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CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 5 June 2024 / Mercredi 5 juin 2024

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Preventing Unethical Puppy Sales Act, 2024, Bill 159, Mr. Kerzner / Loi de 2024 sur la prévention de la vente de chiots contraire à l'éthique, projet de loi 159, M. Kerzner

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens	9571
Mr. Mike Schreiner	9575
Third reading agreed to	9575

Report, Financial Accountability Officer

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly)	9575
---	------

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

Mental health services

Mr. Nolan Quinn	9575
-----------------------	------

Anti-racism activities

Ms. Jessica Bell	9576
------------------------	------

Government investments

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu	9576
--------------------------	------

Labour dispute

Mme France Gélinas	9576
--------------------------	------

Skilled trades

Mr. David Smith	9576
-----------------------	------

Colleen Wake

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	9577
-------------------------------	------

Thornhill Presbyterian Church

Ms. Laura Smith	9577
-----------------------	------

Events in Ottawa–Vanier

Mme Lucille Collard	9577
---------------------------	------

D-Day anniversary

Mr. John Yakabuski	9577
--------------------------	------

Toniata Public School

Mr. Steve Clark	9578
-----------------------	------

Annual report and statistical report, Information and Privacy Commissioner

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	9578
-------------------------------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

Mr. Stephen Crawford	9578
Mme France Gélinas	9578
MPP Andrea Hazell	9578
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff	9578
Mr. Tom Rakocevic	9578

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon	9578
Mr. Graham McGregor	9578
MPP Jill Andrew	9579
Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam	9579
Mrs. Daisy Wai	9579
Mr. Deepak Anand	9579
Mme France Gélinas	9579
Hon. Stephen Lecce	9579
Mr. Chris Glover	9579
Hon. David Piccini	9579
Miss Monique Taylor	9579

Wearing of poppies

Hon. Paul Calandra	9579
--------------------------	------

D-Day anniversary

Hon. Paul Calandra	9579
Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens	9579
Mrs. Karen McCrimmon	9580
Mr. Mike Schreiner	9580
Hon. Victor Fedeli	9580

Visitors

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	9581
-------------------------------------	------

QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS

Government spending

Ms. Marit Stiles	9581
Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy	9581

Special education

Ms. Marit Stiles	9582
Hon. Stephen Lecce	9582

Children's mental health services

Mr. Sol Mamakwa	9583
Hon. Stephen Lecce	9583
Hon. Greg Rickford	9584

Taxation

Mr. Graham McGregor	9584
Hon. Todd Smith	9584

Pharmacare

MPP Jill Andrew	9585
Hon. Sylvia Jones	9585

Taxation

Mr. Andrew Dowie	9585
Hon. Victor Fedeli	9585

Mental health services

Mr. Terence Kernaghan	9586
Hon. Michael A. Tibollo	9586

Government spending	
Mr. Stephen Blais.....	9587
Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy.....	9587
Taxation	
Mr. Sheref Sabawy.....	9587
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff.....	9587
Front-line workers	
Mme France Gélinas.....	9588
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	9588
Government spending	
Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon.....	9589
Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy.....	9589
Taxation	
Mr. Stephen Crawford.....	9589
Hon. Rob Flack.....	9589
Ministry spending	
Miss Monique Taylor.....	9590
Hon. Michael Parsa.....	9590
Taxation	
Mr. Dave Smith.....	9590
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	9591

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024, Bill 185, Mr. Calandra / Loi de 2024 pour réduire les formalités administratives afin de construire plus de logements, projet de loi 185, M. Calandra	
Third reading agreed to.....	9592
Patient-to-Nurse Ratios for Hospitals Act, 2024, Bill 192, Mme Gélinas / Loi de 2024 sur les ratios patients-personnel infirmier dans les hôpitaux, projet de loi 192, Mme Gélinas	
Second reading negatived.....	9593
Reception	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche.....	9593
Correction of record	
Mr. John Fraser.....	9593
Mark Stoddart	
MPP Jill Andrew.....	9593
Reception	
Mme France Gélinas.....	9593

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Municipal Accountability and Integrity Act, 2024, Bill 207, Mr. Burch / Loi de 2024 sur la responsabilité et l'intégrité au niveau municipal, projet de loi 207, M. Burch	
First reading agreed to.....	9593
Mr. Jeff Burch.....	9593

Sacred Spaces, Safe Places Act, 2024, Bill 208, Mr. Fraser / Loi de 2024 pour des lieux sacrés sécuritaires, projet de loi 208, M. Fraser	
First reading agreed to.....	9594
Mr. John Fraser.....	9594
Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice Month Act, 2024, Bill 209, Mme Collard; MPP Hazell / Loi de 2024 sur le Mois de la justice reproductive et de la santé maternelle chez les personnes noires, projet de loi 209, Mme Collard; MPP Hazell	
First reading agreed to.....	9594
MPP Andrea Hazell.....	9594

MOTIONS

Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs	
Mr. Trevor Jones.....	9594
Motion agreed to.....	9594
Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs	
Mr. Trevor Jones.....	9594
Motion agreed to.....	9594
Committee sittings	
Mr. Trevor Jones.....	9594
Motion agreed to.....	9594

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Social assistance	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	9594
Endometriosis	
MPP Jill Andrew.....	9594
Addiction services	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche.....	9595
Land use planning	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	9595
Addiction services	
Mr. Mike Schreiner.....	9595
Police in schools	
MPP Jill Andrew.....	9595
Social assistance	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche.....	9596
Mental health services	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	9596
Education funding	
Ms. Sandy Shaw.....	9596
Social assistance	
MPP Jill Andrew.....	9596
Injured workers	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche.....	9596

Sexual violence and harassment	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	9596
Education funding	
MPP Jill Andrew	9596
Public transit	
Ms. Bhutila Karpoche	9597
Tenant protection	
MPP Jill Andrew	9597

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, Bill 200, Mr. McCarthy / Loi de 2024 sur la protection des propriétaires de logements, projet de loi 200, M. McCarthy	
Hon. Todd J. McCarthy.....	9597
Ms. Jess Dixon	9601
Mr. Brian Riddell	9602
Mr. Mike Harris	9604
Mr. Tom Rakocevic	9605
Ms. Bhutila Karpoche	9609
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	9609
Report, Integrity Commissioner	
The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly)	9610
Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, Bill 200, Mr. McCarthy / Loi de 2024 sur la protection des propriétaires de logements, projet de loi 200, M. McCarthy	
Ms. Aislinn Clancy	9610
Mr. Adil Shamji	9611
Second reading agreed to	9613

Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, Bill 200, Mr. McCarthy / Loi de 2024 sur la protection des propriétaires de logements, projet de loi 200, M. McCarthy	
Mr. Tom Rakocevic.....	9613
Hon. Todd J. McCarthy.....	9614
Committee of the Whole report adopted	9614
Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, Bill 200, Mr. McCarthy / Loi de 2024 sur la protection des propriétaires de logements, projet de loi 200, M. McCarthy	
Hon. Todd J. McCarthy.....	9614
Mr. Terence Kernaghan.....	9615
Third reading agreed to	9616
House sittings	
Hon. Paul Calandra	9616

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

Electric vehicles	
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	9616
Mr. Joel Harden.....	9618
Ms. Aislinn Clancy.....	9618
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	9619
Mme France Gélinas	9620
Mr. Matthew Rae	9620
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	9621
Vote deferred.....	9622

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 5 June 2024

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 5 juin 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

PREVENTING UNETHICAL
PUPPY SALES ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LA PRÉVENTION
DE LA VENTE DE CHIOTS CONTRAIRE
À L'ÉTHIQUE

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 4, 2024, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 159, An Act to amend the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019 / Projet de loi 159, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2019 sur les services provinciaux visant le bien-être des animaux.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Good morning, Speaker, and good morning, everyone. It is always an honour to speak on behalf of the residents of Niagara and St. Catharines and, in this case, to be able to debate some of the issues with Bill 159.

Preparing for a committee to deliberate and determine the amendments, I was struck by two parallel revelations. The first is that when speaking with stakeholders for animal justice, front-line service providers, societies and shelters, the theme of government consultation for this bill—from their perspective—was consultation and submissions by force, as they were not asked by the ministry for their expertise. On their own, without prompting, they came together to submit their own reports to the ministry. The second revelation is that this is a recurring, disappointing theme of this Conservative government—the severe and considerable lack of consultations leading to decisions in a silo. This is why I know we can improve on this bill already.

Now, putting aside my latter, more high-level observation about the degree of collegiality of this government, with the legislation for Preventing Unethical Puppy Sales Act, 2023, we find ourselves at a crossroads. This legislation, now at its third reading, represents a precipice, and it's our collective duty to ensure that when we are

addressing the welfare of animals in our province, it is done right. It is a moment that demands that we listen, then act—doing those two things exactly in that order.

Bill 159 seeks to amend the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act by imposing further penalties and measures to eliminate puppy mills, to eliminate unethical breeding, particularly those associated with unregulated and often cruel, cruel practices. These facilities exist because of a lack of enforcement, driven by large amounts of profit while at the expense of animal welfare, and epitomize the darker aspects of our relationships with domestic animals. We can all agree that puppy mills are really bad. I am a dog and cat owner myself. My dog's name is Lucy; we call her lovely lady Lucy. She really is part of our family. We love her. She welcomes us with unconditional love. I know that many of the members in this Legislature have similar connections with their pets. It is why legislation to further reduce and ultimately attempt to remove puppy mills is just. Yet, our intentions must not be morally inconsistent with our actions.

Strengthening regulations and penalties without the proper funding for enforcement and staffing we are only accomplishing what my grandmother would have called out as, "Doing something as useful as putting a screen door on a submarine." This is because producing puppies in a wholesale environment, which tends to mean you're focusing on quantity first and using the least amount of resources possible, is menacingly profitable. It means if creating a disincentive is not done right, then it wouldn't get done at all. The incentive for profit will still outweigh its disincentive to getting caught. For all of our success, it will just be like playing whack-a-mole: You knock it down in one area, and they spring up all over province.

This legislation is a reminder of the delicate interplay between the rule-making and the rule-enforcing, and if we do not address the issue of puppy mills meaningfully, there will remain pockets where suffering and neglect persist unchecked and unaddressed, which could be quite shameful.

In the role of the official opposition and as the critic for the Solicitor General, it is incumbent upon us to examine this legislation with a watchful and critical eye. The goal in principle is to enhance, to ensure that this bill not only addresses the symptoms of the problem but also tackles the grassroots causes. This is because we all must recognize that intent alone is insufficient without robust and enforceable mechanisms.

Speaker, when this legislation was coming up for third reading, I reached out to the executive director of the Humane Society of Greater Niagara, Tanya Firmage—who, by the way, I would like to formally welcome from Niagara in this chamber. Welcome, Tanya.

Tanya moved to Niagara from Kawartha Lakes, and after spending 30 years in animal welfare sheltering and investigations, holding positions from inspector to chief of humane services for the province, is now the lead in Niagara. I am glad we have that experience at the helm in Niagara.

Over Tanya's career, she has seen some of the worst puppy mills in all of Ontario. She would describe one of the largest she was involved in, with over 300 dogs. She would go on to describe to me the deplorable conditions: dogs covered their own feces, injured, missing eyes and starving to death. They were without veterinary care—and so, so many puppies. As she told it, the triage took them over 24 hours.

The next one that came to her mind was a case when she was an inspector herself for the province, where he removed 80 dogs. Many of them were pregnant. In her words, "I will never forget how long they had to stay in our care before we could adopt them out. This person was also a repeat offender and would simply look for any and all loopholes to keep doing what they were doing."

Speaker, with so many investigations, Tanya told me she had often had to revert to calling the CRA to report people for unclaimed income because there was nothing we could do under the legislation to stop the unethical breeding.

Tanya said it was never only about the rules but the ability to have the time and the resources to act. And like so many of her fellow investigators, it broke her heart. What that means is that we must do better than what we have been doing in Ontario. The Legislature and the Ontario government not only create the rules that regulate sectors like animal welfare; we also hold the purse strings. We have the ability to fund this sector to improve it drastically.

There's a light at the end of the tunnel, but that by no means will happen without real substantial funding support.

Ontario has over 400 known puppy mills. Ontario humane societies' intake of puppies surged from 788 in 2022 to nearly 1,200 last year. Humane Canada reports 10,000 puppies die in puppy mills every year. This is horrific.

The message from advocates and experts and so many compassionate dog-loving residents across Ontario about going to a shelter to adopt a dog has penetrated the public's consciousness, but we all know that this is not enough. So let's make sure we get it right.

When this bill inevitably passes, it doesn't mean policy-making for animal welfare is going to stop—far from it. As Ontario's upper chamber provides new rules and regulations, we are also beholden to resist the consequential actions of this legislation to be pushed down to the service and municipal levels without also providing the proper resources. A significant portion of the debate should focus on feedback from stakeholders, particularly the Ontario Animal Welfare Network, from experts with lived experience like Tanya and others that have their insights, drawn from front-line experience in animal rescue and rehabilitation.

0910

We also need to revisit the amendments proposed during the committee stage. These amendments, as described earlier as forced consultation, are essential and directly aimed at closing loopholes and ensuring comprehensive protection for animals. Among these are proposals to mandate pet stores to source animals from shelters and rescue groups and to establish minimum standards of care for breeders—standards inspired by leading jurisdictions such as Quebec.

Finally, but I would say most importantly, the importance of enforcement cannot be overstated. Effective legislation is predicated on the ability to enforce it. This means adequately resourcing the provincial animal welfare services, ensuring that inspectors are not only well-trained but also sufficiently numerous to cover the vast expanse of our province. The current shortfall in enforcement capabilities is a glaring gap that must be addressed if we are to see real, lasting change.

Speaker, to fully grasp the imperative of Bill 159, it is essential to understand the historical context of the landscape in Ontario. Animal welfare organizations, including Ontario Animal Welfare Network, OAWN, have long been crystal clear about the situation for puppy mills in our province of Ontario—we have many dogs that are bred and sold. These organizations have consistently reported on the prevalence of puppy mills, and their stories are very heartbreaking to anyone that hears them.

The COVID-19 pandemic supercharged these issues. As demand for pets skyrocketed during lockdowns, breeders found themselves in an even more favourable, fruitful market, taking advantage of the situation, leading to an increase in the number of dogs entering the market under deplorable—deplorable—conditions.

Post-pandemic, we've seen a dramatic rise in the intake of puppies at humane societies across this province, with numbers surging from 788 in 2022 to 1,192 in 2023. This sharp increase indicates a troubling trend and underscores the urgent need for regulatory intervention.

The call for stronger legislation was hitting a fever pitch. Donna Powers, president and co-founder of Stop the Mills, emphasized that, "Dogs are simply a commodity and they're only looking at profit. They don't do any testing, there's no health concerns, there's no standards of care, there's no quality of life."

In a recent article by the CBC, the founder of ARF Ontario describes the bill as "required" but emphasizes that it is "long overdue."

The Wellington Advertiser chronicled concerns from animal advocates who believe that the proposed law still falls short in some areas, particularly in enforcement and clarity of definitions. Camille Labchuk of Animal Justice echoed this sentiment, stating that the bill, "will do little to nothing to stop the abuse of puppy mills in Ontario," cautioning against a false sense of security for the prospective pet owners.

Speaker, multiple times during second reading my colleagues raised these very concerns and pointed out that the CBC investigation found that inspections were significant-

ly down since the law was changed. Now, under the OSPCA, inspectors issued between 16,148 orders and laid 1,946 provincial criminal charges. That was between 2015 and 2018. However, since the PAWS law has been passed, PAWS inspectors only laid 6,970 orders and laid 667 provincial and criminal charges between 2020 and 2023. That's a significant reduction in holding people, organizations and bad players to account for how they're treating animals. In other words, the concern about impact and effectiveness is considerable and real. In the cases these questions were raised in the House, it is unfortunate that the members opposite chose to ignore them.

The legislation is imperative. Given this backdrop, Bill 159 is public policy with a moral obligation. It aims to address these long-standing issues by introducing stringent measures that prohibit the unethical breeding of dogs, mandate comprehensive record-keeping, and impose severe penalties for non-compliance. The bill's provisions include specific definitions of puppy mills, breeding limitations and care requirements, which are critical for its effective enforcement.

It is clear that the background and necessity of Bill 159 are very clear. It is a response to a pervasive problem that has persisted for way too long, and it represents a crucial step toward ensuring the humane treatment of animals in Ontario. Our debate today must focus on strengthening this bill, making suggestions to ensure it fully addresses the issues that happened and sets new standards for animal welfare in our province.

As we debate and will debate Bill 159, the Preventing Unethical Puppy Sales Act, 2023, to its close, I will now present and fully review some of the provisions in this bill, while pointing out what experts have time and time again said is missing. I will highlight for the record what is not included in this bill, as identified by stakeholders and experts and, at multiple times throughout this debate, aspects that have been raised by my colleagues in this House.

One of the foundational elements of Bill 159 is its attempt to define and prohibit certain practices associated with puppy mills. The bill introduces specific breeding limitations:

Age and frequency restrictions: It prohibits breeding female dogs under the age of one year and limits the breeding of female dogs to no more than three times within two years or more than two litters from consecutive heat cycles.

Health and isolation requirements: The bill mandates that dogs with illnesses and environments have a specific standard in Ontario. These provisions aim to address the heartbreaking situations when dogs are overbred, kept in deep, deep unsafe conditions, and not provided with adequate medical care.

Record-keeping and traceability: Another significant provision in Bill 159 is the requirement for comprehensive record-keeping by dog breeders. This includes maintaining detailed records of each dog's breeding history, health status and transactions related to their sale or their transfer.

Penalties for non-compliance: The bill sets forth stronger penalties for those found operating puppy mills or violating its provisions.

Financial penalties: A minimum fine of \$10,000 for operating a puppy mill, with penalties increasing to \$25,000 if the operation results in the death or euthanasia of a dog.

Enforcement measures: The bill grants animal welfare inspectors enhanced powers to conduct investigations and enforce the law, including authority to impose liens for costs associated with investigations.

Speaker, it is critical that these penalties are only as good as the ability to enforce them. I will repeat that: It is critical that these penalties are only as good as our ability to enforce them. We have learned lessons about long-term care and tenants' rights, as it is simple economics. If you want to change behaviour, we need a clear disincentive for those actors by making them know they are at a big risk of being caught. This part requires substantial resources.

0920

Bill 159 also expands the regulatory authority of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to develop further regulations related to the sale and transfer of dogs.

What's missing, Speaker? Despite these provisions, stakeholders have raised several concerns about what's missing from Bill 159.

Lack of clear definition of a puppy mill: Advocates argue that the bill does not provide a sufficiently detailed definition of what constitutes a puppy mill, which could complicate enforcement efforts. A more explicit definition that includes conditions of care, socialization and medical treatment is much needed to ensure effective prosecution of bad actors and offenders.

Enforcement and resource allocation: Time and time again, this point has been raised. There is significant concern about whether the provincial animal welfare services, PAWS, have the necessary resources and staffing to enforce the new regulations effectively. Historical data indicates a decline in inspections and charges under PAWS compared to the predecessor, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, OSPCA. Speaker, we can all agree that this is not a desirable outcome. Small or big policy tweaks will not be enough if we are not allocating the resources to get the job done.

The bill does not establish a provincial registry or licensing system for breeders, which many advocates believe is essential for tracking and regulating breeding operations. Such a system would help ensure that breeders adhere to ethical standards and make it easier to identify and shut down illegal operations.

Bill 159 does include several measures aimed at curbing unethical breeding practices and improving the welfare of dogs in Ontario. And yet, as pointed out already, to fully achieve its goals, the bill must address the gaps identified by most stakeholders. By incorporating a clear definition of a puppy mill, ensuring adequate resources for enforcement and establishing a comprehensive registry and licensing system, we can strengthen this legislation and

make a significant impact on the fight against unethical breeding.

As the official opposition, we have a responsibility to be a watchful eye on legislation that is presented and passed through this chamber. In terms of Bill 159, we must not only ensure it fulfills its intended purpose, but also advocate for the necessary enhancements that will make this legislation as effective as possible. While we support the overall intent of Bill 159, we have several significant concerns that need to be addressed to ensure the bill fully achieves its goals.

One of our primary concerns is the lack of active consultation to begin with, and then later to strengthen this bill. My colleague from Toronto–Danforth, during the debate on the second reading, stood up with a clear question: “Could you tell us the genesis of this bill? Was there a particular event or a particular organization that inspired you to bring this forward?” This is a good question. The question was to the point: Who did you consult? The ministry was unable to really provide an answer. This is really, deeply problematic.

The lack of consultation is a thread that runs through the decision-making of this government far too often on too many important bills like this one. It is very disappointing when no consultation is done.

My colleague in the north, a member of this committee who participated in providing clauses for this bill—many good ones that strengthened the legislation that were turned down by this government, might I add—made good points during the debate: “Ontario’s animal welfare models and services take almost no consideration, if any, for on-reserve communities in the province of Ontario....

“We need First Nations voices to be heard at the transition council when regulations are being crafted to ensure that there are not barriers for First Nations Indigenous communities and that systemic racism does not occur.”

Speaker, that’s why I heard this time and time again: “consultation by force,” a term I heard often when speaking the experts. This is how they felt their expertise was being treated—consultation by force.

It has led to some shortfalls, like concerns about a clear, comprehensive definition of what constitutes a puppy mill. The current bill outlines certain breeding practices that are prohibited, but it does not provide a clear definition that is so, so important for effective enforcement and prosecution. As noted by the Ontario Animal Welfare Network, without explicit criteria, it will be challenging to hold violators accountable.

Additionally the bill’s reliance on future regulations to set conditions for the sale and transfer of dogs leaves a significant gap in immediate enforcement capabilities. It has been years already on revisions on how the province handles puppy mills and animal welfare. Why wait any longer?

The need for detailed regulation cannot be overstated. Human Initiative co-founder Donna Power has criticized the bill for being “pretty weak” and has pointed out that the current provisions would not significantly change the situation for the animals involved.

It is essential that the government commits to significantly increasing funding and resources for PAWS. This includes hiring more inspectors, providing them with comprehensive training and ensuring they have the necessary tools to conduct thorough investigations. Without these resources, the enhanced enforcement provisions in the bill will remain largely theoretical and ineffective.

It is also essential that we recognize that a registry would not only help in identifying and shutting down illegal operations but also in supporting ethical breeders to gain trust in our within our communities and our province.

Advocates, including Camille Labchuk of Animal Justice, have emphasized the importance of a licensing regime coupled with enforceable care standards. This approach would provide a framework for ongoing oversight and accountability, which is currently lacking. As Labchuk noted, “This bill will do little to nothing to stop the abuse of puppy mills in Ontario” without these critical elements.

The Ontario Humane Society has called for the inclusion of specific standards of care based on best practices from other jurisdictions, such as Quebec’s Animal Welfare and Safety Act. These standards should include requirements for adequate food, clean shelter, veterinary care and socialization for dogs.

Additionally, the implementation of mandatory micro-chipping for all puppies sold would add a layer of traceability, making it easier to track the origin of puppies and ensure they are coming from ethical sources.

Speaker, in Niagara, locally, if you will, the heart-wrenching experience of Mrs. Jane Thompson from St. Catharines: Mrs. Thompson recalls the day she found a frail, shivering puppy abandoned in a cardboard box outside of her local grocery store. The puppy later was named Lucky. Lucky was of a victim of a nearby puppy mill that was eventually uncovered in the south end part of Ontario.

These stories not only come from individuals, but also, organizations like the Ottawa Humane Society have been on the front lines, rescuing, rehabilitating and rehoming these vulnerable animals. Sharon Miko, president and CEO of Ottawa Humane Society, has often highlighted the increased number of puppies being surrenders to their care, many of whom are too young and sick to survive. In 2023 alone, their intake of puppies surged to 1,192, a clear indication of the rampant issue of puppy mills in our province.

0930

The voices of animal welfare advocates have been clear and consistent. Camille Labchuk—as I’ve quoted before—executive director of Animal Justice, has articulated that while Bill 159 is a step in the right direction, it must go further to be truly, truly effective.

The Animal Justice blog on the PUPS Act also brings forward the need for a provincial registry and licensing system for breeders, which would create a framework for ongoing oversight and accountability. Such a system would not only help in identifying and shutting down illegal operations but also support ethical breeders who adhere to high standards of care.

Speaker, statistics from 2023 are telling. Humane societies across Ontario have seen a significant increase in the number of puppies admitted into their care. This year alone, intake numbers have surged to 1,192 puppies, highlighting the scale of the problem and the need for action that goes beyond policy. It also comes along with the province opening the purse strings to provide adequate resources.

Speaker, our task today is quite clear. It is time to stop puppy mills—it's hard to say "puppy mills" when you haven't had a coffee. It is time to stop puppy mills, but the need to get this right is paramount.

Let us remember the stories and the statistics, the dedicated advocates and the suffering of all animals. So many of us in this chamber own pets of our own. As I mentioned, we have lovely lady Lucy, a Boston terrier. My husband and I actually won her in a custody battle with my daughter after my daughter left home. She's been the best part of our life, may I say.

So many of us in this chamber own our own pets, but in order to be just and ethical, we need to breathe consciousness into the fact of what that means and where our pets may have come from. Those can be difficult conversations, but the debate in this chamber in order to get this right should not be one of them.

Speaker, thank you for listening this morning. I look forward to continuing opportunity to help strengthen this legislation for the benefit of all Ontarians, especially our fur babies and the animals we strive to protect.

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

Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise to speak to Bill 159, an important piece of legislation. I want to begin by just saying that I'll be voting in favour of this bill, because—

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Quit while I'm ahead, eh? Well, I've got to do my job. I've got to do my job over here.

I think it's important to bring in penalties to address puppy mills; there's no doubt about it. But, Speaker, if we're going to do this, we have to make sure we have a proper enforcement regime.

I'm the proud dog parent of a rescue dog named Helix. Helix was an abused pup that my family rescued and we've taken care of for many years, and I can tell you, Helix is still dealing with the trauma. Even though he's been with our family and loved for about five or six years, you can still see the trauma Helix experienced. It highlights for me why so many pet lovers and dog lovers want puppy mills shut down.

But if we're going to do that, we have to listen to the experts who want put on the record—and when say I've got to do my job, I've got to put a few things on the record—that if we don't have a proper licensing and enforcement regime in place, this legislation won't accomplish what we all want it to accomplish, and that's shutting down puppy mills.

Penalties without enforcement will not provide the protections that puppies deserve and that Ontarians want. I think that is highlighted by the experience we've had with the PAWS Act, an act I supported but want to point out that, in an analysis comparing enforcement under PAWS versus previous enforcement under OSPCA, there were 64,000 inspections done under OSPCA, 69,000 done under PAWS. But issues ordered were 16,148 under OSPCA, only 6,970 under PAWS. Charges laid: 1,946 under OSPCA; 667 under PAWS, even though the budget under PAWS is \$21 million and under OSPCA was only \$5.57 million. We're paying more for less enforcement.

If this bill is going to have the teeth it needs, we need to ensure that enforcement is in place, and a key part of ensuring that enforcement is in place is having a licensing regime with transparent data for the people of Ontario.

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

Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Kerzner has moved third reading of Bill 159, An Act to amend the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: a report entitled Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services: Spending Plan Review from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

Orders of the day? I recognize the deputy government House leader.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: Good morning, Madam Speaker. No further business at this time.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Seeing there is no further business at this time, we will stay recessed until 10:15.

The House recessed from 0937 to 1015.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Nolan Quinn: Last week, the Mental Health Commission of Canada hosted their first Father's Day at the Park reception here at Queen's Park. Not only did this reception focus on men's mental health and the unique challenges they face; it also offered a safe environment for guests to gather and have conversations about mental health.

We were honoured to have Steve Jones as a guest speaker sharing invaluable insights into his personal journey contributing to destigmatizing mental health.

As Father's Day approaches, let's make a concerted effort to check in with our fathers, sons and brothers. The stigma surrounding mental health often deters men from seeking help, contributing to higher rates of suicide among men.

It is critical to recognize that while women attempt suicide twice as often as men, men die by suicide three times as often. Societal expectations of toughness and just dealing with it can discourage men from seeking help, leading them to resort to destructive coping mechanisms.

Our government has improved and expanded the supports in our Roadmap to Wellness. Since 2019, we've invested \$525 million in new annualized funding for mental health and addictions services.

I'd like to thank Minister Tibollo, MPP Gretzky, MPP Bowman and MPP Schreiner for their attendance and contributions to this event. This important topic is not a partisan one and extends across all party platforms.

Thank you to all members, staff, guest speakers and stakeholders who were able to attend, even if it was just for a brief moment. Your support truly matters.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Ms. Jessica Bell: This week I met with the National Council of Canadian Muslims to discuss the rise of Islamophobia in Ontario; of the multiple incidents of violence targeting Muslim communities and mosques; of the hundreds of cases of mistreatment of Muslim and Palestinian staff and students in schools across Ontario, often directly connected to the conflict in Gaza.

Their experience mirrors the calls and emails we are receiving in our office from residents who are devastated by the loss of life and security in Gaza and fear the worrying rise in discrimination here in Ontario, which is far bigger than official statistics, because most hate crimes and hate incidents in Ontario go unreported.

Public dialogue about the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza has been so divisive, and it has harmed relationships between neighbours, colleagues, friends and Ontarians.

The National Council of Canadian Muslims has been clear in what they want Ontario legislators to do: Take proactive steps to halt the harassment and discrimination of Muslim, Arab and Palestinian Ontarians by reviving and passing the Our London Family Act, which includes an anti-hate strategy for the province and changes to education. It is a request that I support. It is a move that many of us in the Legislature support. It is a concrete step we can take to advance peace and diversity here in Ontario.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I rise in the House today to share two significant milestones for the residents of Brampton. The first milestone I want to celebrate is our government bringing a second hospital to Brampton. Our request for qualifications has been issued to select a qualified team to design and build the project, which will include a multi-storey patient tower, expanded clinics and Brampton's second emergency department. Once com-

plete, the community will be well served by a world-class hospital which will deliver the comprehensive health care that the residents of Brampton deserve.

The second milestone I'm pleased to share is the progress being made on bringing the first school of medicine in the province in 15 years, and in over 150 years in the GTA. It will find its home at Toronto Metropolitan University. Our government is ensuring the next generation of medical professionals will be trained in Brampton, in Ontario, for Ontarians.

1020

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the partners involved in these projects. Thank you to Dr. Frank Martino from William Osler Health System and Mohamed Lachemi from Toronto Metropolitan University. Your visions and collaboration have made these advancements possible, and the people of Ontario will be better supported because of our work together.

LABOUR DISPUTE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Mine mill Unifor Local 598 members from Sudbury, including the member from Sudbury's dad, travelled to the headquarters of Jarlette Health Services on Monday to hold an information picket in support of the workers at the Elizabeth Centre in Val Caron. Why did union members from Sudbury get on a bus early in the morning and travel three hours to Midland, Speaker? Because the workers at the Elizabeth Centre have been without a collective agreement since 2022—two long years. This is happening under this government's watch.

With so little resources at the Ministry of Labour, once an employer asks for arbitration, it doesn't take days, weeks or months; it takes years.

That's right, Speaker: Retirees and workers on their day off travelled down to the headquarters to remind management that these workers are without a contract.

The Elizabeth Centre is a long-term-care home in my riding. They house 128 residents. The Unifor members working there look after frail, elderly residents. They are dealing with the same cost-of-living challenges that every other Ontarian faces. Many of them can barely afford rent, never mind a car payment. They need a new collective agreement now. But here we are, two years after their last contract ended. These workers are left to wait, wait and wait some more.

I hope this government agrees that this must stop. These workers need a new collective agreement, and they need a collective agreement right now.

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. David Smith: I commend our government's efforts to integrate youth into skilled trades amid high unemployment and labour shortages. This is a big game-changer to Scarborough Centre youth.

Significant enhancements to the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, supported by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development and the Ministry of Education—we've launched 68 new

pre-apprenticeship programs for 2024-25, now engaging over 1,700 participants, with women comprising 30% of the skilled trades labour force.

We have also expanded the apprenticeship program to include recruiters across 800 schools and introduced a mandatory technological education credit for high school graduates, beginning in September 2024.

Our Premier; the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development; the Minister of Education; various unions; community partners have been instrumental in achieving this. Now, 1.3 million people work in skilled trades, with over \$1.5 billion invested since 2020.

COLLEEN WAKE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend, Colleen Wake. As the youngest of six siblings, she was lovingly referred to by her family as the baby sister. Her sons, Alex and Collin, along with her family, are deeply saddened by the loss of their beloved mother and sister.

Colleen joined Kinsmen London club in 1996. She immediately took on roles of leadership in public speaking, was elected to an executive level and then as a governor. Under her leadership, the district 1 team launched Portraits of Honour. As well, the Kin team received the Decew-Phee district award for outstanding leadership and administration.

In 2022, she received the Kin lifetime membership.

Beyond her volunteer work, Colleen was an NDP supporter. Colleen worked at CAMI automotive. At work, she learned sign language to support a colleague with hearing challenges to demonstrate her dedication to her co-workers. Her many accomplishments reflected her heart, her hard work, intelligence and fun-loving spirit.

Despite her leadership qualities, Colleen always said she wouldn't run for politics. She would tell me, "I can't put up with that stuff." Our thing was going to movie nights, and that was filled with laughter. I always bought a noisy bag of licorice candy to open during the movie because she would shush me, and that was a joke between us.

If she knew I was making this statement about her, she'd say, "Don't make a big deal about me." And I would say to her, "You meant so much to everyone you connected with, and you changed lives without even knowing. Your kindness and willingness to help others and your relentless honesty, whether we wanted to hear it or not, made a difference."

Colleen never gave up on people and never gave up on love. Rest in peace, my dear friend.

THORNHILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Ms. Laura Smith: Last week, the Thornhill Presbyterian Church celebrated their 175th anniversary, marking 175 years as a vibrant, multicultural and intergenerational congregation. From its humble beginnings on Yonge Street to its current location just down the road from my office, the church is a testament to a solid and

historic area with almost two centuries of community stewardship.

Historically, picnics were literally gala events and one of the social highlights at the TPC. Football matches, bicycle races, strawberry socials—it all happened on the grounds.

This congregation played a pivotal role in the foundations leading to modern day Thornhill. In 1885, Toronto's first commuter railway, the Metropolitan radial railway York-Simcoe, was opened just steps away from the church. If we look back as early as the 19th century, the location served as a critical junction for transportation. It was the natural pit stop for travellers moving north. A member of the congregation who also worked at the Ontario Department of Highways ensured that local pictures of the radial car included a photo of the church.

E.J. Sand elementary school was named after Eilert Sand, also a member and school superintendent back in the 1950s. His son Richard, who I've met, later went on to be a minister at the church.

There is so much history in Thornhill. As my father used to say, sometimes you have to look behind you before you know where you're going.

Thank you, Reverend Heather and the congregation, for your hospitality as we celebrated 175 years at Thornhill Presbyterian. May there be 175 more.

EVENTS IN OTTAWA-VANIER

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Last week, I joined the residents of Ottawa-Vanier as they kicked off the summer with festivities across the riding. I attended the popular summer fest in Beacon Hill alongside Mayor Sutcliffe, MP Fortier, city councillor Tim Tierney and community association presidents Heather Scott and Jeff Kaluski. Everyone enjoyed the weather, the activities, the free hot dogs and, of course, the traditional cake, which I had fun serving.

At the Beechwood Market summer opening, I connected with neighbours and bought local goods, witnessing vibrant community spirit.

The VeloFest in Vanier, hosted by Club Optimiste, was again a hit this year with several families winning brand-new bicycles. A special thanks to Club Optimiste for their constant contributions to our community.

The wonderful lobster dinner organized by the Club Richelieu was also very successful. Several volunteers and students from l'école élémentaire publique Le Prélude tended to all the guests, and the band performance by the school was simply a delight.

June will continue to be busy with AGMs, graduation ceremonies, fundraising events, tea parties and so much more. As we are nearing the end of our parliamentary session, I want to wish to all my colleagues here in the House a great summer in your respective communities.

D-DAY ANNIVERSARY

Mr. John Yakabuski: After the Dunkirk evacuation in 1940, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill knew that victory over Germany would only be achieved with a

future invasion of continental Europe. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor and the subsequent declaration of war by the United States against the Axis powers, that invasion and the planning of it became a reality.

The attack, code-named Operation Overlord, began on June 6, 1944. Approximately 150,000 Allied troops landed or parachuted into the invasion area on D-Day, including 14,000 Canadians on Juno Beach. It was the largest sea-borne invasion ever attempted in history.

After securing the beaches at a great cost, the Normandy campaign began. As the Americans battled on the western end of the front and struggled to take the prized port city of Cherbourg, the British and Canadians waged war around the Norman capital city of Caen. My father was one of those soldiers.

1030

The Normandy campaign finally ended on the 21st of August 1944, with Canadians playing an important role in the closing of the Falaise gap. After D-Day, more than two million soldiers landed in France, ensuring an Allied victory and the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Tomorrow, we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the D-Day invasion. Let us all take time to remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice and also those who came home to build the great country we know today, securing the freedoms that we sometimes take for granted, but are ever grateful for.

Lest we forget.

TONIATA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr. Steve Clark: Today, I rise to recognize a very special anniversary in my riding of Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. This past Saturday, Toniata Public School celebrated their 60th anniversary and I was pleased to attend the celebration with the current students, staff, faculty and alumni. There were 13 special speakers that shared remarks and memories, including Hugh Bates, who was the very first principal at that school in 1964. He also opened the school's time capsule.

Speaker, I was even more thrilled to attend the celebration with two of my grandchildren, Mila and Georgy, who are proud Toniata Tigers. My wife, Deanna, and I were very proud that, in addition to Mila and Georgy, all five of our children attended this amazing school.

Speaker, the celebration was emotional, knowing that it's Toniata's final anniversary. At the end of the school year, Toniata will merge with Commonwealth Public School to form the brand new Swift Waters Elementary in Brockville, a state-of-the-art facility that will open its doors in September.

I want to congratulate Toniata's principal Tania Stover and all the staff there for this amazing milestone in your history. I want to thank you for all the great things you do for our kids and our communities. I felt really privileged to be able to represent it.

Happy anniversary, Toniata Public School.

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

ANNUAL REPORT AND STATISTICAL REPORT, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: the 2023 annual report and 2023 statistical report, entitled *Beyond Imagination: Planning for Ontarians' Digital Future*, from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Good morning. I have the pleasure of welcoming former pages Monica and Michelle Crawford, who are here to see their sister Farah Crawford.

M^{me} France Gélinas: They are making their way in. They are paramedics and dispatchers from all over Ontario, from Thunder Bay to Kingston to all over, making their way into the Legislative Assembly. Welcome to your House. Paramedics are very important to all of us.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Welcome to the House, Carlos Cabaneros from the Filipinos in the 6ix organization, who is hosting today's Filipino Heritage Month event in room 228 at 5 p.m. You're all welcome to attend.

Please welcome Carlos Cabaneros to your House.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the privilege of welcoming to the Legislature today five members from the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek's constituency office, people who are working tirelessly on behalf of those constituents in Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. We have Julian Pecchia, Jane Neal, Tony Lemma, Kenya Maughn and John Gillis. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I'm really proud to welcome my family again to Queen's Park: my wife Aleksandra, my son Aleksandar and my son Ilija. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good morning, everyone. I'd like to introduce my new intern for the summer. Her name is magnificent Mikaela Taylor, and she's actually from Scarborough–Guildwood, so I'm borrowing her. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Speaker, I beg your indulgence for two groups to introduce this morning. First off, we have Brampton North's own Guransh Ghai, who is operating as page captain today, and we're joined by his family: his mother, Shaminder; father, Manpreet; and sister, Hasrat Ghai. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Also, I'd like to welcome Aggarwal Sabha Canada to Queen's Park—I had all the names, and I just clicked "X." I'm very happy to have a whole whack of people, and thanks to my friend Ashwani Aggarwal for organizing. We have Satpal Gupta, Parmod Goyal, Vinod Bansal, Mrs. Gazal Bansal, Yash Rani Goenka, Ashwani Aggarwal, Suresh Aggarwal, Ajay Gupta, Sanjeev Gupta, Shiv Par Kash Bansal, Pardeep Goel, Ashok Aggarwal, Sandeep Aggarwal, Deewan Chand Goyal, Bajrang Gupta and Salil

Aggarwal from Aggarwal Sabha Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Jill Andrew: I want to welcome Filipinos in the 6ix to Queen's Park, to your House. I also want to say congratulations on a wonderful Filipino Heritage Hoop Fest. Congratulations.

Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam: I would like to welcome my summer intern, Tamileni Vijay, from Scarborough–Rouge Park.

Also, I would also like to welcome Supothanam Jayakumar, my operations adviser, and also would like to welcome Filipinos in the 6ix and Carlos to the chamber. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I would like to thank my husband, Albert Wai, for 45 years of happy marriage. Happy anniversary, Albert.

Mr. Deepak Anand: It's always a pleasure to introduce our parents, the people who took care of us. It's an absolute pleasure to welcome Puneet Sharma, Sheelu Sharma and Sheelu Sharma's parents, Satya Naryan Sharma and Lad Sharma, for their first time to Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): With the indulgence of the House, I'd like to continue with the introduction of visitors.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Rob Moquin and Kyle Stamler, paramedics from Thunder Bay, made it to the House. Mike Merriman, Steve Rocks, Joel Usher and Keri Irving made it to the House. Welcome to your House, paramedics coming to visit us.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to introduce Warren and Ramona Ehlert, who are with us today: the parents of our page Tristan Ehlert, who is from King–Vaughan. Welcome to the Legislature.

I also would like to welcome two distinct individuals from the Youth Association for Academics, Athletics and Character Education, Devon Jones and Marina Nguyen, who are with us. This amazing organization, founded at Jane and Finch, supports young education in inspiring them to pursue their dreams. Thank you, and welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Chris Glover: I just want to wish our colleague Jeff Burch a very happy 39th birthday.

Hon. David Piccini: I want to welcome some friends from Helmets to Hardhats here to Queen's Park today: James Hogarth, who is also a great advocate for the construction sector. And also, I think—my eyes, Speaker; I'm getting up there. But Darryl Cathcart, I think, is here as well. Thank you for being here and thank you for being such a strong voice for military veterans and their families.

1040

Miss Monique Taylor: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to wish another one of our colleagues a very happy birthday, Ms. Jennifer French. It's her birthday today too. Happy birthday.

WEARING OF POPPIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I'm seeking unanimous consent to allow members to wear poppies today, Wednesday, June 5, and tomorrow, Thursday, June 6, in remembrance of the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to wear poppies today, Wednesday, June 5, and tomorrow, Thursday, June 6, in remembrance of the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings. Agreed? Agreed.

D-DAY ANNIVERSARY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): A second point of order by the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: First, let me just thank all colleagues for this. As you know, the end of a session can be very fluid, so all members wanted to make sure that we had an opportunity to recognize D-Day, even if it is a day in advance.

Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in remembrance of the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, with five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group and five minutes allotted to His Majesty's government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra is seeking unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in remembrance of the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, with five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group and five minutes allotted to His Majesty's government. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the member for St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I rise again to recognize the great privilege to stand to participate in representing my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in this Legislature as we collectively lead an important moment of reflection for Canada's military history. It is the veterans who sacrificed it all for our communities. They have made it so we all can enjoy and respect the freedom we enjoy today.

Today, I stand to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day, the Normandy landing. When those who served our country first enlisted, they did so as ordinary citizens, some lying about their age. They felt pain and joy. They made memories with their friends and loved ones back home in hockey rinks and schoolyards, in living rooms and community centres. They lived a life here as we all do today. Eighty years ago, they left as ordinary people; when they marched onto the beaches of Normandy, they were forever changed. They became our heroes.

On June 6, 1944, Canadian soldiers, sailors and airmen were sent into the bloodiest battle of World War II—1,074 Canadians were injured and 359 did not make it through the battle that day. To put that number into perspective for

those of you sitting in this room, the lives lost on that day is more than double the number of elected individuals we have sitting in this chamber.

By the end of the Battle of Normandy, we lost more than 18,700 Canadians. What sets them apart is their unwavering service, their willingness to risk and, for some, give the ultimate sacrifice to each and every one of us. In donning a uniform, they represented us; they fought for us; they gave their lives for us. We are honour-bound to remember them. In each of our own ways, we honour those who have defended our freedoms and made the ultimate sacrifice.

My colleague from Ottawa Centre visited those beaches recently, honouring his grandfather, and the feeling and the emotions that would overcome him with grief, pride and honour.

My community in Niagara, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in Canada and across Ontario have deep roots that will be expressed in events and memorialization. I encourage all of the members of this House and this chamber to attend their own local events.

I am proud to live in a province where our government, the official opposition and the independent members of this Legislature will always stand by our service members, be it past, present or future. We honour those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for Canada 80 years ago on the beaches in Normandy. We honour those sacrificing every day in some way in active duty right now, defending our freedoms on the front lines. For that, we owe them a debt that we can never repay. We owe them the honour of remembering them today, tomorrow and in the future. We will remember them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll recognize next the member for Kanata–Carleton.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: D-Day, the 6th of June, 1944, was the largest amphibious invasion in the history of warfare. The Allies used over 5,000 ships and landing craft to land more than 150,000 troops on the beaches of Normandy.

The Allies banded together more than 80 years ago to put an end to the tyrannical rule of a dictator—a dictator who convinced his countrymen to abolish the rights of minorities, to turn a blind eye to crime, stoking the fires of hate and division while fighting to eliminate democracies across Europe. Through populist propaganda and simplistic slogans, attacks on education, experts and the media and a constant effort to hide the truth and to hide their true intention, fascism prevailed.

There are lessons to be learned as history is always perilously close to repeating itself. Notwithstanding a century of civic progress, some current-day leaders have launched attacks on individual freedoms and rights. We must challenge this at every opportunity.

Speaker, we owe our freedoms to those who landed on the beaches at Normandy. One such hero is a long-time Kanata–Carleton resident, Dr. Roly Armitage, who is 99 years old. He landed at Normandy and fought bravely for his country. He returned home and became a long-time community leader and veterinarian in West Carleton and

the Ottawa Valley. When asked what he remembers about landing in Normandy on D-Day, he humbly says, “I got my feet wet, and I wasn't welcome.”

Like so many, Roly doesn't see his selfless service as anything extraordinary. His service is a constant inspiration, and I am privileged to call him a friend.

To my colleagues, to my friends, to all Ontarians, I ask you—I implore you—to honour Roly's service to our country, to honour the sacrifice made by thousands of Canadians who never returned from war. Our democracy is a priceless legacy paid for in blood and sacrifice. It is our constant duty, our responsibility, to raise our voices in protest wherever and whenever we encounter the tools of tyranny. Lest we forget.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise today to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day, a pivotal moment in Canadian and world history.

On June 6, 1944, British, American and Canadian troops stormed the beaches of Normandy in the largest seaborne military invasion in history, which played a central role in ending the Second World War and the march of tyranny across Europe.

1050

Canadian soldiers, sailors and aviators were instrumental in D-Day's operation. Some 14,000 Canadians bravely landed on Juno Beach and pushed further inland than any of the Allied forces. Their bravery and sacrifice played a critical role in the Allied invasion, which ultimately led to victory in Europe and the end of the Second World War, the horrors of the Nazi regime and the Holocaust.

There were 1,096 Canadian casualties, of whom 381 lost their lives. Many of those heroes still remain laid buried in France, while others suffered injuries to body and mind that they would carry for the rest of their lives. Eighty years later, it is imperative that we remember the ultimate sacrifice they made.

Speaker, all of us in this House have a duty and a responsibility to honour their sacrifice by defending the freedom and democracy they fought for and died for, so today we honour the men and women who risk their lives on the beaches of Normandy, and we take time to reflect on the many privileges we have today as a result of their sacrifice. Lest we forget.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Sadly, what most of us feel we know about D-Day is, quite frankly, what we see in the movies today, *Saving Private Ryan* the most notable example. It's hard to get through those opening scenes. The horror of war is on full bloody display, but so is the bravery, the courage and the humanity of those who were fighting to make and keep the world safer for us at home.

These movies that we watch in the comfort of our homes, surrounded by family and friends, are about real people, in real places, doing real things. They weren't safe, they certainly weren't comfortable, but they all wanted to come home to be with their family and friends. For 4,414

of them, that didn't happen. For more than 350 Canadians, that didn't happen. For them, it was real.

Months of top-secret planning took place—new tactics, misdirection, decoys, raids—all to distract and mislead the Nazis about the timing and location of this eventual attack. Even then, with all the planning, the success of the operation was far from guaranteed, with some giving it a 50-50 chance of success. But as we've heard, on June 6, 1944, the Allies launched Operation Overlord, the long-anticipated invasion of Normandy in France.

Soldiers from across the US, the UK, and, of course, Canada and other Allied nations faced Hitler's formidable Atlantic wall. As they landed on the beaches of Normandy, 50,000 troops spread across five beaches. The operation was made increasingly difficult due to landings that were marred by challenging weather and very difficult terrain, with many of the Allied landing craft affected by enemy mines, the Allied soldiers having to establish positions on exposed beachheads—I can't even imagine this—all under very heavy enemy fire.

By the end of the day, over 14,000 Canadian soldiers had landed or parachuted into France. Those in that first wave suffered the heaviest with nearly every other soldier being a casualty. In the end, Canada suffered over 1,000 of those casualties, and on June 6, more than 350 were fatalities.

The price paid by the Allies on that day cannot be overstated. Across all the five beaches, the Allies suffered over 10,000 casualties; 4,414 did not answer the roll call the next morning. As we commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day, we remember them, Speaker, and we honour them.

While it was not clear at the time, with the foothold on the continent now secure, the Allies would begin their march towards Berlin. Less than a year after D-Day, the war in Europe would be over.

Every year, Canadians pause to reflect and remember our veterans and the sacrifices they made for those freedoms that we talk about, those freedoms that we enjoy. These gatherings remind us of the human cost of war and provide the chance to see and interact with the veterans who bravely and courageously served. Some are here today. Today, 80 years removed from D-Day, we are blessed to still have some of those who stormed the beaches of Normandy with us. Thank you for highlighting one of them.

We have a moral responsibility, a human responsibility, to ensure that those stories live on through us. The average age of these vets closes in on 100 now. We are faced with the reality that, for many, this 80th anniversary, this milestone, may be the last anniversary they experience. Let's embrace the time we have with these heroes. Let's use it and learn from them, to offer our unending thanks for their sacrifice, and to assure them that we will carry the torch. We will carry that torch forward to be remembered for generations to come.

To the veterans here today—namely, Commander Paul Smith and Lieutenant Commander Stefan Pohl from HMCS York—and representatives from the Juno Beach

foundation, Historica Canada, Helmets to Hardhats, True Patriot Love, Coding for Veterans and Together We Stand who travelled here to Queen's Park this morning to commemorate this important day with us, we thank you and we do salute you.

To all of our vets who served in World War I, World War II, Korea, Afghanistan and as peacekeepers around the world in conflicts, their bravery and courage represents the best—the best—of who we are as Canadians. They have made our country and the world a better place, and we're all forever grateful. Lest we forget. Lest we forget.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I wish to inform the House that we have some special guests with us today, former members of the Legislature: The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek in the 39th, 40th, 41st and 42nd Parliaments, Paul Miller—welcome back; and the member for Windsor–Tecumseh in the 40th, 41st and 42nd Parliaments, Percy Hatfield.

I'm pleased to say that we also have with us the Poet Laureate of Ontario, Randell Adjei, and his mother, Esther Ablorh; his father, Fawkins Ablorh; and his friend Mark Stoddart. Randell has done a superb job as Poet Laureate, and we thank him for his service to the Legislature and the people of Ontario.

1100

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning, Speaker. This question is for the Premier.

This government knows how to spend big on vanity ads and projects that favour their friends. In fact, their fiscal plans are going to see Ontario's deficit triple this year. Across Ontario, meanwhile, people are wondering what they're getting for that money. Rural emergency rooms are closing, northern highways are shutting down, and schools are running out of buckets to catch the leaks.

How can the government justify spending nearly a billion dollars to break a Beer Store contract that is already set to expire?

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you for the question, to the member opposite.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: The number that she's putting forward, of course, is a hypothetical number that you can only get to—get this—if you raise taxes and raise fees. Which side of the House wants to raise taxes and fees? I would submit that it's that side of the House and that side of the House, except for the middle here. This side of the House wants to cut fees and cut taxes for the people of Ontario and the businesses of Ontario.

As we saw last week, we had a number of businesses say that this was a good thing. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said, “Speeding up the process to allow more Ontario small retailers to sell beer and wine is a very positive move for entrepreneurs and consumers.”

What does the member opposite have against—

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

The supplementary question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, the government themselves have said it’s going to cost at least \$225 million to break that contract, but for me, and I think for all of us over here, it’s about where that money is being spent. The Premier is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to subsidize a private luxury spa in downtown Toronto, while 2.4 million Ontarians can’t get a family doctor. He won’t pay nurses what they deserve, but he’ll pay three times as much to private, for-profit nursing temp agencies. And while rural emergency rooms are shutting their doors, he’s spending \$25 million on partisan ads to gaslight people about how good they have it—and let me tell you, people know it ain’t good.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I’m going to ask the member to withdraw the unparliamentary comment—

Ms. Marit Stiles: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):—and to conclude her question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question to the Premier is, can the Premier let the people know what they have to do to become his priority?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I’m sure the member opposite has read the budget. Of course, we all know she and her party voted against the budget, but if she had looked at the budget, she would have noticed that health care spending over the last few years has gone from \$75 billion to \$85 billion, an increase of \$10 billion. If you do the math, \$10 billion over two years, over \$75 billion—that’s a significant increase.

And where is this money going? Through this Minister of Health and the whole team on this side, this money is going to build more hospitals and acute-care beds across the province. Fundamentally, also, this Minister of Health led the charge to increase the funding for primary care—\$600 million—so that there are more patients being taken care of.

But she didn’t stop there. Do you know what she did? She put in a request, and we’re funding \$2 billion more for home and community care so we can take good care of people at home.

That’s what we’re doing for the people.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, if people have it so great, why are there emergency rooms closing?

It’s the Premier’s priorities that are completely out of whack with where Ontarians are at. If he spent some time talking to them instead of for them, he might learn something.

I want to take that Beer Store contract again, for example—even people who are looking forward to having

beer in convenience stores are asking why we would ever fork over as much as a billion dollars to make it happen when the contract is going to expire anyway. They want to know why there’s no money to fix the air conditioners in their kids’ schools, but they have hundreds of millions of dollars for that.

Does the Premier think that this billion dollars is money well spent?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: As I said yesterday and I’ll repeat here in the House, those numbers are part of Boondoggle Bonnie’s math over there. You can only get there, supported by the math over here, through increasing taxes and fees, which we’re not doing on the people of Ontario. We’re not going to put the costs through to consumers. We’re going to let the businesses thrive here.

Let’s continue to look at some of the support here from the Ontario Craft Brewers: “These changes are critical to the success of the new system so craft beer operators have a chance to compete and thrive in Ontario.”

The Grape Growers of Ontario: They want to expand their grape growing in Ontario.

The Convenience Industry Council of Canada: They want to increase the ability to sell beer and wine across the province.

One concept that I think the member opposite can’t seem to handle is that we can be fiscally responsible and grow the economy at the same time. This party is getting it done.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Ms. Marit Stiles: The Ontario deficit is triple again this year, Speaker, I remind the minister.

Anyway, back to the Premier: In February, we saw the loss of 300 school board positions that support children with special needs in Mississauga, in Brampton and in Caledon. A new report from People for Education found that nearly half of our schools are experiencing a shortage of educational assistants every single day.

Students with disabilities have a right to education in safe and supportive classrooms. So my question to the Premier is, why are children in Ontario being short-changed by this government?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We are firmly committed to the safety and security of those very children, which is why, in the most recent budget, we increased the staffing and increased the funding for special education. Speaker, to the member opposite, we’ve now increased special education funding to the highest levels in provincial history. It is up over \$110 million this year compared to last year.

There are 3,500 additional EAs within our schools as a consequence of our Premier and government’s investment. This year, we launched a new investment to train

our staff specifically dealing with a plan of care co-created by the school and the parent for children that have prevalent medical conditions—a new investment we announced some months ago and put in place.

We are committed to the success and safety of children. The funding is there. We'll continue to increase it and the staffing and the training to keep our kids safe in our schools.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: People across the province are mourning. They're calling for action in the wake of the very tragic death of Landyn Ferris. He was a vulnerable child who died after being left alone at school. That is an unimaginable nightmare for anyone and, I will say, any parent in this place, I'm sure. We've been asking about this all week, and nobody out there is satisfied, least of all us, with this government's answers.

You don't need to wait for a coroner's inquest to start right now to make sure that kids don't die at school. So my question back to the Premier is, what changes will this government be making today to ensure that no other parent has to go through what Landyn's mom, Brenda, is going through right now?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, we're dealing with the loss of a child, a tragedy, and I would urge the member opposite to allow an independent, fulsome investigation to get under way and to resist the inclination of trying to exploit this opportunity. Because there is an investigation under way, and in order to ensure the integrity of that investigation, we should all stand by with the assurance that we will work together to protect children within our schools.

The school board in question, as required by the province, has a plan of care. They actually have a plan for any child with medical conditions. They are required to implement it. This year, to the member's question of what's new, we added an investment specifically to deal with consistent training of our staff when we're talking about children that have these issues. We've developed training modules and new investments put out this year to help those very children in our schools.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: This was a preventable tragedy. This is not about political games; this is about political choices. This is about political choices.

The minister hasn't even said Landyn's name. He is not a data point; he was a child and he was Brenda's child.

1110

There is a theme here of a government that is cutting funding and programs that support children. We used to have a children's advocate in this province until this government got rid of him. Families have been coming here

to this place for the last six years warning about the risks and the consequences of this government's choices.

I want to ask the Premier: Will he contradict his minister and agree that you do not need to wait for a coroner's inquest to do right by Landyn and other kids like him?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: When dealing with a tragedy of a child, the responsibility of government and Parliament is to make sure that there is an independent, fulsome investigation, which the coroner of Ontario is leading, supported by the OPP. That young man, Landyn, has every right and deserves this investigation for his family and for his mother.

That's why, to the member's question of what is new, this government stepped up with an investment that took effect this year, specifically to deal with the consistent training of our staff with respect to children that require a plan of care. Every school board is required to have that.

Interjection.

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: And this year, we added an investment in addition to the 3,500 EAs and the new funding and the increase in spec ed. This specific year, there is a \$250,000 investment to develop training modules, develop the Ontario physical health and education association to ensure consistent application of these policies and the safety of our children.

I would hope the members opposite would allow that investigation to take place without the inclination of trying to exploit it for their own political—

Interjections.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: Shame on you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The next question.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Speaker, this year's Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario survey reveals high levels of violence in our schools: 77% of their members have experienced violence in the classroom.

It's worse in the north. The wait-lists are up to 24 months to access mental health supports. Some students must travel four to eight hours to access service.

Will the Premier commit today to addressing the student support deficiency in the north?

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the question from the member opposite. We know how important it is to access mental health services, particularly in remote parts of Ontario, for First Nation, Indigenous and Métis people.

We have expanded the Rapid Response Northern School Teams, with an \$800,000 expansion this specific year, to assist with respect to connecting access to mental health supports for families and communities, particularly for our children in the most remote parts of Ontario.

We have stepped up with an overall investment in mental health. Because of the parliamentary assistant and the member from Burlington, we have expanded a mental health module developed by SickKids in school mental health. We also have ensured there is culturally responsive mental health services for Indigenous peoples.

We will continue to work with the member opposite and all members to ensure the safety of those in the most remote parts of Ontario.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: The fact of the matter is, we are still waiting four to eight hours to access those services. The education in the north is in deep trouble.

Teachers working in Kiiwetinoong school boards recently told me that the classrooms get evacuated so often because of violence that the students are desensitized. Class sizes and wait-lists for support have only increased under this Premier.

Will the minister commit to increasing the per-student funding for students in the north?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And to reply, the Minister of Northern Development and Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I appreciate the advocacy of the member from Kiiwetinoong and the Minister of Education and, frankly, the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, who collectively have worked with us to build a very effective partnership with Nishnawbe Aski Nation. We recently committed \$2.6 million in funding to support a number of activities to ensure that children in school, especially from the Far North, get the mental health supports that they need.

Part of that funding went to Keewaytinook Okimakanak to lead the NAN Hope program that provides community-driven, culturally appropriate services for young people in crisis. Other supports included students who have come from the isolated communities to places like Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay and ensuring, whether it's crisis teams or just partnering with a mentor, they have the resources in those schools for mental health supports.

Of course, to the member's question about the immediacy of support, especially for youth in crisis, part of those resources was dedicated to make sure that Nishnawbe Aski Nation as an organization had the vehicles necessary to get to locations to meet students coming from the north or in cities—

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

The next question.

TAXATION

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

Mr. Graham McGregor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, gosh, Mr. Speaker, you look great today.

My question is for the Minister of Energy. I don't need any political spin; I want a straight answer. My question is: At a time when inflation and the cost of living continue to rise, the federal government has decided to further burden Ontarians and hike the carbon tax by 23%. Time and again, the federal Liberals and their buddies in the Ontario Liberal Party, led by the carbon tax queen herself, Bonnie Crombie, have continued to put failed policies that show a lack of empathy for Ontarians who are struggling with the cost of gas, groceries and heating their homes.

When the carbon tax queen, Bonnie Crombie, was mayor of Mississauga, she hiked taxes, just like her federal buddies are doing now. Ontarians cannot afford this Liberal tax grab. The carbon tax must come to an end.

With summer quickly approaching, could the Minister of Energy please explain how the carbon tax continues to affect—

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

Minister of Energy.

Hon. Todd Smith: The spin stops here. We are now in full force in our farming season in Ontario. The farmers are out there, and that includes, in my riding, the grape growers, those great wineries like Huff Estates and Rosehall Run and Sandbanks that we all enjoy. They're out there producing great Prince Edward county wines.

Since day one, our government has been focused on bringing costs down. Even in our recent budget, the Minister of Finance cut the wine tax by 6.1%, a great step. We've also focused on cutting energy costs, and that's a break of 10.7 cents a litre at the pumps.

Not only are our farmers out there in the field every day, but they need to get their products to market. The Grape Growers of Ontario, with a group of farm organizations not too long ago, with the Premier and agriculture minister, said that they just can't survive the federal carbon tax supported by our provincial Liberals, NDP and the Green Party.

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

Mr. Graham McGregor: I want to thank the minister for his response. The hard-working men and women in my riding of Brampton North and across the province want an immediate end to the carbon tax.

The queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, knew well when she was mayor of Mississauga the cost of the carbon tax, particularly on public safety. The carbon tax costs a police car \$6,500 per year; for a fire truck, \$15,000 per year. We haven't done the numbers, but I imagine the carbon tax is pretty pricey for private jets as well.

All parties in this Legislature, including the Ontario Liberals, including the NDP, should be calling on the federal government to abolish this punitive tax. Instead, the opposition NDP and the independent Liberals, led by the carbon tax queen, Bonnie Crombie, are choosing to do nothing. Ontarians deserve better. That's why our government will continue to fight this disastrous tax until it is scrapped for good.

Can the minister explain what our government is doing to stand up against the carbon tax and put money back into Ontarians' pockets?

1120

Hon. Todd Smith: We've cut the gas tax, as I mentioned, by 10.7 cents a litre. We're reducing fees: One Fare for transit riders right across the GTHA. We've cut licence plate sticker fees. We've cut the Drive Clean program that was just a grab—oh, my goodness; it was driving up the price for everyone. We brought in all of these accomplishments, and more, for the people of Ontario. But the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, and Gang Green here and the NDP, they're in full support of Prime Minister Trudeau's federal carbon tax, which is driving up the cost of everything, from the pumps to home heating to groceries that we buy every day.

We've taken a different approach. We're continuing to build on our clean energy system that we have in Ontario. As a result, we're seeing multi-billion-dollar investments in our province. The 300,000 jobs that left under their watch? Seven-hundred thousand of them have come back to Ontario.

Our economy is thriving. We can do this without a costly carbon tax, Mr. Speaker.

PHARMACARE

MPP Jill Andrew: This week, Canadians are celebrating the introduction of universal pharmacare. A big part of this commitment includes access to contraception. This will make a huge difference to realizing reproductive health and equity for women, queer, trans and non-binary people. We can make it easier for people to plan their pregnancies and improve maternal and child health care outcomes. We could eliminate the cost burden for these communities at a time when cost of living is becoming unbearable. But this government is refusing to make this happen.

My question is to the Premier: How long will Ontarians have to wait for this Ontario government to commit to universal pharmacare?

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Frankly, we're still trying to figure out when the federal government is going to share their plans.

We have been in the pharmacare space in Ontario for many, many decades; the member opposite would know this. We have OHIP+—25-and-under individuals who have access to free pharmaceuticals. We have a seniors-plus program. We have a Trillium drug plan program. We have ensured that we fill those gaps where we see the need in our community, and we'll continue to do that.

I think if the member opposite would like to be of assistance, she could actually talk to the federal NDP and say, "Why are you supporting a program that has no details and no benefits?"

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

MPP Jill Andrew: This government has no plan. They keep passing the buck.

But anyway, back to the Premier: This government is playing political games with people's health. They don't care about the health and safety of women, queer, trans and non-binary people. Just ask them. If they did, they would understand the urgency of bringing no-cost contraception to Ontarians. They're ignoring the problem, just like you've done with \$10-a-day childcare.

This government has shown community members and their families their well-being is not their priority. Ontarians deserve better. So I'm going back to the Premier: When will this government start prioritizing the things that actually matter to Ontarians, stop playing political games and stop prioritizing beer and wine? Prioritize the people.

Interjections.

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

Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Respectfully, Speaker, that's bunk. Where were the NDP when we announced in Peel region a Peel Black Health and Social Services Hub? Nowhere; nothing. They don't care. They don't talk about it because they see that we are making the investments. We will continue to.

Speaker, earlier this morning, I had an opportunity to talk to over 600 providers who are working in community health centres doing the work that this member is, frankly, dismissing. We will continue to make those investments, because we see that when we work with people, when we work with communities, when we make those investments, that's when you see a difference—not when the NDP members spew facts that, frankly, have no reality.

TAXATION

Mr. Andrew Dowie: It's always a great day when Percy Hatfield is in our presence, so welcome.

Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, or as I dub him, the minister for green automotive production, Windsor-Essex.

The carbon tax is hurting businesses and families back home and right across the province. As the Premier has repeatedly said, it is truly the worst tax. It is an inflationary tax that penalizes the hard-working men and women who are the backbone of our economy.

Ontario is home to a wealth of skilled workers in key sectors that will be vital to the province's economic success and prosperity in the years to come. The last thing a government should be doing is hiking taxes on workers and chasing them away.

Speaker, can the minister please explain what he is hearing from companies and workers about the carbon tax?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, we just returned from the BIO International Convention to promote Ontario's thriving life sciences ecosystem. We talked about companies

around the globe, and they're intrigued by how rapidly Ontario life science is continuing to grow.

Ontario has the best talent pool with over 70,000 STEM grads annually coming out of our renowned post-secondary institutions. We want those workers to stay here in Ontario and succeed, which is why we've taken action to lower taxes, so they can keep more of what they earn.

But with the Liberal carbon tax, the federal government is moving in the opposite direction. They're making life less affordable and risking the progress that we have made, Speaker. We need them to come around. Follow our lead. Scrap the carbon tax today.

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

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Truly, the people of Ontario want a government who will stand up for them and work to make their life more affordable, not more expensive.

They had a clear choice in the by-elections in Milton and Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. Certainly, knocking on those doors, I received that message loud and clear. They could vote for our government, who will always have their backs and fight to keep costs down, or they could vote for the Liberals and NDP, who endorse the carbon tax and will never stand up to their federal cousins in Ottawa. It's no shock that they chose to elect two excellent, new PC MPPs, who are already important members of our government, as we fight against unnecessary Liberal tax hikes.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on why Liberals need to scrap their carbon tax?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, when businesses are choosing where to invest and expand, they look for jurisdictions with lower costs. That's why, under the previous Liberal government, we saw businesses looking outside of Ontario.

The Liberals put up mountains of red tape. They hiked tax after tax after tax and they scared businesses away: 300,000 manufacturing jobs fled the province and key industries were on the brink of collapse. And now, the federal Liberals are trying to do this all over again with their carbon tax.

We need the Liberals to reverse course. Speaker, we ask them: Listen to the hard-working people and businesses in Ontario. Scrap the carbon tax today.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Speaker, when people have the courage to reach out for mental health help, there must be someone there to listen and guide them to proper services.

When Amanda called a 24/7 hotline, and despite the receptionist exclaiming, "Wow, that's a lot," there was no one Amanda could talk to in that moment.

Children's mental health wait-lists are years long. Students aren't getting any mental health supports in schools. There are just so many other areas where this government can't get their act together.

Why is this government underfunding CMHA and disregarding their wise funding requests in budget 2024?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'm not aware of there being issues with respect to funding CMHA. As a matter of fact, we spend a great deal of money working with CMHA to provide the great services they do throughout the province of Ontario.

In fact, we partner up with them in many of the services that are being provided. Whether it's the mobile crisis response teams, whether it's providing the supports and services in our children and youth sector, whether it's in the youth wellness hubs, whether it's their centres where they're dealing with crisis, whether it's in the crisis centres that they're operating for us around the centre, we are investing. And this government continues to invest in building a continuum of care that's based in all the communities, so that the supports and services are provided close to home to individuals.

1130

The government has made incredible investments—over \$500 million a year—to build this system, and it's continuing to build the system, notwithstanding the neglect of the past government, supported by the NDP. The government is making investments and creating that continuum of care, and it is making a real difference, thanks to the partnerships—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Supplementary question?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Speaker, the minister says this government is building, and we are here to say that this government needs to build faster.

It seems to me that there's more interest from this government in billion-dollar buck-a-beer—while London's mobile crisis response COAST program is not funded at all by this government.

Mental health funding isn't making it to people when and where they need it. People like Amanda deserve to get supports in times of need.

When will this government admit they're failing when it comes to addressing the mental health needs of Ontarians?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Again, I'm surprised that that would be a comment coming—that we're failing. If you look at what we inherited from the past government and the investments that we're making, building a system that did not exist in the past, one of the things you should be saying is the accolades that we should be getting for the work that we're doing. To build a system, you don't do it overnight. The investments we're making are sizable, given the fact that we are making significant changes throughout the system, not just in providing the supports and services that are desperately needed throughout the province, but also trying to reduce the demand and the needs for those services by investing in innovation, like youth wellness hubs—27 of them, to be exact—throughout the province of Ontario. Making upstream investments will ensure that in the future the services that are being developed today are going to be sized to the needs of the province.

That's what this government is doing. It's focused and will continue to build a system of care for everyone in the province.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Stephen Blais: My question is for the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, I've received numerous emails, phone calls and letters about the state of our education system. Recently, Catholic teachers reached out to articulate concerns about the teacher shortage, the billions in repair backlog, and the lack of per pupil funding. But what I've rarely been asked about is greater access to the sale of beer and wine.

I don't mind selling beer and wine at the corner store, but as a fiscal conservative, I do mind the billion-dollar price tag that comes along with it. I wonder how this government is going to make up the billion-dollar shortfall, already having ballooned the provincial debt by nearly \$100 billion. Taking on more debt is not a fiscally responsible approach.

My question: To avoid taking on massive amounts of new debt, why won't this government auction licences to sell alcohol and beer, like Conservative governments in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and use that money to better fund our education system?

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite is really saying is that what their party would do is they would increase the taxes and the fees on the consumers and the small businesses of Ontario. Is that the right thing to do? I don't think so.

We heard from people, we heard from businesses, and they want to stimulate the economic activity of Ontario. The convenience store association said this will create thousands of jobs. The grape growers, the wine growers, the craft brewers, the cideries across Ontario—this is good for Ontario.

I don't know what the member opposite has against Ontario businesses. I don't know why the member opposite would want to increase fees and taxes.

This is a government that cuts fees and taxes.

We'll update the numbers this fall, for sure.

I'll remind the member opposite, this member's party also increased the debt to the highest subnational debt in the world. Their government got downgraded—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The supplementary question.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Mr. Speaker, with \$100 billion added to the debt, it is still the highest subnational debt in the world, under this Conservative government, so much so I actually think he's applying to run for Justin Trudeau in the next election, not Mr. Poilievre. This government is so fixated on beer and wine and booze that health care is an afterthought.

How can they justify two million Ontarians going without a family doctor? Imagine, Mr. Speaker, every resident

of the combined cities of Ottawa, Windsor, London, Kingston and Guelph—no family doctor.

Is the price tag of a billion dollars really worth the opportunity to go buy a six-pack at the corner store? Is that really what's going to solve our problems? How about a billion dollars to reduce the surgical backlog that a quarter-million Ontarians are facing?

Auctioning the licences like true conservative governments in Alberta and Saskatchewan have done would raise hundreds of millions of dollars, money that could be invested—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.
Minister of Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Mr. Speaker, did that member opposite vote for or against cutting the gas tax?

Interjections: Against.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Mr. Speaker, did that member opposite and their party vote for or against the budget?

Interjections: Against.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: But one thing they did do: When they were in power, they got downgraded by the credit rating agency DBRS. And guess which government has a positive credit watch, not just from DBRS, not just from Moody's, but also S&P? It's this government that's lowering the borrowing costs for the people of Ontario.

In fact, that's reversing the trend. It took 15 years to bury this province. It's taken us six short years to turn the economy around.

As my colleague here says, 300,000 tail lights leaving Ontario, 700,000 headlights bringing jobs back in Ontario.

This just never occurred to the member opposite, that you can be fiscally responsible—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. The Liberal carbon tax is driving up the cost of everyday essentials and making life unaffordable for Ontarians. With summer fast approaching, many families are looking forward to taking some time off and exploring our province with their loved ones, but the carbon tax continues to wreak havoc on our economy, including our cherished and world-class tourism sector.

Just last week, Bonnie Crombie's federal cousins suggested that the cost of a family road trip is akin to letting the planet burn. It is shocking to hear how out of touch the Liberals are with Ontario families.

Speaker, could the minister please tell the House how the federal Liberal carbon tax is impacting summer plans for Ontarians?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant, member for Niagara West.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills for his leadership on ensuring that we have a strong tourism sector here in the province of Ontario.

But I have to tell you, Speaker, when I heard that the Liberal members of Parliament were saying that people shouldn't be going on road trips this summer, my jaw hit the floor. And I'll tell you right now, when we talk to the people of Ontario, we know that they want to get out there, and they want to hit the road, but I'm thinking that right now the federal Liberals should be hitting the road, too, because when you look at the fact that we have a long tradition here in Ontario of people being able to get out and enjoy small towns and big cities across this province, whether you're going up to Kenora, whether you're stopping by Lanark county, whether you're visiting Kingsville, we know that the people of Ontario have the right to be able to enjoy those opportunities.

We, unlike the federal Liberals, believe in the rights of the people of Ontario to go out, enjoy a road trip and ensure that they're spending a little bit of money on the road as well to support our local businesses. So we're going to continue to cut costs for those families and encourage them to be able to get out, make a road trip.

Come down to Niagara. We'd love to have you.

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you to the parliamentary secretary for the response. The Liberal carbon tax is hurting people in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills and across Ontario. It is driving up inflation and increasing the cost of everything.

Speaker, it's perplexing how the Liberals and NDP can ignore the heavy burden the carbon tax puts on families. Every day, we hear more about how people are struggling with the increasing cost of basic necessities. Parents taking their kids to hockey practice or on a road trip are now paying more at the gas pump. That's not right. Ontarians deserve to enjoy the summer season with their loved ones and explore our province without worrying about extra costs.

1140

Speaker, could the parliamentary assistant please explain to the House what our government is doing to get people on the road and support summer tourism?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I think that the member opposite really spoke very eloquently about the benefits of the people of Ontario getting out and enjoying some of the incredible sights and attractions that this province has to offer.

We know that unlike the federal government, our government is not penalizing those who want to have a summer vacation or who want to spend a few days on the road. We're actually encouraging that. We're encouraging those people who have the opportunity to get out and visit small towns, spend a few bucks on a nice meal, take their family out for a visit to the beach, and maybe visit one of the sights, sounds and small businesses that make up this beautiful province.

So what we've done is taken a different approach. We've actually cut the gas tax. We've cut licence plate sticker fees, because we know that the majority of the people of this province are drivers and we want to encour-

age them to be able to enjoy every single corner of this province. And it's not only that; it's the millions of dollars that we've devoted to the Experience Ontario program, the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund, our Sport Hosting Program. In so many ways, we are ensuring that the people of this province have the opportunity to enjoy every square inch of this beautiful province, and we'll—

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

FRONT-LINE WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé. Today, paramedics and dispatchers from Thunder Bay to Kingston and all across our province have come to Queen's Park to share with us legislators the challenges they are facing on the front line of emergency care here in Ontario.

All political parties are sending representatives, but a month after the invitations were sent, only one representative from Mr. Ford's government is confirmed to attend. Will the minister accept the paramedics' invitation and join them any time between 1 and 3 this afternoon right here at Queen's Park?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: You know, I hope as you do the round table with the paramedics, you are able to highlight some of the incredible investments that we've been able to do, working with our community paramedicine.

When we do 911 models of care where we ensure that patients voluntarily can be diverted to other places to get service in community, it is actually working directly with paramedics and paramedic organizations. When we do the Dedicated Offload Nurses Program, embedding individuals paid 100% by the province of Ontario to ensure that paramedics could get back out into community faster, it's as a result of conversations that we have had with paramedics and their organizations.

We'll continue to listen and respond to their input. We have done that since 2018. And I have to say that paramedics have stepped up every step of the way to ensure—

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

Supplementary question?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The paramedics have set quite the straightforward agenda. These front-line workers want to talk to us about the mental health challenges that they face and the education barriers with the preceptorship. They want to talk about practice standards and, of course, staffing.

The paramedics are not just bringing concerns from the front line; they have solutions to offer. They need the ears of decision-makers like yourself, the minister; like your parliamentary assistant; like your ADM for emergency services, who were all invited to attend.

Minister, paramedics want to know: Will you come today and listen to the concerns of the people who answer the call and help us often on the worst day of our life?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Perhaps the member opposite has not been paying attention as we invest and increase paramedic opportunities for training in northern Ontario, expanding them and including them into the Learn and

Stay program, where their tuition and books are covered as they agree to practise and continue their service in parts of the province that are underserved.

We have done a lot of work with community paramedicine. I have seen first-hand how it impacts our communities, particularly our seniors, who are staying at home and have more confidence because they have that community paramedicine program.

We'll continue to do this work; we'll continue to invest. Of course, we are a 50-50 per cent partner with our municipal partners and paramedic services, and we will continue to do that.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: If I had a billion dollars

If I had a billion dollars

Well, I'd buy you a house

I would buy you a fourplex in this housing crisis

And if I had a billion dollars

If I had a billion dollars

I'd buy equipment for your house

Maybe a nice heat pump with a rebate!

But, seriously, Mr. Speaker, how can this government possibly think getting booze in convenience stores one year early would be a priority for Ontarians in an affordability crisis, in a housing crisis, in a health care crisis, in a climate emergency?

My question to the Premier: Are you that nervous about the next election that you have to resort to games and gimmicks?

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Mr. Speaker, through you, thank you for the question from the member opposite. Colleagues, do you know why we're here? It's her party that signed one of the worst contracts in the history of the province: a 10-year monopoly, a 10-year bad contract.

Interjections.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I see the member is agreeing with that.

Let's take a look at what this is going to do for our economy, because clearly the economy is paramount on this side of the House—economic prosperity, good jobs for people. The study from the Convenience Industry Council of Canada projects 7,000 to 7,500 new jobs in Ontario and \$165 million to invest in convenience stores. The study also estimates up to \$213 million in new annual tax revenues, 69% of which will go to the province.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: If this government is looking for areas to spend money, I have a good list for things in Beaches East–York:

—a new Second public school, which I talked to you about last week—they've been waiting forever;

—funding for Michael Garron's redevelopment—hospitals aren't that important these days, are they;

—cooling systems for our schools with extreme heat upon us;

—operational costs for TTC;

—family doctors for everyone;

—more affordable housing, especially assisted living.

If I had a billion dollars, I would invest in Ontario.

My question, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: Why are you spending a billion dollars on booze? Why are your priorities so skewed?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I'm going to correct the member opposite, Mr. Speaker: We're not spending \$1 billion; we're spending \$200 billion on health care, on education and on social services. I'm going to correct the member opposite: We're investing \$190 billion on capital over the next 10 years to build hospitals, to build schools, to build long-term care, to build highways and to build transit. No government has ever spent that kind of money to invest. You know why? Because we are investing in the future. We're making up for the time that the previous Liberal government didn't get it done.

This government has the priorities of the people of Ontario. We're building the economy, we're building the infrastructure and we're supporting the workers in this great province to get it done.

TAXATION

Mr. Stephen Crawford: My question is for the Associate Minister of Housing. All Ontarians deserve to find a home that best meets their needs and budget. The previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, failed to plan ahead for the future needs of Ontarians, and now the provincial Liberals are supporting a tax that is only pushing Ontario families further away from their dream of home ownership. This is simply unacceptable. Our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, remains laser-focused on getting more homes built faster and helping more Ontarians find affordable housing, and we are doing it as we continue to fight against the costly carbon tax.

1150

Can the associate minister tell the House how our government is working to build the homes that Ontario families need, despite the federal carbon tax?

Hon. Rob Flack: Thanks very much, Speaker, to the member from Oakville. Always good to hear from him.

Our housing crisis is only made worse because of the federal carbon tax—and this government has delivered to offset it. We delivered \$1 billion in the last provincial budget to enable housing. We delivered \$1.2 billion in the Building Faster Fund and are seeing tangible results. We delivered the elimination of the HST on purpose-built rentals. And we delivered unprecedented reductions in red tape to make shovels in the ground happen faster.

Speaker, we are supporting community home builders—unlike the carbon tax coalition opposite, led by Bonnie Crombie. They are not supporting community home

builders and frankly, Speaker, they are taxing the dream of home ownership out of the reach of all Canadians.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the associate minister for that response. Young families should not have to struggle to pay for a down payment. Seniors on fixed incomes should not have to worry about being displaced. Everyone in Ontario deserves to have a place to live that meets their needs and their budget, and the Liberals are making it more and more unaffordable by supporting that carbon tax. It is essential for all governments to provide real solutions in addressing the housing and affordability crisis. Unfortunately, our government is fighting this battle alone.

Can the associate minister please explain why the Liberals and NDP must join us in calling for an end to the carbon tax and making housing more affordable again?

Hon. Rob Flack: As we all know, the federal carbon tax has always been a burden for Canadian home builders. It's inflationary and it's punitive. In fact, the Bank of Canada governor last year stated that, of total inflation, the carbon tax contributed 16%. That means higher interest rates for families and higher mortgage rates, and it also means higher capital costs for community home builders. It means all costs related to building a house go up. It's wrong, and what makes it worse is the compounding nature of this carbon tax.

The cost of living is hurting all Ontarians and hurting Canadians. If the federal government really wants to help Ontarians, I think the carbon tax coalition next door should understand that the carbon tax in this province is wrong, and most importantly, Bonnie Crombie and the coalition is wrong on housing, wrong on the carbon tax and, frankly, wrong for all Ontarians.

MINISTRY SPENDING

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

The Financial Accountability Office released a report this morning which projects the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services has allocated \$3.7 billion less than what was needed in program spending from 2024 to 2026-27. The ministry is responsible for everything from funding developmental services, child protection, Ontario Works, ODSP payments, the autism funding and much more—all of the programs which are required to serve and support vulnerable Ontarians.

Can the minister explain why there is a \$3.7-billion shortfall?

Hon. Michael Parsa: I thank my colleague for the question.

As I've said it many times here in this House, the FAO opinions are not representative of actual government spending, as the FAO uses different methodology. I'd be more than happy to share some facts and some numbers with my colleagues across. The funding for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services increased by

\$600 million this year. Last year, the funding for this ministry increased by \$900 million. The year before that, the funding for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services increased by \$1.2 billion. So, I'd be more than happy to share some facts.

My honourable colleagues talk about developmental services. Mr. Speaker, it's this government that is providing more than \$1 billion for developmental services across the system, something the previous government didn't do, that the NDP supported along the way.

When we say we're not going to leave anyone behind—

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

Supplementary question?

Miss Monique Taylor: I will take the Financial Accountability Officer's word over this minister any day.

Speaker, \$3.7 billion is a huge shortfall for programs that literally keep some of Ontario's most vulnerable populations alive. The FAO projects that \$120 million announced this year in autism funding is one-time funding and that that budget will continue to be \$600 million year over year. That would only be enough to enrol 10,000 kids in core clinical services, not even close to the 20,000 that the minister's binder suggests.

With 60,000 and growing waiting for autism services, does the minister think that this is going to be enough?

Hon. Michael Parsa: Again, I thank my honourable colleague for the question. When it comes to the Ontario Autism Program, I'll tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker: After the previous government, supported by the NDP, failed the people of this province, it was this government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, that said we're not going to stand with the status quo. This program that we have in place now is built by the community for the community.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to funding, the member struggles and the opposition struggles with often—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Michael Parsa: We've seen that before.

We doubled the funding of the Ontario Autism Program. We added another \$60 million to the program. This year, Mr. Speaker, we added \$120 million to the \$600 million, bringing our total to \$720 million. What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? Instead of the 8,500 families who were receiving services and supports before, now more than 40,000 families are receiving supports and services—

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

The next question.

TAXATION

Mr. Dave Smith: My question is for the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development. The Liberal carbon tax is harmful to every single person in this province. It does nothing for the environment, and it only punishes the people of Ontario with higher costs for daily necessities. Families in the north are especially affected by

this regressive tax as they already pay more for groceries and for fuel.

Speaker, the opposition NDP and the independent Liberals have an opportunity to advocate on behalf of the residents of northern Ontario. But rather than joining with our government and calling on the federal Liberals to terminate the carbon tax, they prefer to sit in their seats and watch this tax increase time and time again. That is not what the people of Ontario want or deserve.

Speaker, can the minister please tell the House why northern communities cannot afford the federal carbon tax?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Here's the thing, Mr. Speaker: It's summertime. I know I can't wait to get back to Lake of the Woods. But with over 500 seasonal lodges, out-fitting camps and campgrounds, of which I know there are quite a few in the member's—as he likes to say—God's country, Peterborough–Kawartha, families are going to make some tough choices. I was talking to one of my neighbours the other day, and I said, “Now, where are you going to take that big trailer this year?” Every summer, he just kind of spins the campground wheel and takes his family somewhere in another part of northern Ontario.

He said this year—do you know where he's going, colleagues, through you, Mr. Speaker? Camp Backyard. Yes, it's a campground in his backyard. He's just going to open the trailer there because he can't afford to hitch that thing up to his pickup truck and go and spend some money in another part of northern Ontario.

Clearly, outfitters, lodge owners, campground owners and families in the thousands who just want to explore our vast and beautiful region are saying one thing: Scrap the tax.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you to the minister for that response. While the Liberal members in this Legislature believe that Ontario stands to benefit from more taxes, the reality couldn't be more different. Residents in the north who already struggle to pay their bills are now being forced to pay more for food and for fuel. With the weather warming up, it's just not fair that families have to cancel their summer plans because they're stretched at the pocketbook.

Speaker, Ontarians need more relief, not a 23% tax hike on the carbon tax. The federal Liberals and their provincial counterparts need to do the right thing and get rid of the carbon tax immediately.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on why the Liberals need to scrap their carbon tax?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Well, let's start here, Mr. Speaker: When seven out of 10 Canadians oppose the carbon tax—from myriad polls, Mr. Speaker; when the Parliamentary Budget Officer says, “Not so fast, king of the carbon tax,” and he says that this is going to cost families up to \$1,000 more—and this message, through you, to Mr. Green, because it's time to come clean, after the rebate which he loves so much—we've got a problem here.

All I can tell you is that the carbon tax royalty is beginning to abdicate their throne, except for one exception: The queen of the carbon tax chooses to be a buttinsky. Not only is she interested in keeping the carbon tax alive, she has a history of raising other taxes.

Listen to the voice of seven out of 10 Canadians and the Parliamentary Budget Officer, if no one else, and scrap this tax.

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

I'm going to ask the Minister of Health to withdraw an unparliamentary comment that was made earlier during question period.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I withdraw.

DEFERRED VOTES

CUTTING RED TAPE TO BUILD MORE HOMES ACT, 2024 LOI DE 2024 POUR RÉDUIRE LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES AFIN DE CONSTRUIRE PLUS DE LOGEMENTS

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

Bill 185, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 185, Loi modifiant diverses lois.

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

The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.

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

On June 3, 2024, Mr. Calandra moved third reading of Bill 185, An Act to amend various Acts.

On June 4, 2024, Ms. Khanjin moved that the question be now put.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hamid, Zee	Pierre, Natalie
Babikian, Aris	Hardeman, Ernie	Pinsonneault, Steve
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Mike	Quinn, Nolan
Barnes, Patrice	Hogarth, Christine	Rae, Matthew
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Rickford, Greg
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Riddell, Brian
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Trevor	Sabawy, Sheref
Byers, Rick	Jordan, John	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Kanapathi, Logan	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Ke, Vincent	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Kerzner, Michael S.	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Laura
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Todd
Dixon, Jess	Martin, Robin	Tangri, Nina
Dowie, Andrew	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Downey, Doug	McGregor, Graham	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dunlop, Jill	Mulroney, Caroline	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.

Fedeli, Victor
Flack, Rob
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn
Ghamari, Goldie

Oosterhoff, Sam
Pang, Billy
Parsa, Michael
Piccini, David

Wai, Daisy
Williams, Charmaine A.
Yakabuski, John

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

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

Nays

Andrew, Jill
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Bell, Jessica
Blais, Stephen
Bourgouin, Guy
Bowman, Stephanie
Brady, Bobbi Ann
Burch, Jeff
Clancy, Aislinn
Collard, Lucille
Fife, Catherine
Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.

Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Glover, Chris
Gretzky, Lisa
Harden, Joel
Hazell, Andrea
Jama, Sarah
Karpoche, Bhutla
Kernaghan, Terence
Mamakwa, Sol
Mantha, Michael
McCrimmon, Karen
McMahon, Mary-Margaret

Pasma, Chandra
Rakocevic, Tom
Sattler, Peggy
Schreiner, Mike
Shamji, Adil
Shaw, Sandy
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Stiles, Marit
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John
Vaugeois, Lise
West, Jamie
Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 68; the nays are 39.

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

Mr. Calandra has moved third reading of Bill 185, An Act to amend various Acts. 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 1210 to 1211.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On June 3, 2024, Mr. Calandra moved third reading of Bill 185, An Act to amend various Acts. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak
Babikian, Aris
Bailey, Robert
Barnes, Patrice
Bethlenfalvy, Peter
Bouma, Will
Bresee, Ric
Byers, Rick
Calandra, Paul
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Cho, Stan
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Crawford, Stephen
Cuzzetto, Rudy
Dixon, Jess
Dowie, Andrew
Downey, Doug
Dunlop, Jill
Fedeli, Victor
Flack, Rob
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn
Ghamari, Goldie

Hamid, Zee
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Mike
Hogarth, Christine
Holland, Kevin
Jones, Sylvia
Jones, Trevor
Jordan, John
Kanapathi, Logan
Ke, Vincent
Kerzner, Michael S.
Khanjin, Andrea
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia
Leardi, Anthony
Lecce, Stephen
Martin, Robin
McCarthy, Todd J.
McGregor, Graham
Mulrone, Caroline
Oosterhoff, Sam
Pang, Billy
Parsa, Michael
Piccini, David

Pierre, Natalie
Pinsonneault, Steve
Quinn, Nolan
Rae, Matthew
Rickford, Greg
Riddell, Brian
Sabawy, Sheref
Sandhu, Amarjot
Saunders, Brian
Scott, Laurie
Skelly, Donna
Smith, Dave
Smith, David
Smith, Laura
Smith, Todd
Tangri, Nina
Thanigasalam, Vijay
Tibollo, Michael A.
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Wai, Daisy
Williams, Charmaine A.
Yakabuski, John

Nays

Andrew, Jill
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Bell, Jessica
Blais, Stephen
Bourgouin, Guy
Bowman, Stephanie
Brady, Bobbi Ann
Burch, Jeff
Clancy, Aislinn
Collard, Lucille
Fife, Catherine
Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.

Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Glover, Chris
Gretzky, Lisa
Harden, Joel
Hazell, Andrea
Jama, Sarah
Karpoche, Bhutla
Kernaghan, Terence
Mamakwa, Sol
Mantha, Michael
McCrimmon, Karen
McMahon, Mary-Margaret

Pasma, Chandra
Rakocevic, Tom
Sattler, Peggy
Schreiner, Mike
Shamji, Adil
Shaw, Sandy
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Stiles, Marit
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John
Vaugeois, Lise
West, Jamie
Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 68; the nays are 39.

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.

PATIENT-TO-NURSE RATIOS FOR HOSPITALS ACT, 2024 LOI DE 2024 SUR LES RATIOS PATIENTS-PERSONNEL INFIRMIER DANS LES HÔPITAUX

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 192, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act with respect to maximum patient-to-nurse ratios / Projet de loi 192, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé en ce qui concerne les ratios patients-personnel infirmier maximaux.

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

The division bells rang from 1215 to 1216.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On June 4, 2024, la députée Gélinas moved second reading of Bill 192, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act with respect to maximum patient-to-nurse ratios.

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Andrew, Jill
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Bell, Jessica
Blais, Stephen
Bourgouin, Guy
Bowman, Stephanie
Brady, Bobbi Ann
Burch, Jeff
Clancy, Aislinn
Collard, Lucille
Fife, Catherine

Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Glover, Chris
Gretzky, Lisa
Harden, Joel
Hazell, Andrea
Jama, Sarah
Karpoche, Bhutla
Kernaghan, Terence
Mamakwa, Sol
Mantha, Michael

Pasma, Chandra
Rakocevic, Tom
Sattler, Peggy
Schreiner, Mike
Shamji, Adil
Shaw, Sandy
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Stiles, Marit
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John
Vaugeois, Lise

Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.

McCrimmon, Karen
McMahon, Mary-Margaret

West, Jamie
Wong-Tam, Kristyn

MARK STODDART

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anand, Deepak	Hamid, Zee	Pierre, Natalie
Babikian, Aris	Hardeman, Ernie	Pinsonneault, Steve
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Mike	Quinn, Nolan
Barnes, Patrice	Hogarth, Christine	Rae, Matthew
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Rickford, Greg
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Riddell, Brian
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Trevor	Sabawy, Sheref
Byers, Rick	Jordan, John	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Kanapathi, Logan	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Ke, Vincent	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Kerzner, Michael S.	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Laura
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Todd
Dixon, Jess	Martin, Robin	Tangri, Nina
Dowie, Andrew	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Downey, Doug	McGregor, Graham	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dunlop, Jill	Mulroney, Caroline	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Wai, Daisy
Flack, Rob	Pang, Billy	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Parsa, Michael	Yakabuski, John
Ghamari, Goldie	Piccini, David	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The eyes are 39; the nays are 68.

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

Second reading negated.

RECEPTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Two members have informed me they have points of order they wish to raise.

The member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: On behalf of the Tibetan Women's Association of Ontario, I'd like to invite all members to a lunch reception in rooms 228 and 230 starting now.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

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

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, Speaker, a point of order: I'd like to correct my record. In my question on Monday, I inadvertently said that the government had increased the provincial debt by \$100 million. I meant to say \$100 billion, which is historic, but not in a good way.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It is in order to correct your record.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The next point of order, the member for Toronto–St. Paul's.

MPP Jill Andrew: I just wanted to express congratulations for Mark Stoddart, who is not only a friend of our Ontario Poet Laureate, but was also a recipient, if I'm not mistaken, this year of the Scarborough Walk of Fame award.

RECEPTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm just inviting everybody who would like to listen or talk to paramedics, they are in room 351 from 1 till 3 this afternoon. Everyone is welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business at this time, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1220 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTEGRITY ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ ET L'INTÉGRITÉ AU NIVEAU MUNICIPAL

Mr. Burch moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 207, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 and the City of Toronto Act, 2006 with respect to conduct of councillors and members of local boards / Projet de loi 207, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités et la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto en ce qui concerne la conduite des conseillers et des membres des conseils locaux.

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): Would the member briefly like to explain his bill?

Mr. Jeff Burch: The Municipal Accountability and Integrity Act, 2024, if passed, will ensure that municipally elected officials who perpetrate violence, harassment and predatory behaviour are finally held accountable and are no longer able to evade justice through long-standing loopholes.

Among other things, it will establish a common framework for codes of conduct across Ontario; it will require the minister to establish a board of integrity commissioners under the commissioner of Ontario and establish standards for selection and training; and it will allow the commissioner to make an application for judicial review to vacate a member's seat in the case of egregious contraventions of the code of conduct.

SACRED SPACES, SAFE PLACES
ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 POUR DES LIEUX
SACRÉS SÉCURITAIRES

Mr. Fraser moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 208, An Act respecting the safe access to religious institutions / Projet de loi 208, Loi concernant l'accès sécuritaire aux établissements religieux.

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): Would the member for Ottawa South like to briefly explain his bill?

Mr. John Fraser: The Sacred Spaces, Safe Places Act is modelled after the bubble zone legislation that we have for abortion clinics. What it really does is prevent harassment and intimidation of people when they're simply going to practise their faith, where they're vulnerable. It's something I'd like to work with everyone in this assembly on. I think there's more to do.

I appreciate the time to say a few words.

BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH
AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE
MONTH ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LE MOIS DE LA JUSTICE
REPRODUCTIVE ET DE LA SANTÉ
MATERNELLE CHEZ LES PERSONNES
NOIRES

MPP Hazell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 209, An Act to proclaim the month of April as Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice Month / Projet de loi 209, Loi proclamant le mois d'avril Mois de la justice reproductive et de la santé maternelle chez les personnes noires.

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): Would the member like to briefly explain her bill?

MPP Andrea Hazell: The bill proclaims the month of April in each year as Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice Month.

Mr. Speaker, Black mothers face worse maternal health outcomes than mothers in other groups. Black women are approximately three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than a white woman. This is not only a policy failure but a moral failure.

Proclaiming April as Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice Month raises awareness of the challenges faced by Black women in accessing adequate maternal health care. These challenges include lack of data collection on health risks, instances of medical racism and the absence of tailored support for Black women. By acknowledging these unique challenges, the well-being of Black mothers becomes a focus of our health care system, taking

the first step in ensuring we move towards better protecting Black mothers in Ontario.

MOTIONS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Trevor Jones: I move that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be authorized to attend the National Conference of State Legislatures in Louisville, Kentucky, from August 4 to August 7, 2024.

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

Motion agreed to.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Trevor Jones: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be authorized to travel outside of Ontario during the 2024 summer adjournment.

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Mr. Trevor Jones: I move that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet at the call of the Chair during the summer 2024 adjournment of the House in relation to its study on intimate partner violence.

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

Motion agreed to.

1310

PETITIONS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition was delivered to me by Sally Palmer, who is the chair of the Hamilton Social Work Action Committee. It calls out the failure of the ODSP and OW rates and calls for these rates to be doubled in the province of Ontario so that we do not have legislated poverty in this province.

ENDOMETRIOSIS

MPP Jill Andrew: This petition is entitled "Endometriosis Awareness Action." It's got hundreds of signatures, and it's calling for this government to recognize endometriosis as a disease that impacts women, especially

BIPOC women. It is currently under-researched and underfunded.

Some 2.4 million Ontarians do not have access to family doctors, and because of this, many women struggling with endometriosis are not able to access health care here in Ontario. Some have to travel to different countries and go broke paying out of pocket for care.

This petition is demanding a response from the government to help survivors—endowarriors, people with endometriosis—to get the health care they deserve and be able to see specialists in Ontario now.

I absolutely support this petition. I'm affixing my signature and handing it over to Ishan.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: There is a drug-poisoning crisis in Ontario, and that is resulting in the deaths of, on average, 10 people a day. In 2023, 3,753 people died needlessly—because these deaths are preventable.

The government of Ontario has a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of all Ontarians. Part of that is to ensure that there are supervised consumption services available. These sites save lives, and they also are a gateway to supportive services, including addiction treatments, that we know this government is pushing hard on. But for folks to be able to get there, first they need to be alive. That can happen when supervised consumption services are provided.

This petition is calling on the government to provide funding so that SCSs can reopen in Windsor and Sudbury, so that they can keep the site in Timmins open, to expedite the approval process for outstanding applications, and to ensure that every community that needs an SCS is able to have one.

I fully support this petition.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Catherine Fife: Farmland in the province of Ontario is under attack; we lose 319 acres a day.

The agricultural sector contributes \$48 billion in economic development to the province of Ontario.

In Waterloo region, 770 acres of prime farmland are being designated for a large industrial site. The people of Wilmot have delivered hundreds, if not thousands, of signatures—and I want to thank them for that—calling on the provincial government to slow down the demise of our farmland in Ontario, and also calling on the regional government to not move forward with the forced expropriation of this prime agricultural land.

I fully support the people of Wilmot and Waterloo region and, in doing so, will affix my signature and give it to page Hosanna.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Mike Schreiner: This petition was handed to me personally by Doris Grinspun of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario at a rally here at Queen's Park.

The petition notes that, due to the drug-poisoning crisis, about 10 people a day are tragically dying in the province of Ontario—3,753 needless deaths in 2023.

Safe consumption sites save lives and open a gateway to treatment for people.

The petition is calling on the Legislature to reopen safe consumption sites in Windsor and Sudbury, to provide funding to keep the site in Timmins open, and to provide funding for safe consumption sites in communities across Ontario. We have one of these sites in my riding of Guelph.

I personally support the petition. I will sign it and ask page Sophia to bring it to the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Before we continue with the petitions, I just would like to remind members that “a member may present a petition in the House during the afternoon,” as we are. “The member may make a brief statement summarizing the contents of the petition and indicating the number of signatures attached thereto but shall not read the text of the petition.”

I have given some discretion earlier, but I would just like to remind the members of what we've agreed to do.

Petitions?

POLICE IN SCHOOLS

MPP Jill Andrew: We cannot police ourselves out of violence, and that also includes in our school spaces, so I'm honoured to stand here and present this petition. It's a petition calling for the removal of police-in-school programs across Ontario. The petition has been signed by approximately 15 ridings in this Legislature. It's calling for us to address the root causes of violence and to address the mental health crisis in our schools and the teacher and education worker shortage in our schools, as opposed to militarizing our schools, which, as we know, disproportionately impacts BIPOC students in our Ontario schools—

Mr. Trevor Jones: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Excuse me. We have a point of order.

Deputy House leader?

Mr. Trevor Jones: Respectfully, the Speaker has just reminded this House and instructed our colleagues from both sides of the floor to please adhere to standing order 42(b), which does not include editorializing a petition or anything else. A quick summary, a brief summary, just as is done in Parliaments everywhere, the number of signatures—then be seated.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): The member for Toronto—St. Paul's, if you could just sum up, please, the petition—because you are straddling what I just said.

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you very much, Speaker.

As I was saying, we cannot police ourselves out of violence, and that includes our schools. So I'm going to

affix my signature on this petition that's calling for us to make more investments in teachers, education workers and mental health supports for our kids instead of militarizing our schools. They are calling for a removal of police-in-school programs across Ontario.

I absolutely support this petition. I am affixing my signature, and I will hand it over to Farhan for tabling.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled "Raise Social Assistance Rates."

The rates for Ontario Works have been frozen, and the small increases for ODSP, the Ontario Disability Support Program, leave recipients still struggling and well below the poverty line. So the petition here is calling on the Legislature to call on the government to double both Ontario Works and Ontario disability rates.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition calls for greater mental health services in the province of Ontario. It has been inspired by Kaitlyn Roth, who died by suicide after seeking assistance from the system.

Some 4,500 people die from suicide in Canada each day. These are preventable deaths, if the resources are there. So this petition is calling on the government to recognize the state of crisis in mental health in Ontario.

It is my pleasure to honour Kaitlyn's memory, support her family, affix my signature and continue to call on the government for greater mental health resources.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I have a petition to adequately fund the Ontario public school system. This is a particularly important petition considering the recent tragedy that we saw with Landyn passing in the school system.

This petition highlights the fact that we have a mental health crisis in Ontario's schools and that we also need to make sure that there are supportive, caring adults in classrooms so that we don't continue to see the kind of tragedies that we have seen here in this province. We want to make sure that the Minister of Education meets their obligation when it comes to funding public education and does not continue to rob children of their right to access safe education in our public school system.

This is a very important petition, again, given the recent tragedy.

1320

I'm going to add my name to this petition and give it to Hosanna to take to the table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Jill Andrew: The petition is entitled "Petition: To Raise Social Assistance Rates."

Yesterday, I had a chance to meet with the Disability Without Poverty coalition, and I'm here to say that people with disabilities in Ontario are struggling. They are starving, and they are feeling left behind.

So I am proud to sign this petition that was given to me by Dr. Sally Palmer. It is calling for raises of the social assistance rates. We need to at least double ODSPoverty and OW so that Ontarians with disabilities have a chance at survival in this climate. I've affixed my signature, and I'm handing it over to Farhan.

INJURED WORKERS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: In Ontario, about 200,000 to 300,000 people are injured on the job every year.

Over a century ago, workers gave up their right to sue their employer in exchange for a system that would provide them with a just compensation. However, that is not the reality in Ontario, leading to injured workers living in poverty and also without timely access to medical care and quality medical care.

This petition is calling on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to eliminate the practice of deeming, or determining, which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers actually do not have.

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

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition calls on Lydia's Law to be called to justice committee.

It's good to hear that the justice committee will be dealing with the IPV issue over the summer.

We all can never accept that 1,326 sexual assault offenders walked out of court and did not have their day in justice.

Lydia's Law honours the voices of survivors and calls on the government to move forward with the 2019 Auditor General recommendations—that would be greater accountability to the Attorney General, and report back to this House what's actually happening in our court system. This is a good bill. It's the first step in moving the justice system forward.

I'm affixing my signature and giving this to Farhan.

EDUCATION FUNDING

MPP Jill Andrew: This petition is calling to stop the Conservative government's education cuts. I absolutely support this petition. It has been signed by hundreds of community members, including my own, and folks from across the city and in other ridings as well. It's demanding that the government halt the cuts to classrooms, to our teachers, to our education workers, and that they properly fund our schools, as opposed to beer and wine.

I've affixed my signature, and I will hand it over to Farhan for tabling.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Fund the TTC.”

Under Conservative Premier Mike Harris, the 50% operating cost that was shared between the province and municipalities was downloaded to the city of Toronto. Since then, the TTC has become the least subsidized public transit system in North America, leading to systemic underfunding issues and problems in our transit system.

This petition is calling on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately restore the provincial funding of 50% of the TTC’s net operating costs.

As a transit rider and a Toronto resident, I fully support this petition, and I will affix my signature to it.

TENANT PROTECTION

MPP Jill Andrew: This petition is calling for this government to give Ontarians real rent control in all buildings to help address the housing crisis and keep them from being homeless. It is signed by thousands of residents in St. Paul’s. I’m proud to stand here and affix my signature. We cannot allow our residents of St. Paul’s to be kicked out of their homes. We need real rent control, and we need it now.

I’ve affixed my signature, and I’m handing it back to Farhan for tabling.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HOMEOWNER PROTECTION
ACT, 2024LOI DE 2024 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES PROPRIÉTAIRES DE LOGEMENTS

Mr. McCarthy moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 200, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to homebuyers and homeowners, properties of cultural heritage value or interest and certain planning matters / *Projet de loi 200, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les acquéreurs de logements et les propriétaires de logements, les biens ayant une valeur ou un caractère sur le plan du patrimoine culturel et d’autres questions liées à l’aménagement du territoire.*

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Back to the minister to lead off debate.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: Good afternoon to all honourable members of this House. On behalf of the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery, it gives me immense pride to rise this afternoon in the Legislative Assembly to lead second reading debate of what is, I submit, a critical and urgently required piece of legislation, the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024. This landmark legislation, if passed, will significantly strengthen protections for homeowners as well as current and future

homebuyers. It represents a comprehensive approach to protecting consumers from unethical practices, improving transparency, supporting strong condominium communities, and safeguarding buyers of new homes.

I am, indeed, grateful for the opportunity to speak about this urgent new legislative proposal, and I look forward to an informed debate about what it will mean for Ontario’s homeowners and homebuyers, if this House sees fit to pass it.

I will be sharing my time today with my great colleagues. They include, of course, the member of provincial Parliament for Kitchener South–Hespeler; the member of provincial Parliament for Cambridge, my parliamentary assistant; and the member of provincial Parliament for Kitchener–Conestoga.

Speaker, at the core of this proposed legislation is the fulfillment of our government’s promise to protect Ontarians, especially our seniors, newcomers and the most vulnerable. We must protect them all from the harm caused by the misuse of notices of security interest, NOSIs.

Consumer NOSIs can be registered on the land registry system by a business when it rents, finances or leases certain goods that become fixtures in homes, such as water heaters or furnaces. Initially, NOSIs were intended to register interests in financed appliances. However, over the past few years, they have become tools for organized and deliberate deception used to scam hard-working Ontarians.

Since the early 2000s, the number of NOSIs registered on Ontario’s land registry has skyrocketed, from around 400 each year 20 years ago to more than 58,000 in 2023 alone. These registrations often occur without the homeowner’s knowledge and for amounts far exceeding the fixture’s actual value. Homeowners usually discover NOSIs are registered against their homes when they want to sell or refinance their homes, and bad actors exploit this by demanding exorbitant fees to discharge the NOSIs. In some instances, multiple NOSIs are registered on a single property, which are then converted into sham mortgages that rob hard-working and law-abiding Ontarians of their life savings and their home equity.

1330

The escalation of NOSIs and related scams and fraud appears to disproportionately affect seniors, new Canadians and other vulnerable consumers. Many of these cases have been reported in the media—cases where homeowners have made a large cash payment because NOSIs were leveraged by unethical operators, or they were trapped in high-interest mortgages for which they could not make the required payments and then they default, putting their property in peril.

You may have read of a Bowmanville senior in my riding of Durham who suffered from short-term memory loss. He had 11 NOSIs totalling over \$100,000 registered against his home of over 50 years. These were for door-to-door rental contracts for home equipment, including plumbing valves, a digital thermostat, water softeners and outdoor cameras. The perpetrators targeted him and took

advantage of his condition, leading him from one scam to the next until eventually they managed to leverage the NOSIs on title to convince him to sign a mortgage. Four days after a NOSI for plumbing valve and surge protector equipment was placed on his home, a financing company registered a one-year mortgage on the property for \$130,000 with 25% interest. Then, in late 2022, he received a foreclosure letter from this mortgage company stating that he had two weeks to leave his home. According to his family, their father had signed mortgage paperwork, he had not understood it, and they had to get legal help. Sadly, this vulnerable gentleman passed away earlier this year.

This may seem like an extreme case, but I am sorry to say that situations like this occur far too often. The bad actors use NOSIs as leverage to obtain exorbitant contract payouts from consumers, sometimes inappropriately using them to discourage consumers from even changing suppliers or, in the case of the Bowmanville senior I spoke about, to convince that homeowner to sign a mortgage to pay off NOSIs.

I receive letters and emails from people across Ontario, many sent to my ministry by my fellow members of provincial Parliament. Ontario residents are openly expressing their frustration, their anguish and their outrage at being victimized by elaborate schemes to defraud them.

For example, an individual wrote about a contract he entered into with a company for a high-efficiency furnace, only to realize that the company was misrepresenting itself as a provincially endorsed company working for the province to make homes more energy-efficient. The company advised they would perform an energy audit to determine which provincial energy rebates the individual might be eligible to receive. It will likely come as no surprise to learn that that company was not provincially endorsed and the consumer had no assurances of receiving potential provincial energy rebates. According to the writer, the sales rep advised that he could opt for an earlier buyout after the first several years, at a quoted cost of \$800 to \$1,000. Almost two years later, when he decided to arrange that buyout, he was then told that the cost would be an exorbitant amount of approximately \$15,000. Then, the individual became aware that a NOSI valued at more than \$15,000 had been placed on the title to his property immediately after the furnace had been installed.

As I've said before, these elaborate schemes are being used against innocent, honest, trusting consumers. This is a despicable practice that particularly harms our senior citizens, newcomers and other vulnerable residents, and it must stop.

To that end, if passed, this comprehensive legislation will curb these unethical, immoral and shameful practices. Upon passage, this proposed legislation would ban the registration of consumer NOSIs on the land registry system and deem all currently registered consumer NOSIs expired.

To get to today—this legislation has been developed following extensive consultations across Ontario in the fall of 2023. My ministry, the Ministry of Public and Business

Service Delivery, held these consultations on specific approaches to address the misuse of NOSIs. The ministry received feedback from businesses of all types, legal organizations, law enforcement, other regulators and consumer advocates, as well as many consumers negatively affected by NOSIs. Based on all the information received through that extensive consultation process, it has become apparent that the harms caused by the misuse of consumer NOSIs on the land registry far outweigh the benefits provided by their legitimate use.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my parliamentary assistant, the member of provincial Parliament for Cambridge, as well as the member of provincial Parliament for Kitchener–Conestoga and the member of provincial Parliament for Kitchener South–Hespeler. All have played a particularly crucial role in highlighting this issue and driving our government's efforts to address it. They have been working tirelessly and closely with the Waterloo Regional Police Service and impacted Ontarians to shed light on this significant area of consumer harm. You will hear more from each of them today as part of our government's leadoff on second reading of this bill, but I just want to take a moment to thank them for being such strong advocates for the elderly, for all of their constituents, and indeed for all Ontarians.

Also on behalf of the government, I wish to thank Chief Mark Crowell and the entire Waterloo Regional Police Service, particularly Detective Adam Stover, for their invaluable work on this issue. Detective Stover's efforts have been instrumental in investigating and documenting the harms caused by NOSIs. It is because of his and the Waterloo Regional Police Service's tireless efforts that we are here today to take a stand against those who seek to victimize our fellow citizens and residents.

In response to the tabling of Bill 200, stakeholders have applauded our government's steadfast determination, under the leadership of Premier Ford, to bring forth change for our province's consumers and homeowners. It brings me great pleasure indeed to highlight the widespread positive responses we have received from stakeholders who support this much-needed ban of consumer NOSIs.

As I just mentioned, this legislation has been strengthened through the dedicated work of the Waterloo Regional Police Service, who have committed extensive hours to investigating complaints of NOSI misuse, investigating the issue, sharing updates with our ministry. This occurred prior to and during and subsequent to the fall 2023 consultation process.

Upon tabling Bill 200 on May 27 of this year, the Waterloo Regional Police Service has extended "appreciation to ... the Ontario government for working to eliminate the registration of consumer" NOSIs "in the province." The chief of police services in Waterloo region, Mark Crowell, has shared his optimistic outlook on this proposed legislation, as well as his hope that, as he put it, "the proactive policy approach announced today will put an end to this devastating fraud." It is my hope that today, we can all make Chief Crowell's hope a new reality.

Laura Tamblyn Watts, the president and CEO of CanAge, Canada's national seniors' advocacy organization, made it clear that the actions of our government will make a positive, meaningful impact on the lives of seniors in Ontario. CanAge recognizes that the tabling of Bill 200 is an opportunity, as she put it, for "historic action in protecting the financial well-being of Ontario's seniors." CanAge has commended our government for taking decisive action to address this problem and to make Ontario a safer marketplace for senior homeowners, while at the same time preventing predatory behaviours on the part of bad actors.

In addition to this report we have received from CanAge, we have welcomed responses from the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, who supports the immediate passage of Bill 200. The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly has shared the extent to which senior homeowners are victimized by the unlawful and unscrupulous use of NOSIs, and underscored the urgency to which both future and retroactive abolitions of NOSIs are needed to protect the rights of vulnerable elderly citizens.

They have described the countless ways in which unethical lenders and home service companies are aggressively pursuing homeowners with lawsuits leveraged by the registration of grossly inflated NOSIs against title to their homes—homes that were paid off long ago and in which they have full equity.

Our government will not allow our elderly to be harassed by these exaggerated and unlawful claims by organized criminals. We cannot idly stand by while seniors pay out large claims to fraudsters, all the while led to believe that they have no other alternative, or having to retain legal counsel or paralegals and pay thousands of dollars to pursue relief in court.

1340

So, Speaker, I stand before you now to make a promise to the seniors and the vulnerable members of our province that this government will put an end to the fear and the harassment perpetuated through the misuse of NOSIs and make Ontario a safer place for seniors and all Ontario homeowners.

I wish to send a clear message to our seniors and all Ontarians: Your government has your backs, and with help and support from His Majesty's loyal opposition, help is on the way.

Beyond the ban of consumer NOSIs proposed in Bill 200, I wish to discuss the other proposed measures contained in the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, which I submit will further strengthen protections for Ontarians making the biggest purchase of their lives, and that is their homes. These changes align with our government's ongoing work to help ensure that purchasers are well informed and better protected when they make their plans to buy a new freehold home. With our proposed legislation, we are enhancing protections to make sure Ontarians who buy a new freehold home have the time to make informed decisions confidently and comfortably.

Home purchase agreements are complex, and buyers are sometimes faced with making a decision to sign a

purchase agreement for a new home on the spot. If passed, our government would develop and consult on regulations needed to implement a 10-day cooling-off period for purchases of new freehold homes. A cooling-off period would help buyers make a more informed and confident purchasing decision and allow them to better understand the associated risks with their agreement. During that 10-day period, the buyer would be permitted to cancel the agreement for any reason with no fear of financial penalty. Providing buyers with this cooling-off period would, I submit, better align protections for buyers of new freehold homes with existing ones for those buying new condominium units.

In addition, the government plans to require in the future that builders who terminate freehold home purchases or freehold home purchase agreements must report those terminations to Tarion for public reporting on the Ontario Builder Directory on the Home Construction Regulatory Authority's—HCRA—website. This will improve transparency for new home buyers so that they can better educate themselves and make sound choices with peace of mind. And this brings new freehold home purchase requirements more in line with the existing requirements that we've had for some time with condominium projects and condominium purchase agreement terminations, which are already available on HCRA's website.

Our government is also proceeding with initiatives aimed at promoting fairness in the new home market and bolstering consumer confidence. My ministry intends to publicly consult at a future date on potential ways to address the illegal building and illegal selling of new homes in Ontario.

Illegally built or sold homes are a real and growing threat to consumers, to developers, and indeed to all levels of government. Illegal building and illegal selling puts consumers at risk from unqualified builders and developers. Those risks include inferior quality and unsafe construction, unethical conduct, and greater costs for homeowners due to defects.

You may have heard of one recent case where Ontario's building industry regulator, HCRA, had to freeze all the assets linked to one developer. This measure followed an investigation that revealed that the company had been building homes without the required approvals from Tarion, the administrator of Ontario's new home warranty and protection program, and that builder had been accepting substantial payments on the sale of those homes.

Another Toronto-area developer was ordered to pay more than \$180,000 after pleading guilty to selling a new home without a licence.

Illegal builders like these create an uneven playing field, offering consumers lower prices but without fulfilling their legal options; for example, by building or selling homes without a licence or without the required approval from Tarion—processes that are designed to protect consumers. Builders like these compete unfairly with licensed builders who play by the rules by fulfilling their licensing

and warranty-related obligations through Tarion. That is not fair to those legitimate, fair and reasonable builders.

When builders illegally build or sell new homes without a licence or without Tarion's approval, consumers are more likely to be exposed to risks to their deposits and to major structural defects in their homes. Buyers of these homes may only become aware of these risks when faced with serious and significant problems that put their peace of mind in jeopardy.

Tarion, one of the 12 administrative authorities within my ministry, is also exposed to financial risks associated with deposit protection and backstopping the builder's warranty. Illegal builders often do not respect warranty obligations, so Tarion is left to pay for warranty coverage without being able to collect from the illegal builder. Over the years, this has resulted in payouts of millions of dollars, and the payment of these claims comes from a fund supported by the licensed legal builders and new home buyers.

Illegal builders, then, put additional strain on all levels, contributing to tax evasion and lost revenues, and they make it more difficult for the majority of builders who abide by the rules to build the many, many new homes we need—safe, properly constructed homes on the path to that 1.5 million new homes and builders in Ontario by 2031.

Speaker, as we know, homes come in many forms, and I would like to mention additional measures that our government is taking and is proposing to proceed with aimed at supporting Ontario's condominium communities. More than a million Ontarians call condominiums home, and we know that condo communities often experience unique challenges and disputes. Our goal is to develop policies that are responsive to those needs.

Ontario currently has many rules in place to help condo buyers make informed decisions and protect themselves in the marketplace. Condo developers are required to provide buyers with an outline of the possible risks of buying a pre-construction unit, early termination conditions, important timelines and project status.

In 2021, my ministry launched a residential condominium buyers' guide to help condo buyers make informed purchasing decisions. Developers also must provide condo purchasers with a copy of the guide to better inform them about the buying process and condominium living, along with a copy of the current disclosure statement.

Recent changes to the Condominium Act, 1998, also would increase the amount of interest payable under certain circumstances to purchasers on their deposits or payments for the purchase of a new or pre-construction condominium unit from a developer, including in the event of a cancellation.

I would like to point out that in the 2020 value-for-money report, the Auditor General called attention to condo-related issues. The audit on condominium oversight highlighted a need for more consumer information on how condominium fees are set and managed. The report also called for an enhanced mandate for the Condominium Authority of Ontario and Condominium Authority Tribunal to protect condo owners against many of the common

issues that they may encounter in their daily living in condominium communities.

In 2021, the condominium authority itself conducted consultations on topics such as expansion of the tribunal's jurisdiction to adjudicate disputes. Condominium residents and condominium board directors signalled their strong support for the expansion of the tribunal's jurisdiction, and these findings were supported by a recent targeted consultation undertaken by my ministry. We are now taking steps to make sure that condominium communities do have a strong and responsive dispute-resolution mechanism available when issues arise, and we will continue to consult on ways to improve how condominiums are operated.

As part of that process, we are taking measured steps to expand the Condominium Authority Tribunal's jurisdiction in a phased and thoughtful way, beginning with consultations on a proposal for the tribunal to resolve certain additional types of disputes.

1350

Our province plans to also consult on other initiatives aimed at strengthening protections for condo owners and buyers. These include improvements to status certificates, disclosure statements, remedies for inadequate disclosure of material changes during construction, and how access to records may increase safety in condominium communities. Transparency is the goal. We want to help increase operational and financial clarity while limiting burden to the condominium corporations and managers that are entrusted with running a condominium on behalf of a community.

These are just some measures that are all part of our government's broader plan to provide people with the very best in consumer protection, to ensure they have the necessary tools to both purchase and enjoy their home. Our government will do everything that we can to reassure hard-working Ontarians that we are protecting them when they make that major purchase.

Bill 200 also proposes a minor amendment to the Ontario Heritage Act. The proposed Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, if passed, would amend the Ontario Heritage Act, 1990, to improve heritage conservation outcomes. Our government is ensuring we continue to protect Ontario's heritage for generations to come. The amendments my colleague the Honourable Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism is proposing to the Ontario Heritage Act will help ease administrative pressures related to the conservation of legacy-listed heritage properties by extending the timeline for municipalities to review such listed properties by an additional two years, to January 1, 2027. These proposed changes would encourage municipalities to prioritize and proactively review and designate heritage properties that are truly important to their communities. If passed, the changes would mitigate impacts on cultural heritage resources by providing additional time for review of the province's legacy-listed properties, to ensure that those most important to communities and their histories are designated and protected for generations to come.

Our government will continue to work with municipalities, the building industry and other key stakeholders to ensure we conserve true heritage, while using all the tools at our disposal to support Ontario's future growth.

Bill 200 also addresses transit-oriented communities. The proposed legislation, Bill 200, if passed, would also support our government's efforts to provide zoning certainty for our building partners on transit-oriented communities. If the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, passes, our government would exempt designated transit-oriented community lands from the immunity provisions in the Planning Act related to the making, amending or revoking of minister's zoning orders. The changes my colleague the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is proposing would support the government's plan to build vibrant mixed-use communities near transit, while reducing the cost to taxpayers to build transit station infrastructure. We know transit-oriented communities will create more homes, including affordable housing, parkland and retail and office space near stations, and that will make it faster and easier for everyone to access reliable transit right in their own neighbourhoods.

Let me conclude by reiterating our government's pledge to ensure that our fellow citizens and residents have the protections they need as they navigate the marketplace. Let me say that Ontarians can and must be well informed and empowered when they purchase a new home. Communities need clarity and flexibility to be able to protect their heritage assets, and all Ontario consumers, especially our elderly and our most vulnerable members, must be protected from financial abuse at the hands of organized criminals operating in the marketplace. When consumers can have trust in the marketplace as they spend their hard-earned dollars; when homeowners can be sure that they are not being taken advantage of; when businesses understand and comply with their responsibilities, then we all benefit.

The Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, if passed, would reinforce our government's strong record of protecting Ontario consumers and supporting a level playing field for businesses to promote fairness in the marketplace.

The changes we are proposing would help eliminate unfair business practices and help ensure Ontario homeowners can make informed choices with peace of mind when purchasing a freehold home, just as when they are purchasing a new condominium unit. Our fellow citizens and residents then can be confident that, when it comes to their home and their rights, the government of Ontario has their backs.

It has been a great honour to address all members of this House today; I thank all for their kind attention. My colleagues and I look forward to the upcoming debate. We know that you all have informed and thought-provoking input to share. The track record with bills so far introduced by my ministry of late is that His Majesty's loyal opposition has supported our goal in favour of consumer protection and safety for all. I look forward to members not only on this side of the aisle but the opposite side of the aisle in terms of their contribution to debate. I look forward to hearing from them. I will listen intently.

I encourage support for this urgently needed Homeowner Protection Act, 2024. It is the right thing to do in moving our province forward. It is a bill that is a true testament to our government's unwavering commitment to building a safer, fairer and stronger economy, now and for future generations. Protecting Ontarians—especially our elderly and the most vulnerable—is our sacred duty. It is our sacred duty as legislators, and it is a duty that rises above partisanship; it is one that I know that each and every one of the members in this House holds near and dear to their hearts. A duty is one that unites us beyond any differences that we might otherwise have.

I look forward to the debate. Furthermore, I thank all for their kind attention.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler.

Ms. Jess Dixon: I really appreciate the opportunity to speak today about something that I know has been very long-awaited and looked forward to, and something I'm incredibly proud to be able to speak to and play this tiny role in, which is Bill 200, the Homeowner Protection Act. If passed, this bill will essentially hammer the final nails into the coffin of NOSIs and bury them forever.

In my decade of service as a crown prosecutor, I often saw the incredibly ugly impacts of fraud—the way the perpetrators identify and prey on the vulnerable in our society. Fraud can be incredibly hard to prosecute. Often, the perpetrators may be out of province or even out of country, cloaked and covered and easily able to find their victims but challenging to locate. Justice for fraud victims is also elusive at times. Even with a conviction, ensuring that victims are in fact made whole when the reparations are made is incredibly challenging. This, of course, is particularly painful to witness when the victim is a senior, someone who has worked hard throughout their life to provide for themselves in their later years. Recovering from the type of financial loss that is exacted by fraud can take years and even more dedication of resources. Unfortunately, that time and those resources are things that many of our victimized seniors do not have.

You've all read this bill and heard hours of debate on its contents, so I would like to take my limited time here to talk a little bit more about the people behind the legislation, the victims, the people who had their lives turned upside down by those who are really only worshipping at an altar of greed, but also about the heroes in this legislation, the people who went up against this Goliath, went up against the harlequin hydra that were these offenders, and with the hopeful passing of this bill, will have finally won their fight.

Let me tell you about John. John is 71, and he lives with his sister in the home that they inherited from their parents. They've never had a mortgage, but now John is stuck actually paying rent on his own home that he no longer owns to the very person who forced the sale of John's home through a series of predatory mortgages. Once the home was sold, the equity was seized. John can't even access the equity from the sale of his own home, because, according to those who took advantage of him, it will take

all of that equity and more to pay off all of the NOSIs that were registered on the title.

1400

Prior to October 2021, another victim I'll call Jim fully owned his house. He ended up owing \$30,000 via a predatory NOSI and was doing his best to make the monthly payments. Another predator approached Jim and told him that they could help him pay off that lien and help him qualify for renovations to increase his home's value. They did some renovations in his home that were worth at most \$15,000 and of incredibly poor quality. On completion, that lien was converted into a mortgage, and Jim now owes \$312,000 on his house and is being pressured to foreclose, and he had to hire a lawyer and is fighting.

Then there was Karl. Karl was in his eighties, and he was suffering from short-term memory loss after a brain aneurysm. Predators came knocking at his door, promising that they would be able to help him, almost save him. He thought they were there to help, and he ended up with \$150,000 registered against his home. Sadly, Karl passed away, his last years marked by—victimized by fraud.

All across Ontario, vulnerable people were being preyed upon and victimized, misled and mistreated and led down this path to their ultimate financial destruction. As this happened, the alleged perpetrators were flaunting their newly acquired wealth on social media, with fast cars and expensive vacations, sometimes even recording their communications with their victims by way of training modules to share with others.

I want to tell you about one of the heroes in this: Detective Adam Stover of the Waterloo Regional Police Service. In early 2022, Detective Stover identified a complex fraud scheme that was targeting vulnerable and elderly victims in Waterloo region involving placing NOSIs on their homes without their knowledge. Victims were losing their homes. They were losing their life savings. Detective Stover undertook an in-depth criminal investigation into the perpetrators and became a part of uncovering a large-scale predatory criminal enterprise that had spread all across Ontario. As his investigation spread and unfolded, he became the provincial expert regarding NOSIs and was able to give guidance to numerous police services across the province as well as work with the OPP to dismantle the organizations. Other people may have stopped there, but Detective Stover, as he had essentially more than fulfilled his duty as an officer of the law—he'd investigated, he'd put together a case, he had protected the public to the best of his ability. But that ultimately wasn't enough for him, and in becoming the expert, he realized that legislative change was the only way to put an end to this forever.

So, Detective Stover, you are a big part of the reason that I am standing here today, talking about NOSIs. You had a mission, which was to save thousands of vulnerable Ontarians, and here we are today, on the precipice of the completion of your mission. I know that you spent hours meeting with elected officials, with MPPs, with ministry officials and with lawyers, with journalists and reporters, and I know just how difficult it can be to effect change

when everyone you meet seems to agree with you and support you but the magnitude of the machine itself can seem too big to budge and too large to listen. But, Detective Stover, you did it. You got the attention of the machine. We heard your call, and we answered, and I'm incredibly proud to be part of the government that took action, and to call our Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery a friend. You could not have had a better advocate in him or his ministry.

I also want to recognize the hard work that was done by the Ontario real estate bar. All of us lawyers have heard people we can kind of sneer at use the quote from Shakespeare's *Henry VI*: "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers." The same people who like lawyer jokes like to trot that one out as evidence of the horribleness of lawyers, but those of us who are more familiar with the play itself know that the person who said, "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers," was a violent anarchist who wanted to overthrow society. Really, what that statement means is, by killing all the lawyers, we would end society as we know it, because lawyers, ultimately, are the fundamental defence against the grossest manifestations of power-hungry antics and greed that are, frankly, wrought by the scum of humanity.

Interjections.

Ms. Jess Dixon: Some of my fellow lawyers are applauding.

I know that there were some members of the Ontario real estate bar who really took their law licences, took their degrees and their experience and, frankly, went to battle on behalf of so many people who were victimized and have lost so much as part of the criminal enterprise that so many NOSIs became. As a lawyer, as a legislator, as an MPP, thank you so much for everything that you did. I admit I never really pursued real estate law as a law student; I was more interested in the criminal side of things—but I have to say, incredibly, incredibly well done. You have wonderfully represented your trade and our association. I am proud to be part of the same society as you, and I commend you all so much on the work that you have done.

Ultimately, with this bill, it's a story of small and vulnerable people who became victimized by the greedy and the power-hungry, and it's also a story of people who went far beyond the call of their individual duty to protect those people. As I said, I am hoping we will be able to put politics aside and stand up for what is right, stand up for the vulnerable in society and recognize the hard work done by these heroes, and pass Bill 200 and put an end to these predatory practices once and for all.

Again, I'm so proud to have been part of this, and I am so grateful for the work of the people who were so passionate in this.

I will hand it over to the MPP from Cambridge.

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

Mr. Brian Riddell: It's a pleasure to join the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery today to speak about the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024. As the

minister illustrated previously, this important new consumer protection legislation demonstrates once again our government's dedication to advance the interests of Ontario consumers. I'm extremely excited to see this piece of legislation come to fruition, as well as the steps we are taking with this proposed bill to promote fairness and transparency for Ontarians and safeguard their interests, including seniors, new Canadians and other vulnerable consumers. We are protecting Ontarians' interests as buyers of new homes and as homeowners, and we are strengthening their confidence in their abilities in our marketplace. And we're making Ontario a better place to live, work and grow.

Let me provide a brief recap for the House of the measures included in the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024. First, if passed, this bill will ban the registration of consumer notices of security interest—or NOSIs, as they are called—on the land registry. All consumer NOSIs currently registered on title will be deemed expired, which means that they can be removed from the record of title at any time the consumer chooses.

Speaker, the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, will help Ontarians feel confident that this government has their backs when it comes to their home and housing. It also supports our government's ambitious plan to build the infrastructure that Ontario communities and municipalities need to grow and prosper.

To that end, Bill 200 includes changes to the Planning Act from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Infrastructure to provide zoning for our partners in advancing transit-oriented communities.

The Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, is a far-reaching legislative package that advances rights and protections for homeowners and buyers of new freehold homes, and supports strong growth in Ontario.

If this bill has one headline, it would be the banning of consumer notices of security interest—and there is good reason for that. If these notices of security interests, or NOSIs, have been in the media a lot recently, which they have been, that is because of the dramatic effect their misuse has on so many people who live in Ontario.

1410

To reiterate, we are proposing an outright ban on the registration of consumer NOSIs, and we would deem any consumer NOSIs already on title to be expired. This legislation means Ontarians would also not have to take on the fight themselves against the misuse of these NOSIs.

This issue is very important to me, personally. I have heard of many people in my riding and many people in Ontario speak of this—including my riding of Cambridge, like I spoke earlier about—who have been victimized by the misuse of NOSIs. I've spoken about this problem in the House previously, and at the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, and have stressed the need to tackle these scams that target vulnerable homeowners.

Today, I'm going to take a good portion of my time to talk about how vital it is that we deal with NOSIs and their damaging effects. We know that banning consumer NOSIs on title altogether is a bold move. It is one that our

government is considering very carefully before taking action, but we must.

As the minister stated, NOSIs do serve a real purpose. There are a number of reasons for a homeowner to enter into a rental or service contract with a business when they're considering a large piece of equipment like a furnace or a water heater, and that business should outline the payment plan clearly in the contract. In certain cases, these businesses may have the right to register a NOSI on the land registry system based on that contract.

Registering a NOSI on the title of that property serves as a notice to third parties of the company's security interest and may protect that interest, for example, if the customer sells the property to a third party. This allows a business to protect itself and its interests, and to be able to repossess its equipment in certain circumstances. It's not an uncommon practice, especially not here in Ontario, where there has been a long history of renting home equipment like furnaces and water heaters.

So there is a reason for NOSIs and the system to exist in the first place, but over the decades, the use of NOSIs by bad actors who have taken advantage of consumers by leveraging exorbitant payouts for them has become more and more common. As the minister mentioned, the number of NOSIs registered on the Ontario land registry per year has skyrocketed from approximately 400 registrations annually in the early 2000s to more than 58,000 in 2023 alone. And right along with the increasing use of NOSIs has come a proliferation of abuses of this legal tool, often with homeowners unaware that the consumer NOSI has been registered on title, nor the value registered.

As the minister and others in this House have pointed out, NOSIs have been used too often over the years to exploit too many unsuspecting vulnerable seniors, new Canadians and overall Ontario residents, with some unscrupulous actors misusing NOSIs to demand high payments from consumers to discharge them.

Last year, it was my privilege to join the minister and my colleagues for the House debates on our new Consumer Protection Act legislation, the Better for Consumers, Better for Businesses Act, 2023. The great achievements in consumer protections in our province have jumped over something that we haven't done for 20 years in this province, so I'm really glad to be a part of it. It's a real landmark piece of legislation, designed to strengthen consumer rights and confidence, to make it easier for businesses to comply with consumer protection rules, and to promote a fair and competitive economy.

The new Consumer Protection Act, 2023, includes stronger, clearer protections against unfair business practices; provides a fairer exit option for consumers and their families entering into certain long-term leases; and limits when businesses can make unilateral contract amendments, renewals and extensions without express consumer consent. We took up the issue of NOSIs as part of that bill. During debates, I talked about my experience with NOSIs in my riding.

There is a lot of good in this bill, and I think what made me very passionate about it was working with a Waterloo

regional police detective, Adam Stover, and David Mullock, who is the liaison officer for the force, and just watching the transcripts of the phone messages that these bad actors had portrayed to these vulnerable sector people. It's the elderly who are being abused—people with dementia—people with a lack of understanding of what they're really signing. This really sickened me, watching the same perpetrators come back to the same people they had first basically ripped off and trying to rip them off again.

I want to take time for a moment to mention the good work of Detective Adam Stover and David Mullock and the Waterloo Regional Police Service's organized financial crime team. Detective Stover, David Mullock and the Waterloo Regional Police Service's representative joined us when we first announced our intention to introduce this important piece of legislation.

The measures in this new consumer protection act, once in force, are intended to be the first step to address and reduce the harmful and inappropriate use of NOSIs. The measures include provisions to clarify a business' obligation to discharge a NOSI under specific circumstances and to allow some consumers to receive assistance from the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery in enforcing a business' obligation to discharge a NOSI if a contract was cancelled or rescinded. However, since then, the government has heard loud and clear that further and quicker action has to be done to help to protect consumers from bad actors and NOSIs related to them.

I want to take a moment to thank all individuals and organizations who have drawn attention to this issue over the years, and all those who participated in consultations last year specifically addressing the issue of NOSIs. I want to thank members on both sides of the House who have contributed to debates on this issue in the House and in committee.

The measures we are tabling with this proposed legislation are informed by the concerns expressed by the people of Ontario. This is how we came up with this bill—by talking to these people. This is a complex issue that requires urgent attention, and our approach is pragmatic, but it is a direct response.

In summary, the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, if passed, will advance protections for Ontario homeowners. It would protect homeowners from abusive practices by banning the registration of consumer notices of security interest and deeming current registered consumer NOSIs expired. These changes would come into force upon royal assent.

The Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, is an ambitious plan with strong protections for Ontario homeowners, especially for seniors and vulnerable residents. The legislation, if passed, will enhance consumer protections for buyers of new freehold homes and provide local communities with the certainty they need to protect significant heritage properties and to build for the future.

I urge all members in this House to support this proposed comprehensive legislation and help create a better province for all of us.

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

Mr. Mike Harris: It is great to be here and take part in what is truly a historic bill and debate on that today.

First, I want to thank the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and his team. Many of them are here listening right now and certainly watching on TV. Thank you for taking this very seriously and moving forward expeditiously, and putting together a bill that really is going to be transformative for many people in Ontario—not just, obviously, the seniors and typically elderly people who are affected by these scams, but also their families. I'm going to touch a little bit on some of that in my time here; I don't have a lot, only seven minutes, but I did just want to touch on a few points.

Obviously, we've heard about what this bill is looking to accomplish: the 10-day cooling-off period for buyers of new freehold homes and, obviously, enhancing protections for condo owners, but I want to talk primarily about notices of security interest today. I think that's made up the bulk of the speech and it certainly makes up the bulk of the bill.

1420

It's something that was brought to my attention a little over a year ago—about a year and a half—by David Mullock from Waterloo Regional Police Service. We've heard about him being the liaison officer who works with government on a regular basis. I know he's actually watching right now. He was texting a few of our colleagues. So, thank you, David, for giving me a call last May and inviting me down to police headquarters to hear about the challenges that not only people in Waterloo region were having, but people across the province of Ontario.

It was a very sobering conversation. We had an opportunity to sit down with Detective Adam Stover, whom you've also heard talked about here this afternoon, and we walked through this notices-of-security-interest scam that had been going on in the region. We talked a little bit about what it meant, what it has done. You've heard that here today so I won't dive too deep on it, but it was very interesting when you looked at the numbers. I want to provide a few of the numbers today.

When you look at the early 2000s, there were roughly 2,000 registrations per year of NOSIs on properties here in Ontario. That number has ballooned last year to 58,000 notices of security interest. You can really see how the scam has taken hold, how people have seen that it is profitable and that there were enough loopholes in legislation that you were able to go out and perpetrate these on individuals. Like we've heard, it's typically on folks that have maybe some cognitive impairment; folks who are a little bit challenged from a health standpoint; elderly people who, quite frankly, are taken advantage of and always want to believe that people are there to do the right thing, are there to help them, but at the end of the day it's not always the case.

Right now—and this is sort of the telling piece—there are roughly 350,000 consumer and commercial NOSIs

registered against property, against title, in Ontario—350,000. When you total that all up, it translates to roughly \$1 billion, which is staggering. You can understand how often organized crime, unscrupulous realtors, lawyers, folks who want to take advantage of Ontarians are out there doing that, because there is so much money in this.

When you look at what this bill accomplishes, obviously banning notices of security interest, or NOSIs, going forward is fantastic, but the real key piece—and I want to thank the minister again and his team for the fulsome consultation that they did with stakeholders through the fall of 2023. It is really the retroactive banning of these practices which is going to make the key difference. It's great that you stop it going forward, but it's to be able to go back and say, "No, we are not going to allow these lucrative, unscrupulous contracts to stand, and we are not going to allow you to fleece people out of their homes."

I did just want to read a couple of articles that I think are quite important. This one in particular comes from—I will just paraphrase from a CTV article. This is about a gentleman—I believe actually he was from Bowmanville; he's since passed away. The minister had talked a little bit about him earlier. I'm going to quote, and this is Melissa Irons. Her father-in-law was, as I said, Karl Hoffman. I'm just going to read through this:

"Melissa Irons says her elderly father-in-law, Karl Hoffman, would have loved to live long enough to see the government eliminate notices of security interest (NOSIs) after they were used 11 times against him and his Bowmanville, Ont., home."

Thank you, Melissa, for telling your story. I think it's very important that we're able to hear those stories first-hand. I know that Detective Stover has been travelling around the province, working with other municipal police forces and hearing those stories first-hand, investigating and seeing what the impact is to not only the homeowners, the people on title, but also their families. Often, these folks who have been taken advantage of don't want to tell their family members because they're embarrassed or they're afraid of what might happen. It can cause real challenges—real challenges—divide families and, ultimately, see some people lose their homes, their nest eggs, their livelihood, their retirement.

I also did want to talk a little bit about Kitchener resident Ian Craig. He has seven notices of security interest on his property totalling more than \$150,000, which, if this bill is passed—I'm hopeful, and I know that all of our colleagues here in the House believe that this is a good bill and that it should be passed—this will eliminate \$150,000 of potential payments that he has to make.

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Harris: That is real money. You're right; that is real money, absolutely.

And this is somebody that doesn't have that \$150,000 to go ahead and pay that back. He would be forced to sell his home that he's lived in for years to be able to make these payments.

Time is running down here, Madam Speaker. Again, I did want to thank all members of the House here today.

I'm looking forward to hearing some comments from members of the opposition. I think we share the same sentiment that NOSIs need to stop and that, going forward, we can't have these types of loopholes in Ontario law where you're, quite frankly, able to scam people out of very, very hard-earned money.

So, thank you to the minister, thank you to his team, thank you to my colleagues. And with that, I will cede my time.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's now time for questions. Questions? Questions? Further debate?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I'll be sharing my time with the members from Waterloo and Parkdale–High Park.

Speaker, I stand before you today with vigorous and urgent support of the legislation that stands before us. In fact, it is so urgent, what you will see today demonstrates what is possible when all of us stand united on an issue, and the issue today is one that is definitely warranted. It is us standing united against fraud, against those who take advantage of the most vulnerable amongst us.

I commend the government, because many times I've risen in this House, criticizing them on who they get their advice from—not today. Today, they have listened to the many people out there affected: consumers, lawyers fighting for those consumers, the police, countless Ontarians. You heard the facts: over 300,000 liens placed against properties, over a billion dollars tied up, creating nightmares—nightmares for families, nightmares for individuals. That is why we in the opposition will do everything we can to move this through as fast as possible, because people don't have a single day more.

What we are looking at as we face this summer, day after day, with these bad actors going to people's homes, taking advantage of our elderly, taking advantage of our parents, of our grandparents—in fact, it has been so heinous that when they find people that they can take advantage of, some of these bad actors will call their friends and other friends and other friends.

I have seen videos shown to me where individuals were mocking—were in the homes of people facing cognitive decline and mocking them in their living rooms as they took advantage of them. Unbelievable. What we are doing today is taking the money out of their hands, and that's what we're going to continue to do with this legislation.

Speaker, I'm going to share with you some excerpts from consumers, law enforcement, lawyers, legal aid clinics and many of those who have been in the trenches, either suffering fighting this or fighting on behalf of those affected. I again applaud the government because this is something that the New Democrats have been fighting for for years: consumer protection, fighting against scams, fighting against abuse.

I will be speaking to the consumer protection aspects of the bill, and before I get into NOSIs—these types of liens which, by the sound of the word, seem innocuous, and I tell you, it is nothing but damaging to families.

1430

The other part of the bill does deal with the cooling-off period with regard to freehold homes. Again, I agree with

the government in moving forward, because this was an amendment to the CPA we brought forth last fall. They did say at the time that the amendments we put forward were worth consideration, and today, they are taking our advice on this and I appreciate that.

Furthermore, with regard to the NOSIs themselves, I want to commend the member from London North Centre, the member from Waterloo, the member from Parkdale–High Park. I was proud to be co-sponsor in a bill that was tabled in March of this year calling just for this, the ban of notices of security interest in Ontario, both for the future and retroactively. That’s what we are doing, all of us together today, with great urgency.

I will now read to you a number of excerpts from those affected. I would like to begin with London Police Service:

“A London man is facing charges in relation to a lengthy investigation that was reported in the summer of 2023.

“In August of 2023, members of the London Police Service Financial Crime Unit were made aware of an alleged fraud that had taken place between July and December of 2021.

“Investigators learned an elderly victim was approached by a door-to-door salesperson and signed contracts to have various products installed inside the victim’s residence in the west end of the city. The items, including attic insulation, a water filter and water softener were sold through a signed contract to which the victim agreed to pay monthly bills for a lengthy period.

“After the products were installed, liens or ‘notice of security interest’ (NOSIs) were secured against the victim’s property without the victim’s knowledge.

“In March of 2022, the suspect male attended the victim’s address and advised the victim that he could assist with dealing with the aforementioned contracts and debts that were owed. The suspect provided advice in relation to how the victim could acquire a private mortgage to pay for the previous home renovations. The suspect filled out a mortgage application, which was signed by the victim, resulting in the issuance of a high-interest private mortgage in the name of the victim.”

And this is what the minister, in fact, and others here have alluded to. This is what law enforcement have been warning us, that these NOSIs were a gateway into schemes that would rob people of their homes.

“After the mortgage was obtained, the suspect convinced the victim that he could assist with additional renovations to the home at significant cost to the victim. It is further believed that the total amounts paid exceeded the cost of the work completed.

“Shortly after the payment was made relating to the renovations, the suspect male convinced the victim to apply for a reverse mortgage to pay back the private loan originally obtained. The reverse mortgage salesperson became concerned and contacted the London Police Service to investigate.”

Thank you, London police. Thank you for your advocacy and for standing up for people in the province of Ontario.

The name Adam Stover was mentioned, and he deserves a lot of praise. He was one of many officers in this province fighting, bringing this issue here to this House, talking to the politicians. In fact, he sat in my very office months ago himself. Here’s what he said, in excerpt:

“NOSIs have evolved into a tool used by organized crime in conjunction with predatory private lending to steal victims’ life savings and even homes....

“The removal of NOSIs eliminates the predators and saves likely over a billion dollars that is currently sitting on victims’ home titles waiting to be cashed in by predators by way of liquidation through the sale of the home and/or refinancing”—again, remortgaging-the-home schemes.

“The introduction of this legislation is a significant step. I look forward to all-party support”—and he has that—“to have this bill moved swiftly through the process. The expediting of this bill is imperative as, until that time comes, Ontarians will continue to be vulnerable to the current power of NOSIs and their predatory use.

“On behalf of the victims and those who speak on their behalf, we are hopeful that the removal of commercial NOSIs will put an end to this devastating fraud.”

Thank you to Detective Adam Stover and the Waterloo Regional Police Service.

Now I’m going to talk to you about a couple of consumers, many of the thousands affected across this province. Linda Palmieri, who stood with us here in the press galleries to talk about what has happened to her very own family: “In 2015,” she said, “my in-laws were manipulated into a small appliance sale; that they assumed was with a reputable company and told, under ‘government recommendation.’

“The sale from that initial contract in which a NOSI clause was included in the very fine print of the contract, put them onto a fraud list in which their names and identities were trafficked, swapped and sold to other fraudulent companies who over the span of six years repeatedly came back to their home and manipulated them into more fraudulent contract sales.” Seniors—seniors.

“They’ve had no recourse to fight it or have anyone protect them. Until now. While my in-laws do appreciate that the official opposition is finally addressing this urgent issue ... these are innocent”—this was at the time when we had tabled our bill; we are all united today—“proud people and there are thousands and thousands of them in Ontario and they need the government’s immediate help.

“End NOSIs now, retrofit the contracts and quickly, so that these companies do not rush the liens of the homes they have access to whilst the government spends precious time on passing this law. Please, we are counting on you.”

That’s what we are doing here today: moving it through.

“Please protect my in-laws and other victims of this crime and pass the legislation to ban NOSIs in Ontario for good and amend the legislation to wipe them from the books completely—and please pass it fast. Time is of the essence.”

Celia Bowker—she bought a home from a builder who originally signed a contract with a company and left her

with no idea of the terms of the rental agreement. When it came to resell her home, monies were held back at the time of the closing, and to date, these monies—totalling \$32,000—again are being held back due to vexatious NOSIs.

She says, “Thank you so much for your work on behalf of those of us who have been held hostage by this crooked company. I must add that the land registry’s office ... failed to check that supporting paperwork for liens was present or valid and that they failed to notify people when a lien was placed on their home. I see the LRO’s role in this problem has allowed the company to exploit people.”

One of the problems is that when these liens are passed, they’re not passed—anyway, they are fraudulent as they stand before us, but they’re not even happening with the knowledge of the victims. Victims don’t know.

I had a town hall that I did a couple of months ago. We talked about auto theft and we talked about NOSIs, and when I told people about NOSIs, the vast majority of the over 100 people that were there did not even know what they were. When they found out what they were, they wanted it dealt with immediately, and that’s what we’re doing today.

Now I want to talk to you about some of the legal aid clinics and legal aid services. We already heard about ACE, the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly. What they are is a specialty legal clinic established to provide a range of legal services to low-income seniors in Ontario, and they have been dealing for years with this issue. They came out, stood with us at our presser here, calling for the ban on NOSIs. They came out to our town hall to talk to people about how they could have them discharged and how to fight them.

They said, “On average, ACE receives more than 4,000 client intake inquiries a year. Many of these calls are reports of complaints due to unfair practices contrary to the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 ... many including door-to-door salespeople taking advantage of particularly vulnerable homeowners who have issues with vision, hearing, cognition and/or literacy, and/or for whom English is not their primary language.

“The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly ... welcomes and supports the introduction of” the bill, “An Act to provide for the development and implementation of a plan to establish a consumer watchdog organization,” which is something that we had tabled as well, and they are calling for the immediate passage of Bill 200, the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024—what we are debating today.

“Older adult homeowners continue to be victimized by the unlawful and unscrupulous use of NOSIs. Unethical lenders and home service companies are aggressively pursuing older adult homeowners with lawsuits leveraged by the registration of grossly inflated NOSIs against titles to their homes. Day after day, ACE continues to hear from older adults harassed and threatened by these actions. In many cases, vulnerable older adult homeowners are not able to withstand the stress of harassment for these exaggerated and unlawful claims. Sometimes, they pay out the claims believing they have no other alternative. In

other cases, they cannot pay out the claims and live in fear of the loss of their homes. The Homeowner Protection Act is urgently needed to protect the rights of vulnerable older adult homeowners. Vulnerable older adult homeowners immediately need the retroactive abolition of NOSIs that the Homeowner Protection Act would provide,” which is what we are doing today.

Jamie Hildebrand, executive director and staff lawyer at the Huron Perth Community Legal Clinic:

“The notice of security interest has been a tool deployed by predatory ‘lenders’ to wrongly exploit the vulnerable consumer.

“Our clients typically do not have the financial resources to fight these notices, as a lawsuit and a qualified lawyer are the only way to do so.

“These notices need to be abolished immediately, and in the interim anyone affected by such a notice should be informed by the province immediately at no cost.

1440

“The cascade of unfortunate financial consequences of such a notice to a person of modest means is fast and furious, potentially rendering them homeless.”

We heard from the minister how, when this tool came into effect decades ago, there were 400 registered a year and now 58,000.

More, from other forms of legal aid, Pro Bono Ontario: “NOSIs are most often used as a method to extract unconscionable payments from vulnerable consumers in exchange for a discharge.

“Discovering a NOSI on title can generate significant stress.

“Consumers are left with either paying significant sums to obtain clear title or having to initiate court proceedings to enforce their rights under the Consumer Protection Act.”

We thank all of the legal aid clinics that have been fighting in the trenches to help those affected by these scams.

Here’s a name that people of this House know well, Tim Hudak—in fact, former Conservative leader, CEO of OREA at the time and, in fact, who was the minister that moved the old Consumer Protection Act. He came out swinging in saying we need a ban on NOSIs.

This is what OREA said and what he said: “Too many Ontarians, when selling their home, have been surprised by one or more NOSIs—fine print in contracts that include exorbitant buyout charges that must be paid out before the home can be sold. This only adds undue financial burden and stress to the largest transaction many Ontarians make in their lives”—and that is the purchase of a home.

“Banning NOSIs is just one more step in the right direction to protect consumers and deliver fairness in Ontario’s real estate landscape.”

As we said, most people don’t know they have these liens registered against their properties. When do they find out? When they’re remortgaging their home, when they’re selling their home, when they’re buying a home. That’s when it’s discovered, and that’s why OREA took a position on behalf of all realtors in Ontario who are fighting on behalf of their clients to ban NOSIs.

Now, I'm going to talk to you about a number of lawyers who have been fighting this, fighting for their clients.

Dave Deonarain, lawyer, had this to say when we tabled our bill at the time, Bill 169, which would do the very same, banning NOSIs retroactively and for the future: "Upon my review of Bill 169—I think the ban of NOSIs is essential to protect Ontarians and" this is the "only proper solution to address this total mess created by these HVAC companies. Nothing else will work to address the problem.

"I compliment the MPPs that have come up with such a strong strategy to finally deal with a situation that has caused so much financial damage to many Ontarians for far too long.

"Ultimately, to address the problem, an outright ban of future NOSIs and full removal of any NOSI from the title of any and all titles across Ontario will be exactly what is needed. There is no middle ground."

Lawyer Mohsen Seddigh, a lawyer who has represented numerous consumers affected by NOSIs—and so he's in fact advancing a class action in this respect and stated, "I applaud the political consensus that has emerged with respect to the scourge of NOSIs and their traumatic impact on the most vulnerable in our society, especially the elderly."

Emma Michael, partner at Aion Law: "Between the exorbitant cost of buying the rental equipment out to remove a NOSI, which is almost always well above the value of the equipment, and the additional legal fees incurred on every real estate transaction involving a NOSI, property owners are taking the hit in favour of these companies.

"To address these issues for homeowners would be a step forward in protecting Canadians and their most treasured, largest and most treasured asset—their home."

Matthew Langer, another lawyer, who has written blog articles on the subject of NOSIs, said: "More problematically than not knowing what HVAC stands for, thousands of Ontario consumers don't know that they are renting HVAC equipment on lengthy agreements that have been found by Ontario courts in some instances to be unenforceable. These HVAC agreements can seem like small monthly payments, but there can be clauses ... that include a term ... of 10 years and allow for the HVAC companies and other affiliated financial companies to place liens on the" consumers' homes.

"The amount of the lien can be variable as there is no clear formula in the HVAC rental agreement but it usually is equivalent to the full amount owing for the entire duration of HVAC agreement. If the Ontario consumer has more than one piece of HVAC equipment, they will have multiple liens on their property."

And finally, I'm going to read from Greg Weedon. Here is a lawyer, here is a voice for a long time who has been fighting to end and ban NOSIs. I recognize him, and I thank him. He has sent multiple letters to both myself and to the members of provincial Parliament here at Queen's Park. He has amassed 750 signatures from real estate lawyers and realtor registrants.

Here is an excerpt from their open letter submitted last month: "We are Ontario real estate agents, brokers and registrants writing on behalf of thousands of Ontario homeowners who are dealing with the very real threat of losing their homes....

"The registration of notices of security interest ... or lodgements against title ownership of vulnerable homeowners in Ontario, often in respect of unwanted and overpriced home services and equipment, has escalated to the point where it is openly and brazenly being abused.

"The victims of these predatory practices are elderly homeowners who are socially isolated with limited financial means, deliberately targeted due to their social and demographic profile. There is an enormous burden on homeowners since mortgage lenders and purchasers require NOSIs and lodgements to be removed from title before completing a transaction.

"The properties are effectively held hostage and the victims are forced or extorted to pay the amount the registrant claims to be owing, regardless of whether that sum is legitimate or not. This system is broken. There is no other adequate solution other than a complete prohibition of NOSIs for all residential ownership"—again, what we are doing here today together.

"We demand that this government not only prohibit NOSIs and lodgements going forward, but move to immediately delete, vacate and abolish NOSIs and lodgements from residential properties retroactively."

Just yesterday, Mr. Weedon submitted another letter in support of taking swift action. He wrote:

"I write this letter to urge multi-party co-operation in passing Bill 200 prior to adjourning the Ontario Legislature in June. The consequences of announcing this bill and then waiting nearly five (5) months to enact same will be devastating. Lawyers are already witnessing these consequences at this given time. We understand that the parties are unified in efforts to protect homeowners and the elderly; we simply ask that these Ontarians are prioritized now.

"I write on behalf of fellow members of the Ontario real estate bar as experts in our field, and on behalf of hundreds of clients who continue to deal with a threat to their most important asset that they never saw coming. On behalf of these victims and the countless Ontarians set to benefit from this charge, a heartfelt thank you is in order.

"I have personally advocated for nearly 100 families impacted by these predatory schemes over the past 24 months. While we applaud the steps taken to resolve these issues, we cannot stress the urgency and importance of moving this bill through the legislative system without further delay. We have collectively witnessed thousands of distressed homeowners who have less than a week to clear thousands of dollars in NOSIs, failing which, these homeowners risk a failed refinancing or a lawsuit stemming from an aborted closing.

"The proposed legislation has caused uncertainty as to whether NOSIs need to be discharged and the degree of leverage these bad actors continue to maintain. These concerns are shared across the entire real estate legal bar.

We personally have between 20 and 30 clients who are embroiled in expensive litigation proceedings pertaining to NOSIs; these homeowners have no practical means to refinance, sell or utilize the equity in their homes at this time.

“These homeowners remain a small sample size of those affected by the predatory scheme. These homeowners need urgent representation and demand timely action. We plead for the parties to work collaboratively and in unison to pass this bill and right the wrong that has plagued Ontarians for far too long.

“Thank you very much,

“Greg Weedon.”

So there you have it: the case put before us all by consumers, by the police, law enforcement agencies, lawyers, legal aid clinics. This matter is costing Ontarians over \$1 billion of vexatious liens placed against properties, and they end today. They end today because we are working as one. I am proud to stand here as an MPP in this House today. I congratulate the minister. We have talked about this for some time now, and I know these liens bother him as much as they bother me, as much as they bother the official opposition, as much as they bother every member in this House.

Because of this, I am sharing my time and our lead with two members, and we will be putting forth no more speakers on this, in the urgency. But every member in the official opposition is standing united, standing with strength and is calling to an end and a ban on NOSIs today and forever.

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Before I begin, I just want to acknowledge that we have so many students joining watching debate. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

It is always an honour to rise and speak on behalf of the residents of Parkdale–High Park, and today to speak to Bill 200, the Homeowner Protection Act. This bill puts an end to predatory scams through the use of notices of security interest, NOSIs, after installing and financing consumer goods like water heaters, furnaces, AC units and even home automation devices.

These scams have become all too common in our province and they have persisted for many, many years. These unethical companies have used NOSIs because the government of the day turned a blind eye.

1450

What is particularly vile is that these scammers target and victimize some of the most vulnerable members of our community, such as seniors and newcomers. A constituent, an attorney from my riding, wrote to me saying that most people are “never aware of the regulations until the time comes to sell or finance the home, when they are suddenly on the hook for thousands of dollars. Some are seniors who have been ... criminally scammed.”

That’s the other aspect of this scam that is so vile: that it is done without the homeowner’s knowledge, and it becomes a lien against somebody’s property title. Then, the companies, these scammers, get to pocket a chunk of

somebody’s property value for years and years. In fact, people become aware of these scams, these liens, only when it’s time for them to move or sell or refinance their home.

At a press conference that I was part of, we heard a story of a senior couple who were scammed into purchasing a furnace and air conditioner unit in 2015 and a NOSI clause was included in the fine print. They had 12 liens on their home, a home that they spent their lives paying for. Now, these scammers were trying to steal this couple’s home for themselves.

That was the press conference when we in the official opposition announced our bill, Bill 169, Removing Red Tape for Homeowners, to end the disgraceful practice by banning NOSIs and making it easier for existing ones to be removed.

The government responded quickly, announcing the very next day that they agreed with us, and they would move to ban NOSIs. Their swift action shows that this is necessary and urgent legislation, and there is agreement across party lines that it needs to be implemented immediately.

Governments promise action all the time, but often never follow through or drag their feet. But this time—to the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery’s credit—he did follow through on his commitment to bring in legislation before spring, and here we are. It’s an example of how we can work together. When we do, it’s Ontarians who benefit.

Speaker, I am pleased to support this legislation to ban predatory NOSIs and protect Ontarian homeowners.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I would like to say in the House, and this is probably the first time in almost six years, I am very happy that this government bill has been called to the House. I’m very grateful that the government has moved so quickly on addressing NOSIs. And I particularly would like to thank the government and Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery for taking action on this extremely important issue.

I’d also like to thank, of course, the member from London North Centre and the member from Parkdale–High Park and, of course, the very passionate member on this issue from Humber River–Black Creek. I was pleased to join them as co-sponsors on Bill 169 to address these predatory practices in Ontario.

Some background on this bill—because my parents just tuned in—we have been hearing a lot about notices of security interest, or NOSIs, that are placed on properties, resulting in many senior victims. It’s a relatively common interaction: Typically, an illegitimate company shows up at a homeowner’s door offering to sell or rent HVAC appliances, and there is a debt or a lien placed on the home that must be repaid upon the sale or refinancing. Some of these videos that have been published about this issue are truly, absolutely heartbreaking. Many seniors find themselves victims on this.

A simple unit which costs hundreds of dollars becomes tens of thousands of dollars in many of these cases. Worse yet, homeowners don't even find out about the NOSIs until they refinance or sell. Homeowners, especially senior homeowners, deserve to be protected.

There has been a considerable uptick in NOSIs registered in Ontario over the past two years, with hundreds of thousands of dollars registered on title. Particularly vulnerable are low-income citizens and those who are socially isolated.

I must tell you that some of the saddest videos that were part of this investigation show seniors who are lonely and they are isolated. In one video that I watched, the lady wanted to get the door-to-door salesman some coffee, to have him sit down and have some cake, because they were lonely. Essentially what was happening, though, is that these lonely and isolated seniors were literally inviting the wolf into their own home. The connection to organized crime as these NOSI scams evolved is truly frightening. It was certainly a learning experience for me as the finance critic.

I want to just tell you very quickly about one local resident—his name is Ian Craig—in Waterloo region. He has had seven notices of security interest on his property, totalling more than \$150,000. All the NOSIs on Craig's home were put there by scammers without his knowledge. "This is not right, for people who have invested in their homes, that somebody comes along and puts [NOSIs] on it for half of" the house. "The way they can take advantage of people is just disgusting," he said. "This is why we need protection." This is why we need Bill 200.

The ties to organized crime became very evident when we reached out to the Waterloo region police, who I definitely want to say thank you very much to for your leadership and your advocacy and for your education on these predatory practices.

Detective Stover of the Waterloo Regional Police Service has been investigating NOSIs since 2010 but the investigation intensified in 2020 when police identified that they were being used criminally. Sometimes this is data that is the personal and financial data of the individual in the home. That data is captured and then sold to various other organizations. It was astounding that this has been going on and accelerating in Ontario for the time being.

"It became a tool used by organized crime to target and revictimize people who had notices of security on title from the years previous," said Stover. "They really identified an aging population in Ontario that have a lot of equity in their home."

Last year in Ontario alone 38,000 NOSIs were registered. Imagine that this practice has been allowed to continue for so many years. When this came up under the former Liberal government, it was astounding. They were supposed to outlaw door-to-door sales, but there was no enforcement whatsoever. The lack of oversight—basically just going through the motions—is really a disservice to so many Ontarians, particularly the vulnerable and seniors. It is vital that we protect vulnerable citizens and especially

seniors from such scams so that they are not being taken advantage of.

Thank you very much for introducing this important legislation. I hazard to say it, but let's get it done today—

Interjections.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I know. Let's get it done. Let's protect seniors. Let's pass this bill. Let's do it quickly.

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

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I beg to inform the House the following document was tabled: the annual report of the review of expense claims covering the period April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, pursuant to the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002, from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario.

HOMEOWNER PROTECTION ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PROPRIÉTAIRES DE LOGEMENTS

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

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I do appreciate these moments when we can share, all working together, with one goal in mind—and that goal is protecting the vulnerable in our community from fraud and bad actors who are there to steal, basically.

I want to thank my neighbour the MPP from Cambridge, who put forward a PMB a while back. I know my friend from Cambridge has moved the needle very much today, and I appreciate his trail-blazing work on this file. I want to thank the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, as well, for making sure that we can get this work done as soon as possible so that people can start seeing relief now. I have stories from my riding where people's lives are put on hold or the harm is happening day to day, moment to moment, and so I'm glad we could expedite this work.

1500

I'd be remiss if I didn't also thank Detective Adam Stover. He's a member of our Waterloo Regional Police Service. I had the good fortune of talking with him when our police service came to Toronto and came to Queen's Park to describe what was happening in our community. He took an amazing lead. He has been an expert in the field. I've had the privilege of being able to refer constituents in my riding who have been facing this to him to get expert advice and help with their issues, and he has been at the forefront of making sure that this gets resolved as soon as possible. So I want to give a deep bow to our police service, and especially Detective Adam Stover for his great work and advocacy.

Notice of security interests—the fact that we are all learning what this means right now shows how vulnerable

our population is. So many folks across our province have no idea what's happening when they're being scammed day to day through these complicated contracts—people coming to fix a bathroom or sell them a heater or an air conditioner—and getting charged triple, quadruple and amounts they're not even aware of. There is a total lack of informed consent, and the way this has opened the floodgates to organized crime is astounding. So I really appreciate that this silent crisis is getting addressed quickly, especially given the circumstances of us facing an aging population.

Just last week, I spoke to a resident in my riding whose mother has had NOSIs put on her property. She's living with Alzheimer's. It was her dying wish to age in place, but because she lives with dementia, she is vulnerable to folks coming to her door. Her data was sold. So not only was the NOSI put on her property, but her data was sold, and the PSW told the constituent in my riding that a cab had been sent to her home four times to take her mother to the bank. The only reason she wasn't swindled out of any money in her bank account was because she didn't remember to bring her social insurance number. So I don't think that we're just saving folks from the harm caused by NOSIs; we're saving this data from organized crime, being used in other malicious ways. I know that our constituent will breathe a sigh of relief. Her mother is in long-term care now, and she really wants to do the work of selling the house, but she needs this resolved in order to move on with the sale of her mother's home and so that her mother can keep the money she has worked for her whole life.

I also appreciate the work done to delay—the heritage buildings being recognized. I know our heritage community and the architectural conservancy was very loud in their advocacy for asking about that. I want to acknowledge my constituent Kae Elgie for her work in this matter—and a lot of the other protections for people buying their homes that are afforded to those who have condos. I'm so grateful that we can include some of these items to make sure people have peace of mind when they buy their first home.

I'm grateful today that we can all come together and we can create protections for people, especially our most vulnerable, in terms of home ownership. I hope we can go that extra mile in the coming years to protect seniors from renovation. I know in my riding and in many of our ridings, seniors are being renovicted at double the rate and they're losing their rental homes. So I hope we can protect people's home ownership and we'll keep working towards protecting tenants from being illegally evicted by bad actors in that space, as well.

I am looking forward to voting in unanimity together for this wonderful bill.

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

Further debate?

Mr. Adil Shamji: It's a pleasure to rise in this chamber to discuss Bill 200 with everyone.

Let's start by facing the facts: The Premier is in damage control. After the disastrous reception of Bill 185, the Premier realizes he needs to give a little something for

everyone. Instead of passing landmark housing policy, he's trying to pump out a little goodie bag to keep stakeholders quiet over the summer.

Who is really driving housing policy? Is it the Premier, who's got the minister on a leash, or is it the other way around? I guess we'll never know. Or we could wait for another minister to write a book about their time trying to keep a struggling ministry afloat, which is a book that I would preorder.

This bill gets too much credit—because let's talk about flip-flops. And I'm not talking about the kind of flip-flops the Premier might have been wearing at last night's backyard barbecue. I'm talking about the kind of flip-flops they're trying to camouflage in this bill. Schedule 2, the Ontario Heritage Act—that's a flip-flop. Schedule 5, the Planning Act—again, that is a flip-flop.

When this government flip-flops, you never know whether it's going to land in the clear, and on this occasion, they're doing the right thing. But how much uncertainty, how much spooking of the housing sector had to take place in order for them to get here? The answer is: too much.

By forcing municipalities to determine whether their listed heritage sites would be designated according to an unrealistic timeline, they have forced them to reroute valuable administrative resources that municipalities needed to get homes built, that they couldn't use to get homes built. But this government isn't concerned about that. After all, Bill 185 entirely abandons the “1.5 million homes by 2031” housing target.

At least this bill realizes the error of the government's ways and flip-flops to give municipalities more time to give notice of intention to designate homes as heritage sites. It's good that this government can realize when it's wrong, but I think the people of Ontario would appreciate if they weren't wrong every day, because these flip-flops are costly, not just for the taxpayer, but to everyone waiting for a place to call home.

Madam Speaker, I wish that was the end of it; I genuinely do. But when you make your way down to schedule 5 of this bill, you realize there is yet another flip-flop staring you in the face—and again, not the Premier's flip-flops from last night. I'm talking about the legal protection this government legislated for itself with regard to ministerial zoning orders. Do you remember that—when the government covered its own hide for reversing on all those MZOs? Yes, so that was with changes to the Planning Act. All those developers that the government dragged down into the mess of their own making—well, the government railroaded them too. They were left out to dry without any recourse for legal action. That didn't sit well with Ontario's development industry, even those that weren't involved with the Premier's greenbelt-giveaway fiasco.

The government wants to hand out MZOs to build transit-oriented communities. Well, no one trusts the government anymore on those MZOs. They don't believe those MZOs mean anything. And if those developers have those MZOs cancelled, they wouldn't have any insurance

that they could then avail themselves of legal action. Never in the history of Ontario has there been a government that has created so much uncertainty in Ontario's housing sector.

Let me be clear: I am in support of transit-oriented communities. We need to increase density, and we need to do it in major transit areas. I want to make that clear to the minister and his entire office, because it seems they have their wires crossed on this issue. But I want to make sure that the whole House and all the people of Ontario realize—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I apologize to the member who is speaking. I apologize to the member for Don Valley East.

Please lower the voices, the conversations. We cannot hear the speaker.

I apologize. You can continue.

Back to the member for Don Valley East.

Mr. Adil Shamji: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I want to make sure that the whole House and all the people of Ontario realize the absurdity that is this government having to walk back legislation to reassure home builders that they will still be able to sue them if they flip-flop on their MZOs. That's where we are, folks. That's how low this government has taken us.

We will support this legislation, but it's embarrassing that we have to. I can understand why this government is rushing this bill through in one day, because it is frankly so embarrassing that so much of this bill even had to be written. It makes sense why they don't want to take it to committee, because the stakeholders would flame them there. Well, perhaps that would happen more behind the scenes, as it already has. Regardless, it would be pretty awkward.

The housing sector has had enough of this government jerking it around. When it comes to health care, I have come to the conclusion that this government's neglect is intentional and deliberate. But I do believe that the government's mismanagement of the housing file boils down to another one of Ford's finest signature blends: NIMBYism and incompetence.

1510

But it turns out that a broken clock can be right twice a day, and that is the case for this government in some sections of the bill. This bill does get some things right, against all odds and in spite of this government's signature blend of incompetence. For example, it offers a 10-day cooling-off period, after the purchase of new freehold homes, to cancel their contract without reason or penalty. This is to ensure that new homeowners can make sure their purchase was the right choice for themselves, and so they're fully equipped with all of the information that they need. Surprisingly, this government is actually taking the advice of the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board and the Ontario Real Estate Association, although it is still flouting many of the Housing Affordability Task Force's major recommendations.

Do you know what, Madam Speaker? A chance for homebuyers to make sure their purchase was the right choice? Some time for them to make sure they've got all the information correct?

Frankly, I think this government should legislate a 10-day cooling-off period for itself when it passes legislation, just so that we can all make sure.

This bill also bans consumer notices of security interest. There are far too many examples of people who have been caught unaware of NOSIs registered on their property and who have subsequently been subjected to exorbitant fees that feel extortionary. Something has to be done about that. While retroactively banning consumer NOSI registrations will be a good thing for homebuyers and we support that, this government must ensure that it puts the protections in place so that this change only affects bad-faith actors, not good-faith actors. Some of the people who have been impacted most are people who are elderly, who are new to our province, or who don't speak English. Banning consumer notices of security interest is indeed an important step to introducing more fairness and equality to people who own homes. Ultimately, we need to do what is best for the 350,000 homeowners who will be protected by this policy, but this government needs to do it responsibly.

On to legal protections: It is understandable, especially for this government, that they would want to put legal protections in place for themselves regarding NOSIs. But in the same breath, they are also legislating legal protections for any action taken by Teranet. What's up about that? Does it have anything to do with NOSIs? Is this about cancelling a contract and changing vendors? This bill offers no transparency, and this process, frankly, offers no time to even figure it out.

Does the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery have any of these answers? Does the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing? Does anyone? Does the Premier know—or is this coming from somewhere else entirely? Those of us on this side of the House would like to know.

While we're on the topic of transparency, let's talk about builders' cancellation disclosures. This bill would require the public disclosure of builders' histories of cancellation disclosures, providing consumers with greater confidence and peace of mind. This is a good thing for homebuyers. It keeps everyone honest, and we support it.

But I find it odd that we are talking about homeowner protection and we are living in a time when the government can't even ensure that a home is physically protected from crime, break-ins and armed robberies. This bill has some worthwhile elements to it, but it's disgraceful that this government hasn't included anything to do with helping Ontarians protect their homes and their families from crime. In my community, break-ins have been on the rise ever since this government took office, and far too little has been done to make them feel safe in their homes. For this government's next bill, I do hope that they will take this into consideration.

Just one last thing, on MZOs: With all the talk about MZOs, how about this government actually using them to

build homes instead of as political favours? If you want any proof that this government treats MZO's as political tools, look no further than 175 Cummer in the Minister of Long-Term Care's riding. That inaction is forcing the city of Toronto to pay millions in storage for modular homes.

We'll pass this bill, but will the government get its act together?

I want to end by concluding with just how regrettable this accelerated and expedited process is for denying a fulsome review of everything in this Legislature. I will say now what I said before, which is that this bill is an embarrassment and didn't need to happen—an embarrassment so great that a bill that is being touted as a housing bill wasn't even put out under the housing minister's name; it was put out under the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

In conclusion, I thank all members of the House for participating in this debate and for putting this bill forward. I regret that it has been done in such an expedited manner, but I look forward to the ensuing stages of reviewing this later this afternoon.

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

Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. McCarthy has moved second reading of Bill 200, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to homebuyers and homeowners, properties of cultural heritage value or interest and certain planning matters.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? I recognize the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I respectfully ask that the bill be referred to Committee of the Whole House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Committee of the Whole House. *House in Committee of the Whole.*

HOMEOWNER PROTECTION ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PROPRIÉTAIRES DE LOGEMENTS

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 200, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to homebuyers and homeowners, properties of cultural heritage value or interest and certain planning matters / Projet de loi 200, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les acquéreurs de logements et les propriétaires de logements, les biens ayant une valeur ou un caractère sur le plan du patrimoine culturel et d'autres questions liées à l'aménagement du territoire.

Hon. Paul Calandra: With the indulgence of the committee, may I request that a table be brought onto the floor of the chamber for staff while Minister McCarthy moves to the front row?

The Chair (Ms. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to standing order 109, this is permitted. I will ask chamber staff to assist with bringing a table and three chairs onto the floor while the minister moves to the front row.

We are now considering Bill 200, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to homebuyers and homeowners, properties of cultural heritage value or interest and certain planning matters. Are there any comments, questions or amendments? And if so, to which sections of the bill?

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: Chair, I have no amendments to the bill, but I have comments to—pardon me; I must rise.

The Chair (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the minister.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: Chair, thank you. My apologies.

I have no amendments to the bill, but I do have comments to schedule 4 as a whole.

The Chair (Ms. Donna Skelly): Thank you, Minister.

Are there any other comments, questions or amendments to other sections of the bill?

1520

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I just wanted to make comments to everyone in the House today. I want to congratulate the minister on this bill before us. I want to thank the government for listening to the official opposition. The parts of the bill pertaining to the freehold home extension with regard to the cooling-off period is, in fact, an amendment that we introduced to the CPA, and we thank you for listening to us and for it appearing in the bill.

We also thank the government and the minister because the banning of NOSIs for the future, as well as the past, in fact, is the substance of Bill 169, tabled by members of the official opposition. Again, the government and the minister have heard us, and this is part of the substance of this bill with regard to consumer protection.

I'm proud, as we are all proud, to stand together united on this bill.

The Chair (Ms. Donna Skelly): Are there any other members who wish to be recognized?

I will now bundle consecutive sections that have no amendments and to which there are no comments or questions.

The bill is comprised of three sections and five schedules. I suggest that we postpone the first three sections of the bill in order to dispose of the schedules first. This allows the committee to consider the contents of the schedules before dealing with the sections relating to the commencement and short title of the bill. We would return to the three sections after completing the consideration of the schedules.

Is there unanimous consent to postpone consideration of these three sections of the bill and deal with the schedules first? Agreed.

Schedule 1, sections 1 to 5: Carry? Schedule 1, sections 1 to 5, carried.

Schedule 1, sections 6 to 8: Shall they carry? Sections 6 to 8, carried.

Shall schedule 1 carry, as a whole? Carried.

Shall sections 1 to 3 of schedule 2 carry? Carried.

Shall schedule 2, as a whole, carry? Carried.

Shall sections 1 and 2 of schedule 3 carry? Sections 1 and 2 of schedule 3 are carried.

Shall schedule 3, as a whole, carry? Schedule 3, carried.

Shall sections 1 to 12 of schedule 4 carry? Sections 1 to 12 of schedule 4, carried.

I recognize the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: Thank you, Chair. This is a landmark piece of legislation, the first of its kind in Canada. If passed, it would protect consumers from fraud and bad actors. By banning, or proposing to ban, the registration of consumer notices of security of interest on land titles, we are putting an end to the exploitation that has targeted our elderly and the most vulnerable residents of our communities.

Moreover, we're giving Ontarians the crucial information and the time they need to confidently make one of the biggest financial decisions of their lives. This would occur through our enhanced protections for new homebuyers, putting those new freehold homebuyers on the same plane as new condo purchasers.

The proposed legislation would further strengthen consumer protections for homeowners and buyers by establishing a 10-day cooling-off period for purchases or purchasers of new freehold homes. The Condominium Authority Tribunal's jurisdiction to cover a broader range of disputes would be put into place. There would be a more accessible and efficient resolution of disputes and the burden taken away from the courts.

This proposed legislation has widespread support from advocacy groups for seniors, consumer advocates, law enforcement, legal professionals and businesses of all sizes.

The Chair (Ms. Donna Skelly): Is there any further comment on schedule 4?

Shall schedule 4, as a whole, carry? Carried.

Shall schedule 5, sections 1 and 2, carry? Schedule 5, sections 1 and 2, are carried.

Shall schedule 5, as a whole, carry? Carried.

We will return to sections 1 through 3. Shall sections 1 through 3 carry? Carried.

Shall the preamble of the bill carry? Carried.

Shall the title of the bill carry? Carried.

Shall Bill 200 carry? Carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? Carried.

Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that the Committee of the Whole rise and report and ask leave to sit again.

The Chair (Ms. Donna Skelly): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

The Committee of the Whole House begs to report one bill without amendment and asks for leave to sit again.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Committee of the Whole report adopted.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

Orders of the day?

1530

HOMEOWNER PROTECTION ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PROPRIÉTAIRES DE LOGEMENTS

Mr. McCarthy moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 200, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to homebuyers and homeowners, properties of cultural heritage value or interest and certain planning matters / *Projet de loi 200, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les acquéreurs de logements et les propriétaires de logements, les biens ayant une valeur ou un caractère sur le plan du patrimoine culturel et d'autres questions liées à l'aménagement du territoire.*

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the minister.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: Speaker, this is a momentous day. Great work has been done by all members of this assembly to get us to this point. We consulted in the fall of 2023 across the spectrum: individual families and elderly citizens who have been victimized by this terrible fraud of misuse of NOSIs. The deception and organized criminal activity associated with it was unacceptable.

We heard the stories, as I said, of families and seniors. We consulted with law enforcement, legal professionals, businesses of all types, advocates for consumer groups and advocates for the elderly. We then put forward the proposal and we tabled the bill.

There are times when matters that require our urgent attention must be dealt with swiftly. This is one such time. I congratulate all members of this House for listening to the residents and citizens of their communities across 124 ridings in the province of Ontario. We are working together today swiftly to move this matter to the point where we can debate and ultimately vote on third reading of Bill 200. It is properly called the Homeowner Protection Act, but it's also about protecting homebuyers. The Homeowner Protection Act, 2024, is the right thing to do and it is urgently needed.

When members of this House come together and put partisanship aside, we can serve the citizens we all serve together, rightly and fairly and properly, doing our duty as parliamentarians. I believe that we have done that today. With the support of all members of this House, we can move it forward so that immediate relief will be available to the seniors who are affected by this. It is not just a proposal to abolish the registration of notices of security

interest in regard to consumer goods and services against people's homes going forward. It is not just that; it is about retroactively abolishing—making ineffective—the 350,000 some-odd NOSIs that are currently registered on title against homes.

Before we vote, I ask you to consider this: To delay the passage of this legislation would be to enable further fraud, enable further victimization of our elderly and our vulnerable. That would be wrong. That would be a failure of our duty as parliamentarians. I urge you all to continue what you have started. Let us come together, vote together and pass this bill on third reading. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's an honour for me to rise here today to add some remarks on Bill 200. To my mind, this marks some of the best collaboration I have had the opportunity to witness within this chamber in my six years as a legislator.

We've all seen the horrific stories of seniors, people living with disabilities and new Canadians who have been targeted by these insidious HVAC scams. It's been absolutely unconscionable to see that these companies will end up using ridiculously long contracts that actually are longer than the lifespan of the unit, and that the contracts will also have these appliances accrue interest year over year. What appliance gets more expensive the more you use it? It makes no sense. The fact that they will take a bite out of the value of a homeowner's home is absolutely unacceptable.

The reason we are here is because the dithering Liberal government did not respond to this crisis properly. They banned door-to-door sales, but yet there was no enforcement to that. It was like they took care of a side issue. They looked at the method of this scam, but not actually the beating heart of this scam itself. The beating heart of this scam is the NOSI or the lien.

Despite the fact that door-to-door sales are banned, these companies have found other ways in, they have pivoted. They will contact people through email, they will set up phone calls, they will tell people that they have won prizes, thereby gaining entry.

I want to thank all of the investigative reporters, whether it's W5 or CBC Marketplace, who have had hidden-camera investigations, which have really shone a light on what this scam actually is.

It's been really unfortunate that Liberal inaction has allowed these companies to continue to get away with this for so many years. So here we are today, dealing with this issue in a collaborative, proactive way.

I've got to say, I was initially not all that impressed when the government first mentioned the study of NOSIs. I was a little bit worried. I thought it would be imbalanced, unfair and that people wouldn't receive justice. I've been following this for a number of years. It's something that I've cared very passionately about, and I've got to say that there's been so much work done in this space, and as legislators, we cannot ignore what has happened in people's lives.

After thinking about this for some time, I've tried different ways to develop legislation to combat it. There's been many different approaches, but we have to cut the head off of the snake with this scam. We have to get rid of the beating heart of this scam which is the NOSI or the lien.

I want to thank Dennis Crawford, who has been incredible to work with. He's done excellent work fighting for and informing people about this scam. And I also want to thank people who came forward and shared their stories with us.

There was Linda Palmieri, a constituent of the MPP from Humber River–Black Creek. We had staff litigation lawyers from the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, Sarah Tella and Bethanie Pascutto.

This fall, when discussing the consumer protection bill, Bill 168, I was asking this government time and again if retroactivity was going to be included within any discussion of NOSIs and we weren't really given much cause to support any upcoming legislation, because there was really no indication that retroactivity was going to be provided. I was really quite worried that this government wasn't going to go far enough, so as a result, I tabled my bill, Bill 169, and I want to thank the member for Humber River–Black Creek, our consumer protection critic, I want to thank the member from Waterloo and I want to thank the member from Parkdale–High Park for also being my co-sponsors on this legislation.

I've got to say, I did prefer my title, but I decided not to go and change that during Committee of the Whole House. It was the Removing Red Tape for Homeowners (No More Pushy, High-Pressure HVAC Scams) Act, but with that legislation, it did both things: It looked forward and it also looked backward. It included that retroactivity which is central and is key and is something that we must do.

It's not fair to go and say, "Now is year zero, and we're going to start looking after people and make sure that they aren't being scammed." We need and we have a moral and ethical duty to make sure that people who have been victimized and exploited by this scam are also protected, and so I want to thank the government for including that within Bill 200.

I've got to say, on the day when I tabled this legislation along with my co-sponsors, I had the opportunity to ask, in question period—and there aren't many times where I'm, quite frankly, speechless, but when I asked the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery about this, and the minister indicated that they would be following Bill 169 and including retroactivity, I was so glad. I'm so glad to see that we, together as legislators, are going to take care of an awful mess that has been left for years—to take care of this predatory, horrible industry which exploits people and takes money out of their pocket.

I want to thank also police services, advocacy organizations—all the people who have been trying to get change within this space for a number of years.

1540

I also want to share some feedback that I have received, and it was written to me:

“Without the opposition pushing this issue forward, the government may not have acted until later, and their action may have been less comprehensive than what has been proposed in the announcement.

“Thank you, Terence, for your leadership on this important public issue!”

I want to also send a message from this Legislature to those predatory scam companies. I want to ask them a question: How on earth is it possible that you can live with yourself when every dollar in your pocket is based on human suffering? I want to ask: How could you look yourself in the mirror and pretend that you're a decent person? This Legislature today has shown that we are on to your scams. You can try to pivot. You can try and slither away, but we will continue to respond with legislation to make sure that this does not happen to seniors, people living with disabilities and new Canadians. Stop scamming people and put your efforts into a real, decent job.

Thank you very much for the time, Speaker. Again, I commend the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery. I want to thank all members here for providing me with this opportunity to speak today.

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

Mr. McCarthy has moved third reading of Bill 200, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to homebuyers and homeowners, properties of cultural heritage value or interest and certain planning matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Orders of the day.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Paul Calandra: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 7(e), I wish to inform the House that tonight's evening meeting is cancelled.

And if you seek it, I'm sure you'll find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to move the clock to 6 o'clock. Agreed? Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario building code should be amended to restore the requirements for electric vehicle supply equipment that applied to houses served by a garage, carport or driveway, as per subsection 9.34.4 of division B of O. Reg. 332/12, as it read on January 1, 2018.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

I recognize the member from Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: The future is electric and the future is coming and we have to be ready for it. We may be excited—we may even be electrified—but we aren't prepared.

As a girl from Oshawa, I support the automotive sector and always want to grow manufacturing. My community was immeasurably shaped by automotive innovation and auto workers. I want to do my part to ensure the road ahead is bright and sure.

We will all be proud to build electric vehicles right here in our province and proud of the good jobs and the auto workers who will build them. But Ontario needs a real EV plan so we can charge them and drive them. We are not EV-ready, and we are falling behind. We need a serious EV strategy to grow development, manufacturing and the charging infrastructure. We need EV-ready homes.

This initiative aims to make it easier and more affordable for drivers to transition to electric vehicles by requiring home builders to include rough-ins for charging infrastructure in newly built homes. As the official opposition critic for infrastructure, transportation and highways, I have the opportunity to talk to folks who are driving the future and building the province. Months ago, I met with the Electricity Distributors Association and our local utility, Oshawa Power. Daniel Arbour, the president and CEO of Oshawa Power, made a reference to Quebec's buildings code's at-home-charging rough-in provisions for new homes. I was interested, because it makes sense to start at home when creating a solution that will make a difference to the most Ontarians. New homes should be built with the future in mind.

The building code had been amended in 2017 to include a requirement for EV charger rough-ins, which was to take effect for new builds after 2020, but it never did. In 2018, the newly elected PC government undid this section in the Ontario building code around the same time that they also removed chargers from GO stations and cancelled the rebate for EV buyers. I want this government to reverse course and undo their undo.

We have seen this government rethink positions before and repeal or reverse or reconsider, and I am asking them to listen to industry, environmental and energy folks, and make it easier for more Ontarians to charge their electric vehicles at home. The future is on its way, and it will be here by 2035.

The federal government's plan for Canada to move away from fully gas-powered cars and toward electric vehicles is that by 2035, 100% of new light-duty vehicles sold would have to be electric vehicles. These gas-powered vehicles account for about half of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector.

In a government news release announcing that this province was investigating options for a new ultra-low overnight electricity rate, this PC government's former Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks said,

“Electric vehicles are a powerful tool in the fight against climate change and a critical way to reduce emissions.”

Further, this Minister of Energy said, “Introduction of a new ultra-low overnight price plan that would benefit shift workers and support EV adoption is our next step as we focus on helping electricity customers save money....”

The former Minister of Transportation said, “This new initiative will help electric vehicle owners save on costs, while also supporting the use of these environmentally friendly vehicles across the province.”

Speaker, I don't often read PC government news releases, but today I believe we share common ground, and I'm trying to remind them that we want to support mass adoption of the electric vehicles that we are all excited to be building here.

Honda will be investing \$15 billion to build four new EV plants in Ontario, and that is a big deal. The deal includes the construction of the Honda's first electric vehicle assembly plant and a new stand-alone EV battery plant in Alliston. This Premier called the investment “a game-changer for the industry” and a “tremendous win for Ontario.” He said his government is supporting the investment with direct and indirect incentives worth \$2.5 billion.

Honda Canada's president, Jean Marc Leclerc, was recently in Oshawa, and I ran into him at the Canadian Automotive Museum. I appreciated talking with him about Ontario's EV future, and I just heard him on CBC Radio, where he spoke about mass adoption of EVs and the need to find solutions to eliminate people's anxieties about owning an electric vehicle. In that interview, Monsieur Leclerc said, “In the end, what we're seeing right now is a matter of the conditions not being optimal for mass adoption for Canadians. We as an auto industry don't control all these aspects for success. We can bring vehicles to market, we have to sell them, people have to be comfortable buying them.”

He went on to say, “We're trying to address environmental concerns, climate change. Governments are taking certain actions to accelerate these developments and those investments in a very short period of time. With that needs to come all the other components of that ecosystem to come together and assure that ultimate objective gets realized.”

Charging infrastructure, specifically at-home infrastructure, is part of that EV ecosystem. People won't buy them if they can't charge them, and there is more that we can do. The provincial government has made significant investments to bring EV manufacturing to Ontario, but without a reliable consumer market, we've already seen Ford Motor Co. delay their EV production by two years. Unifor members have been left in the lurch. Stakeholders in the automotive industry have shared their concerns that the government is not doing enough to encourage EV adoption.

1550

I appreciate being a part of this important work, and I want to thank industry and community partners for their input into my bill. I have been glad to get frank and clear

advice from many who see the value in planning ahead to support the future of EVs. Here is part of a letter from the Electricity Distributors Association:

“Dear Ms. French,

“The Electricity Distributors Association ... welcomes your recent tabling of Bill 199, the EV-Ready Homes Act ... 2024. As you know, the EDA represents Ontario's local hydro utilities, the part of our electricity system closest to customers.

“The EDA is pleased to see that the EV-Ready Homes Act would respond to our mutual goal of an electrified Ontario. Whether it's the federal government's net-zero target, the province's investments in EV manufacturing or changes in customer expectations—mass adoption of EVs is coming, and it is time to get ready. Building new homes with the expected changes in future electricity use in mind—particularly EVs—makes sense, and it will ensure Ontario is ready for its electric future.”

I want to thank the president and chief executive officer, Teresa Sarkesian, for her letter.

Speaker, it was Daniel Arbour, the president and CEO of Oshawa Power, who first sparked my interest in EV-ready homes. I am pleased to share his letter today:

“Dear Ms. French,

“Oshawa Power is pleased to provide this letter of support for Bill 199, EV-Ready Homes Act ... and your motion 109 that would amend the Building Code Act ... to make homes ‘EV ready.’

“With more than 130 years of experience in delivering services and bringing Oshawa forward through innovation and technology, we know and understand the need to provide residents with the services they want and need, and be prepared for emerging technologies, such as the future of electric vehicles.

“The electricity grid is undergoing a period of transformative change due to the growth of electric vehicles, and other emerging technologies, our focus is to modernize the electric grid to ensure stability and this bill will enable homeowners to make a seamless transition to electric mobility. Many customers are reluctant to make the move to electric mobility because their home electrical panels need to be upgraded in addition to installing an EV charger, resulting in additional delays and unplanned costs.

“Oshawa Power also believes the future in Ontario is electric and this amendment to the building code requiring the addition of a 200 amp panel and the roughed in electrical box for EV chargers in the home will make the transition to electric a smooth and seamless experience for Ontario residents.”

That's from Daniel Arbour, the president and CEO of Oshawa Power.

We have a responsibility to support the market. We can't only support the auto manufacturers in building the vehicles. We want them to be able to sell them so that they will keep making them here.

I know a thing or two about good auto jobs. I live in a city that built General Motors. Those good union jobs ensured workers could buy homes, vehicles; that they

could participate in and invest in our community. We have to be thoughtful in how to support a strong future for auto workers across our communities.

Some basic EV economics: We are going to have the supply side covered, but we are not being smart about the demand side. People are EV-curious and are wanting their next vehicle to be electrified, but they don't yet see the infrastructure so they can charge them. They want to be able to charge them at home.

Building new homes is a priority for everyone, and we are building new homes, so let's build them right and EV-ready. Supporting EV-ready homes today will ensure every new home we build is ready for the future. To date, the Premier has said no to this, but let's talk this through.

We need to weigh the minimal cost to plan ahead, amortized over decades, against the hefty cost to retrofit, paid all at once. The costs of upgrading a home to allow convenient charging are significant, with estimates as high as \$3,000 to \$5,000. This is a deterrent for anyone looking to get off of fossil fuels and into an electric vehicle. It is far more cost-effective for home builders to include the rough-in for chargers at construction.

We also all agree that great automotive jobs are important to keep in the province, and that investment in manufacturing and the future of electric vehicles is part of our economic and electrified future as a province.

Speaker, I am ever the optimist. Originally, this government removed chargers from GO stations and removed this forward-thinking section of the Ontario building code. However, we have seen this PC government investing in charging infrastructure, and clearly, they recognize there's a need. I'm hopeful that their recognition of the problem of access to charging will motivate them to adopt this initiative today and ensure all new homes are built EV-ready.

We will be building cars and making batteries and hopefully strengthening the energy grid to support our electric future, but we want to make sure people can charge their vehicles. The future is electric, and we have an opportunity to do something useful today. I urge this House to pass this today so that we can have EV-ready homes tomorrow.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: It's an honour to rise to participate in this debate. I want to thank the member for Oshawa, one of the places in Canada that knows a lot—I agree with her—about the automobile industry.

I also want to just note for the record that I am the proud owner of an EV. My partner and I got a 2022 Chevrolet Bolt EUV. We specifically chose that car because it is the one—of which I'm aware at the moment—union-assembled car that one can buy in the market. But we know there is more product coming. There's more product coming because Ford has product that it wants to introduce into the market, and we see other product coming.

But there is a delay in the market right now, and it has nothing to do, as my friends might attest, with controversies over nuclear energy or environmental programs. It

has to do with making sure that we have the charging infrastructure for the next generation of electric vehicles right here in Ontario.

I was at committee where I serve—heritage and culture and infrastructure—and I recall a senior staffer saying to the committee at the time that Ontario Parks was going to be participating in a massive rollout of fast-charging stations, which would be a fantastic idea, because that is land the province is directly responsible for. That is across the province of Ontario—particularly when I'm thinking about the north. But have we had an update on that, friends?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: No.

Mr. Joel Harden: We've not. In the meantime, in the United States, under President Biden, there has been a \$7.5-billion commitment to hit a goal of 500,000 new chargers by 2030. Wow, that's progress.

Unfortunately, right now in Canada, the ratio of electric vehicles to charging stations is 20 to one. If you look at the global average, it's 10 to one. So we have to ask the question: We've heard a lot in this House—and I'll acknowledge that it's progress—from this government wanting to attract the assembly of electric vehicles in our province, wanting to attract the assembly of batteries for electric vehicles in this province. But we haven't heard a lot—as the member for Oshawa just said—about what we are going to do to make sure that we can charge the cars once they're out there in the economy. It's a critically missing piece, Speaker.

We can fix this missing piece, I want to believe, rather like our debate we had earlier this afternoon on NOSIs and consumer protection. This is another kind of consumer protection. If we make sure that a family or an individual takes the leap to be part of the electric vehicle future, we have to make sure that the infrastructure is there to support those folks.

Because the EV market is growing. We know that it's going to be 4.6 million by 2030, 12.3 million by 2035. But will you be able to fill up the car? Let's hope we can vote for the member's motion and make sure that happens.

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

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I am very grateful to talk about this motion today, and I appreciate the member for putting it forward. I too own a Bolt and am a grateful owner of that Bolt. I spend \$12 a month on operating my Bolt through electricity rates—thank you to the energy minister for the low overnight rate, which I charge my car with—and I save 80% a year on maintenance fees.

I know in this House there is great concern about affordability, and I think the more we can do to help people not only afford an EV but also operate one with ease will go a long way to ensure that it's not just me, with privilege, who can foot that bill at the beginning, but this affordability relief can be appreciated by all Ontarians, which is why we support the member's bill. We know that it's so much easier—I know from lived experience—to patch in the electrical capacity when you're building your

home. It saves thousands of dollars. It costs so much more to retrofit a home when you have to do it later on.

1600

Look at the retrofitting we're trying to do right now when it comes to climate. We look at all our older homes. They're very leaky. We have to retrofit those homes, and it costs people thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars. We know better, and so we should do better. So I hope that we can do this work of retrofitting the homes from the very beginning. We could save people money on their monthly expenses, and we could save money on their servicing.

We also know that this creates affordability over the lifespan of the car. As a person who graduated from business school, I think we need a revamp on our accounting classes. We need to take operating costs and we need to allow those costs to be used for capital. We know with these cars, yes, they cost more up front, but you will save thousands of dollars over the lifespan of the vehicle, and I have seen this with a lot of the electrification of our fleets. We see this in the city of Kitchener, where we've electrified our fleet. When we build new buildings now in the city of Kitchener, we mandate that that charging happens during the development process. So I urge us to do that not just for municipalities and put this on them to figure out on their own.

This is a consistent thing we can do across the province with ease. What I've heard from the development sector is that they hate going from city to city to city and trying to figure out everybody else's way of doing things. The city of Kitchener is moving forward with green development standards. This will be the reality in the city of Kitchener, but we would like it so that developers can find it easy to manoeuvre and build across the province with the same set of standards, so they don't have to reinvent the rules and understand different rules depending on where they're building. It adds time. It adds energy. It adds staffing costs. It adds complexity. When we create this norm across the province, we create simplicity for home builders, which saves people money as well. We know these retrofits will have to come if we don't do that.

I also believe in what the member beside me has shared about the future of the EV sector. What I've heard is that you build it where we buy it. We know that, yes, we need to operate EVs cheaply and we need to make it easier for people to use them. This encourages people to buy the very EVs that we are manufacturing in Ontario. So when we make it easier for people to buy EVs in the province of Ontario, we are supporting the very jobs that we're creating at this moment. These things go hand in hand. Any effort to undermine EV market sales by not having it patched into someone's home, by not having consistent charging infrastructure across the province, by not making it affordable by using rebates and these price incentives—we will see a dip. This is what I heard from Toyota. Toyota Canada came to me last week. They are near my riding. Most of the auto workers live in my riding—because it's awesome—but Toyota Canada is in Kitchener. They told us that these are the things they want, as an auto manufac-

urer. I know that they will be coming to Canada, but they want to make sure that the jobs that they create are sustainable. They don't want to build a workforce and tell people to go home. They need to see the will of this government for the uptick, for the sales of the EVs, so that they also will come here and invest in the Ontario EV market.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to join the debate today—almost a historic day, really. I'm really pleased that the member from Oshawa has brought forward this motion to the House. It feels very much like a “help us help you” kind of moment here.

It is important, actually, just to understand how we got here. I do think that it's worth noting that when the Ford government first came into power back in 2018—then they zapped the compulsory garage plugs from all new houses and condos, effective 2019. This felt at the time like an absurd move, I have to tell you, because most of us would agree that people do want to transition away from your traditional automotive fossil fuel car.

EV has a little shininess to it, but there are some structural issues that stand in the way of consumers purchasing those cars.

I also want to make it very clear that there have been some major investments in this province towards the EV sector—\$2.5 billion in taxpayer dollars going to Honda in a recent announcement. However, according to a recent CBC article, “The surge in investment comes as the underlying EV industry remains at a crossroads.” So this motion from the member of Oshawa can actually be a motivator, if you will, and an enabler, if the government is serious about the EV sector. “Growth forecasts have plateaued, charging infrastructure has not kept pace and electric vehicle prices have pushed the cars out of reach of many consumers.”

So this is where we are in the province of Ontario—major investments towards the automotive and the factories, but the missing piece to successfully rolling out and becoming a true global leader in the EV sector is the infrastructure piece.

According to the Pembina Institute, “Currently, Ontario's EV market share is low and charging infrastructure is insufficient—in Ontario, there is approximately one public charger per 25 EVs on the road. Globally there is about one charger per eight EVs on the road.” We have a lot of work to make up for.

“However, EV sales are sagging, in part due to inadequate charging infrastructure”—and this is just from April 2024—“there are about 2,900 charging stations with 8,000 charging ports in Ontario.” This is insufficient.

This is why there is a lot of market interest in building these chargers into the building code. Build it right the first time. Create the market share. Address some of the stigma and the concerns and fears around range anxiety or access to charging, build that market share and demonstrate to companies like Toyota that Ontario really is serious about the EV market.

Other stakeholders—this is Daniel Breton, the head of the industry association Electric Mobility Canada: “The problem ... is people have limited knowledge and understanding of electric vehicle chargers.

“An Electric Mobility Canada survey found 88% of respondents said they would like their next vehicle to be electric but only 13% claimed to have an in-depth understanding of EVs, including the number of public charging stations, government rebates and battery life, among other aspects.”

“The entire industry agrees we are going to get to a place where we are at zero emissions. The only debate is how long it’s going to take.” This quote is from Flavio Volpe, who is head of Canada’s Automotive Parts Manufacturers’ Association.

“That timeline depends on several key factors. But price and charging infrastructure are among the most important.”

Everybody gets a second chance to correct a mistake, I think, in this House. We just saw a really important moment in this House where we worked together to try to address the predatory practices around NOSIs.

There are three major, key issues at play with the motion today. We want to make sure that going green shouldn’t be prohibitively expensive. When you install a charger in your home at the time of build, it’s approximately \$500; later, after the house is built, it’s about \$3,000 to \$5,000. This is cost-prohibitive for so many Ontarians.

My son is an electrician. I’m very proud of him. He could work 24/7 in this province. We need more electricians to do this work. We will get more electricians moving into the trades if the building code is changed, if we build in this green infrastructure around the EV sector.

The other thing is that good union jobs are on the line. The provincial government has made these investments, but without a reliable consumer market, we have actually already seen the Ford Motor Co. delay their EV production by two years. So this would be a confidence builder, I would say, for the market, and then finally an easy fix to prepare for an electrified future.

1610

This is the direction we should be moving. As the official opposition, with the leadership of the member from Oshawa—the time is now. Join us. Help us help you make the EV sector truly successful in the province of Ontario.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is a pleasure for me to talk in support of the motion from my seatmate, the MPP from Oshawa. Her motion is quite simple: “That, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario building code should be amended to restore the requirements for electric vehicle supply equipment that applied to houses served by a garage, carport or driveway, as per subsection 9.34.4 ... as it read on January 1, 2018.”

I live in northern Ontario. I can tell you that within about 300 kilometres of where I live, there are zero

charging stations for electrical vehicles. That doesn’t mean that the people of northern Ontario don’t want electrical vehicles; we do.

My neighbour Shelley bought an all-electric vehicle last summer. She had to pay a good friend of ours, Len Holmberg, close to \$3,000 to install a charging station at her house. She works in the city. She’s able to go to work. They have two kids; she’s able to pick up her kids and do all of this because she charges her electric vehicle at home.

In northern Ontario, where I live—if you find that the cost of gas is high in southern Ontario, come and have a look at the watershed. Come and have a look at Gogama or Foleyet. If it’s under \$2 a litre, we find that this is a deal and it’s a good time to fill up. So do we want electric vehicles? Yes, we do.

There is home construction going on in northern Ontario. To mandate it in the building code that every new home with a garage, a carport or a driveway—which most of them in northern Ontario have; we need cars because there’s no public transit—is a given. Make it part of the building code so that when you have your plans, when they come and build, you don’t have to say, “Oh, by the way, make sure you wire in for”—it will be done.

Same thing—my husband is an electrician. My daughter is an electrician. They will tell you that putting it in while you’re building the home is very easy to do—connecting it to your electrical panel and all this. They have good conversations between those two that I don’t always understand, but I do understand the cost. It is hundreds of dollars to do it while you’re building the house—it is thousands of dollars.

Pass the motion. It makes sense.

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

Mr. Matthew Rae: It’s my pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak on my colleague from Oshawa’s motion before this House. I also obviously want to wish my colleague a happy birthday. I know we work well together on the procedure and house affairs committee and the important work we’re doing there.

I was listening to the debate intently this afternoon, colleagues, and hearing about the important investments our government is making in Ontario—increasing the power capacity, historic amounts of auto investments that Minister Fedeli and Premier Ford are attracting to this province. Our provincial government understands the opportunities this presents, and we’re going to unleash the next stage of the electrical vehicle revolution.

That’s why our government is implementing, as this House knows, our Powering Ontario’s Growth plan, with shovels in the ground today on new energy generation and storage that will power the switch of Ontario-made electric vehicles as well as new economic investment and new homes. That includes Canada’s first small modular nuclear reactor; the largest procurement of clean energy storage in the country’s history; and new transmissions that are going to connect every region of our province.

At the same time, we’re ensuring that our grid is ready for families and businesses to decide to make the switch.

We also know this revolution brings with it unparalleled opportunities for our province's economy.

Over the last four years, Ontario has attracted over \$43 billion in transformative auto investments by global automakers and suppliers of EV batteries and battery materials.

Interjections.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I appreciate the member from Guelph for clapping for that fact.

Interjection.

Mr. Matthew Rae: And Kitchener Centre. My apologies. I can only see Mr. Green.

My apologies, Speaker.

Ontario's auto supply chain is comprised of over 70 parts firms, over 50 tool-and-die and mould makers and over 40 companies working on connected, autonomous, electric and mobile technologies. It employs approximately 120,000 people in the province of Ontario—as well as hundreds of thousands of indirect jobs, many in my own riding of Perth–Wellington. These are historic investments for our province.

It's disappointing though, colleagues, that the members opposite, most recently in the investments we're making in our budget around auto investment, giving our municipalities the tools to attract this investment—they voted against that, colleagues. And they voted against my motion, in particular, around our clean, green nuclear fleet. They voted against those good union jobs at Bruce Power, Darlington, and those historic investments we're making to refurbish those facilities to continue to produce the electricity we will need to power those made-in-Ontario electric vehicles. It is disappointing that they voted against those investments.

But it's thanks to our government's actions that we are now a global leader when it comes to the manufacturing of electric vehicles. We know that in order to take full advantage of this coming change, we need to be ready. That's why we're increasing the number of public EV chargers, especially in underserved areas, including exploring reduced electricity rates for those chargers. As we heard, the member from Kitchener Centre appreciates our government's action on lowering the overnight rate to charge her electric vehicle.

We're building thousands of new EV chargers through the EV charge Ontario program, a \$91-million investment to support public EV charger installations outside of Ontario's large urban centres, including at community hubs, Ontario's highway rest areas, the ONroutes, carpool lots, parking lots, Ontario parks, an arena down the road from my house in my riding. We are installing new EV fast chargers across all of Ontario's ONroute stations along the 400- and 401-series highways with local utilities. They're some of the biggest supporters of these programs—like Hydro One and OPG's Ivy Charging Network.

When it comes to ensuring our homes are ready, last year the Ontario Energy Board issued new guidance to all local utility providers that makes clear that utilities should be providing all new residential customers with the

capacity to accommodate 208-amp service, enough to power an EV vehicle that is currently available on the market.

Let's talk about new homes. It's no secret, colleagues, that Ontario is in a housing supply crisis. Recently, as members of the standing committee on infrastructure, cultural policy and heritage, we heard from a former Liberal cabinet minister, Steven Del Duca, now the mayor of Vaughan—we know the leading cause of this crisis was the inaction of the previous Liberal government, who for years failed to act to take any steps to address the lack of affordable housing in Ontario. While our government has taken historic steps to undo this damage—today we voted on Bill 185, another important step forward in that goal of building more homes across Ontario—one of the main obstacles facing home builders across the province of Ontario is the cost of housing. As we heard recently at committee from stakeholders, high interest rates—it was great to see the Bank of Canada finally begin to cut interest rates, as our Premier has been calling them, and many Premiers in Canada have been calling on that. High interest rates, high inflationary rates, high tax policies of the federal government—yes, including the federal Liberal carbon tax—are driving the costs up for our home builders across Ontario. These are the higher costs that are ultimately passed on to those potential homebuyers. Those new Ontarians, those new Canadians, those young people, and those seniors looking to downsize are the ones footing that bill.

Unfortunately, the proposal from my colleague, as presented today, would be another additional cost that would make it more unaffordable for families to purchase a new home. The NDP wants every homeowner to have to pay up front, whether they would use the service or not. Those of us on this side of the House believe in a free market approach. And they laugh, colleagues, but I will fight every election in my entire life on the free market, because I'm a believer in the free market and I will stand for that.

Any homeowner can make this choice, and I have friends who have made the choice to purchase an EV and install that, as well. I have friends who have purchased a home that may have it, as well. It's their choice. We'll continue to stand with the people of Ontario to allow them to make those choices, as well.

That is why our government is recommending that we do not support the opposition motion.

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

I recognize the member for Oshawa. You have two minutes.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Speaker, today we have an opportunity to prepare for tomorrow. We need EV-ready homes. I've been proud to bring this achievable solution to this Legislature, and it is buoyed with support from industry and those interested in that bright future. I do hope that the government will make this happen.

From a letter of support from Unifor national president Lana Payne:

“On behalf of nearly 40,000 Unifor members working in the auto and component parts manufacturing sector, I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed EV-Ready Homes Act ... and its companion motion 109, intending to amend the Building Code Act to accommodate for electric vehicle (EV) adoption. These proposed amendments will facilitate the future installation of EV supply equipment in new homes, which is a forward-thinking and necessary step to ensure Canada’s automotive sector infrastructure meets the needs of its net-zero transportation future.

“Ontario is positioning itself as a leader in North American EV production. Tens of thousands of jobs in this province will depend on a well-functioning EV supply chain. However, it is crucial that our infrastructure evolves in a way that both supports this shift towards zero-emission vehicle options and, in turn, good jobs here at home.

“Advancing our infrastructure today can save homeowners significant future costs, making the inevitable transition to EVs more accessible and affordable. This will have a positive effect on EV demand, property values and home safety. This sort of holistic approach to policy development is precisely the type of government approach our union envisioned within our 2022 auto industrial policy road map, Navigating the Road Ahead.

“I commend you on this initiative to modernize Ontario’s housing infrastructure and promoting sustainable living. Unifor urges all parties to support this legislation, and to ensure its swift passage at Queen’s Park.”

I want to thank Lana Payne and all the autoworkers across the province.

Making sure we have EV-ready homes is one small but mighty, and achievable, piece of the puzzle.

I hope the Premier will switch gears and commit to ensuring we’re EV-ready at home and on the road.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The time provided for private members’ public business has now expired.

MPP French has moved private member’s notice of motion 109. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

Vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): All matters relating to private members’ public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow, June 6, 2024.

The House adjourned at 1624.

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Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
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Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	