All are invited. I look forward to seeing you there.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** In Don Valley East, thousands of people do not have a family doctor. Meanwhile, my riding has hundreds of foreign-trained doctors who can't get credentialed in Ontario—doctors who are forced to sit on the sidelines when they should be on the front lines.

Our local hospital, Michael Garron Hospital, is bursting above capacity. We have insufficient acute care beds to meet our current needs, let alone the projected needs, as my riding sees unprecedented development around the intersection of two new public transit lines. We're in desperate need of funding for expansions and upgrades, and we're not getting it.

But if the situation is dire in Don Valley East, it's worse in northern and rural Ontario. Even fewer have access to primary care, and hospitals are collapsing one by one: Minden, Muskoka, Strathroy Middlesex and now Durham hospital.

It started with sporadic ER closures then more regular ones. Now, their emergency room is only open 12 hours a day. This is because this government has ushered in the worst health care worker shortage in our province's history, and last week, the Minister of Health had the audacity to say she's not concerned about it.

Now it has suddenly been announced that all of Durham hospital's in-patient beds will be removed in a couple of weeks—no warning, no consultation and no conversation. Today, the mayor of the municipality of West Grey and over 60 Durham residents have travelled to Queen's Park to express their opposition to this decision, which will compromise diagnostic testing, cause doctors to leave and put patient care at risk.

Mr. Speaker, the people of northern and rural Ontario and across our province deserve a government that will protect their health care system and give them answers. Fully fund health care and stop the closures.

#### JEWISH AND ASIAN COMMUNITIES

**Ms. Laura Smith:** May is Jewish and Asian Heritage Month. It's time to recognize both Jewish and Asian communities and their significant role in developing Thornhill, Ontario, and Canada as a whole. They have been one of the largest communities in my riding of Thornhill, and the Asian community is actually—we have one of the largest in Ontario. But, Speaker, there are so many ways where both communities intersect.

This week, I attended the opening of the Cultural Canvas exhibition, Jewish and Chinese Perspectives. It showcased amazing local artists, including a musical duo composed of a classical guitarist and a traditional pipa, also known as a Chinese musical lute. The two musicians have been playing together for years, seamlessly harmonizing the two distinct instruments.

The historical connection between the Jewish and Asian communities dates back centuries. For instance, there has been a long-standing Jewish presence in China, with records indicating the arrival of Jewish merchants and settlers during the ancient times. Additionally, during World War II, Shanghai served as a safe haven for thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing persecution in Europe. In fact, Jewish people living in the city of Kaifeng prayed in their synagogue in both Hebrew and Mandarin.

I want to thank the Successful Woman Council, along with the Jewish Women's Club, for putting this amazing and unique experience forward. This exhibit is now featured at the Bathurst Clark Resource Library in Thornhill.

In a world that often emphasizes our differences, it's crucial to remember the strength that comes from standing united.

#### FIRST RESPONDERS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It was a great day on May 1 in the city of Pembroke in Riverside Park on the shores of the majestic Ottawa River, such that the services of the

Reverend Dave Henderson, the local town crier, kicked off the ceremony with his customary, "Oyez, oyez." It was there that the former Fred Blackstein Boulevard was renamed First Responders Way.

#### 1030

May 1 was of course chosen to correspond with First Responders Day here in the province of Ontario. Fred Blackstein, a member of the Order of Canada, had approached the city earlier this year and suggested his name be removed from the street and the street be renamed in honour of first responders. I could go on for hours about the contributions of Mr. Blackstein, but this just serves as another example of his selflessness.

The ceremony was well attended by members of the public and representatives of each group of first responders that we depend on so greatly each and every day. Whether it is police, fire, paramedics, ER doctors or nurses and, of course, our military, it is the dedication and commitment of our first responders that allow us to feel safe during the day and sleep better at night knowing they have our back. For most of us, what they do every single day goes largely unnoticed until we need them, but it is tremendously comforting to know that if the situation calls for it, they will be there.

I want to thank the city of Pembroke for making this happen and, of course, Mr. Blackstein for his kind gesture. But above everything else, I want to thank each and every one of our first responders for their unwavering commitment to making our lives safer and better. This renaming in Pembroke recognizes that in a tangible way.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Rick Byers:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker and good morning, colleagues. It's my pleasure to welcome the mayor of West Grey, Kevin Eccles, to the Legislature as well as many, many residents of that beautiful town in Durham in my riding. Welcome to the Legislature. It's a pleasure to have you here today.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I also want to welcome some good people from Durham, Dawn McNab and Kris Kennedy, who are the co-chairs of the Save the Durham Hospital committee, as well as everybody else who came to join us. Thank you for being here.

**Mr. John Jordan:** I want to introduce members from Beef Farmers of Ontario: Joe Dickenson, Jim Whitley, Thomas Brandstetter, Evan Chaffe and thank Craig McLaughlin, president, for the meeting earlier this morning. Thank you for all you do to grow Ontario's beef industry. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I'd like to congratulate page captain Antonio Geremia from Niagara Centre for a job well done and welcome his parents, Kerri-Ann and Mario Geremia, to the Legislature. I look forward to having lunch with them this afternoon.

**Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin:** I would like to welcome Mr. Ross MacDonald to the Legislature today. Mr. Ross

MacDonald is page Lise MacDonald's grandfather. Lise and her grandfather are not from my riding, but Lise's father, Anthony MacDonald, is a family physician in the town of Plantagenet in my riding. I had the opportunity to meet several times with Dr. MacDonald. He's probably assisting patients at the Prescott and Russell long-term-care facility as we speak.

Again, I would like to welcome to Queen's Park Mr. MacDonald. I have to say, he must be really proud of his son and his granddaughter.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm very pleased to welcome Mike Shoreman to Queen's Park. Mike was the first person with disabilities to cross the five Great Lakes by stand-up paddleboard—folks know him for that—but he's also an excellent advocate for mental health and a great public speaker. We're glad to welcome him back to Queen's Park. Welcome back.

**Mr. Amarjot Sandhu:** I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the members of Delhi Chandigarh Elite Indian Community. Please bear with me, Mr. Speaker, it's a long list: Gaurav Shrivastava founder and CEO, Munish Wadhwa, Lalit Keram, Devyansh Kaura, Sanjeev Sharma, Neeraj Tripathi, Rajan Sethi, Vikram Dhawan, Sherwin Trindade, Sumati Makhija, Ekta Wadhwa, Heena Siddiqi, Harsimranjit Walia, Malika Narang, Nisha Sawhney and Kanika Grover. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** I had a great meeting this morning with MPP Burch. As well, in attendance were CAO Ron Tripp from the Niagara region, regional chair Jim Bradley, Daryl Barnhart, Adrienne Jugley, Mark Rucic and Rachael Ball-Condron. Thank you for the meeting; we had a great time. Welcome to your House.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Today, in the members' gallery, we are joined by Chief Sherri-Lyn Hill, an amazing leader for Six Nations of the Grand River. They're holding a reception today as part of their lobby day. We welcome them to this magnificent place. Colleagues, I ask you to drop by rooms 228 and 230 at lunch time to say hello and join us.

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** This morning, I'd like to welcome Kevin Eccles, the mayor of the municipality of West Grey; Dawn McNab; Kris Kennedy; Dennis Graham; Lucretia Schafer; and the over 60 people who are here and belong to the coalition to save Durham hospital.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** I have students from St. Demetrius and staff and volunteers here today to tour Queen's Park whom I'll get a chance to speak with and meet, so, of course, I would like to welcome them to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I would like to welcome, from my riding of Waterloo, Sara Casselman, who's the executive director of the sexual assault support centre. Welcome to your House, Sara, and thank you for participating in the press conference.

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** I see my buddy Jonny Stathakos in the visitors' gallery, but I've got a special guest here in the Speaker's gallery. I think he's here to apologize to the opposition for the son he's unleashed on

the Legislature. But please join me in welcoming my father, Duncan McGregor.

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

I recognize the Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I seek unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 100(e), the member for Waterloo be permitted to designate private members' notice of motion number 110 as ballot item number 13 to be debated today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Leader of the Opposition is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding order 100(e), the member for Waterloo be permitted to designate private members' notice of motion number 110 as ballot item number 13 to be debated today. Agreed? I heard a no.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Women have been silenced in the courts and, yesterday, women were silenced in this House. The MPP for Waterloo tabled Lydia's Law, which would have helped increase accountability and transparency in the handling of sexual assault cases in Ontario. The government shut it down.

Hundreds of survivors and advocates and crisis support workers were expecting a chance to get answers on why this government has allowed so many sexual assault cases to be dismissed before trial. More than 1,300 cases of sexual assault in 2022 alone never saw a trial because the court system is so deeply underfunded and overwhelmed. Those are not just numbers, Speaker, these are survivors—survivors who are not going to get a shot at justice.

So to the Premier: Why are you silencing survivors of sexual assault who deserve justice from our legal system?

*Interjections.*

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

Government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. As the Leader of the Opposition would know, what we voted on yesterday was, in principle, sending the bill directly to a committee of the Legislature. In fact, all Progressive Conservatives, and I would suggest that probably all members of this House, wanted to see that bill sent directly to committee so that it could be part of the study that the justice committee is doing on intimate partner violence.

1040

I remind the Legislature that this Legislature agreed that we should study that and come back with comprehensive recommendations on how we can provide better services

to victims of intimate partner violence. As you know, a former crown prosecutor is leading those efforts on behalf of the government side at committee. It is certainly my expectation that that committee will continue to do really good work and bring back recommendations here, and that we can provide real solutions for those—

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

The supplementary question? The member for Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** The House leader knows full well that if the government was going to vote for that bill, it would have ended up in justice committee anyway.

Months ago, a young woman named Lydia and her mother came to me and they shared their experience of navigating Ontario's broken justice system. It took Lydia two years to get justice. She told me that she did not want any other survivor to go through what she went through and asked what I could do to help. I learned through stakeholder consultations just how broken and underfunded and retraumatizing the justice system is for survivors.

Lydia's story represents the story of so many survivors in Ontario. Speaker, sexual violence disproportionately impacts women, girls and gender-diverse people.

To the Attorney General: You have silenced survivors in the court system, and now you are silencing female voices in the Legislature. What are you hiding from?

*Interjections.*

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

I remind members to make their comments through the Chair.

Government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Again, in her opening comments, the member opposite frankly identifies that the bill would go to the exact same committee that we expedited the bill to yesterday. We were very clear that we thought that there are very important elements in the private member's bill that the member brought forward.

But we're undertaking right now a very comprehensive study into the challenges facing victims of intimate partner violence. The justice committee, which is, on our part, being led by a former crown prosecutor, is to provide recommendations to this Legislature, to the government, on how we can make the system better, how we can make those who provide services for victims of intimate partner violence better, how we can improve the justice system. We want to also ensure that the federal government understands how important this issue is to the people of the province of Ontario.

We're not silencing anyone, Mr. Speaker. In fact, what we're doing is showing how important it is and expediting that work, and the committee will continue to do that work.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Debate in this House is a key part of our democracy. Lydia wanted the debate to happen. She wanted to hear from the government. She wanted to hear from us, and she deserved to be heard.

Speaker, if this government won't listen to me, maybe they'll listen to Lydia's mother. She said:

"The most difficult thing a parent can ever experience is watching your child suffer. Throughout the over two-year court process for this trial, my daughter's mental health suffered immensely ... due to court backlogs.

"With every delay, every setback in court, my daughter's mental health deteriorated. She was revictimized and traumatized over the course of two years, in which during this period of time the accused (who was found guilty of all charges) was free to live his life"—but not Lydia.

To the Attorney General: Why are you attempting to silence voices like these and trying to prevent them from getting the justice that they deserve in this Legislature, in this province?

*Interjections.*

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

Again, I remind members to make their comments through the Chair.

Government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** To be clear, Mr. Speaker, I thought it was very important that that bill be referred directly to committee because we are undertaking a very in-depth study on intimate partner violence through the justice committee of the Legislative Assembly. As I've said, the member for Kitchener South-Hespeler, a former crown prosecutor, is leading the efforts on behalf of the government of Ontario on that committee.

What we want to see is, what are the obstacles that are being faced? We know that there are obstacles in the courts because the federal government seems somehow unable to appoint judges to the bench, which is causing delays, but there's more to it than that, Mr. Speaker. We want to talk to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. We want to talk to the minister of family and children's services, to the Minister of Housing—across government, to see what obstacles can we remove? How can we work better together? Are there provinces that are doing things better than we are doing? And how can we make changes that will provide victims of intimate partner violence real, real change so that they can move forward?

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I'll tell you, Speaker, no one is buying that. No one is buying what they're selling, I'll tell you. I cannot tell you how disappointing this is for everybody here.

Let's talk about another disappointing issue. While the Minister of Health dismisses and minimizes the doctor shortage in this province, the CEO and president of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, CHEO, says that their hospital has lost dozens of pediatric physicians since this government took office. CHEO is struggling to provide the early intervention that our kids need, and we know that it makes a world of difference for our children.

Does the Premier agree with his minister who thinks vacancies at children's hospitals are not a major concern?

*Interjections.*

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

The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** Ontario has some of the shortest wait times across the country, but we know there's more to be done.

That's why, this last summer, we announced that our government is investing an additional \$330 million each year for over 100 high-priority pediatric-care initiatives across the province. I was at that announcement at CHEO, because that is my local hospital, and I will quote the CEO of CHEO—"the biggest children's health funding announcement in provincial history." This would help "unleash creative forces of children's and youth organizations across the province."

This investment includes hiring more pediatric surgical staff to increase the amount of day surgeries and increase access to diagnostic procedures for children.

Speaker, we're ensuring children and youth in every corner of this province can connect to the care they need when they need it.

Our increase in pediatric surgeries has been supported by our government doubling pediatric ICU capacity at both McMaster and CHEO.

We're taking the bold and innovative action to ensure Ontarians can connect to the care they need when and where they need it.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, I shouldn't have to tell this government how unique CHEO is. It has one of only two level 1 pediatric trauma units in Ontario.

Wait times for MRIs and ultrasounds at CHEO are now the longest in Ontario. We have sick little kids transported out of the region, even out of the province, to get care; parents taking time off work; brothers and sisters taking time off school; little kids separated from their families and their friends while they're getting treatment. Why? Because of the doctor shortage that this government and that minister refuse to even acknowledge, let alone fix.

So back to the Premier: Is this a major enough concern for his minister yet?

*Interjections.*

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

The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** I'm very proud of the work they're doing at CHEO, and I'm extremely proud of the extra \$330 million that we invested into CHEO last year.

It took Ontario years of neglect by previous governments that were supported by the NDP unfortunately—and we're fixing those mistakes that they've taken.

The Leader of the Opposition actually voted against our historic \$330-million investment, but she doesn't mention that in the House.

Screening and overall surgical wait-lists have declined to below pre-pandemic levels, with nearly 80% of all Ontarians receiving their surgery within the target time.

The number of pediatric surgeries taking place is up by over 30% of what surgeries were last year, with three of the five Ontario pediatric hospitals operating close to or near 100%.

With our Your Health plan, we're growing our health care workforce to ensure Ontarians can access the care they need now and for years to come.

Speaker, I will remind the House that for a decade, the NDP propped up the Liberals, and that's why—

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

The final supplementary?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It's six long years that this government has been in power, and they're still blaming everybody else for their failures. Just own up to it.

All you need to do is look at their own numbers: 3,000 physician vacancies right now across the province; a growing population; more physicians leaving the province every single day.

**1050**

Here's the problem: A child is sick. They can't get treated because there aren't enough doctors. Listen to the CEO and president of CHEO, for goodness' sake.

What I and parents across the entire province are hearing from this Minister of Health is that this is not a major concern—not a major concern. If the people of Ontario cannot trust this minister to acknowledge the extent of the crisis in our primary care system, how can the Premier trust her to solve it?

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** Health care workers across the province have not forgotten about Rae Days. I know the Leader of the Opposition really doesn't like me to bring it up, but she was a staffer in the Rae government, as well as some of their other caucus members.

It does take time to reverse the poor Liberal policies. Unfortunately, the NDP cut the amount of residency seats by 10%. The Liberals cut 50 seats. We are going to continue making those investments that are needed to ensure that our health care system functions properly after 15 years of a Liberal-NDP coalition that put us into this mess in the first place.

## HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Scraping the bottom of the barrel there.

Since this government won't do anything for CHEO and their physician shortage, let's talk about Grey county. Local residents are here today in the hope of finally getting some answers from this government. They are losing all of their in-patient beds at Durham hospital, meaning that patients can't be kept overnight. Not only that, their emergency room is going to be permanently shut after 5 p.m.

We've been raising this with the government for years now. The community has experienced rolling closures in Chesley, in Kincardine, in Walkerton and Durham hospitals. For a month, their local councils have been asking the

Minister of Health for a meeting—I mean, a call; frankly, any explanation for any of this. But what they got? Silence.

My question is to the Premier: Will the Premier do what the minister will not and commit to meeting with the people of Grey county today?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply? The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** First and foremost, I think it's worth noting the hard work the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has been doing on this file, both meeting with his community and the Ministry of Health.

The South Bruce Grey Health Centre is governed by a local board of directors to best serve their local community needs. When reviewing their community needs, they've decided to refocus the resources at Durham hospital to primary care and urgent care. This will result in expansion of care beds at Walkerton and Kincardine hospitals as Durham shifts to primary care and urgent care. With many patients in the Durham region community without a family physician, this focus will be imperative.

The South Bruce Grey Health Centre changes will have no impact on the level of care, while retaining the existing staff. These changes will ensure a stable and sustainable health care system that will better serve the local needs. The Ministry of Health, Ontario Health and South Bruce Grey Health Centre will continue to work together for longer-term solutions to health care in South Bruce Grey.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The supplementary question? The member from Nickel Belt.

**Mme France Gélinas:** To make sure that we understand, we're talking about the town of Durham, not the region. Those good people are here today.

We've seen this all before with the closure of Minden hospital last June. This government starved rural hospitals and emergency rooms with chronic underfunding. They blamed the workers. They blamed the community. They blamed everything but themselves. After being ignored and dismissed by this government when the community of Minden asked for help, their local hospital officially closed their doors last June.

The good people of Durham are here today. They are living the same nightmare that Minden lived last year. Will the Premier assure the good people of Durham that their hospital will stay open?

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** Let's be clear, Speaker: We blame the NDP propping up the Liberals for over 10 years as to why we're in this situation. Our government inherited a health care system under severe pressure due to the actions of the previous Liberal government.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government has made record investments into the health care system. Since 2018, we've increased the health care budget by over \$18 billion, investing over \$85 billion into the system this year alone.

Speaker, we will continue to ensure that we have the best publicly funded health care system all across Canada with our investments into our system.

## TAXATION

**Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. The inflation affordability concerns Ontarians are facing right now are a direct result of the federal carbon tax. They are paying higher taxes and higher costs for the necessities of life, like food, gas and housing, and it is only getting worse from here. Families need a break.

However, the carbon tax queen Bonnie Crombie and her Liberal caucus are supporting their federal buddies who want to keep punishing Ontarians. That's unacceptable.

Speaker, can the minister please tell the House how our government is working for the people while the Liberals are punishing them with higher taxes?

**Hon. Todd Smith:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question this morning.

The federal government has imposed this torturous federal carbon tax on the people of Ontario and the people across Canada, and we know that the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, is happy to have this carbon tax in place. Her counterpart federally, Minister Guilbeault, her buddy on Parliament Hill, has said that the queen of the carbon tax is happy to have that federal carbon tax in place. We know that the caucus here supports that increased tax and what it's doing to drive up the cost of everything. The NDP supports that tax, and the Green Party leadership here supports that, as well.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** What's the plan?

**Hon. Todd Smith:** They're asking, "What's the plan?" The plan is Powering Ontario's Growth.

I want them to hear this: Last night, I was speaking at the net-zero forum put on by the Transition Accelerator. They applaud our plan, which is reducing emissions and growing our province's economy.

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

**Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** Thank you to the minister for his response.

Since the introduction of this regressive tax, the cost of people's everyday essentials has reached a new high. Businesses are raising prices to keep up with costs, families are cutting back on groceries and seniors are worried about being able to afford heating fuel.

Contrary to what the Liberal members in this House believe, the carbon tax is not in the best interests of Ontarians.

People are looking to our government to keep costs low and deliver real energy solutions. Last week, we concluded the largest battery storage procurement in Canada's history to meet growing electricity demand. Speaker, can the minister please explain why initiatives like this procurement deliver better results than a costly carbon tax?

**Hon. Todd Smith:** I want to thank the member opposite for the great question.

We are doing a lot. She referenced the massive energy procurement last week for storage. The largest storage



facility is actually going to be in the riding of our good member from the riding that's way too long to mention—the Brockville region. That's going to ensure that there is secure, reliable electricity in eastern Ontario for future growth, the kind of growth that we saw yesterday, with Asahi Kasei—I said that wrong, but the Minister of Economic Development is going to support me on this. It was an almost \$2-billion announcement down in the Niagara region yesterday, building on the \$43 billion of new investment that we've seen across the province.

Our Powering Ontario's Growth plan is working. Even the environmental organizations that I met with last night at the Transition Accelerator are endorsing the Powering Ontario's Growth plan because we're reducing emissions, providing reliable clean power for our province and watching our economy grow at the same time.

1100

### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Premier. Your government has failed to implement the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care program. Child care operators, stakeholders and advocacy groups have been raising red flags that your minister has not delivered the \$10-a-day child care spaces that were promised. Ola, a child care provider, pulled out of the program, citing a broken funding model.

Everyone wants to know where the money is being spent. Your budget doesn't even mention the words "child care." Will the Premier commit to requesting the Auditor General provide a full report of government spending on the \$10-a-day child care program?

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Mr. Speaker, we took action to sign a better deal with the federal government. The members opposite urged this government to sign the first deal available that would have precluded 30% of the market—70,000 spaces.

The member opposite asks me why operators aren't receiving support, and yet they wanted us to remove the ability of government to fund 30% of our operators, who are for-profit child care owners, often women that run these businesses, often one or two operations. So you've got to pick a lane. You can't argue that we need more capacity and then single-handedly urge the government to deny 30% of families access to this program.

We are standing up for flexibility and affordability. We are delivering on our commitments, but the one challenge we face is the federal government has imposed a ceiling on growth because of an ideological adherence, the same one the NDP seems to champion today.

Stand up for families. Support choice. Every parent in Ontario deserves—

*Interjections.*

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

The supplementary question?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** That's not what we're hearing on this side of the House, and maybe if this government actually listened to some productive changes to the child care file, we'd actually get the spaces built.

Families, Speaker, are paying the price for this minister's lack of action and his failure to implement the \$10-a-day child care spaces. Wait-lists keep growing, and parents can't access affordable child care.

Families have lost trust in this government's ability to deliver affordable child care. This government won't even publicly report on how many of the 41 child care spaces they created in 2019 are subsidized spaces—they won't even report on that.

This government has not met with their own advisory group on the funding issue since last June. Families and child care providers want to know why this government continues to hide, and when will they finally come up with a funding formula that will work for kids?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Mr. Speaker, our Premier's commitment to affordable child care is a sharp contrast to the Liberals. When it increased by 500% under former Premier Wynne, it was Premier Ford who delivered a 50% reduction. You want to benchmark success: \$6,000 to \$10,000 per child in the bank per year, and we're just at 50%. We're going to keep going down and keep reducing rates.

We've increased tens of thousands of spaces—31,000 spaces within our schools—and members opposite should make it aware to the families watching that you opposed the expansion of spaces and the reduction of fees. You actually would have made it worse. Wait-lists would have been longer because the opposition wants to impose blind adherence to ideology instead of standing up for every single parent in Ontario. And so the opposition should get on board with what every parent instinctively knows: Child care was too expensive under the Liberals, it's finally more affordable under our Progressive Conservative government.

*Interjections.*

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

I'll remind the members to make their comments through the Chair.

The next question.

### TAXATION

**Mr. Steve Clark:** My question to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. The Liberals continue to tell Canadians that their carbon tax is the only way to fight climate change, but the people of Ontario know that paying more for gas and groceries is not fighting climate change. In fact, in my riding of Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, all we have to do is look across the St. Lawrence River, south of the border, to our biggest trading partner, the United States—they don't have a carbon tax, but yet they managed to have greater emission reductions than Canada.

My question to the minister is: Please explain why the Liberal approach to fighting climate change through the carbon tax is a misguided approach?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, any tax hikes are misguided.

Look at what our government is doing. Yesterday, we welcomed a \$1.6-billion investment from Asahi Kasei to build an EV separator plant in Port Colborne. We've now landed \$43 billion in new EV investments in the last four years; that is more than any US state. These investments are creating tens of thousands of good-paying jobs right across our province. How? Because we've reduced taxes right across the province. We've lowered the cost of doing business by \$8 billion each and every year.

Speaker, we've shown the Liberals the way: Lowering taxes is how you bring wealth to an economy.

Axe the tax.

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

**Mr. Steve Clark:** The Liberals need to scrap the carbon tax. It doesn't matter where you go in Ontario—especially in my riding of Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes—the tax is opposed by virtually every worker and every business across our country. No one wants to pay more for gas, shelter or groceries.

While Ontario's economy, as you noted, Minister, has made significant progress since we took office, just imagine what we could do in Ontario if the Liberals scrapped the carbon tax.

Speaker, can the minister explain our approach to economic growth and how it's so, so different from the Liberal approach?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, the people of Ontario remember what life was like under the Liberals. They said in their economic statement that they wanted to “restructure the composition of our economy” by wiping out the manufacturing sector and transitioning the economy to a fully dependent service sector. They drove up taxes to crush Ontario's manufacturing sector, and they chased out 300,000 jobs by doing that.

We took the opposite approach. We have lowered taxes in Ontario. We have cut red tape. We have lowered electricity rates. That's why 700,000 more men and women are working today and manufacturing employment is now at the highest level in 15 years.

The Liberal agenda of high taxes does not work.

Our message is very clear: Scrap the carbon tax today.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** My question is to the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery. Minister, auto theft is happening every day across this province. Car thieves are gaming the system and are able to get new VINs for stolen vehicles at ServiceOntario counters. This government has reportedly been getting advice from current and former law enforcement and insurance experts about how to prevent re-VINing. This is more than a loophole, it's a highly lucrative scam that this government knows about but isn't fixing.

So my question is, why is it so easy in Ontario to get stolen vehicles legitimized with a new VIN?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The parliamentary assistant and member for Cambridge.

**Mr. Brian Riddell:** Speaker, there is no reason people should live in fear of their cars being stolen or their homes being burglarized. That's why our government is using all the tools available to immediately put an end to the increase in auto theft.

At our ministry, we have implemented many security measures with ServiceOntario. All employees at ServiceOntario centres go through a rigorous screening process and receive constant training to ensure that government services remain safe.

Under Premier Ford, this government takes matters of consumer protection very seriously. We will never stop taking action to protect Ontarians.

*Interjections.*

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

Supplementary question?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Three years ago, in June, the government posted a summary of proposal seeking feedback on how to improve the assigned VIN program. The stated objective was “to reduce fraud and help recover stolen vehicles by preventing bad actors from fraudulently applying for an assigned VIN.” I don't know what you learned or what you did with it, but things are not getting better.

**1110**

Provincial centres like ServiceOntario do not have a system that checks if VINs already exist in other jurisdictions.

In Ontario, someone can steal a car, register it, make quick cash and be good to go.

So my question is, what is this government doing to protect the VIN registry and Ontarians from car thieves?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Again, I'll remind the members to make their comments through the Chair.

To reply, the Solicitor General.

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Yesterday, there was an incredible announcement with the Minister of Transportation, and I was there. One thing we're doing, in sending a message for people who think it's okay to steal cars, is, we're going to keep your licence suspended—you do it once, it's 10 years; you do it twice, it's 25 years; you do it three times, you're gone, there's no way of getting it back.

When it comes to fighting auto theft and understanding how serious it is, when it comes to understanding that there has never been a government that has taken public safety more seriously—to work with stakeholders, to work with the auto manufacturers, to work with police services—it is this government that's standing up for public safety every day.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** My question is for the high-energy minister—sorry, the Minister of Energy.

The Liberal carbon tax continues to drive up the cost of living for all Ontarians. Families in my riding of Brampton North and across the province are paying more for everything, from fuelling their cars to feeding their families. What's even worse is that there's no end in sight for this tax. The federal Liberals are planning to nearly triple the carbon tax by 2030.

While the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, and her Liberal caucus are in favour of making life more expensive for families—they've never seen a tax they didn't like—our government is fighting back against the Liberals' unjust tax schemes.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is standing up for Ontario families and putting more money back into their pockets?

**Hon. Todd Smith:** Thanks to the member from Brampton. It's great to get a question that is tough but fair from him this morning.

Unlike the NDP and the Liberal caucus and the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, we're against a carbon tax in Ontario. The greens, the reds, the oranges—they're in favour of a carbon tax.

As families are getting out on the road this summer, maybe the Liberals will be getting into their minivan and travel to southwestern Ontario to visit their members—oh, hold on, they don't have any members in southwestern Ontario, so they won't be going to visit their members. But it's going to cost them a lot more to fuel up that minivan.

Families are fuelling up their minivans; it's going to cost them more. Energy costs, gasoline costs, groceries—it's all going up.

The Premier Ford team here in Ontario is making life more affordable for the people of Ontario—cutting taxes, cutting fees, cutting tolls, cutting the carbon tax.

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

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** Thanks to the minister for that answer.

I'll note the Liberals don't have any members in Brampton either. We've got Duncan here from Brampton North.

I know the Liberals support the carbon tax. I really hope that they'll change their tune and finally call Justin Trudeau in Ottawa and ask him to scrap this ridiculous tax.

Speaker, Liberals can tout the carbon tax as a solution all they want, but they're not fooling anyone. The carbon tax only punishes Ontarians by driving up the cost of daily necessities, making it harder for families to get by.

Our government knows that Ontarians deserve better. That's why, under the leadership of Premier Ford, we have a plan to build our clean energy advantage.

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Long-Term Care will come to order. The member for Ottawa South will come to order.

The Minister of Energy can reply.

**Hon. Todd Smith:** Thanks to the great member from Brampton for the question this morning. He's absolutely bang on.

We do have a plan, Powering Ontario's Growth, and seeing the types of investment that the Minister of Economic Development and the Premier were at yesterday in the Niagara region—multi-billion dollar investments are coming back. It's because we're cutting the costs of doing business and making life more affordable for the people of Ontario.

While the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, is in full support of the federal carbon tax, we are not.

I know we've got some good folks here from rural Ontario who are going to the pumps every day. We've got some beef farmers here from Grey county as well, and the cost of them doing business is going up billions of dollars over time because of the increased carbon tax. It's only going to continue to keep going up and up and up.

We're making life more affordable. I know the member from Brampton really loves the One Fare program that's been brought in for transit riders. It's going to cut the cost by \$1,600 a year. We've cut the gas tax, 10.7 cents a litre, making life more affordable. Cutting licence plate sticker fees, cutting taxes—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Todd Smith:** You've got to be really careful—

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

I apologize to the member from Kingston and the Islands for making him wait. I recognize him for the next question.

#### OHIP COVERAGE OF COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** In late 2021, COVID-19 cases skyrocketed in the Kingston area with the Omicron variant. An enterprising local doctor, Elaine Ma, ran a drive-through mass vaccination clinic. Community members, like my own daughter, volunteered to help. Thousands were quickly inoculated during a critical couple of days. That's why I was shocked when I learned that OHIP asked Dr. Ma to pay back its \$600,000 reimbursement. Why? OHIP said because shots were given in the St. Lawrence College parking lot, not in her office.

Mr. Speaker, this is a follow-up to a letter to the minister's office that I sent several months ago: Does our government have the backs of doctors who think out of the box and take the initiative to protect us during health emergencies? Would the minister intervene and override OHIP's action and offer a fair solution?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Of course, we'll look into that. I know, in my own riding, we had a drive-through vaccination clinic which worked very well.

The COVID pandemic really highlighted the failure of the previous Liberal government to do anything about health care. The reason we had some of the longest

lockdowns in North America is because the Liberals left us with such a crumbling, decaying health care system.

And do you know who supported them every step of the way? It was the NDP. In 2011, the Liberals cut the health care budget when the federal government increased it by 6%. Do you know who supported them? The NDP. In 2012, the Liberals cut funding to small hospitals in rural areas across the province of Ontario. Do you know who supported them? The NDP. In 2013, the Liberals cut medical school admissions. Do you know who supported them? The NDP. On every—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member will take his seat.

Supplementary question?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Mr. Speaker, this is not really a partisan question. OHIP asked Dr. Ma to repay about \$600,000 in reimbursement for costs incurred. And \$600,000 is about the cost for one COVID patient to stay a couple of months in the ICU. So that drive-through clinic was a really cheap way to vaccinate thousands and prevent many additional COVID-19 patients going to the ICU.

Dr. Ma followed the rules, the steps to qualify her mass clinic under the prescribed G, Q and H billing codes and OMA billing practices for mass clinics. She is being punished for no good reason.

The Minister of Health has the power to conduct post-payment review. Will she intervene today? Will she set a healthy precedent so that in our next public health emergency, doctors who take the initiative to protect us in good faith can count on support from the system?

*Interjections.*

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

Government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** In my own home community, Dr. Pearl Yang did the exact—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. The member for Ottawa South will come to order. The member for Orléans will come to order.

*Interjection.*

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

Sorry; I apologize to the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Dr. Pearl Yang in Stouffville did the exact same thing, Mr. Speaker, so we'll look into that.

But it's really telling that the member for Ottawa South is yelling, because while he was here and he supported the previous Liberal government that year after year after year cut health care funding, supported by the NDP, this is a member who was an absolute failure when it came to delivering for his own community. Do you know who's rebuilding CHEO, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario? It is this government. While that member sat there and supported a government that built no long-term-care homes in his own community, it's this government which is building more long-term-care homes in his own riding than they built province-wide.

1120

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Ms. Bhutila Karpoche:** My question is to the Premier. Groceries are getting too expensive. People cannot afford to feed themselves and their families. Over the past year, almost a million Ontarians accessed food banks. It's evident that big grocers are jacking up prices under the cover of inflation and posting excess profits outside the historical norm.

The Premier has a choice to make: Are you going to stand with the big grocers like Loblaws and Walmart or are you going to do your duty and protect the public from greed?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the Minister of Finance to reply.

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that acknowledgment.

I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I thought we went through this a little bit. We understand that many are hurting in this province. In fact, our budget, which we'll be voting on very shortly, talks about affordability, talks about helping not only families but businesses in this province.

I listened to the learned Minister of Energy just a few seconds ago talk about the hardship that increasing the carbon tax and the price of gas has on not just the beef farmers that are here but all the farmers across Ontario who are producing that food. It's harming the people who have to ship that food right across the province and, ultimately, harming the people who have to buy the food.

This government cut the gas tax. We continue to make life more affordable for businesses and people. It's this government and that opposition who should lock arms and vote for the budget to make life more affordable.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's pretty obvious that Ontarians are having a hard time buying groceries. That's why people with jobs are being forced to go to food banks. You know who else is having a hard time? The farmers who actually produce the food. They're having a hard time paying their bills. Who else? The processors are having a hard time making their margins.

You know who isn't having a hard time? The monopolies who control the grocery business. Their profits are going up higher than inflation, and they keep going up. The monopolies, which this government seems to be the gatekeepers of—because they support them, very much so. They want to give them as much business as they can.

At what point is the government of Ontario actually going to protect the people who produce the food and the people who consume the food from the monopolies?

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

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I would respectfully submit to the member opposite that if he really cared for farmers, the best thing he could do is support our budget, because

we are bringing so much relief all across Ontario thanks to the Minister of Finance. He is engaging all of us in terms of making sure Ontario remains affordable.

Talking about affordability, we need to recognize—yes, we have the amazing Beef Farmers of Ontario in the House today. I would like to share with you that they were part of a rally on April 2 that was hosted by the President of the Treasury Board in Holland Marsh. They came together with 25 other farming and rural organizations to stand up with the Premier and myself to send a direct message to the federal Liberals, as well as the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie. That message is simple: Scrap the tax.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Kitchener–Conestoga will keep the budget in the desk for the remainder of question period.

The next question.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** My question is to the Premier. Two days ago, the TTC faced a massive service disruption, with Line 2 being out of service for 12 hours. Thousands of people were impacted as they were crammed onto shuttle buses that could not meet demand. Commutes from Scarborough were more than doubled.

Do you know what we heard from this government? That's right: nothing. Because this government doesn't take responsibility for its failures. They talk a big game, but when their neglect becomes clear, they can't face it. They don't want to face the nurse who missed a shift or the patient who can't see the doctor because they couldn't make it in on time.

Will this government continue to pass the buck on reliable and safe transit, or will they actually provide the TTC with the funding Ontarians really need?

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

**Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam:** Our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, has done more for transportation and transit infrastructure, and also making transportation more affordable, than any other government in the history of this province. Our government continues to provide funding for all the municipalities through a gas tax program and millions of dollars for transportation, repairs and expansion.

When we brought legislation to make sure that we built the Ontario Line, the Yonge North subway extension and the Scarborough subway extension, the Liberals and the NDP said no and voted against it. When we brought the One Fare program, which saved \$1,600, the Liberals and NDP said no and voted against it—not just once; they voted against this twice.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The House will come to order.

Supplementary question?

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** What is clear about this government is that there is only one train that is properly funded

in this province and that it runs right through the Premier's office. That's right: This Premier's gravy train never shuts down because he has no problem providing millions of dollars for his staff and his insiders.

We know where their priorities are. It's not in making Ontarians have public services they can rely on. It's not ensuring that they can get to work on time. It's making sure that cheques get cleared on time.

Under this government, we have seen massive delays to the subway, bus services cut, fare increases and the Scarborough RT derailed. Through you, Mr. Speaker: Will the Premier commit to funding the operations of the TTC so it runs on time, or will he continue to let Toronto transit riders down?

**Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam:** Let's talk about priorities and what is happening under this government. Under this government we are cleaning up the mess—the 30 years of inaction, and in the last 15 years, the Liberals did nothing.

In Scarborough, we are building the Scarborough subway extension. We are building a brand new hospital in Scarborough. They voted against it. We are building the first-ever medical school in Scarborough after 1983, and the Liberals chose to vote against it.

We won't take lessons from the Liberals or the NDP, who did nothing for Ontario. Twelve years ago, they decided to shut down the Northlander. Guess what? Under this government, under this Premier's leadership, we are bringing back the Northlander—

*Interjections.*

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

Start the clock. The next question.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Before I ask my question, I just want to say to the Minister of Energy: Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

My question is for the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development. All that the federal Liberal carbon tax is doing is making it harder—and taking money out of people's pocketbooks.

In northern Ontario, the economic challenges are getting harder in every community. At the gas pump alone, this is a punitive tax that's hitting everyone. Communities across northern Ontario continue to face more and more challenges that way. The cost of transporting goods is already much higher in northern Ontario and these costs are being passed on to the consumer.

But the federal Liberals just are not listening. In fact, they increased the carbon tax last month by 23% and plan to hike it six more times before 2030. That's completely unacceptable.

Speaker, could the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development please tell the House how this carbon tax adversely affects the people of northern Ontario?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** I want to thank the member from Peterborough–Kawartha for his great question. We think

it's a great policy objective of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, as its chair, to support community enhancement programs. This program is focused on places like the South Porcupine arena, where we're supporting refrigeration equipment—compressors, condensers and dehumidifiers—to become more energy efficient and drive down costs; Pointe au Baril's community centre, increasing their energy efficiency; and the Wharncliffe local services board, energy efficiencies for their fire hall and community hall—all good things to do for our buildings that mean so much to our communities in northern Ontario.

1130

What they can't handle is the crushing cost of the carbon tax. As the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry might say, a fully integrated tax chain on everything, including the construction and implementation of these energy-efficient—

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

Supplementary?

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Thank you to the minister for his response. The reality is the carbon tax does not lower a single emission. It's a useless tax that just makes it harder on families and businesses. It's shameful that the federal government continues to force people in the north to pay more for their daily necessities. It's fine for the Liberal elites in southern Ontario to say, "Just use public transit," but Speaker, how does somebody in Whitefish Bay, Elizabeth or Emo hop on a subway? The federal Liberals must learn to respect northern communities and finally scrap this punitive tax.

Speaker, can the minister further elaborate on the detrimental effects the carbon tax is having on communities all across northern Ontario?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** The lineage of this carbon tax is well documented. It actually predates Justin Trudeau. It was Stéphane Dion who tried to introduce it and Canadians said no. But he couldn't hold back. When he became Prime Minister, he brought in the carbon tax. So this is all en famille. One of the biggest supporters was Bonnie Crombie, who has now rightly lived up to the appellative term "queen of the carbon tax"—no surprise, from a party that referred to northern Ontario as a wasteland.

I referenced some projects in the previous answer, and the point here is that no government should be in the business of picking and choosing the kinds of energy efficiencies or the sources of heat and hydro in different regions across Canada. The goal here is to scrap the tax, let jurisdictions make good policy decisions on how we can reduce GHG emissions and have more energy efficiency and maintain the assets—

*Interjections.*

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

The next question.

## TENANT PROTECTION

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Erwin Long lived at 73 Cartwright Street in London for five years until a company bought his home. After the sale, he was given two weeks to move out. When he couldn't find a new home, the landlord changed the locks, boarded up the windows and forced Erwin into homelessness. He slept in a parking lot. Despite the Landlord and Tenant Board ordering the landlord to pay \$6,700 for the illegal eviction, Erwin has never been compensated and he's never been able to return to his home.

Ontario's eviction laws are weak enough; without enforcement, they are useless. Renters want to know: When will this government begin to enforce its own eviction laws?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Attorney General.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** I appreciate the question. We have a robust set of rules that are independent and available to both landlords and to tenants. The member opposite has highlighted an example where the Landlord and Tenant Board had a hearing, had a result, and there are remedies. So I would advise the member opposite to work with their constituent to work within those rules that are independent and not to be meddled with by the government, and I'm sure they will have a proper result.

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'm concerned that the Attorney General didn't even listen to the question. The individual has not been able to get the money that he is owed because the LTB is not enforcing its own rules and decisions.

Today, Erwin's home at 73 Cartwright Street has been renovated and listed on Airbnb for \$110 per night, plus taxes and fees. I don't believe—we don't believe—investors like Erwin's landlord should be kicking out tenants and converting properties into pricey, short-term rentals. It is contributing to Ontario's housing shortage and driving up the rate of illegal evictions.

My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: Will this minister crack down on short-term rentals and investment properties, so that these homes can be returned to the long-term rental market?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** I assure you, I was listening to the question very intently, Mr. Speaker.

The Landlord and Tenant Board is issuing orders within 30 days 90% of the time at this point, so they are in fact doing their job on that end.

Maybe the member misunderstands that the Landlord and Tenant Board is not an enforcement agency; it's a tribunal that has independent hearings and then issues orders.

I'd be happy to engage with the member opposite to help educate her office on how the Landlord and Tenant Board works, but other than that, I don't know what else I can do for her.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** My question is for the Associate Minister of Small Business. Small businesses in my riding of Oakville are concerned about the negative impacts of the carbon tax on their operations, and they're worried, indeed, about their very survival. It's forcing entrepreneurs to pay increased costs that they cannot afford, especially during these difficult inflationary times. Our small business owners do not support these counter-productive tax measures.

Unlike the NDP and Liberals, our government understands the financial burden that the carbon tax places on businesses. That's why, under the leadership of Premier Ford, we are reducing costs for families and businesses.

Can the associate minister please explain how our government's pro-business approach ensures Ontario's small businesses are saving money despite the burdensome carbon tax?

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** Thank you to the great member from Oakville for his question.

While the federal Liberal government remains fixated on more taxes that punish hard-working Ontarians and businesses, under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government is getting it done for businesses and the families and communities that rely on them. Unlike the Liberals, we understand that more taxes and red tape strangle economic growth and job creation.

That's why we've launched meaningful initiatives to reduce costs and cut red tape for entrepreneurs and businesses right across our province. We've cut business education tax rates and reduced electricity costs. We've reduced WSIB premium rates without reducing benefits. We are directly tackling the payroll expenses that weigh on our job creators.

Speaker, while Bonnie Crombie and the Liberals believe businesses are better off with more taxes, we're doing all we can to deliver fewer costs and more benefits; it's time for the Liberals to do the same. Tell Ottawa to scrap the tax now.

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

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** I really appreciate the answer from the Associate Minister of Small Business. She certainly understands small business, unlike the members opposite in the Liberal Party.

Unlike the members of the Liberal Party in this Legislature, we here believe that Ontario families and small businesses are not better off with a carbon tax. They're not better off with increased operating costs, making it harder for them to stay afloat. They're not better off with increased gas prices, making it harder for consumers to come out and support them. And they're not better off being forced to pay the most in carbon taxes while they haven't seen a dollar in promised rebates.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy here in Ontario. I don't know why the members of the Liberal Party and Bonnie Crombie do not understand that.

Speaker, through you: Can the associate minister please tell the House how our government is working to offset the negative impacts of the carbon tax on small businesses right here in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** Thank you again to the great member for his question.

Speaker, I couldn't agree more. It's tone-deaf for the Ontario Liberals to say that small businesses across Ontario are better off under the federal government's punitive carbon tax.

The NDP and the Liberals don't hear when small businesses in their own ridings are being crushed under the weight of higher carbon taxes, but maybe they'll open their ears after taking two losses back to back in Milton and Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. Those wins are a resounding vote of confidence for our Premier and our government's plan to continue getting it done for the people of this province.

Ontario's job creators do not want another tax. They want an affordable entrepreneurial landscape that allows them to invest, grow and create opportunities.

That's precisely what our government is delivering through our strong economic plan for a stronger province.

But do you know what? It's not too late. Call the feds. Tell them to scrap the tax now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our question period for this morning.

I have now three members that want to raise points of order, they have informed me.

## MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll go first to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I just want to wish the great member from Ajax and my great colleague a very happy birthday.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Next, I'll recognize the member for Toronto Centre on a point of order.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I'd like to welcome to the chamber a number of visitors who are here. Some of them have travelled great distances, including: Cait Alexander, who flew in from Los Angeles—and today is her birthday—she is here to support Lydia's Law; Brian T. Sweeny, Dan Jennings and Michelle Jennings, who are parents of women who were killed due to gender-based violence; as well Vanshika Dhawan and Ivanna Iwasykiw, who are lawyers from Gluckstein Lawyers; and Sara Casselman, the executive director of the Waterloo region sexual assault centre.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm recognizing now the Minister of Education on a point of order.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I want to welcome Alvin Mason, who is with us this morning. At 90 years young, Alvin is one of the—if not the—eldest Ontarian we know with an active skilled trades licence, starting back in 1958, proudly

from the riding of King–Vaughan. Welcome to yourself, as well as your amazing son and your grandson, Perry, who is with us. Thank you for being with us. Welcome to the Legislature.

#### MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** We also have a birthday on this side of the House. We would like to congratulate the terrific member for Toronto–St. Paul's on her birthday today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Are there any more pleasant points of order that aren't officially points of order?

Okay. We'll move on.

#### DEFERRED VOTES

##### KEEPING ENERGY COSTS DOWN ACT, 2024

##### LOI DE 2024 VISANT À MAINTENIR LA FACTURE ÉNERGÉTIQUE À UN NIVEAU ABORDABLE

Deferred vote on the motion that the question now be put on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 165, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 respecting certain Board proceedings and related matters / Projet de loi 165, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario en ce qui concerne certaines instances dont la Commission est saisie et des questions connexes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1142 to 1147.*

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

On May 7, 2024, Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, moved third reading of Bill 165, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 respecting certain Board proceedings and related matters.

On May 14, 2024, Mr. Dowie moved that the question be now put.

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

#### Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Hogarth, Christine	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Sabawy, Sheref
Byers, Rick	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Jordan, John	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kanapathi, Logan	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Ke, Vincent	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, David
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Graydon

Dixon, Jess	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Laura
Dowie, Andrew	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd
Downey, Doug	McCarthy, Todd J.	Surma, Kinga
Dunlop, Jill	McGregor, Graham	Tangri, Nina
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Flack, Rob	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Parsa, Michael	Williams, Charmaine A.
Ghamari, Goldie	Pirie, George	Yakubski, John
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Quinn, Nolan	

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

#### Nays

Andrew, Jill	Harden, Joel	Schreiner, Mike
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hazell, Andrea	Shamji, Adil
Bell, Jessica	Hsu, Ted	Shaw, Sandy
Blais, Stephen	Karpoche, Bhutila	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Bowman, Stephanie	Mamakwa, Sol	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Clancy, Aislinn	McCrimmon, Karen	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day):** The ayes are 62; the nays are 35.

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

Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, has moved third reading of Bill 165, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 respecting certain Board proceedings and related matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*The division bells rang from 1151 to 1152.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** On May 7, 2024, Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, moved third reading of Bill 165, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 respecting certain Board proceedings and related matters.

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

#### Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Hogarth, Christine	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Sabawy, Sheref
Byers, Rick	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Jordan, John	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kanapathi, Logan	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Ke, Vincent	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, David
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Graydon
Dixon, Jess	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Laura
Dowie, Andrew	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd
Downey, Doug	McCarthy, Todd J.	Surma, Kinga



Dunlop, Jill	McGregor, Graham	Tangri, Nina
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Flack, Rob	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Parsa, Michael	Williams, Charmaine A.
Ghamari, Goldie	Pirie, George	Yakabuski, John
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Quinn, Nolan	

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

#### Nays

Andrew, Jill	Hazell, Andrea	Shamji, Adil
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hsu, Ted	Shaw, Sandy
Bell, Jessica	Karpoche, Bhutla	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgoin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Bowman, Stephanie	Mamakwa, Sol	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Clancy, Aislinn	McCrimmon, Karen	Vanhof, John
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy	
Harden, Joel	Schreiner, Mike	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day):** The yeas are 62; the nays are 34.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

*Third reading agreed to.*

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

*The House recessed from 1156 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It gives me great pleasure to welcome people from Durham, including Kris Kennedy as well as Dawn McNab, who are the co-chairs of the Save the Durham Hospital Committee. Thank you for being at Queen's Park and thank you for fighting to keep Durham hospital open.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

JUSTICE FOR SOLI ACT  
(STOP CRIMINALIZING MENTAL  
HEALTH), 2024

LOI DE 2024 EXIGEANT  
LA JUSTICE POUR SOLI (ARRÊTER  
LA CRIMINALISATION DES PROBLÈMES  
DE SANTÉ MENTALE)

MPP Wong-Tam moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 196, An Act respecting the use of correctional facilities and mental health crises / Projet de loi 196, Loi concernant l'utilisation des établissements correctionnels et le traitement des crises de santé mentale.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'd like to invite the member to briefly explain their bill.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** This bill aligns with the first recommendation made by the Ontario chief coroner's inquest into the death of Mr. Soleiman Faqiri. The inquest report offers 57 recommendations to the provincial government to improve mental health services in the criminal justice system.

Mr. Soleiman Faqiri was a man with schizoaffective disorder who was subjected to restraints, pepper spray and isolation while in prison, which ultimately led to his death. During this time in correctional facilities, he was awaiting a medical evaluation. He was not able to see a psychiatrist or have access to hospital resources, despite experiencing an acute mental health crisis. This inquest deemed his tragic and preventable death a homicide.

## PETITIONS

### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank the hundreds and thousands of people from Durham who have signed this petition to try to keep their hospital open.

What happened, Speaker, is that the hospital in charge of the Durham hospital—it's in charge of four different hospitals—has decided to, first, move all of the in-patient beds out of the hospital. The hospital in Durham used to have 24/7 emergency care; they're now reduced to 10 hours a day, seven days a week of urgent care. We have seen this before.

The good people of Durham are here today. Many of them are part of a vulnerable population. They are at least 30 kilometres away from the nearest other rural hospital. This hospital has been there for over 100 years, and they want it to continue to be there. They want to have equitable access to our health care system.

We know that medicare consists of hospital services and physician services. Those services are offered to us for free. If the hospital in Durham is no longer there, it will mean longer transportation time to a hospital further away.

The people of Durham want to be able to speak to the Minister of Health, want to be able to speak to the Premier, so that they fully understand that they need to keep their hospital open.

I support this petition, Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask page Sophie to bring it to the Clerk.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll remind the members of the new standing order 42(b), which requests that the contents of the petition be summarized briefly.

## HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** I may need more than one page for this one.

In April, the residents of Durham were notified that their in-patient beds at Durham hospital would be eliminated, in the wake of their 24/7 emergency department being reduced to essentially bankers' hours. So they've put together this petition that has amassed over 3,700 signatures in less than 48 hours.

It calls for the following things: Number one, it orders the South Bruce Grey Health Centre to stop any and all action against the Durham hospital immediately and reverse their decisions. It asks for them to release any and all business analyses, financial projections and health care staffing data that have been used to justify the changes to the clinical services being provided at Durham hospital. And then, finally, it calls on the government to fully and urgently implement all recommendations from Auditor General of Ontario reports on hospitals in northern Ontario and on emergency departments.

I fully and wholeheartedly agree with and endorse this petition, and I'm thrilled to pass it over to page Soyul.

## NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** This petition is entitled "Let's Fix the Northern Health Travel Grant." I will say that there have been improvements to the Northern Health Travel Grant, but there are also some gaps, and these petitions address those gaps.

The mileage fee is still at 41 cents, whereas our mileage fee as MPPs is around 60 cents a kilometre, so I think that needs to be changed. Also, the rates for hotels are far below what it actually costs, so people who are using the Northern Health Travel Grant are still going to be out of pocket.

For that reason, I support this petition and I will give it to Kai.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I just want to thank my constituent Judy Noonan, who brought this petition last week when they came to Queen's Park for Community Living Day.

The petition notes that social assistance rates in Ontario are far below the rising cost of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and \$1,308 for those on ODSP. It also notes that the CERB provided \$2,000 a month. So the petition calls on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to double social assistance rates for Ontario Works and Ontario disability support payments.

I fully support this petition, will sign it and ask the page to bring it to the table.

## TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr. Chris Glover:** This petition is entitled "Bring Back Rent Control." It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

It notes that the Ford government cancelled rent control on units built after November 2018. And the cost of housing in Ontario, both of renting and buying, has never been higher, and it's causing many people hardships. There are 50,000 people a year who leave the province of Ontario, largely because they cannot afford housing. People are being forced to leave their communities.

**1510**

The ask here is for the Legislative Assembly to protect tenants from predatory rent increases and pass the NDP Rent Control for All Tenants Act today to ensure that renters can live in safe and affordable housing.

I fully support this petition. I will pass it to page Diya to take to the table.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. John Fraser:** I have a petition here that speaks about support for access to spine care in Ontario. To summarize it, if you have a complex spinal condition, your access to surgery is hampered simply because of the OHIP fee schedule and the way that the funding formula works for surgeries. So people aren't getting access to critical care that they need, and it's causing a lot of suffering.

What they're asking the government to do is to simply take a look at how they can fund complex spine surgeries in a fair way, compensate surgeons fairly, and ensure that anyone who needs this service gets access to it.

I agree with this petition, and I'm going to give it to page Soyul.

## POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition entitled "Stop Bill 166." This is legislation, of course, that was passed yesterday in this Legislature, despite the opposition of the official opposition. The reason we opposed that bill is set out in this petition. It's because it directs anti-racism and mental health work on campuses without the involvement of those who have expertise in this area, at a time when there have been significant cuts to community mental health services and, also, an effective dismantling of the Anti-Racism Directorate.

It also notes that our post-secondary institutions are facing a very serious fiscal crisis, and the inadequacy of the government's funding for post-secondary education is going to mean cuts to staff who work in mental health and anti-racism services on campus. The petition raises concerns about the political interference in university research and education in Ontario through Bill 166, and notes that the protection of universities from political interference is lauded as a cornerstone of democracy and, therefore, calls on the government to not move ahead with Bill 166.

I fully support this petition, affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Harry.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm glad to present this petition to support access to spine care in Ontario. There are many people suffering from complex spinal problems that require spinal surgery, including things like scoliosis, that could be debilitating for people. We have surgeons that have the skill, that have the knowledge to do those surgeries, but they face many barriers. The biggest one is that they cannot get access to our operating rooms in our different hospitals because of how the hospital is compensated: paid by procedure. Surgeries take precedence because they bring more money to our hospitals that are always stretched for dollars.

Some of those people, including children, have been waiting for years to have those surgeries. This is not fair. They deserve equitable access. So I support them in their call for this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Rhys to bring it to the Clerk.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Chris Glover:** This one is a petition entitled "To Raise Social Assistance Rates." It points out the Market Basket Measure poverty line and the OW, Ontario Works, rates are far, far apart. The Ontario Works rate is \$733 a month, and no one in this province can possibly survive on \$733 a month. You cannot even rent a room for \$733 a month. ODSP is just over \$1,300 a month. Again, you cannot survive on that. And so there's been an open letter to the Premier and to cabinet ministers, with signatures of 230 organizations that are asking that the OW and ODSP rates be doubled. There have been some small increases, but they do not even keep up with the rate of inflation since this government took power in 2018. In fact, the rate of inflation has been 17% since this government took power and the increase in ODSP rates has been only 5%.

They're asking for a doubling of this—of basic survival. Basic income set with CERB was \$2,000 a month. They're asking for an immediate doubling of social assistance rates to end the destitution of people living on Ontario Works and ODSP.

I fully endorse this petition and will pass it to page Sophie to take to the table.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Sandra and Brian Smith from Woodstock for gathering these petitions. The petition is about the cost of surgeries in private clinics.

More and more data are showing us that although the government pays for those surgeries, they pay more if it's done in a private clinic. Plus, many private clinics will have add-ons where people need to pay thousands of dollars to gain access to those surgeries. They also show that other jurisdictions that have introduced private clinics

for routine surgery did not decrease the backlog in hospitals—that Ontario hospitals have many operating rooms sitting empty that could do those surgeries if the money was to flow to our hospitals rather than to the private clinics. So they petition the government to make sure that all medically necessary surgeries are allocated exclusively to public hospitals.

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Charlise to bring it to the Clerk.

#### SCHOOL SAFETY

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition entitled "Keep Classrooms Safe for Students and Staff." It's a particularly timely petition, in light of the ETFO survey results that were released yesterday about the number of violent incidents in schools.

This petition notes that the pressure placed on our education system has led to a dramatic increase in reports of violence in our schools, as well as an increase in the severity of the violent incidents. The petition recommends that classroom sizes be reduced, that additional supports be funded for schools, including mental health resources. It calls for an end to violence against education workers, teachers and EAs and other education staff. It calls for improved workplace reporting and more support staff.

Those are the kinds of measures that would be needed to address violence in our schools. Those are measures I fully support, and I will affix my signature and send the petition to the table with page Harry again.

#### AMYLOIDOSIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Jennifer Enright and Jim McWhinnie for these petitions.

The petition is about improving the care for people with amyloidosis. This is a disease that affects many people in Ontario. It is an incurable disease, but there are new treatments that are finally available to help people who suffer with that disease.

They ask for the Legislative Assembly to make sure that Ontario follows suit with other provinces: to make the diagnosis more seamless and make the treatments that are available also available to people who live in Ontario. They would like March to be recognized as an awareness month for amyloidosis, so that more people know about it and receive the treatment that they need.

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask my good page Charlise to bring it to the Clerk.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnett):** That concludes the time we have available for petitions this afternoon.

1520

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Point of order?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnett):** Point of order, the member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I called page Rhys by a wrong name, so I wanted to apologize to him.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BUILDING A BETTER ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2024

#### LOI DE 2024 VISANT À BÂTIR UN ONTARIO MEILLEUR (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 15, 2024, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 180, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 180, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

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

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** I will be sharing my time this afternoon with the member from Mississauga Centre.

Monsieur le Président, en tant que présidente du Conseil du Trésor, c'est un privilège de prendre la parole aujourd'hui dans le cadre de la troisième lecture de la Loi de 2024 visant à bâtir un Ontario meilleur (mesures budgétaires).

But before I begin, I'd like to acknowledge two bright young Ontarians, Colby Farrell and Noah Loreto, who are present with us today. Colby and Noah have joined my office as summer interns and I am delighted to welcome them to this third reading.

Speaker, members have already heard how this budget will deliver on our government's plan to build.

Je tiens aujourd'hui à rappeler les actions concrètes et les mesures prudentes mises en oeuvre par le gouvernement pour bâtir une meilleure province.

First, no budget is delivered overnight. This is why it's necessary to briefly outline the conditions, the context, that helps shape our plan.

Monsieur le Président, l'Ontario n'est pas à l'abri des soubresauts économiques mondiaux.

The province continues to deal with the very real ramifications of considerable inflation, global instability and high interest rates.

Il ne s'agit pas là de simples problèmes d'ordre macro-économique. Nous parlons ici de véritables problèmes qui ont une incidence sur la vie quotidienne des Ontariennes et des Ontariens qui travaillent dur, and these are challenges that must be addressed directly by the government in its fiscal planning.

C'est pourquoi je me réjouis que, dans ces circonstances, le gouvernement tienne son engagement de continuer à bâtir pour l'avenir.

Speaker, now is the time to meet these economic challenges head-on: actions such as targeted investments to build more homes to accommodate our growing popu-

lation; actions like attracting good-paying jobs in growth industries; and actions like making sure that there is more money in Ontarians' pockets by keeping costs down for families.

Le budget de cette année est soigneusement équilibré.

It calls for significant investments in infrastructure without raising taxes. It includes investments in new highways and roads like the Bradford Bypass, which the great people of my riding of York-Simcoe have been asking for for almost 50 years.

Speaker, our budget goes beyond roads and highways. It also represents the largest public transit expansion in North America, all without increasing taxes. And why are we doing that? Because in these challenging times, it would be unfair to impose additional burden on the people of this province.

Le gouvernement a le devoir de présenter aux familles un plan responsable, transparent et rationnel pour l'avenir. C'est ce que fait le budget de 2024.

It adopts a long-term perspective on our future.

Il tient compte du fait que la population ontarienne devrait enregistrer une nette croissance au cours de la prochaine génération.

Of course, this is a great compliment to the place that we all call home. I believe, Speaker, that it can also be seen as a vote of confidence about where this province is headed. But the expected increase in population is not without its own challenges. It means that the status quo just won't cut it.

L'Ontario a besoin de plus de logements, de meilleurs moyens de transport en commun, d'infrastructures municipales améliorées, ainsi que de services efficaces dans les domaines de l'éducation et de la santé.

Ontario needs to provide for all of its people, today and tomorrow. There's a great deal to cover in this budget, so I will not be exhaustive, but I would like to point out a few highlights.

Tout d'abord, le gouvernement investira plus de 190 milliards de dollars au cours des 10 prochaines années pour construire des infrastructures essentielles, comme celles servant pour le transport en commun, l'élargissement des routes ainsi que l'amélioration de la couverture des services Internet haute vitesse.

There is \$1 billion of investment in the new Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program. This funding will help municipalities get shovels in the ground on critical infrastructure that is so needed to increase housing stock across the province. Cities and towns have been asking for this funding to unlock more housing. Our government listened. As well, the budget calls for an investment of \$825 million in municipal water infrastructure projects.

Le budget comprend également les premiers investissements dans le Fonds pour l'accélération de la construction. Ce nouveau programme triennal de 1,2 milliard de dollars comprend un nouveau soutien financier majeur accordé en fonction des résultats qui sont obtenus par rapport aux objectifs provinciaux établis en matière de logement.

Speaker, this new fund will ensure that more municipalities have the tools they need to build homes faster, to

help alleviate the affordability crisis in housing across our province.

Monsieur le Président, l'accent mis sur les transports est un autre pilier essentiel de ce budget.

Gridlock costs this province every single day of the year. People need to spend more time at their destinations and less time in their cars. That's why the government is making significant investments in projects like the Bradford Bypass and the new Highway 413. As well, the government is expanding existing highways, like Highway 7 and Highway 401.

But it's not just about car traffic. The budget also calls for significant improvements in GO train and GO bus services to create cohesive and comprehensive transit across the province, and includes the long-overdue restoration of passenger rail service to northern Ontario.

La concrétisation de cet investissement représente la plus importante expansion du transport en commun en Amérique du Nord.

Speaker, I mentioned how the budget will also keep costs down and keep more money in the pockets of Ontarians. I'd like to highlight a few initiatives that will do just that.

À travers tout cela, le gouvernement maintient son engagement d'accompagner les collectivités les plus vulnérables de l'Ontario.

This includes our low-income seniors, those of us living with addiction and mental health challenges and the many who are dealing with inconsistent housing.

The budget also highlights changes in the Ontario Electricity Support Program that will make electricity more affordable for thousands of low-income families. As well, the government has already proposed the extension of the existing gasoline and fuel tax rate cuts until December 21 of this year. That's 10 cents off at the pumps, Mr. Speaker. This will put more money in the pockets of drivers at a time when they need it most.

With this aim in mind, the government is proposing to freeze fees on drivers' licences and ban any new tolls on new and existing provincial highways.

Monsieur le Président, les économies réalisées grâce à ces initiatives sont à 66 millions de dollars au cours des cinq prochaines années. Nous faisons ainsi économiser de l'argent aux familles.

In closing, I'd like to emphasize that this budget is a great example of the balanced, responsible and careful approach that our government is taking as we look towards the future.

Le gouvernement procède à des investissements judicieux dans le logement et l'infrastructure, pour soutenir une province qui est en pleine croissance. De plus en plus de gens élisent domicile ici en Ontario.

1530

At the same time, the government is protecting the most vulnerable amongst us and keeping costs down despite economic pressures.

Le gouvernement a mis de l'avant un plan robuste—a plan that supports the contention that Ontario is the best

place to raise a family, the best place to work and the best place to live.

Thank you for the time today, Speaker.

I respectfully ask that all members support the Building a Better Ontario Act, 2024.

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

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** I am so proud to rise today to speak to our government's 2024 budget, Building a Better Ontario, which funds programs and projects that will no doubt meet the needs of hard-working Ontarians during this time of global instability.

Before I begin, I want to acknowledge that we are celebrating PSW Week in Ontario. So to all of our wonderful PSWs working across different health sectors, but especially in long-term care, thank you for your contributions—and a very happy PSW Week in Ontario.

Madam Speaker, make no mistake, this budget is an investment into our children, parents and grandparents. It uses a proactive approach to tackle the ever-changing challenges Ontarians face.

I want to reflect on the Minister of Finance's words on budget day—how his father bravely immigrated to Ontario from war-torn Europe, never to see his parents again; how through his hard work and the privileges afforded to him in this great province, he achieved his dreams of going to university, marrying the woman of his dreams and raising three children. And Madam Speaker, I can attest that at least one of those three children turned out pretty well. Wouldn't you agree?

When I moved to this country at the age of 12, I could not have achieved my dreams if I wasn't afforded the same opportunities as everyone else—if I didn't have access to world-class primary, secondary and post-secondary education. My home country was under an authoritarian regime up until 35 years ago, where people were not guaranteed their freedoms.

Let's not forget and let's appreciate that we live in a country with a Charter of Rights and Freedoms that allows us to pursue our dreams, speak freely and worship as we choose.

In the same way the minister spoke fondly of his father achieving the Ontario dream, I can say the same for my mother, my brother and myself.

Madam Speaker, this budget is for the 16 million Ontarians who have their unique hopes and dreams, who proudly call this province home and want to live, work and play and raise a family in our great province of Ontario.

Speaker, let's not forget that over 80,000 residents in Ontario live in a long-term-care home. Just like a house, a condo or an apartment is a home, so is a long-term-care home, where residents live out the last precious years of their lives.

Just two weeks ago, I attended a gala held by Copernicus Lodge, a non-profit long-term-care home that was founded 45 years ago to serve Toronto's Polish community. Having known this home and their staff for many, many years, I can attest that the lodge provides a loving home to their many residents, using a holistic and

resident-focused approach in their work. And they don't just provide regular programming for residents but also cultural programming for the Polish residents, including those who are World War II veterans.

That being said, it is only right that we invest in these homes, ensuring that the Ontarians who need them have access to a safe, modern, state-of-the-art, comfortable place to call home.

Thankfully, our government has made groundbreaking investments and improvements to our long-term-care sector since forming government, and this budget had even more wonderful news.

Madam Speaker, Mahatma Gandhi once said the true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable persons.

Our elders cared for us, so it is only proper that we take care of them.

Caring for our most vulnerable seniors, including those with dementia, is why I tabled my private member's bill, with the member for Thornhill, to reform our government's approach to dementia care. Right now, 250,000 Ontarians are living with dementia or Alzheimer's disease, and that number is expected to triple by 2050. Caring for this community requires our utmost attention, so I was glad to hear that we are investing \$46 million into not only the continued operation of 59 behavioural support units but also to have 200 more total BSU beds across the province so we can provide care to our beloved seniors with complex needs. It's the right move for our province, which is predicted to see a huge spike in our senior population, the "silver wave," as my colleague across likes to call it.

There's a report that shows a 23% increase in our over-65 population by 2029. Speaker, we know that many Ontario residents are waiting to be placed in a long-term-care home and, rest assured, our budget is addressing that need. We are making progress on our goal to build 58,000 new and upgraded beds by 2028 and already have 18,000 that are either open, under construction or have approval to start construction.

As of now, we succeeded in building 4,500 new and upgraded beds. This is fantastic news for Ontario families with loved ones expected to be placed into a home. With more beds, we will be able to serve the needs of vulnerable seniors in our province.

Sur les 110 foyers en cours de développement, 12 prévoient d'offrir des programmes et des services culturels et linguistiques à la population francophone de l'Ontario. Le fait que notre gouvernement donne aux opérateurs nouveaux et existants les moyens d'établir des foyers francophones est vraiment louable, car cela répond aux besoins de la riche diversité de la population de l'Ontario.

Dans toute la province, nous avons des foyers qui accueillent les résidents dans de nombreuses langues différentes, y compris Ivan Franko, qui dessert la communauté ukrainienne locale.

This budget is providing \$155 million to increase the construction funding subsidy top-up, supporting the cost of developing or redeveloping a long-term-care home.

Eligible projects will receive an additional construction funding subsidy of up to \$35 per bed per day for 25 years. And we want to support our newly built and existing homes so they can operate without issue, which is why we are responding to higher costs in the sector by increasing operating funding to support the financial stability of these homes.

And I want to mention one more home. Through the incredible work of our government's Accelerated Build Pilot Program, we were able to create over 600 new beds with the opening of Wellbrook Place, a new state-of-the-art long-term-care home in Mississauga. This six-storey facility took only two and a half years to build. Speaker, that is a remarkable accomplishment and a testament to our government's ability to build more homes for those in need of them.

C'est pourquoi ce budget prévoit 4,9 milliards de dollars pour embaucher et maintenir en poste 27 000 personnes dans le secteur des soins de longue durée, ainsi que 100 millions de dollars pour former des préposés de soutien à la personne et des infirmières dans le cadre du programme PREP LTC. Ce programme attribue des stages cliniques aux étudiants, ce qui leur permet de recevoir une formation pratique adéquate.

And that's not the only program; we also have the BEGIN initiative, which our budget is investing \$100 million into, which provides tuition grants for nursing students with the aim of adding 2,000 more nurses to our long-term-care sector by 2025. Speaker, just last week, our government announced \$4.1 million towards GeriMedRisk, a program that makes it easier and faster for seniors living with complex needs like dementia to access coordinated care and get connected to geriatric specialists and pharmacists. This helps our seniors avoid unnecessary trips to the emergency room and allows them to stay at home to better manage their health.

Speaker, the members opposite who accuse us of mismanaging health care and mismanaging long-term care, I ask them: Look at the evidence. It is our investments that are supporting our seniors. It is our investments that are supporting and growing our long-term-care sector and it can only be achieved through budget 2024.

**1540**

On a personal note, I just want to conclude by saying that I feel it's a privilege of a lifetime to be working together with the Minister of Long-Term Care and the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. We are all immigrants to this country, and I do believe that it is very, very inspiring that it is in our mandate to be travelling across the province, building modern, state-of-the-art long-term-care homes where seniors who have spent their entire lives building the province can live out the last days of their lives in beautiful, modern, welcoming homes. Because, Madam Speaker, they are truly homes.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It is now time for questions and answers.

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** It's always a pleasure to be able to rise and ask questions of my colleagues across

the way. I listened to your presentation—both presentations, actually—this afternoon.

I guess my question is, in a time when rich, well-connected people in Ontario are benefiting from this government and the working family continues to struggle, how can the government defend a budget that fails to address the soaring costs of living and their duty to build affordable housing, which even our federal counterparts are pointing out Ontario is desperately failing at, and which is affecting real people in all of our communities, especially across Niagara?

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** I'm very happy to answer this question. I think there is no other government in the history of this province that has taken more action and more measures to make sure that life is affordable for Ontarians. Whether it is getting rid of the licence sticker fees, getting rid of tolls, keeping the gas tax frozen—not increasing it—we have taken concrete measures to ensure that Ontarians keep more money in their pockets.

Another great example, which my residents in Mississauga are truly benefiting from, is One Fare, which is saving \$1,600 for commuters who often commute from Mississauga to Toronto and back.

I'm not sure what the member opposite is talking about, but this is the government that truly understands the affordability crisis in Ontario.

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

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** Great presentation from the member for Mississauga Centre. I've had a lot of constituents in my riding reach out to me, concerned about the rising crime, auto thefts. I've seen it in my own neighbourhoods. People are actually scared to walk in the streets and to leave their kids at home at night because there have been many, many break and enters. There's a WhatsApp group that was formed and it literally went from zero to 1,000 people in 24 hours. There is no doubt, unfortunately, that there is a growing crime problem.

The federal government controls the Criminal Code, so we're not able to have any say in that, beyond obviously talking with and suggesting to the federal government that they do make changes. I wondered if you could add your voice to what is being done by the provincial government in this budget to fight crime.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Thank you so much for that question. The member is correct in stating that crime is on the rise. When I first moved to Mississauga, 20 years ago, it was quite rare for me to receive an alert that there is, for example, an active shooter situation. But now, on quite a regular basis, I hear from constituents who are getting their doors kicked in and who are experiencing home invasions as well as car theft.

Our Solicitor General has made so many investments into our men and women in uniform, like in Peel, where last year we were together for a major announcement on investing in Peel police to ensure that our men and women in uniform have all the tools they need to fight crime.

Also, recently, our Minister of Transportation made another announcement about how we're going to keep

criminals responsible. If they are charged criminally with an offence of car theft with aggravated factors, they will actually have their licence suspended for 10 years. We're using all the tools in our provincial tool box to make sure criminals are held liable for the crimes they commit.

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

**Mr. Chris Glover:** My question is for the member from Mississauga Centre. You said that the opposition accuses your government of mismanaging health care, yet you claim that you are supporting seniors and that you are doing things so that seniors can live out their lives in "beautiful, modern ... homes." That's a direct quote from you. Yet, in the city of Mississauga, Chartwell is evicting more than 200 seniors from their homes. Chartwell is a for-profit corporation that was heavily subsidized by the former Conservative government and that is heavily subsidized by this Conservative government, and yet they're evicting seniors, so seniors are not able to live out their lives in their homes. In fact, they're being re-evicted so that Chartwell can sell that property to Minto and then Minto can jack up the rents on the property.

So how can the government possibly claim that they are supporting seniors living in their homes when this government is actively subsidizing a corporation that is evicting more than 200 seniors?

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Thank you for that question.

I can assure the member opposite that we're building beds across the province, and that includes several hundred beds in the city of Mississauga. In fact, Wellbrook Place, which I referenced in my speech, has over 600 homes, or 600 beds, for seniors that they can choose—

**Mr. Chris Glover:** That's not a home.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Yes, they are homes—to move in to, and which is more than the Liberal Party built over 15 years. In my city of Mississauga, we have built more beds in two and a half years than the Liberals in 15 years.

We'll continue investing. We'll continue building. Our budget—a \$155-million construction funding subsidy—is another step in the right direction to encourage providers to build more beds and more homes, which is exactly what we need.

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

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** I want to thank the member from Mississauga Centre for her remarks and her most recent comment about public safety. She represents an area that's protected by the Peel police service, a phenomenal police service in Ontario, a flagship service.

In the budget, there was reference to us providing monies for helicopters so that Peel and other GTHA services would have the special aerial support they need to fight crime.

My question to the member is, how important are these investments to making a difference in her own community, to keep Peel safe?

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** That's a great question.

It is also policing week in Ontario, so I do want to wish Peel police and all our wonderful men and women in uniform a very happy policing week in Ontario. As a nurse and a first responder myself, I really appreciate the work and the dedication, the sacrifice that they do every day when they put on that uniform and show up for duty.

The Solicitor General is right: These investments will make a tangible difference in my community of Mississauga Centre to ensure that people feel protected, including my mom. She lives in my riding, and sometimes she calls me at night, scared, because there's something happening in the community.

We need to continue these investments to ensure that our partners in uniform have all the possible tools, including modern helicopters, that they need to ensure that they keep our streets and our communities safe.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have been up in this House many, many times asking for funding for Highway 69. Highway 69 is the only highway that goes from Toronto to Sudbury. It is used by hundreds of trucks every single day. For 68 kilometres on Highway 69, it is not a highway; it is a two-lane road, with very few opportunities to pass—so you go from a four-lane highway that is at 110 kilometres an hour to a two-lane pathway that goes just awful to make it to Sudbury.

I have been in this House for 17 years. Your government has been in power for six years. You are spending billions of dollars on the Bradford Bypass, on Highway 413, on Highway 7, on Highway 401 in southern Ontario. When can we expect a few million dollars out of those billions to four-lane Highway 69?

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Thank you for that question. Madam Speaker, we're investing about \$58 billion into highways, roads and safety expansions. And when it comes to Highway 69, we are widening that highway.

**1550**

There is no other government in the history of this province that has made more investments in transportation. Whether that's roads, highways and bridges and, of course, our transit expansion, whether it's the Hurontario LRT in my community of Mississauga Centre or whether it's Highway 413 that we are building or the Ontario Line, we are making huge investments—huge investments—to ensure that we save commuters time so that people can get home from work and spend more quality time with their families or they can get to work faster, because time is money. Instead of standing in traffic for two hours every day, we could be using that time to make some money.

We'll continue making those investments and this budget is a great testament to that.

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

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm pleased to be able to stand in my place on behalf of the fine folks from Oshawa

and speak on the 2024 budget. This is the supposedly—well, the named Building a Better Ontario Act, and I'm looking forward to sharing some of the perspectives from my community, although, I will say, Speaker, that the community perspectives that I'm sharing are going to sound familiar because we are hearing it from across the province.

Unfortunately, this is a budget that misses the mark. Folks from across the province don't see what it is they need to get by in this budget, and if folks are looking for change, it isn't in this budget. If people are looking for a family doctor, they're not going to be reassured with this government's plan. A young person trying to find affordable housing is going to come up short with this budget. If people are struggling with the cost of living, there isn't anything in this budget for them. Unfortunately, this is a budget that is out of touch, and it would seem that they're out of ideas, doubling down on policies that have been failing people. So I'm glad to be able to rise and point out a few specifics that we would have wished to have seen in this budget.

While I am the member for Oshawa, I am the only non-government provincial member in the Durham region. There are seven MPPs that have been elected to represent the entire Durham region, and I'm the only non-government and that's been true for the 10 years I've been elected. I've always been this little orange island in—for a while it was in a sea of red; now it's in a sea of blue. Regardless, it would seem that I have the only voice that can rise up against the government of the day and perhaps challenge them. I hope that my colleagues from the neighbouring ridings that are government members are indeed advocating in the backrooms or to the Premier, but publicly, I guess it's up to me.

One of the things that I have raised in this House, and we've talked about in our community is the need for investment in health care and the need to invest in the future for access to health care, specifically a hospital in the Durham region. Oshawa would like that hospital to be in Oshawa. Every community wished that it would be chosen and put in their community, but there was a panel and a task force put together by Lakeridge Health and Whitby was the chosen site.

So the Premier of this province had said on our local radio about that hospital in Whitby, "Is it going to be tomorrow? Not tomorrow, but down the road, very shortly, we will be issuing the planning grants. Right now, for a short period, we're not issuing any planning grants, but is Durham right in line for the next go-round? One hundred per cent they are." He had said also, "There's going to be a Whitby hospital."

There isn't any planning grant in this budget. There wasn't in the budget before. The government has said, "Oh, we don't put planning grants in the budget." Well, where the heck do you put them? Put them somewhere. Tell us if that \$3 million, or whatever it is, is coming so that folks in Durham can look to the future and know that at least some of their health care needs will be met. We continue to put this at the feet of the government, that the



people of Durham region need medical investment, need medical care, need a hospital.

But hospitals, Speaker, are under pressure—part of the reason that we are looking to the future and need to see that that is moving ahead. The government is spending \$1 billion less on health care and people are facing longer wait times, ER closures. The galleries were filled today with folks from Durham—not Durham region, Durham. There's another Durham, and they're losing their emergency room. They're losing their hospital. They're here wearing shirts saying, "Save the Durham Hospital." It's a reminder of what the folks from Minden went through. In their yellow shirts, they came here asking that their health care access be saved. It feels like *déjà vu*. It's a year later, and it seems to be following the same script. So I would say that all communities across the province need to brace themselves, because this is not a government investing in a stronger future for health care. They're actually pulling it away. And the folks who came from Durham are probably entering the next chapter of their lives, where they're actually reaching for more health care.

So, Speaker, we're seeing that hospitals are under pressure. Certainly, unfilled nursing vacancies, they've more than doubled since the start of the pandemic. I want to share from ONA. The Ontario Nurses' Association had put out a piece called, "Ford's Budget Promises Cannot Be Trusted to Improve Care in the Public System, Says Ontario Nurses' Association." I will quote from the ONA provincial president, who said, "There are several actions this government could and should have taken to address the health care crisis it has created. Instead, Ontarians will see their taxpayer money flowing to for-profit, private corporations as the public health care system falls further into disrepair." She goes on to say, "This meagre one-year increase does not begin to address Ontario's hospitals' budgets, some of which are using lines of credits to pay off their debts." That is a sad state of affairs, and that's from ONA.

I will continue sharing voice from nurses, from RNAO. They have highlighted that the number of Ontario nursing vacancies unfilled for 90 days or more have more than doubled since the start of the pandemic. This number has remained around 10,000 since the last quarter of 2022. And they have recommendations.

They have said, "To address Ontario's nursing crisis, barriers that stand in the way of retaining and recruiting nurses, and advancing their career pathways, must be removed. This includes action on compensation and workloads. Policymakers must also leverage opportunities to pave the way for a brighter future for nursing in Ontario. This is the only way to emerge from this crisis with a stronger nursing profession and health system." And their specific recommendations, on "Barrier: Compensation," they've said to:

"—increase compensation for Ontario nurses in all roles, domains and sectors so it is competitive with compensation in other jurisdictions, including the US;

"—address pay disparities among nurses working in different sectors, including home care and long-term care, by harmonizing their compensation upwards."

Some of their other recommendations: regarding workloads, "ensure safe and healthy workloads for nurses by increasing nurse staffing and supports all across sectors"; provide mentorship supports; provide leadership training; increase career development opportunities; register internationally educated nurses; increase nursing education seats and funding; expand nursing education pathways; return nurses to the workforce; eliminate racism and discrimination. Those are a whole whack of very clear able-to-be-implemented recommendations. We don't see in this budget what we would want to in terms of funding to be able to act on those recommendations. We should be listening to nurses.

Speaker, I have another article here, from CBC, called "Ontario May Not Meet Long-Term-Care Direct Care Target Due to Staff Shortages." We just talked about the systemic shortage of nurses. But as of this year, there's a need for 13,200 additional nurses and 37,700 PSWs in Ontario, and this is a document, referenced in this article, that was prepared for the long-term care minister. Sharleen Stewart has said, "Every time the government announces that they're going to have all these thousands of new beds, we're sitting on the sidelines, saying, 'Who's going to staff those homes?'" Referring to the PSWs, "Some of them, they don't last six weeks," says Stewart. "A lot of them go in and say the workloads are just too heavy, the conditions are unsafe, and they move on. So we've had reported close to 50% of new hires leave within the first between six months and definitely after a year. So it's a continuous revolving door."

**1600**

This is from a document that the minister has in front of him. The government knows that they're dealing with a shortage. They're getting information. So where do we see in the budget that we can rectify these challenges, that we can address compensation and workload and training for PSWs? We don't see it.

I want to take the opportunity to highlight a success story in our riding. During COVID, a lot of our communities had stories of folks who came up with creative solutions, who rallied to meet a changed need. One of those stories in our community is Mission United, which was housed at the Back Door Mission in downtown Oshawa. This is a partnership across many organizations to support street-involved community members. Especially during COVID it started, but it has continued. It has grown; it has changed; and it's meeting the acute medical needs of those who would otherwise not have access to medical care. It is building relationships with them so that they can perhaps connect with a service partner in the community they otherwise wouldn't have known about.

It is having success; it is also having challenges and struggle. I want to say that when I had flagged this issue, and I've done it a few times because their funding has almost run out now twice—I want to thank the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions that when I

raised this issue, he listened. He acted and actually came at my request to the Back Door Mission, to the Mission United project in Oshawa, saw for himself and also listened to community members, listened to the partners and, I'll even say to his credit, came back another time unannounced so that he could see—just wanted to make sure that it was indeed what they said that they were. The government funded it so it can continue.

Then, we were in the same position again where the funding was about to run out. Again, we got that one-time funding. Remember, this is to meet the medical needs of street-involved community members.

So what I want to say is, after the back and forth and the advocacy and the understanding of the minister, I want to actually say thank you because there is funding now that is not year to year. It still is short term, but it allows us to figure out our next chapter. That's not a small thing, but that is a perfect example of a community that came together and created a solution that the government recognized was a positive thing.

There are positive things happening across communities, and we hope that the government would indeed fund those as they come across them. Recognizing the opportunity to appreciate that, I'm going to say thank you, and I'm going to continue to do the work alongside the partner agencies with Back Door Mission, Mission United, CMHA. I want to thank Dr. Ho, Dr. Meunier. I want to thank Stephanie, the folks at Back Door Mission and the ED and just everyone at CMHA who have been working so hard to help very real people with very real needs.

I'm hoping to be able to continue to work with the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to address the needs that are not being met in our community for youth and youth mental health. I've been reaching out with community partners, and we're hoping that that could be something, maybe in the next budget, to address mental health needs of youth in Oshawa, in our community.

While I'm talking about health care and kids, I had the opportunity to meet with a pediatrician, Karen Mandel, and Maureen Cuddy, who's a neonatal nurse practitioner. They've been doing unbelievable work in our community, and they have put together a proposal, the KidsKare pediatric health team.

There is a very real need. It's strange to imagine that babies aren't getting the health care that they need. They're so vulnerable. They're brand spanking new, and there's no doctor who will take them. Very few doctors will take on newborns. Numbers wise, there aren't enough family doctors, and very few are setting up practice, because they can't make a living. That's another conversation.

What I'll say specifically about this KidsKare pediatric health team—it was an application, a vision for children's care in Durham region. The Ministry of Health had a call for proposals for new models of care—partnership models. They were due in June 2023. We're coming up on a year. Some places have heard that they have received funding; others have heard nothing. We've heard nothing on this particular model. It's a really impressive model. It

has sort of loosely been working out of a pediatric clinic right now, but they're looking for that funding to grow it to serve babies—well child visits, routine visits for health maintenance. It doesn't need to be done by an MD; it could be a nurse practitioner, someone who can teach and care. We've got young parents with a brand new baby who don't know what to do with this child. They're seeing people who, for five or six months, with a new baby, have never seen a doctor. Imagine that for a moment. I have not been a new mom, but all of us can imagine that when you have a brand new baby, you want to ensure you're doing the right thing. But when there aren't doctors, when you cannot have those wellness checks, we're missing a step.

So this is a plan, this was an application that's before the government, and it's just lost. I don't know where it is. They haven't heard anything—it was received, and that's the only thing that they've got. This is a good idea—and if it's not, if the government has a problem with some part of the application, work with them. We have need for babies, newborns, to be receiving medical care. They have got so many cases they've come across, as this pediatric clinic that is lucky enough to have a neonatal nurse practitioner who draws from years of experience, and they're hearing that bad things are happening. So I'm hoping that someone in the ministry is watching this and can find that application and work with them, fund them.

Speaker, I want to talk a bit about homelessness.

Rent is so unbelievably high. In Oshawa, it's really bad—it's bad all over. We are hearing from tenants who cannot find affordable rent.

People who aren't actually legally considered tenants but who are boarders will answer an ad to share a room—or answer an ad for a room in a home for maybe 800 bucks, and they get there and there's another adult on the other side of the room, a stranger they are meant to live with. They're not tenants. They're not protected by the Landlord and Tenant Board, which is not being appropriately funded. The backlog is wild.

We have so many people who are struggling, and we don't see the money in this budget to address our housing challenges. The budget admits it has never been more expensive to own a home. Young families and newcomers have been totally priced out of home ownership. And that's going to continue to rise.

This government is not meeting their own goal of building 1.5 million homes. The government lumped long-term-care-home beds into their overall housing count to bump up the numbers, but even with that, they're still falling short of the target.

The affordable housing commitments are shockingly low. They've just built 8% of the affordable homes that this government said that they'd build back in 2018—the number I have here is 1,187 homes in six years that have been built. That number might be a bit different today, but it's not enough. People don't have places to live.

There's such a struggle for people, also, to have remedy if something goes sideways. I'm hearing from tenants, and I'm hearing from neighbourhood landlords.

Roxy, who I heard from in my riding, has a home that she rents, and she has had a really rocky journey with bad tenants, in this case—has been through the Landlord and Tenant Board. The tribunal has issued the eviction notice. But did you know that in Oshawa we only have one sheriff? So it has taken, my understanding is—not in that case, but in others—four months for that sheriff to be able to go and enforce that eviction. That's a long time for a neighbourhood landlord who's trying to make ends meet and who's also trying to be a part of the solution to housing people—we're talking basements; we're talking a small home. These aren't corporate landlords. These are our neighbours. But nothing is working for anyone with the LTB right now, and that is not okay, and the money is not in this budget to address this, to fix it.

1610

Speaker, it's no surprise to anyone here that I've run out of time. I have so much—I'd like another 20 minutes, if I may, on education. No? Perhaps during the questions and comments, my colleagues would be so kind as to ask me about education, because I have thoughts to share.

Before I wrap up, Speaker, I want to say that this is a budget that missed an opportunity. And the thing is, I do believe the government members read their emails and speak to people in their community, and they know that things are tough for real people, so we would have expected to see some real solutions that will have that impact on people's day-to-day lives. It's missing from this budget, so I'm encouraging the government to do better.

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

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I listened to the member and, like her, I'm interested in our most vulnerable. I think the member from Mississauga Centre talked earlier about our heartfelt interests in our most vulnerable, which are our seniors. They're a crucial part of our communities. They've helped build this province.

One of the things that our government did was expand the Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income System program to provide more supports to seniors across this province. I was just wondering if the member would support that, given she does care about the seniors, who are our most vulnerable.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Thank you, and I do support our seniors. I personally have one of my own at home. I have a 103-year-old grandma who I'm glad is still spicy and snarky. She's a wild little beast. But anyway, she's very fortunate. She had been a homeowner. She is able to afford to live and she is getting very good care at a home in the region.

I worry, though, about seniors who are not able to enter care, who can't afford to live. I worry about those seniors who are facing long-term care in private homes that don't have the PSWs, don't have the medical support, don't have the space for them, with exorbitant fees. And I see the privatization of our long-term-care system and what it looks like when things go wrong—what it looks like even day to day—and that is heartbreaking.

So sure, small increases here and there that are going to put a couple more dollars in someone's bank account, but that doesn't put a roof over their head or it doesn't help them sleep at night, knowing that they are safe with the care that they deserve.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I would like to thank my friend from Oshawa for an excellent presentation on Bill 180.

I did want to ask, and I know the member herself is an educator as well: Within Bill 180, "school violence" does not appear once. The government says that they care about this, yet we only see mentions of cameras in hallways and vape detectors. Would the member like to comment with her background and her expertise in education about the things that are lacking in the budget for education?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Thank you. I'm glad to be able to talk about education.

Violence in our classrooms and in our schools are complicated matters. The thing is, children with complex needs require support and a plan for that support, and we've been hearing from educators who have talked about the need for smaller classes, the smaller class sizes that you need to have specialized for children who are struggling. We're not seeing that.

The government isn't actually talking about violence in a way that is strategy-based. We need adequate funding that meets the diverse needs of students. We need to reduce class sizes. They should be ensuring compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act as well. There are layers to this. This isn't about vilifying anyone. This needs to be about keeping people safe, whether that's an educator or the other students in the classroom, and there isn't a plan in this budget or anywhere on those government benches.

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member from Oshawa for her comments. I was very happy to see the investments in health care in this budget, and I think all of us share an interest in making sure we have the best health care available for our constituents. I know the member mentioned that she was pleased that the minister of mental health had worked with her to ensure that a community group was getting ongoing funding.

There are some great investments in the budget, including an extra \$2 billion over three years for home and community care; a 4% increase in hospital funding; the first new medical school in Canada focused on training family doctors; and also the primary care investments—an additional \$546 million for more primary care interdisciplinary teams.

The member said she expects this budget to do things to help people, and I wanted to ask: Don't you think these are important investments to help people in your community and all of ours?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I think the folks at home need to understand that these are big numbers, so they sound

impressive, but they don't go as far when we're seeing increasing costs, whether due to inflation or whether due to the government's stubborn commitment to privatization, where we're seeing those dollars having to go to private nursing agencies that cost so much more than paying nurses in our public system. When there's more money going in, or if there's more money going in, so much more of it is going out through those privately drilled holes in the bottom of the bucket.

We need to have the kind of funding that not just keeps up with inflation, but that meets the needs of what the hospitals are laying out for the government of what it is that they need. You can't just have beds; you have to have people staff them. You have to have the care providers.

Just open the newspaper and you see that the doctors aren't happy with you. Nurses aren't happy with you. PSWs are leaving the field. So, obviously, something is missing. Big dollar numbers do not equal care. Fix it.

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

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I want to thank the member from Oshawa for her comments today. I know both she and I were teachers before we became MPPs, and the thing that actually got me into politics was that the former Conservative government was deliberately undermining and creating a crisis in our schools in order to bankrupt and privatize them.

This government is doing the same thing: They have underfunded our schools. There's an inflationary funding cut of \$1,500 per student. There are 5,000 fewer educators in our schools than there would have been if the government had kept up with the rate of inflation, than there were at the beginning, when they took power in 2018.

What is the member from Oshawa seeing in Durham schools? What is the impact of these cuts on the students in Durham?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** So, going back in time, I remember being an educator and I had something that was called an educational assistant, and I loved them. They were great. They could assist the education needs. And now, EAs, they don't have the opportunity to help students, educationally speaking. There are so few of them in schools. They deal with behaviours. They deal with safety issues. And while that is important and matters, we are seeing such an underfunding.

There isn't the support for students. Small classes, where students can be more successful—those are being eliminated. The children who had that smaller class and the support that went with it are now going to find themselves thrown into the mainstream, where there isn't the support in the classrooms, and what that looks like remains to be seen.

When you have fewer and fewer students who are going to be able to be successful, that doesn't serve anyone, let alone the students.

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

**Mr. David Smith:** Speaker, we all know the importance of building more homes across the province. I know especially young people are seized with the issue as they become concerned that the dream of home ownership will never be a reality. That is why I am so glad that the new measures in budget 2024, taken to provide new support, ensure we are hitting our goal of 1.5 million new homes by 2031.

My question to the member opposite: Will you support our government's investment of \$1.8 billion in infrastructure funding that we are providing to our municipalities and vote on the budget 2024?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Okay. So, as the government member just said, it's so hard for people to imagine seeing themselves buying a home or being able to get into home ownership. The budget admits it's never been more expensive to own a home. Young families, newcomers have been priced out of it.

1620

The government has predicted that prices will rise, and you've asked if I support the government in meeting its goals. It's not even meeting its own goals of building those 1.5 million homes. The government counted long-term-care beds into their new home numbers. Like, that's kind of padding the numbers, and those numbers don't even add up.

I will say that the funding in the budget for municipalities comes close, but it doesn't fill in the full need of municipalities, right? The Conservatives have a history of holding back funding. We'll watch to see whether they even get that. So I don't support something I don't believe.

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** It's always an honour to rise, today to debate Bill 180, the government's budget bill. It's interesting that we're debating this bill on the same day the Financial Accountability Officer released their economic and budget outlook for Ontario.

When the FAO compared the 2016-17 to the 2022-23 period versus the current and projected periods for 2022-23 to 2028-29, they only found one area of spending where we're seeing a significant increase in government spending. Do you know what that area was, Speaker? Interest on debt.

Health care, going down; education, going down; community and social services, slight, slight increase. The one area we saw a significant increase? Interest on debt, which to me just shows a government—maybe we haven't had a government in Ontario's history that has spent so much, increased the debt by so much, and actually gotten so little out of it. If we weren't experiencing the various crises in the province of Ontario, you might understand the decrease and the increase in spending in all the other major categories.

Speaker, I want to talk about five areas of the budget where the government falls short, and I'm going to start with housing. Right now, in Ontario, tonight—on average, any night in this province—16,000 people will be unhoused in Ontario. The average market rent in the

province of Ontario for a one-bedroom apartment is now \$2,200. It takes the average young person 22 years to save for a down payment on a new home. We have a whole generation of young people wondering if they will ever own a home.

The government had an opportunity in the budget to actually legalize housing, legalize fourplexes, four storeys, as of right. They had a chance to legalize six- to 11-storey buildings along major transit and transit corridors, something builders tell me will cut their building time in half, just those two measures, key recommendations from the government's own task force.

They had an opportunity to legalize commercial to residential transitions. They had an opportunity to legalize making it easy to build on underutilized strip malls and parking lots so we can quickly increase housing supply in places where we already have infrastructure built. But unfortunately, the government said, "Not in my backyard. We're not going to legalize housing," at a time when we're in a housing crisis.

The government also had an opportunity to invest more in non-profit, co-op and permanent supportive housing. As a matter of fact, the Bank of Nova Scotia says that we need 250,000 additional non-profit and co-op deeply affordable homes built over the next decade. Do you know how many the government has built since they've taken office? Around 1,100—only 6% of the commitment they made to the federal government in 2018.

The reason this is so important—and I've seen this in my own community, and I am going to compliment the government on this one. We actually have succeeded in building permanent supportive housing in Guelph. We got to yes, and I want to take a moment, because this was highlighted in the budget, to thank the Associate Minister of Housing and the Minister of Health for saying yes to building and funding permanent supportive housing in Guelph. I was happy to see it highlighted in the budget. But why aren't we seeing that across communities all across Ontario, where so many people are desperate for housing?

I want to turn for a moment to health care. I wanted to address health care because, right now, 2.3 million Ontarians do not have access to a family doctor. Hallway medicine is the norm in Ontario—even though this government said they were going to eliminate it when they first ran for election—and we have emergency departments closing across the province of Ontario.

I've been listening to the members in debate, and they're saying, "Hey, we're going to build more hospitals and long-term-care homes." What I haven't heard them talking about is who's actually going to staff any of these hospitals, long-term-care homes and primary care offices, especially at a time when the projection is that over the next decade, we're going to be short 33,200 nurses and 50,853 personal support workers. There wasn't anything in the budget about addressing these staffing shortages that will be critical to making sure that health care services are available to the people of Ontario when and where they need it.

I want to shift to education now. You know what the biggest cut in the budget was? Post-secondary education—critical to our economic well-being, to educating the workers of the future. What's so surprising about seeing that cut in the budget was, prior to the budget, the government said, "Hey, we're going to invest \$1.3 billion in post-secondary education," which was less than half of what their own blue-ribbon panel said. The government failed to address the fact that we're going to have less international students coming, which is going to cost our post-secondary education sector \$1.8 billion, which actually led to a real cut in the government's budget on post-secondary education.

On top of that, we're dealing with a teachers' shortage in our elementary and secondary education. As a matter of fact, just yesterday, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario released a report on the alarming increase in violence in our schools due to the shortage of adults in the schools teaching our children. As a matter of fact, a third of secondary schools in Ontario face daily teacher shortages—not addressed in the budget.

The next area I want to talk about in the budget is poverty. There are 16,000 people unhoused on any given night in Ontario and 717,000 people living in legislated poverty in the province of Ontario, many of those people with disabilities. It's shameful in a province that is as wealthy as Ontario, especially when we know that poverty costs this province \$33 billion a year. The government had an opportunity to increase ODSP and OW rates to a level that would bring people above the poverty line. That was not addressed in the budget.

I want to close by talking about the climate crisis, because the government had an opportunity in this budget to bring forward a climate affordability plan to help us reduce climate pollution and make life more affordable for the people of Ontario. One way they could have done that was to make heat pumps affordable for people. We know that heat pumps save people 13% on their heating and cooling bills versus folks with gas furnaces, though today, unfortunately, the government passed a bill imposing those expensive gas furnaces onto new homebuyers. PEI offers free heat pumps for people who make under \$100,000 a year to help them be able to afford increases in energy costs in their homes.

The government could have also had money in this budget to expand EV charging stations across the province and to bring back EV rebates so people in this province can afford to drive the electric vehicles we want to build in Ontario. I will say, yes, we're making some progress on building electric vehicles in this province, and we should all celebrate that, but you know what? It would be nice if Ontarians could actually afford to drive those electric vehicles.

It would also be nice if we would open up investment opportunities in renewable energy, low-cost wind and solar, because the \$1.88 trillion invested in the green energy transition, half of it to wind and solar—

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

1630

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** It sounds to me that what you're talking about is that you'd like to see a lot more spending, because everything you rhymed off, you talked about spending. And yet you talked about having a large deficit, so I don't know where you're coming from.

But I do want to ask the member what his thoughts are on (1) the Auditor General having six clean audits of this government, which is a first in the province; (2) the S&P rating service upgrading the Ontario debt; and (3) today, by the way, for the people in the chamber, a news release from Moody's which said, "The positive outlook reflects Moody's forecasts that Ontario is likely to post better than budgeted results and continue to proceed on a steady path to improvement in its debt burden and reduction in deficits."

So my question to the member is: What are your thoughts on what these third-party people say about how we're running our budgets here in Ontario?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I'll just say that regardless of what the third parties said, the Financial Accountability Officer, an independent officer of this Legislature, showed that the biggest percentage area of growth in spending over the next few years versus the last few years is interest on debt.

The member talked about some of the things I would prioritize spending on. I want to tell the member the things that I think they're mis-prioritizing spending on, because we could meet the objectives I've talked about within our existing fiscal framework. Did you know that we're the only jurisdiction in all of North America that spends over \$7 billion subsidizing electricity prices in the province of Ontario? And people who earn over \$100,000 are getting that subsidy. So why not means-test it for low- and middle-income households, not wealthy households, so we can actually invest in health care, education and housing affordability?

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France G linas:** The housing crisis is throughout the province. That includes in my riding of Nickel Belt. As you know, Speaker, there's a brand new gold mine, Iamgold, that has opened. They've started to get some gold out of it. I'm going to the grand opening on Wednesday.

But two years ago, we had the ribbon-cutting for the starting of the mine. The Premier was there at the time, and I told him that the government owns homes, beautiful homes, in Gogama. They closed down where the OPP officers used to live—beautiful homes. The MNR office that they closed—beautiful homes. Those homes should be put up for sale. I've asked the ministry to put them up for sale for the last two years, and they have not. Do you think it would be a good idea for those homes, rather than to stay empty—

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I appreciate the member's question. I'll just say that when you're in a housing crisis, leaving homes empty makes absolutely no sense, no matter where they're located. So I would say, yes, make

those homes available and make them available to people in a way that's affordable.

I want to talk about affordable housing for a second, because 93% of the deeply affordable homes in the province of Ontario were built before 1995. What happened in 1995? The provincial and federal governments got out of supporting deeply affordable housing. It's time for them to get back in, like the Scotiabank report says, so we can actually make our communities and our homes affordable for people.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** There's time for one quick question.

**Hon. Rob Flack:** It's always good to hear my friend opposite's thoughts and opinions. While we may not always agree, I know we all share the need to build more homes in this province.

One of the things I want to get his opinion on is that with the Minister of Infrastructure just in front of me, we have over \$3 billion that we're investing in infrastructure. That is the number one constraint to get homes built today, frankly. The Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund; the new \$1 billion in the budget to help more infrastructure for small, rural municipalities; and, obviously, the Building Faster Fund: Do you not see those being supportive to get housing built?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I appreciate the member's question. We absolutely need funding for infrastructure for housing; there's no doubt about it. It's unfortunate that with Bill 23 a couple of years ago, the government made changes that took infrastructure funding away from municipalities. That's finally coming back, but it's too bad we lost two years of opportunities to construct homes. So, yes, we're making progress in the right direction. It's unfortunate we wasted time. But why don't we say yes to building homes in my backyard, where we already have infrastructure built, so we can quickly—

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

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I will be sharing my time with the member from Parkdale–High Park.

I've heard quite often in this House, from the government side, "No other government in the history of the province" etc., but I would like to put a different ending on that. No other government in the history of the province has had a criminal RCMP investigation brought against it. No other government in the history of this province has had to roll back as much legislation as they have. No other government in the history of the province has had, I believe, six class action lawsuits brought it against it in regard to long-term care, and a class action lawsuit against the former Minister of Long-Term Care.

One of the things that I find is also remarkable is how much is promised, how often big numbers are put out, when, in fact, the amounts are less—the amounts going for supports for key things like health care, education, are actually less.

In terms of health care, in comparing 2023 interim actuals with the plan in this budget, the government plans to spend \$1 billion less. And then we have all the money

that's going to private nursing agencies—that is gutting hospitals across the province, putting them into deficit.

I want to take a moment to talk about nurse practitioners in our riding. We have one of the oldest nurse-practitioner-led clinics. It is not-for-profit. It is a fantastic, holistic clinic, team-based—the kind of thing that we hear from this government that they want to support.

And yet a report came out in 2012 saying that nurse practitioners were grossly underpaid, and that has not changed—there were incremental changes since 2016, but not the pay that they need. Nurse practitioners, because they can't make a solid living there, are moving into private, for-profit practice, or they're leaving the province, or they're going to the United States, where they can make more, or they're going to Botox clinics, where they can make a decent living.

I've heard twice from the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan that somehow he doesn't know about the for-profit clinics in our community. That surprises me. There is a for-profit nurse-practitioner-led clinic in his riding and one in my riding, so I'm quite surprised he's unaware of this—he should be. This is what is happening.

It has been known for so long that nurse practitioners need to have an increase in wages. They have an enormous scope of practice. And I must say that the Minister of Health completely ducked the question when I raised this before, by talking about scope of practice but not talking about wages, which is actually the issue in question. This same Minister of Health, of course, is also making remarks about not needing doctors, that it's not a problem. Well, we have about 45,000 people in the area of Thunder Bay who do not have access to primary care.

This government talks a lot about job creation. I would like to talk about job destruction, and that is taking place in education. It has certainly been taking place in health care. But let's talk about education, where there's actually a cut of \$1,500 per student—5,000 fewer education workers in the schools.

I just received a letter today from a constituent, from a father who has a special-needs child. That child, unfortunately, is continually being sent home because there's no one in the school to support the child, so it's not safe for the child to be there. He said, “For various reasons, people just don't want to work in education anymore. There's not enough supply staff to cover, and shortages are occurring way too often. Something needs to change. Investing money in upgrades and building new schools doesn't really benefit the students if there isn't enough staff inside for them to even attend.”

Well, we know there's nothing in the budget, or certainly nothing in the education minister's plans that is actually going to increase staffing, and that is tragic because the violence taking place in schools is enormous.

**1640**

We heard from ETFO, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, yesterday. They brought with them statistics, and the statistics are shocking, with 80% of students and educators experiencing violence. That really affects people. For anybody who has experienced a lot of

violence in their lives or experienced violence in their homes, they know that that becomes part of your body. It becomes part of how you see the world, and you start to approach the world with fear, wondering when the bad thing is going to happen again.

These schools are even experiencing evacuations. This is something that was unheard of certainly when I was a student. It is happening because there just aren't the people in the schools to do the work, and there aren't the people in the schools because the working conditions are untenable. The money needs to be put into the schools.

The minister started his discussion when he spoke here the other day by saying how much money they put in, but later, in fact, he admitted that he wants the boards to do much, much more with less. But when it comes to students and student needs, overcrowded classrooms, you can't do more with less. I have been in those classrooms, and I know how hard it is to pay attention to all the students. They have such different needs. If you have half a dozen high-needs children in your room, you can't look after them. You can't look after anybody else. You can't actually do a lesson. It's impossible, and it's tragic.

The money should be going into our education system, and it's tragic that it's not. That is a piece of the budget. This is why I say that I see this government putting out big numbers, but the reality is that they are continual cuts to the services that people depend on. I call that job destruction because people are leaving the profession because they just can't cope.

I have a couple of minutes left. I want to talk a little bit about justice or the lack of justice. We hear from this government that it's tough on crime, but it's not tough on crime against women. It's not tough on crime if it's about sexual assault. A hundred people—survivors—had booked off time, had paid air fare and transportation to come here in order to hear a debate as a way to heal and have their experiences validated and to hear a bill put forward intended to really address some serious gaps in the justice system. Yet the government chose to dispense that bill, denying the opportunity to have those debates. What difference would it have made to allow the debate? The government could have voted in favour—

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I apologize to the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North.

I recognize the Solicitor General.

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Madam Speaker, I'm listening to the debate from the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North talking about a matter that is being referred to a committee. I don't believe it's part of what we're talking about now, so I'd like you to consider that intervention.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I will consider it, but I will ask the member to tie it into her remarks considering the budget.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** Thank you very much. Funding for courts is in the budget, so it is relevant. It could have gone to committee after today. It could be changed and altered in committee, so there was no reason, really, to

deny all of those people who were coming here the opportunity to have their experiences validated and to have a larger public know how the justice system is failing those people.

Perhaps I won't be allowed to say all of these things, but I'm very concerned about the approach—and I only have a few seconds left—of the government toward issues that affect women. First, the midwives had to go to the Human Rights Tribunal—and they won—about systemic sexism in terms of their salaries. Then we had Bill 124, which constrained the wages of workers in largely female-dominated professions.

Then there was the bill to remove charter rights. It was interesting that the member from Mississauga Centre was waxing eloquent about charter rights, when in fact it was this government that tried to take away those charter rights from the largely female workforce of education support workers.

They voted down the private member's bill to hold city councillors accountable if they were found guilty of sexually assaulting their employees. They voted down extending WSIB support for PSWs working in home care, a largely racialized and female workforce, many of whom were in the gallery to hear this debate. And, of course, today they made sure that 100 survivors would not be attending the Legislature today.

So I am very concerned about what is not in the budget in terms of justice. I want to point out that it's not acceptable to be talking about being tough on crime when perpetrators are walking away after committing sexual assault.

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

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** It's my honour to rise on behalf of my constituents in Parkdale–High Park to speak to budget 2024, as presented in Bill 180.

Speaker, the Conservative government is out of touch and out of ideas. With budget 2024, they had the opportunity to provide real solutions for Ontarians, solutions that Ontarians are seeking: solutions to skyrocketing costs of living, the affordable housing crisis, the family doctor shortage, the massive funding shortfalls that are damaging our public schools, universities and hospitals. Instead, the Ford Conservatives are doubling down on policies that have failed people.

An NDP budget would deliver the homes, health care and hope that people are looking for. It would help families get child care by fully funding the \$10-a-day child care program. It would secure faster and better health care, without leaving patients with a bill. It would build affordable housing in the communities that people want to live in, and so much more.

Speaker, a budget is more than just numbers and percentages; it's a statement of values and priorities. If the Ontario government, the Conservative government, is working for the people, then the budget should reflect the values and priorities of Ontarians. It's that simple.

As Ontario geared up for budget 2024, I listened to my constituents about the needs and priorities of Parkdale–

High Park. I held multiple pre-budget consultations with local stakeholders to gather insights on spending priorities, policy directions and investment needs. I met and heard from residents, service providers, small business owners, parent councils, local community members and advocacy groups to learn what a budget for them would look like. My constituents spoke passionately about the need to address issues related to housing, health care, education, the environment, small businesses, affordability and reconciliation. I compiled that in a report summarizing their insights and shared it with the Minister of Finance, in the hopes that my constituents' priorities and perspectives would help inform budget 2024.

Speaker, the report was not very different from what we heard from communities across Ontario. But after reviewing this Conservative government's budget, I'm disappointed, Speaker. It's not for the people. What would have been for them? Speaker, here are some main priorities and perspectives shared with me by Parkdale–High Park residents that are not reflected in budget 2024.

My constituents want increased funding for child care. Too many times in this past year, families in my riding have been left scrambling as lack of investments have led to program closures, facing higher fees, and have put them at risk of losing the child care they rely on. Families at Ola Day Care faced an \$800-to-\$900 per-child increase when the operator had to withdraw from the \$10-a-day child care program due to the Conservative government's poor implementation.

Then there was the High Park YMCA, which was forced to suspend its infant care program in January due to the shortage of early childhood educators. Despite being warned for years about the staffing crisis in the child care sector, this Conservative government still does not take the issue seriously, even as it is leading to the closure of desperately needed child care spaces.

In April, I received an email from a registered ECE in the High Park area who was distressed that the minimum wage increase that she and other ECEs were promised in January wasn't coming until June, nearly half a year after the Ford government said it would kick in. At a time when many child care workers are struggling to buy groceries and pay rent, this delay was incredibly hard to deal with. The lack of investments also means that the \$10-a-day child care program is under threat.

My constituents want proper investments into our public schools, our education system. Despite the Conservative government's claims about historic spending, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association confirmed in a report that this year's funding is the lowest level of per-student funding in more than a decade. This budget continues the trend of education cuts in every year since the Conservatives have been in government. Education funding is down by over \$1,500 per child since 2018.

**1650**

The only historic thing about education is the number of families who are putting their children into private school. Speaker, people are not stupid. They can see right through the government's actions. They are starving the



public education system so that they can replace it with a privatized system. It's happening in health care and it's also happening in the education system.

School boards are getting less money year over year. The Conservative government is simply ignoring the struggles that our kids, parents, teachers and other education staff are dealing with. There is an extreme teacher shortage across all schools in this province: 24% of elementary schools and 35% of secondary schools are reporting teaching staff shortages every single day. There are students who require additional support who are being sent home from school because there are not enough staff available to help them. Parents are having to find and pay out of pocket for supplemental educational support that their children need.

These were the things that we used to be able to count on our schools to provide. It's all boards: big school boards; small rural district school boards. They're all facing deficits. They're all having to make cuts and find the money somehow. The TDSB is facing a \$26.5-million budget deficit this year, and this is after \$17 million in cuts already. Outdoor education programs, language programs etc. have been cut.

In other programs, like the IB program, fees are being introduced now. Parkdale Collegiate in my riding is one of the few schools in Toronto that offer the IB program, and I want to read to this House a letter from a constituent of mine. She writes:

"My son is graduating from Parkdale this year, having participated in the IB program. He chose to participate in this program himself, and from what I have seen has been able to broaden his mind and perspective in a way that would not have happened if he was not part of it. I have seen how his view of the world has been challenged and how he and his fellow students have been enabled to think 'differently' and do more with what they have. I am proud of him for participating and grateful to his school, PCI, for making it available to him. I would hate to see this taken away from future students.

"The fact that the concept of charging for a special program in the public system goes against the entire idea of public and barrier-free education. The best part of the TDSB's free IB program currently is that it creates an equal opportunity for all students to receive a university preparatory education and has a lack of barriers to access, to apply and attend, no matter family income. To charge for the IB program would remove the IB program's most important feature."

And as you hear from this parent, she continues, finally, to say, "I write to you in the hope that you can help put pressure on our government to fund education, as this is the most meaningful way that our province can progress and grow."

Speaker, the Conservative government is denying equal learning opportunities for kids everywhere.

I only have about a minute and a half left, but I want to also share very quickly that obviously when it comes to health care, the residents of Parkdale–High Park also want to see a budget that is prioritizing increased investments

into our publicly funded and publicly delivered health care system. Constituents have shared stories about their experiences in emergency departments, in accessing family doctors, and just the number of challenges that they are experiencing in terms of access to care.

Housing is another very important issue. The residents of Parkdale–High Park want the government to address the crisis head-on and to make safe, affordable homes accessible to all.

In the last few seconds that I have, I want to close by calling attention to Parkdale–High Park residents' steadfast commitment to reconciliation. Constituents in my riding want to see meaningful reconciliation that goes beyond land acknowledgements. We need to make sure that First Nations are given the decision-making powers over their own lands.

Speaker, among the many things, they want to see an enforcement of the moratorium on the province's staking of mining claims and requiring free, prior and informed consent from Ontario's Indigenous people before mining in the Ring of Fire region, something that this budget does not do.

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

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** A question to the members opposite: Part of this budget includes Critical Minerals Strategy funding—it's part of this budget.

The Ontario Mining Association puts together a report every year. It's called the State of the Ontario Mining Sector. They are forecasting gross domestic product from the mining industry to grow between the years 2020 to 2025 by 25%. I'd say that's a good thing. I think that it's, in part, attributable to the Critical Minerals Strategy that's part of this budget and part of the previous budget as well.

And so, to either of the speakers who spoke on this issue, I would like to know: What are their views on the Critical Minerals Strategy? And do they think that the Critical Minerals Strategy is, in part, helping to grow the domestic product of the mining sector in Ontario?

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** Yes, it may be helping that economic outlook, but there's a significant problem. First Nations communities, many affected by mining projects, are not being consulted. They're coming to Queen's Park—they've come to Queen's Park three times already and have been refused meetings. That's one piece of it.

My colleague also pointed to another piece where hundreds of mining claims are being put on Indigenous territory that's actually protected, which means that those companies are actually going to lose everything they invest, because they will never ever have access to those claims.

So there's some significant problems and gaps in how the government is handling the development of critical minerals.

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

**Mme France Gélinas:** I was so happy that the member had a chance to talk about the wonderful nurse-practitioner-led clinic that she has in her riding. Hers is one of the

oldest ones, but the oldest one is in Sudbury. We had the very first nurse-practitioner-led clinic in Sudbury.

My question to the member has to do with: All 25 nurse-practitioner-led clinics in our province have asked for extra staff so they can help the 2.2 million Ontarians who don't have access to primary care. The nurse-practitioner-led clinic from Thunder Bay is one of four that has received confirmation that they will be getting a little bit more money. Do you think that this will help with the thousands and thousands of people in Thunder Bay that don't have access to primary care?

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** Thank you very much to the member from Nickel Belt for that question. I'm glad that our nurse-practitioner-led clinic has received some money, but we know it's not enough. We know that many clinics did not receive any money. We know that nurse practitioners have been underpaid for many years, identified as far back as 2012.

We also know that these are the best models of health care that are out there. The one in Thunder Bay takes the most difficult patients, because they won't be taken elsewhere. They have a team-based model. It's an incredible place, and they should be supported better. All of those clinics need to be supported better.

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

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I think everybody in this room can agree that we want the best possible outcomes for our communities. And I'm very proud that near to my community, there's going to be a York University medical school in Vaughan. This is a major step to create a goal, to create the doctors of tomorrow, because it's going to be concentrating solely on physicians that are going to focus on family practices.

So I'm going to ask the member if she would support that, in favour of the doctors of tomorrow, alongside us.

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I thank the member from Thornhill. First, I want to say if we truly all agreed on wanting the best outcomes, then it would be reflected in this budget. The Conservatives say that they want the best outcome. Then how come we are cutting education funding and we are continuing down the path of privatization of health care—among the many, many examples that are contained in this budget?

1700

Yes, with regard to, very specifically, the family doctor shortage, we need to create more spaces. We need to train more medical doctors. We need to encourage family medicine as a practice. There are a number of measures that can be taken. A lot of this is down the road, but this problem is urgent and there needs to be an immediate solution, as well.

One of the things that we have proposed in the NDP is to reduce the administrative burden that family doctors are experiencing so that they can spend more of their time seeing patients—a recommendation that has been put forward by family physicians themselves. And yet this government voted it down.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank my colleagues for their presentations today on the budget bill.

My question is for the member from Thunder Bay—Superior North. I was very interested in your comments about front-line health care workers who have been recommending a health care human resources strategy that focuses on recruitment as well as retention. Most importantly, one of the things that has been recommended is the need for wage parity across health care sectors. Specifically, actually, the finance committee's own report on the pre-budget consultations mentions the need for wage parity. I'd like to ask the member: How important is this, and would you like to see this reflected in the government's budget?

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** Thank you very much for the question.

Wage parity is critical. We know that physician assistants have two years of training and make quite a lot more than nurse practitioners, who have six years of training. So nurse practitioners are very unsettled in their positions right now because they don't have wage parity with peers, or even with peers with less training than they have, and therefore, they are leaving. They're either setting up private practice or they're leaving the province altogether.

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

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I'll ask another mining question. Frequently, what happens among Canadian jurisdictions and other mining jurisdictions is that we compete for investment. For years, Ontario was a leading investment jurisdiction for mining, and then we slipped behind Quebec, because Quebec introduced a mining strategy that helped mining companies get started. Then we came up with our mining strategy for junior mining companies, and now we're back in the number one place; we're ahead of Quebec again, and that is, in part, I would submit, because of the policies in this government and set out in this budget.

So my question to the honourable member across the way is, does she support the policies that put Ontario into the number one position for junior mining companies in Canada?

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I thank the member for the question.

I will say, absolutely, the NDP supports the development of mining and the attempts to bring more industry that may lead us to EVs and heat pumps and so on. There are a lot of things that stand in the way of that. But, again, if the government is not prepared to get free, informed, prior consent from all impacted First Nations, they are not doing their job; they're not doing their due diligence. So lots of these things may never happen, because you'll be tied up in lawsuits. So, yes, I'd like to see these things happen, but I have concerns that they won't under current policies.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It's very concerning that school violence does not show up once in budget 2024 despite many parents and education stakeholders coming forward and talking about the violence that is in our classrooms right now. This government's answer has been hallway security cameras and vape detectors, as if that's going to address what is happening within classrooms.

My question for the member for Parkdale–High Park: This government seems to have ignored the crisis that is going on, and I'd like to know: Would you like to see further investments in education and education being brought back to the cuts that they've made since 2018 to address what's going on in schools?

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I thank the member from London North Centre for his question and also for speaking very passionately yesterday about how we can address some of the challenges that the public education system is experiencing, particularly around violence, and try to make sure that everybody—students and staff alike—is in safe learning environments and safe teaching environments.

With regards to questions, this is one of the things that the Conservative government continues to claim, that they're making historic investments, but in fact, they have been cutting education funding every year since they've come into office.

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

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** I've got a few things I want to talk about in this budget—

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

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** We're next in the rotation, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** No, you're not.

I recognize the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'm out of here. I can't believe it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I'm warning the member for Ottawa South.

I recognize the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

*Interruption.*

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Well, once we're done the door-slaming here by the Liberals, I'll have a chance to speak.

I have some really great things to talk about in the budget, but I want to address a couple of things the member just said. Two facts—I think all we really need to do is talk about two facts. Health spending when we were elected was \$60 billion annually. Today it's over \$80 billion. We've had a 6%—higher than inflation—year-over-year increase in health spending. Let's just put a pin in that for a moment.

Then we can talk about education as well. When we were elected, the budget was \$23.6 billion; today, it's \$28.6 billion. That is a \$5-billion increase. That's almost \$1 billion a year that the education budget—there are 3,000 more teachers; there are 7,500 more educational

workers. What they have suggested is completely opposite than what the facts outline.

Speaker, I can also tell you that our government continues to move ahead with the economy, not just the \$5 billion more that's spent in education since we were elected, not just the \$20 billion more that's been spent in health—each year, \$20 billion, Speaker. This is what we've added up to. And all of that came as a result of the fact that when we got elected, the revenue in Ontario was \$150 billion; today the revenue in Ontario is \$214 billion. It is a \$64-billion increase in revenue. Why? Because we lowered taxes in the province of Ontario, and that made 700,000 new people working in the province of Ontario—700,000 new taxpayers, 85,000 new businesses last year alone. Those businesses and those 700,000 workers are all paying taxes for the first time in Ontario. That's why our revenue has gone from \$150 billion to \$214 billion, which allows us to spend \$20 billion more in health care spending and allows us to spend \$5 billion more since the election.

We are going to continue—look to just last month alone. If you want more facts, last month alone, 25,000 people were added to the job rolls in Ontario; 5,800 in manufacturing. We're back now to where we were in manufacturing before the Liberals, backed by the NDP, gutted the manufacturing sector and we lost 300,000 jobs. That's what's happening. It's because we've secured \$43 billion in new auto investments, \$3 billion in life sciences, tens of billions of dollars in tech. That's what's happening, and this budget 2024 ensures that we continue to build on that momentum and attract more of these job-creating investments.

**1710**

Some really exciting news in the budget is the new Barrie Regional Innovation Centre. It's a RIC, as we call it. In the budget, we announced \$1 million a year over three years to establish a brand new regional information centre in Barrie. Now we have 17 of these RICs across Ontario, and they ensure that innovators and entrepreneurs have all the tools they need in front of them to succeed. These RICs will help our entrepreneurs protect and commercialize their intellectual property, attract talent, attract customers and attract capital. This is what will happen now in Barrie with this brand new, million-dollar-a-year regional innovation centre that 17 communities here in Ontario already have.

Speaker, we are North America's second-largest tech cluster. We are growing 350% faster than Silicon Valley. Just last July, in a 48-hour period, we had 10,000 California tech workers flee California and apply for visas here in Ontario—10,000 in 48 hours. That's the attraction that we have here in Ontario. We also saw 11,300 self-employed jobs created just in the province of Ontario. That's the kind of activity that's happening here.

Let me turn to Invest Ontario, our investment agency, our investment arm of the province of Ontario. In the budget, you'll see an additional \$100 million to the Invest Ontario Fund, which brings the total fund to \$600 million. They have been very pivotal in the successes, in landing

our investments in advanced manufacturing, in automotive, life sciences and the tech sectors.

Since its inception, Invest Ontario has secured over \$2.4 billion in investments and created over 2,600 jobs. They have helped land these important auto investments, like Dana, a \$60-million investment that landed in Cambridge and Oakville, and they're creating thousands of good-paying jobs through Invest Ontario.

Just yesterday, of course, Invest Ontario was with us to welcome Asahi Kasei's \$1.6-billion investment to build an EV separator plant in Port Colborne. That's what's happening in Ontario because of the kind of incentives and the kind of action that are built into this budget 2024. Asahi Kasei's \$1.6-billion investment is a game-changer for the people of Ontario.

It's almost that we've used that word too much, because that is actually what's happened: \$43 billion has landed here in Ontario in four years. We've stood here and said, "That's a game-changer," because these are. In a community like Port Colborne, they have been hit hard by the Liberals' slashing of the manufacturing sector in Ontario—300,000 jobs lost. We drove through Port Colborne yesterday and saw where a lot of those businesses used to be. The person who was one of the people who are assembling the land in Port Colborne showed us: "Well, this is where that company used to be. This is where that manufacturing used to be. This is where that paper mill used to be." It was shocking to see.

This investment of \$1.6 billion is the single largest investment in the history of Port Colborne, and it's because we put the economic climate together: lower taxes, lower red tape, lower electricity rates, all of these things. All of the things that we've done are why companies like Asahi Kasei are now investing \$1.6 billion. They chose Ontario because they know we have everything here in our boundaries to succeed: this dependable supply chain that we've shown them, access to the best talent in the world, an abundance of clean energy. We have green steel—just so much more for them to be able to access.

I mentioned the \$43 billion. I might have mentioned that a few times in this Legislature.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Wow, \$43 billion?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** It's \$43 billion. That is more auto investment landed in the province of Ontario than in any other jurisdiction, including every US state. That's what's happening. That is this powerhouse that is Ontario. The global automakers are choosing Ontario because we are at the centre. We are now the actual centre of the global electric vehicle revolution that is under way.

Speaker, I could continue to talk for quite a while about EVs, but I move that the question now be put.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Mr. Fedeli has moved that the question be now put. I'm satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*Vote deferred.*

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** You should be ashamed of yourself.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Orders of the day. Was that directed at me?

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** It was directed at who needed to hear it.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Orders of the day.

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** No further business.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** There being no private members' public business proceeding today, pursuant to standing order 100(e), as no business is designated for consideration, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning, May 16, 2024.

*The House adjourned at 1717.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, OOnt  
Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day  
Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim  
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,  
Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

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

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

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

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