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Mardi
29 octobre 2024

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Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Trevor Day

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 29 October 2024

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 29 octobre 2024

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

AFFORDABLE ENERGY ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR L'ÉNERGIE ABORDABLE

Mr. Lecce moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 214, An Act to amend various energy statutes respecting long term energy planning, changes to the Distribution System Code and the Transmission System Code and electric vehicle charging / *Projet de loi 214, Loi modifiant diverses lois sur l'énergie en ce qui a trait à la planification énergétique à long terme, aux modifications touchant les codes appelés Distribution System Code et Transmission System Code et à la recharge des véhicules électriques.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the minister care to lead off the debate.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Good morning. I'm sharing my time with the Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries and the good member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

It's an honour to be joining you today as we start second reading of the Affordable Energy Act, which is an instrumental legislative vehicle to enable a vision—a long-term integrated energy vision for the province where energy is affordable and abundant, and it is always reliable for our economy and for our people.

I want to say it has been an honour over the past 100-plus days working with the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, working with the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore and the dynamic Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries. We, as a team, have, over the past many months, worked together to reimagine integrated planning, to reimagine an affordable energy future and to put in place the steps and put in motion the pathway to a clean, affordable future for our families and our children.

Ontario's energy policy will fundamentally determine the future of our economy. It is that consequential when it comes to getting this right today and thinking through a generational lens as we endeavour to build out our transmission, our generation and our storage infrastructure which will be the foundation for the long-term prosperity of our country.

We take a moment to reflect that this province is once again a province of builders. We're making the record investments, we're building the record infrastructure, we're putting our money where our mouth is on subways and schools and hospitals and so much more when it comes to building for the future. We are seeing growth in our biggest cities and our smallest towns, and with that growth also comes challenges, especially when it come to growing our energy demand. In fact, just two weeks ago, our team stood with Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator and they told us, point blank, that power is increasing at an unprecedented rate.

To support our growing economy, to sustain the quality of life we deserve as Canadians, we will need at least 75% more electricity by 2050. That is the equivalent to adding four and a half cities of Toronto to the grid by year 2050, in the next 25 years. It is an overwhelming public policy challenge, but we have a plan and we are so uniquely advantaged in this province because we've been thinking about tomorrow.

Just the last year, Speaker, to contextualize the challenge, the amount of energy we're going to need to power EV businesses has now doubled. It will be the equivalent of 2.2 million homes of energy by 2050. The power needed for data centres by 2050 is six times higher than just last year's forecast by the IESO. Industrial demand is set to increase by over half in just the next five years.

There is also the demand for new resources like pump storage and batteries and hydrogen, as well as existing fuels like gasoline and natural gas that currently play a critical role to powering our vehicles, heating our homes, attracting investment and supporting our agricultural sectors, life sciences and automotive industry.

When you look back just six years ago, when the policies of a previous government had us going in a very wrong direction, instead of making decisions based on affordability—the singular driver of our government's decisions—the Liberals of the day opted for a rigid adherence to ideology that resulted in electricity prices increasing by \$1,000 a year. That cannot be a metric that any responsible government would want to emulate. The province was paying 10 times the going rate for power. A clear failure—a failure of government that left our ratepayers—and let's not allow this to be abstract—left single-income pensioners in energy poverty, families in energy poverty, businesses fleeing, jobs contracting. Our economy declined. This is not a path to prosperity in our province.

Clearly, we cannot go back. That formed the basis of our commitment as a government, as a people, that we

would fix the hydro mess, and the first step was to get electricity bills under control. We knew right away that it was not fair for ratepayers, whether it be our businesses or our families, to shoulder the burden of these astronomical energy costs. That's why we immediately took action to stabilize hydro rates and provide real relief where it matters, and the plan has worked. Families felt the difference on their bills; investments started to flow again.

Part of our vision too was ensuring energy security for the immediate term, for the coming decade before us. That's why we launched the largest battery procurement in our country's history. It's the third-largest battery fleet on the continent. We are leading under our government, and the contrast could not be more clear. When the former Liberals had the opportunity to invest in battery storage they yielded precisely zero megawatts of battery storage capability. We're putting ourselves on the map as a leader in the country and a top leader on the continent when it comes to storing that renewable power for good.

The fact is that Ontario, unlike jurisdictions around us north and south, east and west—we have enough power for our growth for the medium term. But that work alone is not going to drive our long-term success. Yes, it is important we have those battery storage capabilities, but we need to have a vision. We need to acknowledge a problem. We need baseload solutions—baseload. We need to have an honest, intellectual debate about the baseload solutions for our future.

Mr. Ted Hsu: I'd like to see that.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I think, Madam Speaker, what will bring members of the Liberal Party to chuckle in the House today, is their cognizance—self-aware, if insecure—about their record. A record that led to a \$1,000 increase a year is nothing to be proud of today.

I know that we will unapologetically pursue a path of a pro-growth, pro-job agenda that centres our public policy on affordable energy. That's the driver of our energy expansion plan, using an all-of-the-above approach to leverage the energy we need for our future. But we're not going to go back to those costly Liberal energy experiments that drove up bills under the Liberals, that led to some of the highest energy rates on the continent. We cannot allow that type of politics to return to this province, imposing great hardship on the everyday working people of our province. We sought a mandate in 2018 from the people of Ontario on this issue and they demanded government put affordability first. I'm proud that our Premier, under his leadership, has chosen jobs, growth and the long-term prosperity of our province—putting them first, those imperatives first.

0910

That's why, last week, I was honoured to be joined by the associate minister and our parliamentary team where we announced Ontario's affordable energy future. It provides a full accounting of the challenges facing our province as we partner with workers, with energy companies and builders and private sector union partners, regulators and communities to seize the moment before us—to seize the opportunities before us as we build for

tomorrow. It lays out our priorities, but, first and foremost, it is centred on the needs of families as we remain relentlessly focused on keeping energy costs down.

We're delivering on that by leaning in on the expansion of non-emitting nuclear power, and we're delivering by keeping the dream of home ownership alive for our young people and for new Canadians by significantly cutting the cost for new homes to connect to the grid. We are delivering today with significant legislative changes through the Affordable Energy Act—changes that will position the province for our growth with a coordinated, integrated plan that builds on the baseload power and resources like nuclear energy; changes that will make it more cost effective to connect new homes and will help reduce overall energy use to save money too; changes that support the adoption of electric vehicles.

Let's just take a moment to reflect on the need for energy planning. It's clear the previous government's siloed approach was not working. It wasn't delivering the best value for our ratepayers, because it's no longer enough for the IESO, the Independent Electricity System Operator, to plan for the electricity system, and the OEB and Enbridge to look at natural gas and other private companies to plan for fuels in isolation. We have multiple ships passing in the night.

We need a strong, overarching focus on common goals. We need a long-term vision to deliver energy security and affordability for our people. It's why we proposed updates to reform the legislative planning framework under the Electricity Act to establish an integrated energy planning process, and that starts with a repeal of the previous government's long-term energy plan framework, replacing it with the requirement to produce an integrated energy resource plan recognizing the interconnectedness between electricity, natural gas and other fuels. It includes the establishment of a predictable five-year planning cycle, it streamlines the process for implementing an integrated energy resource plan through modifications to the directive-making powers and, perhaps, more importantly, by planning for all of our sources of energy, ensuring all energy systems support these key goals. As with building housing or attracting investment, we are on a path to achieving its energy vision.

I want to point out that the proposed legislative amendments also address recommendations made by the independent Electrification and Energy Transition Panel in their report released in January. Our government established this panel in 2022 to provide advice on how we can leverage the highest-value opportunities for the energy sector to help Ontario's economy prepare for growing energy demand and widespread electrification and to articulate what changes are needed for better energy planning, a more reliable energy supply and more effective governance and decision-making.

The panel's report was clear: Ontario needs an integrated plan to manage the anticipated increase in energy demand, a long-term vision for our children and our grandchildren. I'm proud that the Affordable Energy Act delivers on this vision.

With the proposed legislation before this House, we are addressing the recommendation to advance an integrated planning process that considers a variety of resources and will ultimately provide the long-term confidence to our families and our businesses and our farmers to align with Ontario's economic development and housing priorities.

But our changes to energy planning don't stop there, because we go much further than that. For the first time in the province's history, we explicitly prioritize zero-emission nuclear generation as part of our expansion for the future. We are proud to be investing and leaning into non-emitting sources for energy expansion.

I hope members opposite will agree with the premise that nuclear energy is fundamentally the future. If they seek to urge government to decarbonize our economy then we need baseload solutions—yes, more hydroelectric, but nuclear too will play a role. I know some members of parties opposite will stand with the nuclear sector. I hope we all can support the 65,000 families that do amazing work—safe, reliable, enduring power that is affordable for our families. We're taking an all-of-the-above approach. We know that we will not meet our goals, we will not be able to sustain our economic success, without nuclear energy.

I will say this should not be a matter of controversy in this House. I want to believe that we can come together on this premise that nuclear energy is an effective, obvious affordable, reliable option for the people of Ontario to keep building on our baseload energy. But, Madam Speaker, you will know that the former Liberal government was happy to plan for the permanent closure of the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station. They wanted to say goodbye to 4,500 jobs associated with it. Instead, our government stood up for our private sector workers, stood with the workers at that plant to support safe, continued operations of their work as we complete the refurbishment of station B's units.

It was the New Democratic member from Toronto–Danforth, the honourable critic, who called nuclear “harmful to human health and the environment.” I don't think that's a position held by every New Democrat in this House, but it's our government that knows that nuclear energy was the only reason our province was able to transition off coal and that nuclear reduces emissions to the tune of 18 million vehicles off our roads every single year. It was the leader of the Green Party, who says it's too expensive.

Madam Speaker, don't listen to me or anyone in this House. Seek the advice of the Ontario Energy Board, the sector's independent regulator that says it's the second-lowest cost resource on our system today behind water power. If we're going to meet the challenges ahead of us, including rising energy demand, we will need nuclear.

This bill codifies, in the clearest terms, this government's commitment to the nuclear sector, to our nuclear energy workers and to our clean energy future. I call, therefore, on all parties to fundamentally work with the government to support our workforce, support our nuclear sector and stand with us through the Affordable Energy Act—a vote for a future powered by safe, affordable,

reliable power. We want members opposite to do the right thing, to accept the premise that nuclear energy is the future. It is the solution to the challenges facing industrialized economies today.

I think about this through a generational lens because, certainly for the associate minister and I, we are generational public servants in government. We came here to think about the next generation. Just like our great-grandparents built the first hydroelectric dams at the turn of the century. I think of Sir Adam Beck. I also think of our grandparents that built our first nuclear stations in the 1960s. Of course, we remember Premier Robarts's leadership and vision.

Now, it will be our generation and our government that will build for our children and for our future. This legislation will set the stage for the path to an affordable energy future for our kids. This legislation also addresses another major challenge—making sure that we get power to new homes and to new businesses. Our government made a commitment to make it easier and more affordable for every project to connect to the grid. Be it a housing project, a new business park, a new manufacturing plant, we want them to connect to the grid at a more affordable rate.

To help define the problem that we have solved, in part through the legislation we have proposed to this House, under the current rules the process is slow. It is costly. It increased the cost for homebuyers and for businesses. Customers including large industrial customers, housing, local utilities—they have all stated that the framework today for electricity system connection infrastructure can significantly delay project timelines and, in some cases, inhibit investment to the province altogether. It's why the Affordable Energy Act amends the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, to enable future regulations that would facilitate more timely, cost-effective electricity system connections for housing and large-scale customers in high-growth areas.

In other words, we want to reduce the upfront capital cost associated with the last-mile connections, the final step that links new homes and business to Ontario's clean electricity grid. Let me just take a moment to thank the associate minister for leading the way on helping to resolve a long-standing challenge on housing affordability by helping to fix the last-mile challenge by producing affordable solutions for Ontario families, giving hope to our kids that, through hard work, they can own a home. We are grateful to the associate minister for his very meaningful leadership in this space.

0920

Under the current system, as you know, Madam Speaker, electricity transmitters and electricity distributors are acquired to align all or a large portion of the cost for expansion of the electricity system and connection facilities to the first customers who wish to connect—the first movers' disadvantage, some may say. That includes the cost of any excess capacity that may eventually be used by another customer. The first movers may be reimbursed only if customers use the excess capacity within the con-

nection horizon, but are not reimbursed by customers who materialize after that period. As a result, quite obviously to anyone hearing me define this problem, first-mover customers bear a disproportionate cost of responsibility and the financial risk associated.

I want to tell you that the member from Leeds–Grenville has been so clear for years that we need to take action in this area, and I am grateful to him for advocating for affordable homes, for an obvious solution to a long-standing challenge, an intergenerational challenge that we can fix together. I'm proud that we're working and seeking the good wisdom of members who have been in the trenches, who understand the economy and understand housing affordability.

With the new regulation-making authority that's proposed in this act, Madam Speaker, you will see we are allowing the Ontario Energy Board to spread those costs over all customers in those high-growth areas—those who connect to the line, not just the first. Let me give you an example: Under the old system, a residential development of 200 homes would pay the full cost of building the new infrastructure needed to connect to the grid. Say the upgrades cost \$10 million in this example; this means that every home will now have to pay \$20,000 per unit to absorb those costs, hiking the cost further on our kids who just simply want to own a home here in the province.

Under our plan, under this example—a real example and a case that is very relevant to so many families, because we know that this project would only have to pay for what they will use—they'll only pay for what they use, their load, and the result under this scenario is that instead of a \$20,000 per-unit cost, the cost would be about \$4,000, saving the family \$16,000 in what would be literally a stealth tax. I think this is a material way we can make a difference. We're not going to solve it alone in energy, but we are part of a broader enterprise of working across government to make housing affordable for our kids. The benefits will be substantial. It will support rapid growth in housing, particularly in support of Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan.

Madam Speaker, this is really what thinking and planning and building for tomorrow looks like. It's about building the homes and the transit and the subway, and Canada's largest energy expansion in our history to create a clean, affordable, reliable grid for the next generation.

The theme of thinking for the future continues with the third set of what's proposed in the Affordable Energy Act, to reduce the regulatory barriers for owners and operators of public electric vehicle charging stations, all in service of getting more chargers built, of reducing range anxiety for EV drivers. This bill, very fundamentally, is a common-sense collection of reforms that are necessary to enable electrification, enable affordability and enable large-scale generation using nuclear as our future, if you distill the purpose of the bill. Electrification is fundamental.

I want to take a moment as I pause on EV charging, Madam Speaker, because I'm a student of history, like we all are in this House. I remember just a decade ago when the intelligentsia, the elites—the Liberals and New Demo-

crats, notably, actually said to the government of the day a decade ago that we should be turning away from manufacturing. There are some brilliant quotes from members opposite saying we should turn away from advanced manufacturing, literally calling it dead industries of the past, saying we need a service economy to drive our future.

Thank God that the Premier and this government ignored in totality the advice of the members opposite, because we have instilled the reindustrialization of our province in manufacturing. We have repatriated the very jobs that fled because of bad economic policy that deterred investment and undermined job creation in the province. We have brought back \$43 billion of EV investments alone, not in spite of but because of our affordable, clean, reliable grid, and because we created the economic conditions through regulatory relief and tax relief to incent investment to the province. I'm proud of that reality.

It's not a laughing matter that 300,000 people lost their jobs. It's not a laughing matter that the members of the New Democrats enable this type of ideological dogma that led to the province buying energy at 10 times the market rate. What is the virtue—beyond, perhaps, members of the Liberal Party and their co-conspirators feeling good about themselves—when a family and a senior got their energy bill and they paid 300% higher than where they started, where energy bills rose \$1,000? Tell us the virtue of that policy and why you seek to replicate it again. No responsible government will pursue that path.

We should not have turned our back on the Pickering nuclear workers. We should not have turned our back on the tens of thousands of manufacturing workers. There is a reason, Madam Speaker, that private sector unions in the energy space have supported our Affordable Energy Act plan. Let them guide or inform this debate. The people on the front lines building the energy support the plan.

Where do you stand? Do you stand with the workers? Do you stand with our economy? Do you stand with our industries that are calling on government to invest in a plan for tomorrow that is reliable at its core and affordable?

The EV expansion is something we're proud of. I'm proud that the Minister of Economic Development and Trade has done amazing work in this space and we've unprecedented investment. But we want to play a role in supporting this expansion. For example, we've seen historic investments in Stellantis in Windsor; Volkswagen in St. Thomas; Honda in Alliston, Goodyear in Napanee. More families are working in these sectors because of our investments. And because of the switch to electric vehicles, more than one million EVs are expected on the roads by year 2030, putting more pressure on the grid, as I mentioned earlier.

To accommodate this transition, the government must ensure electricity remains, yes, reliable and affordable and that Ontarians can find public chargers where and when they need them. We know that investing in public charging infrastructure is important to support Ontario's growing end-to-end EV supply chain to ensure EV drivers can confidently move. That's why our government is encouraging the adoption of electric vehicles in the province by

providing a regulatory environment that supports and enables further development of EV charging. The changes would provide certainty that public EV charging station owners and operators would not need to get the same licence as currently required from the Ontario Energy Board like a local utility like Toronto Hydro or Hydro One. Clearly, that's not what this was intended to be about.

Finally, we are making legislative changes that will enable a significant expansion of energy-efficiency programs because, yes, we're going to need to generate a lot more energy—75% more energy—but we also support conservation. We recognize it's a cheaper option to pursue conservation than generation, but we're going to need both, based on the massive energy demand before us. So we're taking an all-of-the-above approach. Part of this bill recognizes that, as Ontarians choose to electrify their homes and their businesses, there is significant opportunity for them to install more energy-efficient appliances, smarter controls and conduct those retrofits that will help them save time money and reduce their demand on the grid. After all, the cheapest electricity generation to build is the generation you don't have to build at all. We get that. We are literally doing all of the above.

This bill enables that type of mass expansion of conservation. We have a grand vision for that plan. In September, we increased funding for the energy-efficiency programs by \$342 million. It brings the total funding to \$1 billion over the current three-year framework. Over the past few years, we've launched new options, be it the ISO's Peak Perks program, which has been an incredibly effective program to reduce electricity use at peak periods. It's proved to be an incredible success on the continent. I'm not exaggerating: In just over a year, the program enrolled over 150,000 families, making it the fastest-growing virtual power plant on the continent, able to reduce peak demand up to 150 megawatts—the equivalent of taking Barrie off the grid for the summer. It's a major investment and we're proud of those types of actions.

But we recognize too, as Progressive Conservatives, we can do more to make life more affordable, to reduce grid demand. We want to play a role in reducing costs, reducing power. So, under the current legislation, you'll notice that the ISO is, right now, limited in the programs they can deliver. Specifically, they can only administer energy-efficiency programs that result in electricity savings. We want to expand the ISO authority to establish electricity energy-efficiency programs that go will beyond the existing programs. They're just constrained to roughly 30% of the population.

All of our constituents could play a role. All of us could reduce our footprint. All of us should have the right to save money. I believe through these reforms we can help everyone; for example, support a homeowner's transition from an oil or propane furnace to electric heat pump to heat their home. This is a pragmatic policy reform we think is important. We want to ensure all customers have the option to reduce overall energy use and subsequently reduce the cost for high-consumption activities.

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The government intends to build on this strong foundation and unveil new energy-efficiency programs. We want to help every family and business and municipality play a role in energy conservation. I will say, these proposed legislative changes, along with our recently announced vision for an affordable energy future and the public feedback on that vision, will inform and facilitate our plan to release the first integrated energy resource plan in the early part of 2025.

We intend to deliver a plan with certainty to the economy and to our families that will clearly address energy demand that is expected to rise by 75%—a sobering figure—in this province just over the next 25 years to meet the needs of our population, forecasted to increase by two million people over the coming decade. It will provide clarity and certainty for our investors, for our sector participants, for our customers and for our families as we drive economic growth in our province. It will support an energy system that prioritizes customer choice, participation and affordability in the energy transition and build support for the government's vision and future policy decisions through that engagement—a plan that incorporates Indigenous leadership and participation as well as economic development opportunities in the energy sector.

This is plan that builds on ambitious work under way. The largest expansion of nuclear energy on the continent is happening right here in Ontario. A massive expansion of our transmission network to support growing manufacturing and housing is happening right here in Ontario.

New energy-efficiency programs helping families reduce their cost are happening as we speak in this province, with more to come in the early new year. We launched over the summer, with the Minister of Agriculture, the largest energy procurement of its kind, a competitive energy procurement in our province and country as we deliver 5,000 megawatts of reliable power, where renewables will play a fundamental role in that competitive procurement—I emphasize competitive because price will dictate the decision, not an ideological adherence. That will be the North Star for the government: lowest-cost options, affordable options so we keep the rates down for our families and our seniors. We're going to use this integrated plan to embrace the opportunities on the horizon.

My final comment is just to reimagine how we produce power and how we export power, too. This vision—Ontario was already a net exporter of clean energy into the US market. That has historically been done at a loss. We really want to change the game in this respect. We're not going to be generating power to sell it at a discount. In fact, our plan will end the nonsensical sale of power at a loss into the US. We are not a charity for our American friends and competitors. We have a radically different approach to how we can monetize what is increasingly becoming the most valuable resource on earth.

We want to maximize value for Ontario taxpayers so we can build the social infrastructure we need for our future, our schools and hospitals. That is really important, and we need revenue to do it. There's only one party in

this House that has never raised a tax since coming to office—we never will—and that’s the Progressive Conservative government under Premier Ford. I mention that because the alternative options, the obvious options for members of the Liberal Party inevitably will be raising their taxes, as they did every year under their reign. That is not a path forward. That’s not a way to create affordability. That’s not a way to create a growth society. It’s not a way to instill hope in our kids. We want young people to know if they work hard, they can achieve in the country, and we want them to recognize that through their hard work and through their ingenuity and their commitment to the country, they can help build this up for another 150 years of reliable, clean, affordable power.

We’re not going to do this in a vacuum. We’re not going to waste any time. We’re bringing urgency to the file and a commitment to work with our jurisdictions around us to deliver our clean energy advantage to help reduce continental emissions, leveraging non-emitting nuclear power as our future.

This plan enables a prosperous future, an Affordable Energy Act than will give our kids hope to achieve in Canada. So I hope all members of this House will put affordability first and vote for our government’s Affordable Energy Act.

Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank the Minister of Energy and Electrification for his contribution this morning to debate on this important piece of legislation, a piece of legislation that I really believe does define the differences, both philosophically and from a responsiveness to the people of Ontario, between the government members in this chamber and those who sit in the opposition benches.

I want to begin by also acknowledging—I believe my wife Keri, my son Sullivan and my daughter Florence are watching right now. I want to give them a good morning shout-out. I haven’t seen them for a couple of days, so I want to thank them for tuning in now. I also want to acknowledge my team at the ministry for the work that they did in ensuring that this legislation came forward, working with so many stakeholders across this province and meeting with the people of this province in ensuring that today’s legislation became a reality.

At this time of the year, I often wax a bit nostalgic, if you will. It was at this time of the year, in 2016, that I was first elected. It was November 17, 2016, that I was sent by the good people of Niagara West–Glanbrook into this chamber. At this time of the year, eight years ago, I was pounding the pavement, as all of us have done during our elections or by-elections. I was door-knocking and I remember a particular interaction that sticks in my mind all these years later when it comes to the reason why I was elected and the reason why today’s focus on energy affordability is so important for the people of Ontario.

I was door-knocking in a little town called Beamsville in my riding on a street called Hixon Street. It’s a small street; it’s not that long. It has a number of post-World War II houses, the kind that veterans go to. I remember door-knocking on an older lady’s home by the name of Anne. Anne and her husband had moved here from the Netherlands after the Second World War. They had moved into this home; it was newly constructed at the time. I remember she welcomed me into her home because she said she had a newspaper clipping that she wanted to show to me. Again, it was early November at that time, and I remember, when she welcomed me in, it was freezing. It was a small home; it was one of those homes that I’m sure we all have in our communities. I remember seeing the baseboard heating on the side. It can’t have been more than maybe 10 degrees in that home as I stood there and waited for Anne, and we had a brief conversation about the newspaper clipping.

I remember asking Anne, “Can I ask you how much is your energy bill?” At this time, Anne was in her seventies. She was a pensioner and her husband had passed away a few years earlier. Her energy bill was in the hundreds of dollars. That’s why it was so cold in that particular home—it was because of the baseboard heat that she had. It was not a well-insulated home. It was a home that had, obviously, over the years, been very good to their family but also had come with an incredible cost in terms of the skyrocketing electricity rates that we saw under the previous Liberal government.

She spoke with me about how that increase in hydro rates that we heard about from the Minister of Energy and Electrification—a 300% increase in cost for her family—truly did mean, in some cases, the difference between being able to go and buy some of the nutritious groceries that, of course, are important for health and for wellness, or being able to heat her home at a reasonable level.

That’s why I believe today’s legislation, the Affordable Energy Act, is such an important testimony to the priorities of our government in comparison with the priorities of the previous Liberal government. We saw ideological underpinnings to every single action that that government brought forward. It wasn’t focused on the reality of people like Anne on Hixon Street in Beamsville, who had to choose between heating and eating. It really did come down to the belief and the ideology of the Green Energy Act that paid far above-market rates and passed those costs on along to everybody.

In contrast with that, the Affordable Energy Act is an energy act that brings forward an integrated energy vision that says every single tool in the energy tool box here in Ontario needs to be put towards energy affordability as a priority for the Premier, for the province and for the people of this province. I’m going to speak a little bit today, Speaker, about why that’s so important, about what we’ve been able to accomplish by ensuring that, when we came to office, we renegotiated thousands of bad contracts, cancelled the very, very worst of those contracts and, as a result, have been able to stabilize electricity rates and

energy rates at below-inflation cost for the people of the province.

The changes outlined in this legislation today are essential for Ontario's economic expansion and for sustaining our province's clean, reliable and affordable energy system. It's an advantage that we have here in Ontario which has been carefully built over the past six years. Ontario currently has one of the cleanest electricity systems in the world, with about 90% of 2023's electricity coming from non-emitting sources like nuclear and hydro. This system, supported by our highly skilled workforce, a competitive business environment and rich natural resources gives Ontario what we proudly call our clean energy advantage. It's a cornerstone in attracting manufacturing jobs and industry back to Ontario, for good jobs with opportunities for our families and communities.

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We're committed to meeting the growing need of our communities for clean, reliable and affordable power with not just the short-term plans that we've seen in the past, but with a proactive, long-term sustainable energy plan that will empower Ontario for generations. Our vision is to make sure that Ontario's families and businesses have a reliable, affordable and clean energy foundation that will last for generations to come. To meet the demand that is rising, we are acting with foresight and purpose.

Today's legislation is about ensuring that Ontario continues to provide the power to fuel this growth. It is about building a long-term integrated plan that will power our industries now and for many, many years to come. It supports this goal with four key objectives:

(1) The establishment of an integrated energy resource planning approach that considers various sources of energy needed to support a growing economy;

(2) Ensuring a more timely and cost-effective electricity system connection for housing developers and large industrial consumers;

(3) Support for the growth of electric vehicle charging stations by exempting electric vehicle charging companies from Ontario Energy Board red tape; and

(4) Finally, the enabling of the IESO to administer additional energy-efficiency programs to help customers, like Anne, adapt to electricity in a way that reduces overall emissions as well as energy use and costs.

These steps are part of our government's plan to build a more dynamic and resilient energy system. It reflects our unwavering commitment to make Ontario the best place to live, work and invest. Together, we are working to build a stronger, cleaner and more affordable energy vision for every person in this province.

Our sharp increase in rapid economic growth in demand is because of the growth that we have seen over the last years. According to the IESO, Ontario is going to need 75% more power here in this province over the next 25 years, which is the equivalent of adding four-and-a-half cities the size of Toronto to the grid.

We're seeing demand from new investments, like those from Stellantis and Volkswagen; we're seeing green steel production at Algoma and Dofasco, which will soon equal

the annual electricity use of Ottawa. Meeting the demand is not just about keeping the lights on, it's also a generational challenge to ensure that we are proactively supporting industry, securing sustainable growth and ensuring that Ontario remains the best place to live, work and invest.

We will always choose jobs, growth and economic prosperity over taxes as a responsibility to our families and youth. As Minister Lecce spoke about, this government under this Premier has never raised, and will never raise, a single tax on the hard-working people of this province. We will always ensure that Ontario remains a place where youth can pursue good jobs, innovate and realize their dreams of home ownership. It's why we have been relentless in creating the right environment for growth, attracting world-class investments and generating good-paying jobs across the province.

We've already made significant investments to ensure that energy is more affordable for job creators. We've reduced the cost of doing business by \$8 billion, bringing in programs like the comprehensive electricity plan, the industrial conservation initiative and the Ontario Electricity Rebate, which have helped to create a climate that allows families to thrive and industries to grow.

We've seen record investments in this province over the past six years and much of this growth is in manufacturing. The previous government drove out 300,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs, with their short-sighted, costly energy and economic experiments. But under Premier Ford's leadership, Ontario has added over 800,000 new jobs, securing billions in investment across industries like EV manufacturing, greenhouses, data centres and mining, to name just a few—industries that rely on clean, reliable and affordable energy to grow: people like the steel producers, who I met with last week; the Association of Major Power Consumers of Ontario, who I met with this morning; and agricultural sectors from every corner of this province such as the egg farmers, who I had a chance to speak with this morning as well.

Minister Fedeli, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, has been hard at work attracting international and local investment. We know that Ontario has become a beacon for international investment, but they always ask two questions: (1) Do you have the land? (2) Do you have the power? Our answer to that question is yes. We've stepped up and are continuing to respond with yes to ensure that these questions are answered in a way that continues to attract investment.

Ontario's energy advantage makes it a bit easier for businesses of all sizes to expand. It's a key deciding factor for companies to look to bring in their next major investment, and that's why Ontario is the only jurisdiction in North America with all six of the largest auto manufacturers. Over the past six years, we've secured billions of dollars of investment. Honda alone has committed \$15 billion to establish Canada's first comprehensive EV supply chain, including a \$1.6-billion plant in the Niagara region, fantastic news for our local economy.

Bloomberg this year named Canada as the world leader in lithium-ion battery supply chains. This is a historic milestone. Our proximity to the US and Mexican markets amplifies this advantage, positioning Ontario as a North American hub for clean energy manufacturing and sustainable technologies.

We've also become a leader in electrification in hard-to-abate industries. We have seen energy-intensive industries across this province, from Sarnia—where I had the opportunity to visit with the member for Sarnia—Lambton—to the north, where I had the opportunity to visit with Minister Pirie, the Minister of Mines, and the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development; and in Thunder Bay, where Minister Kevin Holland and our team had the opportunity to meet with the lumber sector. We are seeing these industries step forward and continue to invest in our province because of the investments we are making to create an opportunity for these companies.

Our commitment to clean energy includes significant investments in things like small modular reactors, and also an opportunity to build out our hydrogen economy. We are investing in unleashing the power of hydrogen as a clean energy storage and power source to cement Ontario's leadership on the world stage as a clean energy superpower.

We know that hydrogen capacity is still under way to be built here in Ontario. The IESO expects that the sector will generate 15,000 megawatts of hydrogen capacity by 2050. By 2050, according to economic analysis from the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis, the hydrogen economy could create over 100,000 jobs across the province while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50 megatons per year. That's equivalent to removing a quarter of Ontario's 2005 emissions or removing approximately 15 million cars off the road.

The growth potential in this sector is truly impressive. Through initiatives like the Hydrogen Innovation Fund, we are backing our innovators and job creators in this space, stimulating our province's leadership in this growing sector of the economy.

Speaker, we have spoken about the need for more power, and the reason we need more power is because our demand isn't just growing; it's growing exponentially. The amount of power we need for EV businesses by 2050 has just doubled in one year. The power we need for data centres by 2050 is six times higher than we forecast just last year. That's why the actions we are taking in today's legislation are setting Ontario up to meet this generational challenge.

Our energy policy is about driving economic development, attracting investment and ensuring that Ontario remains the best place to live, work and do business. We are backing innovation over taxes—technology that will create thousands of well-paying jobs across industries. One of the ways we are doing this is by moving past the siloed and dated approach to energy planning that kept electricity and different energy systems, such as natural gas and other fuels, separate. It was a fragmented approach,

and it led to inefficiencies, missed opportunities and, frankly, a lack of cohesion in meeting rising energy needs. With growing demand across the province, we can't afford to continue operating in a fragmented system.

That's why this legislation introduces a coordinated planning process which incorporates all sectors and energy fuel types. We know all sectors and energy fuel types will be needed to manage the increasing demands placed on the system in an expeditious manner. That's why, if passed, the Affordable Energy Act will bring all energy sources together in harmony, like a well-tuned orchestra. This all-of-the-above approach allows us to make cost-effective strategic decisions which will support critical goals that we all share. It will guide Ontario's first integrated energy resource plan, a pivotal step towards building a resilient, reliable energy system prepared to meet our province's growing demands.

I want to also speak about some of the changes that we announced last week with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In this legislation, we are addressing the growing need that we have seen to address last-mile concerns. There is so much interest from home builders and job creators in the electrification of home heating systems and transportation, and we've attracted massive investments in so many parts of our energy system. But the final piece of the puzzle is to make sure that the energy is actually connected to the people who need it: to our families, to our job creators. That's why this legislation, if passed, will reduce regulatory barriers to ensure the successful transition of Ontario's electricity system through the energy transition. This will allow us to empower growth in Ontario by lowering the upfront capital costs associated with last-mile connections. This will make it easier to connect new homes and businesses to Ontario's electricity grids.

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Over the summer, I had the opportunity to visit many corners of this province and meet with local distribution companies. I want to thank Teresa Sarkesian and the Electricity Distributors Association for the work that they did to put together round tables, where we had conversations about how we can address that last-mile challenge. They all shared the same message: We need a faster, more nimble and more affordable form of grid connection for new industry and for massive housing developments.

When a new energy-intensive business chooses Ontario, often their first stop is to meet with the local distribution company to determine what local infrastructure is available to handle the added load. But in too many cases, capacity is maxed out and these businesses are shouldering the entire cost of upgrading that infrastructure themselves, even if they are not going to be using all of that capacity. These burdens delay progress. They stand in the way of high-paying jobs in crucial parts of our economy. That's why the amendment which is placed in this legislation will respond directly to that need by amending the Ontario Energy Board Act, enabling future regulations which will reduce the upfront capital cost for housing developers and large industrial job creators to connect to the grid. This

will reduce the financial burden on first movers. This proposed amendment is yet another way our government is positioning Ontario as an evermore attractive location for industry and investment.

One of the areas that we want to really ensure we are driving forward is on energy efficiency. Unlike the previous government, which opted for rigid adherence to ideology, driving up costs for families and stifling investment, we are focused on practical, growth-oriented solutions. The Affordable Energy Act reflects that commitment. The failed Liberal Green Energy Act prioritized ideology over affordability. Under the previous government, we heard stories like those of Anne—of people and families struggling between paying hydro bills and paying for groceries. That's why affordability remains the key driver of our energy expansion plan, and that's why we're proposing to amend the Electricity Act to enable the administration of additional energy-efficiency programs aimed at supporting beneficial electrification. This will put more money in the pockets of people who will be able to access cost savings for driving conservation programs.

The current legislation only allows 30% of people in Ontario to access savings when they're retrofitting their homes to provide for energy savings. This amendment will actually allow every single person in the province of Ontario to benefit from efficiency programs, putting money back into the pockets of hard-working people, and saving them money on their hydro bill while protecting our overall grid and reducing emissions. This will ensure that every single customer is given the option to reduce their energy use and lower the costs associated with everyday realities like heating and cooling. It's all part of a plan that is focused on empowering consumers and providing people with greater control over their bills. It's part of our government's commitment to putting the power back in the hands of the people and on having customer-focused energy planning.

I am coming up to time and I want to acknowledge the parliamentary assistant and his impressive work on the file.

In conclusion, the Affordable Energy Act represents a bold step forward for Ontario's energy system. It's legislation that reinforces our commitment to an affordable, reliable and clean energy future. It provides the tools we need to support the growing demand of Ontario's families, businesses and industries.

To all my colleagues in this House, I ask you to support this legislation. Let us choose growth, innovation and affordability over ideology. Let us together create a future where Ontario leads in energy policy, job creation and growth. This act is an investment in Ontario's future, not just for years but for generations to come. It's a commitment to a future where Ontario stands as a beacon for opportunity and prosperity, building a legacy for generations to come.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy and Electrification.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the Minister of Energy and Electrification and also the Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries. It's really a pleasure to get up to speak today on our Affordable Energy Act. Now, isn't that a difference? Something that actually says, in the word of the act, "Affordable Energy Act."

Some of you would remember: I'm one of the few people who was here when we were given, with the generosity—I say jokingly—of the Liberal Party, supported unanimously by the members of the NDP, the disastrous Green Energy Act. Did it say anything about affordability in that? Green Energy Act: It was all about ideology. It had nothing to do with whether or not the people of Ontario were going to be able to turn the lights on, keep them on and heat their homes.

I appreciate the story that the associate minister told about the elderly lady who really couldn't afford to heat her home under the disastrous policies that we were given by the Liberal Party. That's how we got here. They were okay with the disastrous Green Energy Act that they knew—and they knew at the time, because they had this vision of Ontario that did not include the welfare of the people—it was about ideology, about switching our economy to a service-based economy. "Let's drive 300,000 manufacturing jobs out of the province of Ontario because this will be the Liberal Ontario that we will be able to say is our great legacy." Well, folks, we know how that backfired, because the people of Ontario saw hydro rates go up 300%. I remember, as energy critic some 15 years ago—I was a critic for a long time and, boy, did I have much to be critical about—when people would be coming up to me in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, and having to make the decision: Do we heat or do we eat?

When we came into government, our first job was to stabilize this mess, and that's exactly what we did. That wasn't a simple matter. We had to stabilize this mess brought on by the Liberals so that we could actually then develop a plan that would not only bring back those manufacturing jobs, but make Ontario an energy powerhouse, ensuring that the standard of living in this province is something that would be the envy of everyone else across this great country. That's where we are today.

We are now laying one of the main planks of what's going to be the growth of this great province. We know we're growing with people. We know that the province is growing in population—we're almost 16 million people living in this province today. If you are going to be able to ensure they have the standard of living, that they can have a job, raise a family and buy a home, you have to have an economy that works for them. You can't have an economy that works if you can't provide that reliable, affordable power that we all need.

That is what we are doing here with the Affordable Energy Act. The IESO has made it clear: a 75% increase in the demand of electricity by 2050. That is 25 years away. In some worlds, that sounds like a lot, but in the way that government works, the way that countries grow and the way—how much has changed? I've been here—I'm in my 22nd year. I can't believe how fast it's gone. In 25

years, in the world where you've got to build that generation—it's not that far down the road, so we can waste not another day.

That's why with Minister Lecce, along with Premier Ford's administration, we are moving ahead with this act. It is going to be a game-changer. It is transformational. It will change the way that people live here in Ontario, and will make productivity and the standard of living something that will be the envy of everyone else.

It's not just about building, because in building, you've got to make sure that you can move that power. We're going to have to deal with all of the issues with regard to transmission and distribution, because as cities grow and as people populate this province, we're going to have to make sure we have that power to them. How are we going to make sure that they can afford to build those homes? Well, we're adding another step: the last mile—I know the minister talked about that. So that today, if you're going to build a big development of homes, or under the previous administrations, that developer would have to pay for all of that cost of bringing that power to this new subdivision upfront, which would add about \$40,000 to the cost of the average home in that subdivision, in that development. We're going to make sure that we can take that and amortize it over 40 years so that that developer—now the cost on those homes is going to be about \$4,000. That's one tenth of the cost of what it would be otherwise.

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I know that people on other side don't see it the same way we do, but we are always looking for a way to move forward—not backwards into the times of the Liberal government that ran on ideology, not on making sure that people had a standard of living that we could all depend on. We're going to ensure that we can power those jobs. I know the minister and the associate minister have talked and I know that my PA colleague MPP Cuzzetto is going to be talking about as well.

We're bringing those jobs: \$43 billion of investment in our EV auto sector. Those are real jobs that are going to not only power the next generation of vehicles, which is going to reduce emissions across this province—which, again, is in keeping with our commitment to make Ontario the greenest, cleanest province in all of Canada. Today, we're already at 90%: 90% of our power is emission-free. We have a vision that looks forward to the future, not back. If you're going to be better in the future, you better know how bad it was in the past. We saw how bad it was.

I'll tell you, I was here for the Green Energy Act. Some people might remember George Smitherman, the Minister of Energy—yes, you remember him, of course. I remember Minister Smitherman coming over to me as the critic—I was on that side, he was on this side—and giving me a handwritten piece of paper and claiming that the Green Energy Act was going to add about a dollar per month to the hydro bills—a dollar per month to the hydro bills. We laughed about it. He said, "A cup of coffee." Well, you can't buy a cup of coffee for a dollar now except when McDonald's puts them on sale.

A dollar a month for hydro bills, that was going to be the increase. Can you believe it? A dollar per month. We had a study done by a firm called London Economics International. They said the Green Energy Act was going to cost the Ontario consumer \$40 billion.

Mr. Will Bouma: With a B.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes. Those were staggering numbers, and I say to my colleague from Brantford, the only thing is they were a little bit wrong because it cost a lot more than \$40 billion for the implementation of the Green Energy Act.

We've been cleaning up this mess and we're now moving forward with the Affordable Energy Act that is going to change the world here in Ontario when it comes to our clean energy. Let's remember, we're not doing it on producing power alone; we are talking about the biggest, broadest, best conservation program ever initiated in the province of Ontario.

I know sometimes my friends on the other side have talked about conservation, but conservation alone can't do it. We need a full suite of programs, including generation, conservation and transmission. You're going to get it from this government. The future is bright for the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We'll now go to question and answers.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I had a chance to listen to all three speakers today, and all of them, quite correctly, noted the need for affordability and their commitment to affordability. But I read the act and the integrated energy resource plan "may" include goals for affordability, but doesn't require goals for affordability. So why don't you require goals for affordability in this act?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The legislation, in its short title, is the Affordable Energy Act, which codifies in law an ability for the Independent Electricity System Operator to provide energy conservation to 100% of people in 100% of regions—that is explicitly in the statute. This law enables nuclear energy generation, which the OEB has said is the one of the low-cost expansions of affordable power explicitly in this act. This legislation enables EV charging for free, to remove the requirement for licensing to liberalize access to EV, which is a public good codified in the legislation. There can be no clearer public policy intent than affordability, than this act.

It begs the question: Will you support Canada's largest energy conservation plan, enabled by the Affordable Energy Act?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Will Bouma: I really enjoyed the speeches this morning from the ministers and the parliamentary assistant. I'll leave this question open to all of them.

Speaker, I remember hearing the quote—I looked it up, and it has been modified a little bit over the years. In 1879, Thomas Edison said, "We will make electricity so cheap that only the rich will burn candles." I feel like we are a long ways away from that right now.

As we know, the previous Liberal government's Green Energy Act prioritized ideology over affordability.

In contrast, our government is focusing on practical solutions, with the Affordable Energy Act. I'm going to ask any of the speakers: How do you see this legislation impacting Ontario families, especially with this emphasis on energy-efficiency programs? This feels like a positive step forward for families, for businesses and for seniors.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the member for Brantford–Brant for his question. It's a very, very important question—it's the overarching theme of all of the measures that are happening within this legislation to emphasize affordability. All of our agencies, boards and commissions, all of the LDCs in the province of Ontario, all of our generators—every single contract that we're creating when it comes to bringing new power online is driven by this imperative to ensure that we have affordable energy for the people of the province of Ontario. We're really taking, in this legislation, an all-hands-on-deck approach. We're saying every single fuel source in this province needs to be considered as part of our energy tool box to ensure that we have a diverse, reliable grid, that we have a diversity of options available. But, fundamentally, the reason for that is because the competition between those fuels, the competition between generation sources drives prices down. We've seen, in some of our last procurements, prices come down upwards of 30% for the people of Ontario. That's a commitment that this legislation codifies.

The Minister of Energy and Electrification has been clear in his answer to the member from the opposition. Every single aspect of this legislation is seen through the lens of what we can do to ensure that job creators, families, seniors and students are supported with affordability in your riding and every riding across the province.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Ted Hsu: I'm going to start with something that the minister touted, which was the success of time-of-use pricing. He mentioned it was a 150-megawatt power plant taking Barrie off the grid.

People may remember, in Kingston, Utilities Kingston sent out these little coloured cards, back in 2006—you'd pay 3.5 cents off-peak, 7.5 cents mid-peak, 10.5 cents if you used peak electricity. As a result of this long-term view and getting people to change their habits, we now have been able to do what the minister says: tout the success of time-of-use pricing. It's like having a 150-megawatt generator right when you need the power in the afternoon, when all the households are using electricity.

This government has been in power for six years, and only now they have a plan to have a plan for long-term energy. Why has the government not come out with a plan earlier? There was a long-term energy plan—the last time it was updated was 2017, by the last government.

This government has a lot—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you.

We're going to go to the response from the minister.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: It's interesting; I heard the member say "change behaviour." You can't take the Liberal out of the Liberal Party. This is all about some government policy and position on people—that's actually the same logic that was used on the carbon tax: to change behaviour by increasing costs on consumers, instead of polluter-pay for large industry.

It is the impetus behind why, in 2018, the people of Ontario sent your party packing—and I say this respectfully. You had an egregious record.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Order.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Well, I'm respectful that it's a matter of historic fact that in 2018 you lost party status on the basis of losing sight of affordability.

If you want to put your money where your mouth is, vote for a bill that expands conservation, that delivers long-term integrated planning, that ends the silos that your government enabled, that actually expands EV charging, that makes housing more attainable. Actually do something about the problems you often define in this House and vote for a plan that creates affordability and makes it an actual realization for young people in our province.

1010

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to our Affordable Energy Act and reminisce quickly. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke said it the best: What the disastrous Liberal green energy plan did to the people in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock—I can tell you the genuine stories of driving them into poverty when their energy bills went up 300%—very sad stories and very real.

Now, we have a current Minister of Energy and Electrification who came to Bobcaygeon in my riding to announce the largest natural gas expansion in the province of Ontario to deliver affordable energy to over 3,500 homes. I just want to ask the minister to expand on those projects that are going on and what we are doing for affordability for the people in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and the province.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member for the question. Because of her leadership, including back as Minister of Infrastructure, we enabled large-scale expansions of affordable energy to more people, to more farmers, to more parts of rural Ontario.

I really do believe an all-of-the-above approach means looking at market options to reduce costs for people. You speak to a farmer in her community, of which we met many—I met her local mayors, some community leaders, and they all said to us that affordable energy options are the way forward to reduce costs and to support the food security members opposite rightfully raised as a public policy challenge against government. How do we enable more production in our province? Well, we're going to need affordable energy to drive the way, and our greenhouses require mass amounts of energy. So that expansion

into her rural community is a lifeline for communities that were paying expensive energy.

We now can displace dirtier forms of energy through affordable options. We retain one of the cleanest grids in the province. Our plan is to make it cleaner and greener, as the member for Renfrew mentioned. And I want to affirm to the member: We will continue to invest in energy expansion that delivers lower costs everywhere in this province.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Chris Glover: The Conservative government keeps talking about ideology today. The only ideology that the Conservatives believe in is that our tax dollars should go to corporate welfare rather than to our hospitals, schools, colleges and universities. But the worst corporate welfare scheme launched by the Conservative Party in Ontario was when they started to break up and sell off the pieces of Ontario Hydro. Ontario Hydro was a public utility, and for 70 years, we paid four cents a kilowatt hour. We now pay eight to 16 cents a kilowatt hour. I will say that that corporate welfare scheme was completed by the Liberals when they sold off the last pieces of Ontario Hydro for \$9 billion. Now, through our taxes, the Conservatives have us providing a \$6.9-billion a year subsidy to a private, for-profit corporation—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you.

We're going to have to go back to the other side for a quick response from the associate minister.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I'm not sure in what revisionist past this member is living, but you were here, or the NDP were here, when they propped up the Liberals when they sold Hydro One in a fire sale. We saw the impacts of that. And what did you do? You voted to support them every single step of the way.

Your party had an opportunity to stand with the consumers of this province. Instead, you stood with the Liberals and their interests and their big party donors. That's why this act is finally going to put power back in the hands in the people and ensure affordable power for every person—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Before we move to members' statements, I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: a report entitled Ontario's Credit Rating: 2024-25 Update from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RIDING OF MISSISSAUGA–ERIN MILLS

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Speaker, I am very proud to announce that work is finally under way on the South Common Community Centre in my riding of Mississauga–Erin Mills. I was happy to join the mayor, city councillors and construction workers for the groundbreaking of this exciting redevelopment project.

The Ontario government is investing over \$45 million to reconstruct the South Common Community Centre. The new facility will include an aquatics centre, a fitness centre, an enlarged gymnasium and a 16,000-square-foot library. This is exciting news for the community of Mississauga–Erin Mills, and we cannot wait to see this centre return for public use in the near future.

Speaker, I also attended Trillium Health Partners Foundation's annual Diwali gala fundraiser. The goal was to raise funds for Peter Gilgan Mississauga Hospital and the great work of THP in Mississauga. We are building the biggest hospital in Canada's history, with the largest emergency room in Canada. They are also operating Wellbrook Place, a newly opened long-term-care facility with 632 state-of-the-art long-term-care beds.

And just the other week, I visited Ivan Franko Ukrainian Homes in my riding, with the Minister of Long-Term Care. That facility of 160 safe, modern beds is well under construction and will be finished soon.

Lots of infrastructure is coming to Mississauga, and we are very excited to see our community flourish.

ADDICTION SERVICES

MPP Lise Vaugeois: The addictions crisis is hard on everyone—hard on those living in encampments and hard on those worried about safety in their neighbourhoods. But the closure of consumption treatment sites goes against the recommendations of the province's own experts and that is because these sites improve community safety and save lives—465 lives in Thunder Bay alone; 465 people who did not need emergency services; 465 people who lived long enough to get access to other supports.

In 2018, it was the province that approved Thunder Bay's Path 525, knowing its exact location. A year ago, the province paid for significant capital renovations, and the service completed and implemented a community safety strategy, as required by the province. So why the sudden change of direction? To win votes by creating scapegoats? To distract from the government's failures to address the levels of homelessness and poverty not seen since the Great Depression?

People whose lives have been saved by harm reduction sites have gone on to become community leaders, but only because sites like Path 525 helped them stay alive until they were able to gain control over their addictions.

Addictions affect people from all walks of life, including many working in the trades with high-paying jobs. It's time to end the stereotyping and the stigma.

Harm reduction is one of the four essential pillars of care, and if the experts, including those with lived experience, are listened to, Path 525 in Thunder Bay will stay open.

ALGOMA UNIVERSITY THUNDERBIRDS SOCCER TEAMS

Mr. Ross Romano: This morning, I want to chat a little bit about my alma mater Algoma University.

I was very excited, this past summer—for many of you who know me and my family, we are very close and tight to the game of soccer; very, very actively involved in that.

Algoma University, my alma mater, joined the OUA several years ago, and this year was a pretty productive year for the Algoma University men's Thunderbirds soccer team. This year, they experienced their first-ever two wins of the season—they only had two this year, so they didn't make the playoffs, but it was still pretty exciting. They defeated the York University team, which was, at one point, ranked number one in the OUA. They also defeated the Windsor university soccer team. The women's team didn't fare so well with the victories; they only had four ties on the year—but still a very, very productive year for the girls' team as well.

Just something really notable for the university, coming from school—when I was attending there as a full-time student, we were still members of Laurentian. We were the little sister or little brother university to that institution. We've come quite a long way, and here we are, defeating the likes of York University, Windsor university. And I'm hoping that next year we'll be able to make the playoffs for the first time in their history.

GARBA

MPP Jamie West: Speaker, on Saturday, I celebrated Garba with Sudbury's Gujarati community. It was organized by Sudbury's Canadian Gujju Cultural Association of Northern Ontario.

Thanks to people like my friend Jay Mahida, I learn more about Garba every single year, and I'm grateful to have those experiences.

Garba is a form of dance, but it's also a religious and social event that originated in Gujarat, India. Garba is performed during Navratri, the longest and largest dance festival in world. Navratri actually means “nine nights.” It's the Hindu festival dedicated to Durga, the feminine form of divinity and her nine forms, from the fierce, sword-wielding Kalaratri to the smiling creator of the universe, Kushmanda.

1020

Garba is also layered with a lot of symbolism of the feminine divine and the cyclical nature of life. For example, Garba is performed in a circle, which represents the cycle of time from birth to life to death to rebirth. It's also common to dance barefoot at Garba as a sign of respect for the earth. Sudbury's Garba night had a lot

dancing, community, respect, camaraderie and, of course, food.

It was incredibly fun. I literally could not stop smiling the entire evening. My apologies to everyone whose feet I may have stepped on while trying to learn the traditional dances. I want to thank, again, the Canadian Gujarati cultural association of northern Ontario for hosting such a wonderful and inclusive event. I'm grateful to have been a part of it.

CHOICES ASSOCIATION INC.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Good morning. Today, I would like to highlight a wonderful organization in my riding, Choices Association Inc. Choices works to provide supports that will enhance the quality of life for people living with developmental disabilities. Through the promotion of self-worth and social inclusion, they ensure that the people they support have opportunities to live and to participate in their communities.

Earlier this month, I met with the team at Choices to hear more about the \$118,000 that they received through the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Resilient Communities Fund. The grant has helped fund the hiring of a health services connector, as well as the purchase of equipment and the renovation of space to better provide in-house support for participants.

During my visit, I had the opportunity to hear several inspirational stories, such as the one from Michael Jacques. Michael is an inspiring young adult with autism and an intellectual disability. His story truly is inspirational. Despite the inability to read or write, Michael is the author of *Here's My Book*, a book written by using an iPad's speech-to-text function. It's a collection of life stories and discoveries that teach people to embrace and celebrate their differences.

Organizations such as Choices are what make Flamborough–Glanbrook such a great place to live, and the people that they support, such as Michael, are influential members of our community, which I am so proud to recognize today.

VISIT TO WEST FLANDERS

Mr. John Vanthof: As we are in the House today all wearing poppies, I'm reminded of a trip I took this summer. We went to visit my wife's family in the Netherlands, and my brother-in-law Bram took me to Belgium, to West Flanders, to the city of Ypres.

The region of West Flanders looks an awful lot like southern Ontario. There are towns dotted here and there, large commercial farms, large livestock farms, but the one thing that is different, it's also dotted with graveyards. At one gravesite where we stopped, there were 12,500 headstones. Behind the headstones, there was a granite wall with 100,000 names in it for people who were never identified. Between those headstones, there were poppies growing. The poem came to my head: “In Flanders fields the poppies blow / Between the crosses, row on row.”

It made me think of all the people who have suffered, who have died—but that happened before the Second World War, before Nazism. We don't seem to be learning. I wish that everyone had the opportunity—that's why I'm sharing it today—to stand there, in Flanders Fields, and watch the poppies grow.

SMALL BUSINESSES

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Last week was Small Business Week, and it was a time to celebrate the entrepreneurs who are driving Ontario's economy. These small businesses do more than just provide goods and services, they create jobs and strengthen the vibrant communities we proudly represent.

Behind every business is an entrepreneur with a vision. Recently, I had the pleasure of joining small business minister Nina Tangri to announce our government's \$2-million investment in Futurpreneur, supporting young entrepreneurs in launching new business and creating nearly 1,200 new jobs.

I also visited four fantastic women-owned small businesses in Oakville North–Burlington which had recently opened their doors: Mel's Diner, Daylight bar and grill, the Blue Cafe and OsteoStrong, as well as Guiding Light Autism Services and Bombay Grocers. Each has brought their vision to life and contributed to the local community and economy. These success stories are great examples of what can happen when entrepreneurs have access to the right supports, right resources and opportunities to grow.

Speaker, I look forward to more of these visits as we proudly stand with Ontario's entrepreneurs. We're committed to ensuring they have every opportunity to succeed and keep building a stronger Ontario for all. Because when entrepreneurs succeed, Ontario succeeds.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Will Bouma: Good morning. I am pleased to rise today to speak about the incredible investments that our government is making in the Brant Community Healthcare System.

Brantford General Hospital serves over 120,000 people, in my riding and beyond, by providing state-of-the-art programs via teams of incredible doctors, nurses and other health care workers. The hard work that these health care professionals do each and every day ensures a high level of patient-focused care.

However, Brantford General Hospital's age and deteriorating state hinders the efforts made by these incredible individuals. That is why our government has invested a substantial \$23 million this year alone in critical infrastructure at Brantford General Hospital. Hospital officials have said that these funds have been essential in repairing the hospital's utility tunnel and boiler systems, ensuring a safe and reliable environment for patients, families and staff. Speaker, this is crucial to maintaining high-quality patient care and underscores the importance of well-maintained hospital infrastructure.

As the Brantford–Brant community looks forward to the future and plans to redevelop and build our hospital sites, this investment marks a vital step to sustaining operations at the hospital.

I would also be remiss if I did not extend a thank you to the Brant Community Healthcare System CEO, Bonnie Camm, who identified the issues with the hospital and let us know how and what we needed to fix. Thank you, Bonnie and the entire team at the Brant Community Healthcare System, for everything that you do for our community and keeping us healthy.

MEMBER'S FAREWELL

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: In 2006, I stepped into this hallowed chamber. I had a baby cradled in my arms as Bob Runciman and John Tory walked me through that door. We were joined by Peter Tabuns, although not in the same party, who became a great friend of mine, and I have to say he touched me this morning when he told me that when his mother passed away this past September, she had a picture of me and him in her funeral proceedings.

I harken back to that day because it was a day of hope and it was a day of promise. It was marked with the presence of many great people, and it was fun to be together embarking on the journey.

As Christine Elliott and I walked into the chamber, we sat behind the stalwart Ted Arnott and the spirited Garfield Dunlop. Of course, we had to blush—and the Speaker now knows what I'm talking about; he did as well—because Garfield loudly proclaimed that we had taken our seats behind the eye candy of the Legislature.

In the spirit of the humour that characterizes all of our time here, the late Bill Murdoch, with a devilish twinkle in his eye, took out his dentures in front of Christine and I, leaving the late Gerry Martiniuk in stitches. Of course, anybody that knew Gerry knew he had a belly full of laughs.

1030

I've come to realize after those first five minutes of my inaugural question period that Queen's Park wasn't nearly a compilation of people from different parts, but that we were actually a living, breathing embodiment of each new member, just like Zee, Tyler and Steve, each with a fresh perspective and a new idea that they brought forward to this place. All of that was woven with the experience of those like John Yakabuski. It's a place enriched by those who have weathered the storms of public opinion, as I certainly have, and electoral change, as I have seen over the past 20 years in this assembly.

This place is magical not for the routine proceedings or the motions that we engage in, but it is because of the vibrant humanity that fills it. It's a place filled with shared laughter, questions asked, debates ignited, and I must say, Speaker, I have seen that commitment and dedication to each of those of us who have chosen to serve. That's why the true magic lies in our differences, the unique stories each of us brings, and it's a gift to us fortunate enough to be elected to this assembly.

The experiences that I've had that come to mind are vast and exciting, and some are not, but I'll never forget the day that John Yakabuski, Steve Clark and I were the surprise musical guests at an NDP caucus meeting where expectations ran pretty high, because their crowd spends time with the Barenaked Ladies. We didn't walk in naked and there was only one lady. But the best part of that, when we surprised everyone, was a great mash-up of country singing by Yak and, of course, Rosie Marchese singing a type of opera that none of us had ever heard before. That night, we got the John Vanthof two thumbs up.

Then there were the nights that were spent in the west lobby as we shut down the Ontario Legislature over the HST. Tim Hudak, Randy Hillier and, again, Murdoch sang Johnny Cash songs off-key. We were united at that time in our defiance of the HST, and Norm Miller and myself brought in 500,000 amendments to the HST.

There were also more weighty moments and trials that tested us. When Kathleen Wynne stood firm during the terrorist attack on Parliament Hill, she refused to shut down the Legislature during a time of national crisis. We came together in this assembly as a family. We were united in navigating the storm, and the unity and strength of Ontario came shining through on that particular day.

We faced losses as Bruce Crozier departed just days after our heartfelt farewells. Jim Flaherty passed and left indelible marks in each of our hearts while his wife, Christine, was leading our question period. Gordie Brown's death was felt in real time in this chamber as Steve Clark notified our entire country and became a strong shoulder for Eleanor McMahon, who crossed the floor to grieve.

Yes, COVID-19 tested us all, but amid the challenges, we found some sweeter moments, like the privilege of witnessing Sol Mamakwa speak in Indigenous language in this House for the first time, a transcendent moment that honoured the richness and heritage of the place we call home. Babies have been born to our members, others have become grandparents and still others have left for higher office while serving.

I've had some health difficulties, and some of the most comforting gestures were the warmth of a visit to my office from former Premier Dalton McGuinty; the thoughtful notes from Jim Bradley, Cheri DiNovo, Suze Morrison and—I'm going to out you here—Jill Andrew; and sweet and gentle moments but also from my colleague Will Bouma and his wife Joni.

These are the moments that are some of the best, the funniest, the most humbling and the most genuine of my life. It's been a profound gift to share these experiences with each one of you.

I am always remembering one other thing that didn't make it into this final speech, but I have to talk about John Fraser for one moment—a good-looking guy; he actually put his face on his election posters, and I have never a funny face on one of them.

But I will say this: The guy has got some humour. We were at a concussion event in 2015, and John got up to speak and I said, "Who can say no to that face?" He said, "24,962 people who didn't vote for me in the last election."

Mr. John Fraser: It was 16,000.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No, I did the math last night.

Mr. John Fraser: Tory math.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Oh, John. You just realized what you should have a long time ago, that Joe Varner probably should have told you: I always get the last word.

But as I conclude, I want to say that Tim Hudak reminded me of the platform that we all hold, and John Tory taught me something that is important for all of us to know too: Life unfolds in chapters. I stand here, comfortable in the knowledge that I have had both. And I want to say this to each one of you: You do as well.

I want to say, in my last statement here in this Legislature—my deepest appreciation to each of you. Every single one of you, I look at and you've given me a story. You've given me life. And despite what you might think when I'm in question period, I do look at each one of you with deep admiration and affection, even when you may have been my harshest critic, and that usually came from this side. I learned a great deal from you.

Thank you very much and I look forward to watching all of you succeed.

Applause.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have some special guests for the member from Nepean who are with us today: Jacqueline Martin, Patricia Sloan, Victoria Woolsey, Jessica Currie, Richard Fromm, Dameon Halstead, Ahmed Mawel, Derek Rowland, Susan Truppe, Vincenzo Call, Faith States-Linton, Monia Prince, Jahmeila Moore, and Kaie Mayers. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

We also have some very special guests who are all former Speakers of this Assembly. We have with us Alvin Curling, who was the Speaker in the 38th Parliament; Steve Peters, who was the Speaker in the 39th Parliament; and Dave Levac, who was the Speaker in the 40th and 41st Parliaments. They served this institution with distinction. We are delighted to have you back. Thank you for coming.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And I should add that Speaker David Warner from the 35th Parliament, I believe, is on his way.

Also visiting the Legislature today are guests in the members' gallery: Amanda Bell, George Wamala, Bruce Wood, Judy Dobbs, Hannah Kosc, Danielle Barrett, Natalie McGarry and Brooklyn Mattinson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great honour to introduce James Saunders, from Beech Street Books and Saunders Book Co.; Naseem Hrab, from Kids Can Press; and Noelle Allen, from Wolsak and Wynn, who are here for the Ontario Book Publishers Organization's Ontario book day. They will be hosting the made-in-Ontario book fair after question period from 11:30 until 2 in room 228. I hope all members can join.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good morning, everyone. It's my pleasure today to welcome people from OREA, Ontario Real Estate Association. We have awesome Anna Michaelidis, jazzy Jeff Luciano and clever Christian Vergara. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I'd like to welcome the Sikh Youth Motorcycle Club to Queen's Park, marking the anniversary of the helmet exemption.

1040

MPP Jill Andrew: Speaker, I'm going to try to be dramatic. Today is Arts in the Parks day at Queen's Park. If you are an artist or a cultural worker, welcome to your House, Queen's Park, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

I happen to see Alistair Hepburn with ACTRA here. I happen to see Cynthia Lynch with Film Ontario. I know that we have wonderful people from the Ontario Book Publishers Organization here, including Catherine Little, a fabulous author from my St. Paul's community.

From the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, we have Matt McGeachy, director of government relations. We have the National Ballet of Canada here: Amanda Ram, interim executive director. And, last but certainly not least, we have Amy Mushinski, director of public relations and strategic partnerships from the Canadian Ahhh-pera Company.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: As the MPP who represents the majority of Ontario's legal tobacco producers, I am pleased to rise in the House and recognize the team from Rothmans Benson and Hedges who are in the Legislature today discussing their transformation, sustainability, science and illicit trade prevention. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. John Jordan: I want to welcome the Egg Farmers of Ontario and thank them for the delicious omelettes this morning. In particular, I want to thank Scott Helps, chair of the Egg Farmers of Ontario board; Ian McFall, Burnbrae Farms; and Lorne Benedict for meeting with me later today. Thank you, gentlemen.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to welcome some realtors from the Ontario Real Estate Association who have made the trip from Nickel Belt. That's Julie Robert, Ashley Sauve and Paul Kusnierczyk. Thank you for coming to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ted Hsu: I want to welcome members of OREA who are here today, in particular the group from Kingston who I'm going to meet later today: Erin Finn, Kady Romagnuolo, David Pinnell and Joel Thompson. Welcome to your House.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: It's my very great honour to welcome Annie Dowd, OLIP intern from Brockville.

On a similar note to the member opposite, although I do not think I can do the justice that she did to it, I want to welcome our friends from the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Canadian Opera Company and the National Ballet to the Arts in the Parks function, proceeding at 2:30.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I would like to add my voice to the chorus of welcomes to those folks from OREA. I had the pleasure of meeting with Alexander Côté, Alysha Fiorio and Oresta Kisil this morning.

This afternoon, I have the pleasure of meeting, from the Ontario Book Publishers Organization, Leigh Nash, Emily Ferko and Ashley Hisson.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm very lucky to have two interns working out of my office right now; as you all know, I need all the help I can get. I just want to say thank you to Jaden Gould, from the legislative learner program, and Alex Salton, who will be my OLIP intern, for joining our office, and I look forward to working with you.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Today, Ali Buchanan from my riding is page captain, and I'd like to welcome her parents, Marilyn and Steve, to the Legislature. I know she's doing a good job. Enjoy.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I would like to welcome Karen Hill and Erin Nadon from Thunder Bay, who are here representing the Ontario Real Estate Association. Welcome to your House. I look forward to speaking with you later.

Hon. David Piccini: I will not sing, but I would like to welcome Max Rettig, Brian Kaufmann and Emma Kristensen from DoorDash.

And a very special welcome to two great friends from my riding of Northumberland—Peterborough South: Gord Robinson and Martin Bugden, who are here taking in question period and then having some lunch after.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Bill Madder and Adam Miller from the Ontario Real Estate Association.

I also want to welcome Burnbrae Farms as part of the Egg Farmers of Ontario and thank them for their very generous gift to the London Health Sciences Centre.

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: Aujourd'hui, j'ai le plaisir d'accueillir les élèves de 10^e année de l'École secondaire catholique de Plantagenet. J'aurai la chance de les rencontrer un peu plus tard aujourd'hui. J'ai bien hâte de m'entretenir avec eux. C'est un peu spécial pour moi parce que moi et mes deux filles avons étudié à l'École secondaire catholique de Plantagenet.

Sur une autre note, j'aimerais aussi souhaiter la bienvenue à Marcel Jr. Laviolette, qui est ici à Queen's Park avec ses collègues, les producteurs d'oeufs de l'Ontario—Egg Farmers of Ontario. Bienvenue à M. Marcel Jr. Laviolette.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would also like to welcome realtors from Oshawa, who are here as members of OREA: Wendy Giroux, Vicki Sweeney, Alex Down, Roger Bouma, Chris Vale and Christine Riley. They work so hard to help people find a home. We hope they find themselves at home here at Queen's Park today.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to welcome two members of OREA here from Renfrew county today: Cindy Sell and Ian Fortugno.

I also want to wish two happy birthdays—one to the member from Nepean. We were so moved by her address

earlier today. It's her 50th birthday today. Also—and you never know when you'll get another chance—my father would be 102 today, so I want to wish him a happy birthday too.

Applause.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to welcome Christal Moura, Andrea Fedy, Tania Benninger from the Ontario Real Estate Association. I'll be meeting with them later on.

Of course, I also want to wish a very special birthday to our whip, the member from London West, Peggy Sattler.

Applause.

Hon. Kinga Surma: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to do a shout-out to Ethan. Ethan is a young boy who's touring Queen's Park today. His mom and dad, Kim and Jon, are very good friends of mine. I hope that he will enjoy the tour with his school, and I also hope that this will inspire him to continue to be politically engaged throughout his life, and maybe even be a page in this House.

Ethan, I hope you're having a great time at Queen's Park today.

MPP Jill Andrew: I'd like to take the opportunity to thank and recognize the former Speaker of the House, Alvin Curling.

Mr. Curling, thank you very much for the inspiration you've been to me and to many of us in this House, as the first Black Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Applause.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce some visitors to the Legislature today, from the Sarnia-Lambton Real Estate Board: Steve Park, Dave Bratanek and Tracy Marino.

Welcome to your House.

Mr. Chris Glover: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome to the House, from the Ontario Book Publishers Organization, Karen Boersma from Owlkids Books, Christine Handley from Broadview Press, Crystal Miller from Coach House Books, and Jay Millar from Book*Hug Press, based in Spadina-Fort York.

Welcome to your House. I look forward to meeting with you later today.

Hon. Stan Cho: The names have been mentioned and I won't repeat them—but welcome to the organization of book publishers of Ontario and to FilmOntario.

I'm going to stop right there because there's no way I'm following up the Toronto-St. Paul's member's performance this morning.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: It was my mistake yesterday for not acknowledging that Toronto Centre's own page was the lead from yesterday—Isabella Mendoza Ferguson, who is in this chamber serving all the members quite well. Her mother, Laura Ferguson, was also here yesterday. So please extend our thanks and congratulations to them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I believe that concludes our introduction of visitors for this morning. It is now time for oral questions.

1050

QUESTION PERIOD

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning, Speaker. This question is for the Premier. Everywhere I go, people are struggling. Their housing is not being built. Rents are skyrocketing and illegal evictions are becoming more and more common. But this government ignored recommendations from their own expert task force and cut funding for community housing by 70%.

It's never been more clear that we need more options: homes of all shapes and all sizes in the neighbourhoods where people want to live.

Speaker, my question to the Premier is, when are you going to start investing in permanently affordable public, non-profit and co-op homes that Ontario needs?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: First, let me also just say hello to Speaker Curling. You may know that he gave me my first job in politics as an intern, as a 15-year-old intern at the Ministry of Housing when he was the Minister of Housing back then, so I thank him. I know the House entirely appreciates what you've unleashed on the people of the province of Ontario, so thank you for that, sir.

Look, Mr. Speaker, we have been focused since day one on building more homes across the province of Ontario—and not us building more homes, but putting the environment in place that can get more shovels in the ground. I think that is the difference between us and the opposition. They think that by adding red tape, by adding government regulation, that somehow more homes get built. It has taken us six years to untangle the mess that was left behind by the Liberals and the NDP, which really put a pause on home building in the province of Ontario, but we are getting the job done, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue on the path of reducing red tape, cutting costs to get more homes built.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, that's pretty rich coming from a government when you have housing starts actually down in the province of Ontario. And my goodness, yes, we need market solutions, but we also need non-market solutions.

This Premier has \$100 billion in taxpayer money for his ridiculous tunnel fantasy, right? He has hundreds of millions of dollars to waste on private luxury spas in downtown Toronto and on his Beer Store giveaways, but he will not spend a cent more to support community housing.

When the Premier didn't get his way with selling off the greenbelt to his developer friends, he just threw up his

hands. They've got no other plan to reach their own housing targets.

People are struggling. It's time for this government to get back in the business of building housing. It is your job. So when will the Premier get serious and start building the housing that people truly need?

Hon. Paul Calandra: In fact, since this government came to office, we've put in place conditions that saw housing starts reach their highest level ever, Mr. Speaker, and not just single, detached homes, but purpose-built rentals—their highest level in the history of the province.

Now, colleagues, what unleashed this opportunity is when we started reducing red tape, when we started eliminating all of the obstacles that went in the way and when we reduced taxes and the cost of building. Do you know what happened? People started to get shovels in the ground and people could afford to buy homes.

When the Liberals and NDP in Ottawa, when they got into this, what did they do? They increased taxes: tax and spend; tax and spend; high inflation, which led to the highest increase in interest rates in the fastest amount of time ever. And do you know what happened? People put their shovels down. They couldn't afford it.

They want to tax to prosperity. What we want to do is unleash opportunity across the province, and we will continue to do that by removing—

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, I think we all missed that on this side of the House, but let me tell you that the shovels are down right now all across the province of Ontario.

The government's Housing Affordability Task Force recommended legalizing fourplex apartments in all neighbourhoods, and this government said no. They recommended legalizing density along transit corridors as of right, and this government said no. When we proposed to accept all of those recommendations, the government, the Conservatives, said no.

Next week we're going to give the government another chance to say yes to these recommendations and to the most ambitious home-building plan the province has ever seen. We're going to put forward our plan for Homes Ontario, a plan to make public funding, low-cost financing and public land available to non-market-housing providers so we could at least double the supply of permanently affordable non-market homes, co-ops and rent-geared-to-income all across this province.

Will the Premier support our plan to get the government back in the business of building housing?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Whew, what a relief it must be to all of the OREA members who are here today to know that the NDP are going to put together a corporation that is going to build housing across the province of Ontario. That lot over there is somehow going to bring it to the

people of Ontario that they are going to build housing in Ontario. My gosh, Mr. Speaker.

Now, let's unpack their plan. They want to spend \$150 billion to build—wait for it—220,000 homes. That level of incompetence is only matched by the federal Liberals, who are spending \$1.2 billion to build a housing accelerator in Toronto to build 2,000 homes.

What we are going to do is this: We are going to focus on reducing costs, because we're not interested in building a few homes, we want to unleash opportunity that builds 1.5 million homes across the province of Ontario.

HOSPITAL PARKING FEES

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'll say this: We're still waiting. Where are these 1.5 million homes that this government keeps proposing?

I'm going to go back to the Premier. Last week, my colleague the MPP from Toronto—St. Paul's tabled a motion to eliminate hospital parking fees. That was after we heard from so many nurses and patients who are paying hundreds of dollars to park at their workplace. We all know it's not just the workers in hospitals, of course, it is the patients, too: cancer patients, people with chronic health issues, not to mention their families, forced to pay outrageous hospital parking fees. To me, that does sound like user fees.

Does the Premier think patients should have to pay for hospital parking before they get the care that they need?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: The province of Ontario has a hospital parking directive. It is a directive that's been in place for several years now. The goal of the hospital parking directive is, of course, to keep down the cost of parking in our hospitals. Of course, the parking lots themselves are not owned or run by the province of Ontario, they are actually operated by the individual hospitals that run the parking lots.

That being said, there is a directive that actually places a cap on parking fee increases. It is a hard cap. In addition to that there is also a special fee required for five-day, 10-day and 30-day parking passes. That's keeping with our policy to help keep down the cost of parking at our hospitals.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Let me tell you what the Premier said when he was asked why he won't remove hospital parking fees. He said he couldn't do that to the hospital CEOs. Well, I'll shed a tear, but what about the patients, Speaker? What about their families? What about the workers in those hospitals?

It seems like the Premier is actually admitting that his government underfunds hospitals by so much that they need to charge patients, workers and families for parking to make up for it. Can the Premier stand here and clarify his comments? Are hospital CEOs telling him that they

need to charge parking fees to make up for his government's underfunding?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Of course, the policy of this government is to help make parking more affordable at hospitals. That's why we have the hospital parking directive, which places a cap on any increase in parking fees at hospital parking lots and, in addition to that, provides that such parking lots must have a five-day, a 10-day and a 30-day parking pass rate.

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But in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we all remember that in 2018 the health care budget was only \$60 billion in this province; today it stands at \$85 billion, a 41% increase, meaning that in the province of Ontario, this government is now investing more in hospitals than any other government in the history of the province of Ontario, including building a brand new hospital in my area of Essex county, which for years you could not get an NDP member to actually endorse.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock for a minute.

The noise in here is getting a little louder by the minute. I'm going to ask members to come to order, and if they decline to do so, I'm going to start calling them out by name.

Start the clock. Final supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, the Premier is standing by while patients pay the price. That's the truth. Instead of taking any responsibility for how this government's decisions have left us in this health care crisis, the Premier blames patients.

In fact, let's remember that he recently told patients to stop going to the emergency room and—get this—to go to their family doctors. It is so ridiculous. I honestly thought maybe he was making a joke. You'll remember that he joked, apparently, about patients going to the veterinarian to get an MRI—also not terribly funny.

Some 2.5 million Ontarians do not have access to a family doctor right now, and even those who do have to wait days or months to see them, because doctors are so overworked and so overburdened. Home care patients are going to the ER to get home care supplies.

How can the Premier of this province be so callous about the realities and the difficult choices that Ontarians are making every single day in this province under his watch?

Interjections.

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

The member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: With regard to connecting patients with primary care in the province of Ontario, as a matter of fact, this is actually determined by a rating agency known as CIHI, which is an organization which deals with that type of thing. CIHI reports that at approximately 90%, Ontario has the highest rate of connected primary care in the entire country, better than Alberta, better than the socialist government of British Columbia

and better than any other province in the entire country. That is according to the rating agency known as CIHI.

Of course, one of those examples of connecting people to primary care comes from the riding of Davenport, where an additional 1,700 people have been connected to primary care at the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre.

VICTIM SERVICES

Ms. Marit Stiles: This government talks a pretty big game about getting tough on crime, but within a year of being elected in 2018, this government had dismantled the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. They said that their new administrative process was going to deliver compensation faster—remember that? But the fact is, they're just delivering almost no compensation at all.

Victims of crime used to be able to get a lump sum payment of up to \$25,000 a year which they could use to rebuild their lives. A survivor of human trafficking could use it to rent an apartment and enrol in school. A survivor of domestic violence could use it to get a divorce and fight for child custody. But now, under this Premier, all of that is gone.

So, Speaker, is the Premier ready to stop the tough talk and actually get to work rebuilding Ontario's victim compensation program?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: It's been three years since we set up the Victim Quick Response Program, and what the Leader of the Opposition is referring to is a program that was wound down for a reason. What she and her party would advocate is that we keep a process where a victim who has gone through a heinous experience has to come before a board and retell their story, re-explain what happened to them and get revictimized through that process.

What we put in place is an immediate response to help victims, so they can get help from the front-line services, they can have doors repaired, they can have tattoos removed, they can have transportation. They can have victim supports with courts, Mr. Speaker. And all of that is immediate, instead of a gruelling, long, laborious red tape system that purports to help victims, when in fact, it was revictimizing them.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'll tell you, before they point fingers, this government needs to undo the damage that they have done to our criminal justice system. The truth is, they cut \$20,000 from victims and left them with a paltry \$5,000.

The Ombudsman, under the Liberals said, yes, that that board was starved of resources. Instead of rebuilding this program, what did this government do? They just completely dismantled it.

This is a story that repeats itself over and over again in this province: The Liberals starve our public services and then the Conservatives come in and kill them. So I want to

know from this Premier, when will the Conservatives revive the compensation program and give Ontario's victims the real justice that they deserve?

Interjections.

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

The Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: What victims deserve, Mr. Speaker, are supports that are effective and timely. We have invested tens of millions of dollars in victim/witness support programs. We've invested millions of dollars in support programs for front-line workers to help those in their time of need when it's happening. We have gone further. We have provided victims of human trafficking with free legal advice and support as they go through their trauma.

We don't need a bureaucracy and a red tape process that takes years to go through to help victims. We know what they need. We are there with our victim services. Just last night, I was with Victim Services Toronto to hear their stories, their experiences of what they're doing to help the people of Ontario. And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I could not be more proud of this government for standing up for victims, standing up for people of Ontario and standing up for—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The next question.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Laura Smith: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Yesterday, I joined the minister to welcome an important investment from Hanon Systems. This is yet another vote of confidence in Ontario's thriving auto sector.

When we came to office, the auto sector was on the brink of collapse. Thanks to the previous government's high-tax policies, we were there. But now we've realized that the sector is in better shape by lowering costs and fostering a competitive business environment. The world knows that Ontario is a global auto manufacturing powerhouse.

Speaker, can the minister please provide the House with an update on yesterday's investment?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Yes, I can give you an update, because this company has invested \$155 million here into Ontario. They are a global auto parts supplier. We met them in Korea a few years ago and convinced them to come to Ontario.

The building they have built is spectacular, but their most vote of confidence was that their expansion has already started, Speaker. The steel is already up for their phase 2. They're hiring 300 new workers to join them as they make the electric compressors that keep the electric vehicle batteries cool. That's part of our end-to-end supply chain that is being built right here in Ontario, and tens of thousands of good-paying jobs are being created in the process, Speaker.

We expect those 300 people to be hired now, and when we saw that expansion coming, we expect more to be hired in the future.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank the minister for his incredible and solid work for the people of Ontario. Ontario's auto sector has been revitalized after years of Liberal decline. Investments continue to grow and flow in, and good-paying jobs have been created right across the province. So Hanon Systems' \$155-million investment is fantastic news for the hard-working people in my riding and the surrounding region.

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When the Liberals were losing 300,000 manufacturing jobs, no one would have thought that it would have been possible to land investments like this, but now we've secured tens of billions of dollars of new auto investments that are creating jobs in communities that the Liberals turned their backs on.

Can the minister please talk about how Ontario has earned the reputation as a global auto manufacturing powerhouse?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Think of where we were just a few years ago. In 2019, automakers from around the world announced they would be spending \$300 billion in the EV sector, and zero was coming to Canada. Not a single dollar was on its way here. All 120,000 men and women who were working in the auto sector were—their jobs were absolutely at risk.

When Premier Ford announced our open-for-business approach—we've now landed \$45 billion in new auto investments. That is more than any single US state has ever landed in their own states.

Here, you've got Bloomberg announcing that Ontario is now the number one global location for electric vehicle parts, dethroning China for the very first time.

That's what's happening here in Ontario.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

MPP Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. But I want to remind the minister that when the Oshawa plant was closing, the Premier said, "The ship has left the dock." It was actually the member for Oshawa who fought, along with Unifor, to save those jobs.

Speaker, yesterday, we in the official opposition NDP gave the Premier and his Conservative government an opportunity to acknowledge that mental health care is health care, and that mental health care should be included in our universal health care system. But they voted no to universal mental health care. The Premier clearly has his priorities all wrong.

We're seeing community mental health providers on the brink of collapse and people enduring long wait times across the province for basic mental health services. Ontario needs universal mental health care now.

We know that in Ontario over 30,000 children and youth are waiting for mental health treatment. That wait-

list has nearly tripled under this Conservative government. That is their failure.

Will the Premier apologize for continuing to fail Ontarians, change course and finally bring universal mental health care to Ontario? Yes or no?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply for the government, the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for that question.

Mr. Speaker, since the moment our Premier created this portfolio, I've been working with my colleagues to build a functioning mental health and addictions system out of the mess that was created by the NDP and the Liberals.

As we said yesterday, we won't take any lessons from the opposition. When they were supporting the Liberals, they had a chance to make and build a system, and what they did was nothing.

Our government is the only one in the province's history that has ever taken these issues seriously.

The NDP demonstrated again yesterday that they're still not serious about this issue. While their plan for mental health is about press conferences and vague motions, ours is about expanding supports, building a system, integrating a system, providing supports for children and youth all the way to seniors. This is a system, and it is being built by this government, under the leadership of Premier Ford.

We're going to continue working to build a system that gets everyone the help they need where and when they need that help.

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

MPP Lisa Gretzky: Back to the Premier—actually, you were the official opposition under a Liberal government for eight years. That wait-list went from 12,000 under you and the Liberals to nearly 30,000 under you alone.

Yesterday, the Premier and his Conservative government refused to support our NDP motion for universal mental health care. They claim that they are properly funding mental health. They claim that their record is perfect. And yet, Ontarians are saying the government is failing to deliver the basics to keep people healthy.

Dan Jennings, whose daughter Caitlin was murdered due to intimate partner violence, was only given six sessions with a therapist to cope with the grief and the trauma from his daughter being murdered. That is not universal health care.

Another constituent, Kim, told me she can't access mental health support because she can't afford to pay \$190 per session.

So I will ask again: Why does the Premier believe that Ontarians shouldn't have access to universal mental health care when and where they need it at no out-of-pocket cost?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Once again, I will not take lessons from the opposition, who had every opportunity to do something about it when they were in power and yet supported the Liberals to do absolutely nothing. This is the first government that has stepped up and has a dedicated

ministry that is looking after the mental health not just of our children and youth, but all the way through, including addiction supports.

We're funding a \$19-million early psychosis program. We're investing over \$800 million this year in mental health and addictions. We've opened 280 of the 400 beds for addiction supports, which have seen more than 10,000 independent individual visits that are getting supports they wouldn't otherwise have gotten.

We opened up 22 youth wellness hubs and are in the process of opening up another 10. We've created and embedded mental health literacy into the school programs. Don't preach to me what we are and aren't doing, because we're doing a great deal to ensure that we—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the House to come to order. Order.

The next question.

TAXATION

Mr. Brian Saunderson: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Ontario's natural resources sector is the economic backbone of many communities, especially for families in the rural and northern regions of our province. The natural resources industries of forestry, mining and agriculture support countless jobs and help to make Ontario's economy stronger.

Speaker, the regressive carbon tax is driving up the cost of doing business in Ontario. It's not just businesses feeling these impacts, it's families too. The Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax makes life harder and more expensive for these businesses and families. Higher fuel costs mean higher expenses at every level, from transporting goods to running equipment.

Can the minister please tell us about the negative impacts of the carbon tax on the natural resources sector in this great province?

Hon. Graydon Smith: Thanks to the member for that great question. Jobs in rural and northern Ontario and businesses in rural and northern Ontario are often natural resource based. They can't afford the carbon tax, but they can't escape it either. The Ontario Forest Industries Association said that fuel costs impact every stage of the supply chain within the economy and have compounding negative effects on industry competitiveness. How could you be more clear on the negative implications of the carbon tax?

Let's look to our Great Lakes as well. When we go there we hear from the Ontario Commercial Fisheries' Association, which said the carbon tax increases the cost of goods because everything they do is shipped.

It's businesses that are being hammered by the carbon tax, but it's families too. It's the price of food on the table, the price of heating in their home this winter. The employers, the small businesses, are all being beat up by the carbon tax. There's only one thing to do here: The Liberals need to cut that tax and support the great people—

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

Supplementary question?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you to the minister for that answer. The impact of the Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax is being felt across Ontario's natural resources sector. These industries are critical to our economy, especially to our rural, remote and northern communities. The natural resources sector provides reliable jobs in these communities.

The Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax means higher fuel costs, making it more expensive to operate machinery, transport goods and keep businesses running. This regressive tax is driving up the price of everything and for everyone, from loggers and miners to the families that depend on these resources for their jobs.

Sadly, every increase in the cost of fuel because of the carbon tax weakens the natural resources sector's ability to compete. Speaker, what measures is our government taking to help businesses, workers and communities in response to the negative impacts of the carbon tax of the Trudeau-Crombie era?

Hon. Graydon Smith: Thanks again to the member for that second great question.

Our government continues to make investments that support Ontarians. The Minister of Energy and Electrification is developing a new green energy mix for Ontario and expanding our nuclear fleet—congratulations to him for doing that great work. That means reliable, affordable energy for our manufacturing industries and homes and people in Ontario as we continue to grow our amazing province.

The Minister of Finance has extended the gas and fuel tax rate cut to lower the cost of commuting and home heating.

We do this because we're putting the people of Ontario first. But as our government has always said, the carbon tax is the worst tax—let me repeat that: the worst tax—that increases the cost of everything.

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We're protecting Ontario workers; we're protecting Ontario families from the high cost of this carbon tax. We urge the federal government and those across the aisle to do the same.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier. I want to read out a statement made by the Premier when he was a Toronto councillor about bike lanes: "We have to do everything we can to make sure there isn't a death in the city, one death is way too many."

Premier, six cyclists have died on Toronto's roads this year. Since we all agree that one death is too many, why does this government want to rip up bike lanes that keep families, kids and workers safe from being injured and killed?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond for the government, the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Look, this is the sixth question period since we've had this policy introduced,

and I'm happy that finally NDP or Liberals have asked a question about it. Mr. Speaker, this tells you what you need to know.

They know it's a reasonable approach because Toronto is one of the most congested cities in the world according to a TomTom study. Only 1.2% of people commute by bike, and it just does not make sense to rip up some of the busiest roads—not only in Toronto, but in all of North America—to accommodate that 1.2%.

It's about productivity. It's about moving people, getting to their homes quicker and faster. We're not anti-bike lanes, but it does not make sense to rip up some of our busiest roads in the city, create more traffic, prevent people from getting to their workplace or getting home to their families quicker and faster. This government is about a reasonable approach to transit—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Beaches—East York will come to order.

Supplementary question?

Ms. Jessica Bell: If this government was serious about addressing the congestion in the GTHA, then invest in transit and transit operations. But this government fails to do it—fails to do it.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. I can't hear what the member is saying. And it's both sides of the House.

I apologize to the member for University—Rosedale.

Please start the clock. She may resume.

Ms. Jessica Bell: The Bloor Annex Business Improvement Association represents over 270 businesses and property owners in my riding. Now, the BIA has made it very clear that bike lanes bring more customers to local businesses. They improve road safety, and they reduce congestion. This is a quote: Removing them would be "disastrous" for the community.

My question is to the Premier. Why rip up bike lanes when evidence shows they help small business activity and help people get around from A to B without being injured or killed?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore will come to order.

The Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Mr. Speaker, I've spoken with businesses along that route: Balance on Bloor in Etobicoke, 50-plus businesses have come forward on the impacts of bike lanes.

Look, we know 1.2% of people commute by bike in this province. Look at the winter months. It gets cold, it snows and it rains. It does not make sense to rip up some of our busiest roads in this province to accommodate 1.2% of the population. This is about being reasonable. It's about moving people quicker and faster so they can get home to their families.

And let's talk about public transit. That member right there has voted against the Ontario Line, which will move

400,000 people every single day. That member voted against One Fare—

Interjections.

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

The member for Ottawa Centre will come to order. The government side will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development will come to order.

I think we can resume. Start the clock: The next question.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: In the 2018 election, the Premier talked big about health care, but it was all talk. We had no idea how bad his government could make things. Just how bad is it? It's so bad that, under this Conservative government, the OMA says we're not facing a crisis but a catastrophe. It's so bad that 2.5 million Ontarians don't have a family doctor. It's so bad that 30,000 people in my riding of Don Valley West, 30% of the population, don't have a family doctor. It's worse in the Premier's riding of Etobicoke North, where 32,000 people, more than one in four, don't have a family doctor.

The government says there's no crisis, that enough Ontarians have a family doctor—30,000 of my constituents and 32,000 of the Premier's disagree; they're living with this crisis every day.

Will the Premier admit that 2.5 million people with no family doctor is unacceptable?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: In the province of Ontario, we have connected more people to primary care than any other province in Canada. We have more people connected to primary care than in Quebec, more people connected to primary care than in British Columbia, more people—and that percentage raises around 90% of all the residents in the province of Ontario are connected to primary care and, according to CIHI which is the rating agency that judges this type of thing, we have the best record of any province in the entire country.

But we are not going to stop there. We've appointed Jane Philpott to assist us in connecting even more people to primary care in this province so that we can do even better from today going into the future. We are concentrating on bringing health care to people where and when they need it.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Spadina–Fort York will come to order.

Supplementary question?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: It's pretty sad that the gravity of 2.5 million Ontarians not having a family doctor is

clearly still not sinking in for the Premier and his minister. That means 2.5 million people who can't get a referral when they need one. That's 2.5 million people who have to try to find a walk-in clinic or, worse, go to the ER to get basic care. Does the Premier not think 2.5 million Ontarians deserve a family doctor? Every day, I receive calls and emails from constituents sharing their health care horror story, and I bet the Premier does too. I wonder what he says to them.

When the Premier gets mad and tells people waiting in the ER to "just go see your family doctor," what does he have to say to the 2.5 million people, including the 13,000 in the riding of Essex, who can't?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: As we all know, Ontario leads the country in connecting people to primary care at approximately 90% of all residents in the province connected to primary care. That's according to the CIHI rating agency.

The member mentioned referral. Let me tell you a story about my constituent Victoria. She had cataracts and she needed to have cataract surgery. From the time that she was referred to the time she got her cataract surgery, it was only eight weeks from the time of referral to cataract surgery. That was because of initiatives taken by this government to make sure that cataract surgeries can be delivered at community health surgical centres, which are opposed by the Liberals.

We know that it is working. We know the Liberals would shut down those centres, so people like Victoria wouldn't be able to get the cataract surgery that she got so quickly. I'm standing with Victoria and giving people better and faster health care.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Patrice Barnes: My question is for the Solicitor General. My community is feeling the impact of increasing safety concerns. We all see it in our neighbourhoods, on our streets and even in our parks. Parents are worried about their kids who are walking home from school, seniors are nervous on their evening walks and many Ontarians feel a growing sense of unease that wasn't there before.

After years of underfunding by the previous Liberal government, our police and first responders were not provided with the support they needed to properly protect our communities. That is why it so critical for our government to continue to take strong leadership and provide our first responders with the resources that they need.

Can the Solicitor General please explain what our government is doing to provide our police force with the tools they need to protect Ontarians?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I want to thank my colleague from Ajax. The question that I want to ask my friends in the Legislature is why has our government, led by Premier Ford, decided to be so outspoken in support of our first responders, our police officers, our firefighters

and everyone connected to public safety, and why have the opposition been so silent?

Yesterday, the associate minister and I made an announcement, and we penned a letter to the federal Attorney General and the federal Minister of Public Safety, calling for them now to enact meaningful bail reform and not to wait. We said to them, “We must restore mandatory minimum sentences for serious crimes; we must remove bail availability for offenders charged with murder, terrorism, human trafficking, intimate partner violence; and we must mandate a three-strike rule requiring pre-trial detention for repeat offenders.”

Mr. Speaker, we will not stop.

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

Ms. Patrice Barnes: Thank you to the minister for that response. When we hear about crimes in our communities, we feel anxious. Ontarians want to know that their leaders are doing everything possible to keep them safe. It is a concern that keeps families up at night and the people in my community want to see real action. They want to know that our government cares about their safety as much they do. For far too long, promises were made by the previous Liberal government about community safety that sadly they did not keep. Now, we’re seeing the consequences of those years of inaction by the Liberals.

Through you, Speaker, can the Solicitor General please explain how our government is taking the lead on public safety and ensuring our police have the resources that they need for all Ontarians?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Again, I want to thank my colleague from Ajax. This government, led by Premier Ford, will never apologize for making the investments that are required to keep Ontario safe. We will never apologize for fighting to get rid of those people stealing our cars and put them where they belong: in jail. We have room for them. We will never stop working to get the illegal guns off our streets that emanate from the other side of the border, and the federal government knows this.

When we were in Yellowknife, the associate minister and I spent two days—it was like banging our head against the wall—pleading with the federal ministers to understand that in the absence of bail reform, we have lawlessness. The Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberals are more interested in pandering to those in jail than worrying about the victims that have been victimized by horrible crimes.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The member for Hamilton Mountain, come to order. The member for Waterloo, come to order. The member for Mississauga–Malton, come to order.

The next question.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Guy Bourgoïn: Between Thunder Bay and Timmins, there’s only one hospital that has the capacity to deliver babies. Pregnant women all along this 800-

kilometre stretch are told to move to another community up to four hours away to make sure that they have a doctor when they go into labour.

Now, the OB department in Kapuskasing is at risk of closing. Without urgent funding, we are going to lose the last hospital on Highway 11 where women can safely give birth. Will the minister commit today to finance and keep this last delivery department open?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Mr. Speaker, I want to, first of all, thank the fantastic midwives in the province of Ontario for doing the fantastic job that they do. In fact, it was a midwife who helped deliver our third child—Jackie and I. It was at home, a 100% all-natural childbirth. So I appreciate and fantastically support the midwives in the province of Ontario.

I want to say that between the years 2018 and 2021, the number of obstetrics and gynecology specialists increased by 6.3% in the province of Ontario. And since our government took office in 2018, we’ve increased obstetrics and gynecology training positions by 11.43%. These are importance increases. We want to provide these services to as many people as possible, and that’s why these increases have been undertaken.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I’m really sad to have to tell you that 7% of pregnancies from Hearst were delivered without any obstetrical services: no midwives, no physicians, no obstetricians—nothing.

From Thunder Bay to Timmins, we’ve had babies born in the back of an ambulance, in the back of a taxi, because there were no ambulances available, in the back of their dad’s pickup truck and in bathrooms along the 800-kilometre road.

Speaker, before this government took power, we had access to obstetric and delivery care in northern Ontario.

Now northerners are afraid that the minister will wait until a pregnant woman or a child dies before she will secure the services in Kapuskasing, before she will restore the obstetrical services that closed under this minister’s watch.

Northerners deserve equitable access. When will the minister fix this crisis?

Interjections.

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

The member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Mr. Speaker, as part of the incredible increase in health care investments that this government has undertaken since 2018, we are increasing the number of doctors, including obstetricians and gynecologists, in the province of Ontario.

The health care budget has gone from \$60 billion in 2018 to \$85 billion in 2024, a 41% increase. That helps fund the initiatives at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, where we are training more medical professionals—in fact, more professionals being trained in the north,

for the north than in any other time in the history of the province of Ontario, because this government knows that it's important to deliver medical services to all parts of Ontario, including northern Ontario. That's why we've had these investments specifically in the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: My question is for the Premier. In Waterloo region, for every affordable unit that gets built, we lose 39 existing units—in Ottawa and Hamilton, that number is 31; London, 24; and Toronto, 18. This leaves Kitchener with a 0% vacancy rate of affordable units, so when someone loses their home, there's nowhere to go.

One landlord named Michael Klein was recently named Ontario's top renovictor by Ontario ACORN and was reported by the Globe and Mail to be linked to 21 buildings experiencing mass renovictions in seven cities, including Kitchener. He buys properties and targets legacy tenants, often seniors, in an effort to push them out and jack up the rent. Allegations include tenants being bullied, harassed and, worst of all, given N13s saying they have to move out for renovations, only to see units get a coat of paint and a dishwasher.

What is the government doing to stop bad-acting landlords like Mr. Klein from making the rent-paying seniors of Ontario homeless?

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

Hon. Doug Downey: I thank the member. Just the other day, she handed me a series of news articles in relation to this matter.

I can't speak to the individual matter, but I can tell you this: There is a process and a system to deal with it. It's an independent process. It's something that, of course, community legal clinics and individuals are accessing, the Landlord and Tenant Board, to have these matters heard. There are significant fines for what you're calling renovictions, for people moving out and being frustrated, if it's not legitimate, Mr. Speaker.

1140

This government increased those fines significantly, and I trust that the Landlord and Tenant Board will follow through and make the appropriate finding.

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

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: While I appreciate the additional fines, without justice what's the point? Last year, the CBC reported that only four of the 13 landlords' fined actually paid their fines. Their fines were \$5,000, which for a senior who was made homeless or experienced this trauma is barely a slap on the wrist.

As a result, bad-acting landlords issue N13 after N13 after N13. In fact, N13 use has gone up 300% between 2017 and 2022. It's no wonder neither landlords nor tenants are getting justice, because bad actors are clogging up the system.

The Premier himself agreed that the LTB is flawed. So will the Premier pause N13s, review their use and implement barriers to stop those from bullying renters out of their affordable units.

Hon. Doug Downey: The last time we paused anything with the Landlord and Tenant Board, Mr. Speaker, it had knock-on effects across the system.

We're focused on getting rid of the backlog in the Landlord and Tenant Board so it can function at its optimum value. We've doubled the number of full-time adjudicators. We're hearing significantly more cases per month. The backlog is down over 30%, Mr. Speaker. We are on the way to success with the Landlord and Tenant Board so that tenants and landlords can have their matters heard in an impartial way.

I won't prejudge the hearings and the N13s that are being filed, but I can tell you they're being adjudicated independently, not politically, and the right answer will be achieved.

TAXATION

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the Minister of Rural Affairs. Ontarians are feeling the harmful impact of the Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax on their lives. This regressive and unfair tax is driving up costs on everything.

The Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax is making everything more expensive, from goods, groceries and gas to heating, home ownership and household essentials. I've heard from many constituents who are particularly worried about the negative impact of the carbon tax on their household budgets as winter approaches. They're worried about once again having to choose between heating and eating this winter because the carbon tax is adding unnecessary costs to their energy bill.

Speaker, can the Minister of Rural Affairs please share her thoughts on how the carbon tax is hurting rural Ontario?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I want to thank the member from Sarnia-Lambton for that question, because if ever there was an appropriate time to talk about how the carbon tax is hurting Ontarians, it's today, because we have the Egg Farmers of Ontario here, and if you were down enjoying one of their omelettes, you would have heard them absolutely in despair because the cost of the carbon tax is driving up their cost of production, the drying of corn and, ultimately, the cost of food.

And another example of how the carbon tax is affecting rural Ontario is the price of gasoline. We have to drive everywhere—to get to piano lessons, to get to hockey, to get to church, to get those extracurricular activities that we deserve in rural Ontario.

And in 2025, on April 1, the carbon tax is going up to 20.9 cents a litre. Ladies and gentlemen, we can't afford the Liberal ideology that's driving this tax. Furthermore, when you take a look at people who have to use propane, on a \$1,000 bill, there's \$250 worth of carbon tax of which—

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

Supplementary question?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Minister, for that expansive answer.

Speaker, rural families are being hit hardest by the rising cost of living. They don't have access to transit options like those in major cities like Toronto. That is why they must rely on their vehicles to get to work, drop their kids at school or go to the grocery store.

Rural families are paying more for necessities, all because of the Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax, which takes more money out of their pockets each and every year. When the cost of gas goes up, it impacts everything we rely on, from groceries to farm equipment.

Rural families feel like they're being left behind by the Trudeau-Crombie Liberals who don't understand their way of life.

Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to help these families keep more of their hard-earned money?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Every day, we are standing up, fighting against the Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax. It's nothing but a cash grab. But what I'm really happy to share with everyone in the House today and watching is that it's our government, under the leadership of both Premier Ford and our finance minister, that's doing everything we can to leave money in people's pockets.

We heard the Minister of Natural Resources refer to the fact that we're extending the decrease in provincial gasoline tax through to June 2025. And more importantly, tomorrow, in the fall economic statement, you're going to hear how we are going to give more money back to every taxpayer and child in the province of Ontario: 12.5 million taxpayers and 2.5 million kids will be receiving \$200 to help them get through the tough times.

I want to say thank you to Premier Ford and thank you to Minister Bethlenfalvy. It's the Ontario PC government that is making sure that we take care of—

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

LABOUR DISPUTE

MPP Jamie West: PEGO, the professional engineers of the province of Ontario, are taking strike action for the first time in 35 years. These are qualified professionals that don't get a lot of money in their field. They're responsible for ensuring that \$85 billion in public infrastructure is safe and reliable, but they're not being valued by the Conservative government.

After 16 months at the bargaining table, their in-house expertise is still being treated as an inconvenient expense. We need these engineers if we're going to build great infrastructure, and we can't afford for them to leave public service.

My question to the Premier is, what is the Premier doing to ensure Ontario maintains the vital engineering talent in our public sector?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: The government's goal is to negotiate reasonable collective agreements that are fair and equitable to Ontario's dedicated public servants, that are in line with legislative requirements and that also support the long-term fiscal sustainability of this province.

Since July 2023, the government has held numerous bargaining sessions with PEGO in an effort to reach a fair deal at the negotiating table. The government's latest offer recognizes the specialized role of PEGO employees.

Now, out of respect for the collective bargaining process, it would be inappropriate to comment further, Speaker, but I want to assure Ontarians that all government ministries have continuity of operations plans in place to help them manage through any potential disruptions from labour actions. Any impacts to programs, services and OPS operations are expected to be minimal.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question? The member for Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: This government says infrastructure is a priority, but it's not investing in the in-house engineering professionals who go above and beyond.

PEGO members are involved in the design, planning and oversight of billions of dollars of infrastructure projects, and it's not just construction projects. These engineers monitor our water and air quality, mine safety and much more. When we invest in them, we invest in our future.

This Premier's priorities are all wrong. Is infrastructure really a priority for this province, or is this government going to risk a construction season by refusing to respect their own engineers?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Infrastructure is one of our government's top priorities and that's why we've made significant investments in health care, in transportation. Across the board, we're investing in infrastructure, and that's exactly why all government ministries have continuity of operations plans in place: to help them manage any potential labour disruptions.

Speaker, the government's latest offer recognizes the specialized role that PEGO employees play in our government. Out of respect for the collective bargaining process, I won't comment any further, but I want to assure Ontarians that we are going to continue to build the province that Ontarians deserve. We will get it done.

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: My question is to the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. It's no secret that Ontario is facing a major challenge in the skilled trades sector. Thousands of skilled trades workers—the people who have literally built our roads, our homes and our communities—are on the verge of retirement. These are the same workers who've helped create the Ontario we know and love. But without a new generation stepping in, all this valuable experience, all this know-how could be lost.

1150

At the same time, we know countless young Ontarians may not see university as the right path for them, as they want to work with their hands and build. Yet, too often, students and their families aren't aware of the many rewarding, well-paying careers available in the skilled trades.

Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to get more young people into the skilled trades?

Hon. David Piccini: Thank you to the member for that question and for being such a champion for our next generation.

Speaker, it's exciting. We have launched the largest-ever skilled trades career fair in Ontario's history, empowering 35,000 to 40,000 new youth this year with incredible opportunities, opening up pathways into the skilled trades. I had the privilege being in Cobourg recently for the launch of the Level Up! skilled trades career fairs and the most common thing I heard from youth was, "I've never tried this before."

That's what this government is on a mission to do, to replace the one in three incredible journey persons retiring, the golden generation that built this province. We owe it to them to ensure we're training the next generation to build the public transit, build the hospitals, build the schools that this government and this Premier are committed to building. And we're doing it by inspiring the next generation. So a big shout-out to all the unions, teachers, educators and employers who are taking part.

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

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: Speaker, Ontario urgently needs more workers in the skilled trades to meet the growing demand for housing, roads, hospitals and other critical infrastructure. But despite the excellent job opportunities available, women are still vastly under-represented in the trades, making up only a small part of this workforce. This isn't just about numbers, it's a missed chance to harness the skills and talents of skilled, hard-working women who could thrive in these careers and bring valuable new perspectives.

Speaker, we have heard directly from tradeswomen about the obstacles they face: equipment that doesn't fit properly, limited or inadequate washrooms, and even safety issues. If we're serious about welcoming women into the trades, we must address these challenges directly. Can the minister share what specific actions our government is taking to make skilled trades workplaces more accessible and welcoming for women across Ontario?

Hon. David Piccini: Thank you to that member for this question. Speaker, let's start with the stats. We've seen a 30% increase in women registration into apprenticeships. We're never going to build the homes, hospitals, highways, roads and bridges leaving 50% of our workplace behind.

That's why I'm proud to be part of a government taking common-sense approaches and bringing it forward, like

requiring properly fitting PPE to keep women safe on job sites, or other common-sense changes.

We know in a 2022 Ontario Building and Construction Tradeswomen survey, over half of respondents said, "Better washroom facilities." Common-sense changes like that would help make construction more appealing for women.

While the opposition in debate—for a bill they ultimately supported, so I'm incredibly grateful for that—but while they mocked these common-sense changes, we're listening to women making the same expectations for washrooms on Bay Street to main street, and properly fitting PPE. Speaker, it's working. We're seeing women entering the trades in record numbers.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity has a point of order.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I just want to give a shout-out to Samika Kapoor, who is from my riding. She's the page captain today. I hope today goes well and we don't give you a hard time.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I also want to acknowledge the presence of Gloria Richards, who served this Legislature faithfully many years. She's just stepped out, but she was here and we welcome her back to Queen's Park.

Applause.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 25 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 197, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act, and Bill 194, An Act to enact the Enhancing Digital Security and Trust Act, 2024 and to make amendments to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act respecting privacy protection measures.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1155 to 1200.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the members to please take their seats.

Mr. Clark has moved government notice of motion number 25 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 197, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act, and Bill 194, An Act to enact the Enhancing Digital Security and Trust Act, 2024 and to make amendments to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act respecting privacy protection measures.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Jones, Trevor	Romano, Ross
Anand, Deepak	Jordan, John	Sabawy, Sheref
Bailey, Robert	Kanapathi, Logan	Sandhu, Amarjot
Barnes, Patrice	Ke, Vincent	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bouma, Will	Kerzner, Michael S.	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Bresee, Ric	Leardi, Anthony	Saunderson, Brian
Byers, Rick	Lecce, Stephen	Scott, Laurie
Calandra, Paul	Martin, Robin	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Stan	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Dave
Clark, Steve	McGregor, Graham	Smith, David
Coe, Lorne	Mulrone, Caroline	Smith, Graydon
Crawford, Stephen	Oosterhoff, Sam	Smith, Laura
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Pang, Billy	Surma, Kinga
Dixon, Jess	Parsa, Michael	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	Piccini, David	Thompson, Lisa M.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pierre, Natalie	Tibollo, Michael A.
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Pinsonneault, Steve	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Hamid, Zee	Pirie, George	Wai, Daisy
Hardeman, Ernie	Quinn, Nolan	Williams, Charmaine A.
Harris, Mike	Rae, Matthew	Yakabuski, John
Hogarth, Christine	Riddell, Brian	

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

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gélinas, France	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Sattler, Peggy
Bell, Jessica	Gretzky, Lisa	Schreiner, Mike
Bourgouin, Guy	Harden, Joel	Shamji, Adil
Bowman, Stephanie	Hazell, Andrea	Shaw, Sandy
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Hsu, Ted	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Burch, Jeff	Jama, Sarah	Tabuns, Peter
Clancy, Aislinn	Karpoche, Bhutla	Taylor, Monique
Collard, Lucille	Kernaghan, Terence	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	McCrimmon, Karen	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 62; the nays are 38.

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

Motion agreed to.

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

The House recessed from 1204 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**UKRAINIAN HERITAGE MONTH
ACT, 2024****LOI DE 2024 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE UKRAINIEN**

Mr. Sabawy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 215, An Act to proclaim the month of September as Ukrainian Heritage Month / Projet de loi 215, Loi

proclamant le mois de septembre Mois du patrimoine ukrainien.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Would the member care to briefly explain his bill?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: There are over 340,000 Ontarians of Ukrainian heritage in our province. They have contributed significantly to Ontario's social, cultural, political and economic fabric.

This bill would, if passed, proclaim the month of September in each year as Ukrainian Heritage Month.

MS REMEDIES INC. ACT, 2024

Ms. Triantafilopoulos moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr52, An Act to revive MS Remedies Inc.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES****WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I am rising today to recognize Women's History Month, which is observed every October in Ontario and across Canada. Women's History Month is an occasion to celebrate the contributions that women have made to the culture, economy and history of our province. It is also an opportunity to honour the women and girls who are continuing to advance gender equality, break barriers and make Ontario a better place for us all. This year's theme is "Women at Work: Economic Growth Past, Present and Future."

Every day, women make Ontario stronger. Their labour, their knowledge and expertise are critical to the success of our province.

Women are innovators in medicine, science and technology, keeping Ontario at the forefront of key sectors, especially those sectors where we are under-represented.

Women are entrepreneurs and business leaders, creating jobs and driving our economy forward.

Women are tradeswomen and farmers who work hard every day to grow our food and build our homes, highways and hospitals.

They are caregivers and teachers, protecting our most vulnerable and educating the next generation of leaders.

Above all, women are our mothers and our wives and our sisters and our daughters—the people in our lives who mean so much to us. They are role models who show future generations of girls that they can be leaders, too.

All women today are amazing, and we have to remember the women who created pathways for us to make the

women we have today, like Clara Brett Martin, Canada's first woman lawyer; Dr. Jean Augustine, the first Black member of Parliament; Zanana Akande, the first Black female MPP; Jeanne Mance, the founder of Canada's first hospital; Dr. Emily Stowe, the first Canadian woman physician to practise here in Canada; or Kim Campbell, the first and the only female Prime Minister of Canada.

We are thankful for all the women who have made our province and our country great, but we are working to make sure that we're creating future leaders who are paving more pathways for women and girls in the future.

Despite the progress we've made, many women and girls continue to face barriers to achieving their full potential.

As Ontario's Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity, I am honoured to work every day to help ensure that women have the support they need to overcome these barriers. That's why, under the leadership of Premier Ford, we are taking decisive action to help more women to succeed in their careers, in their communities and in life.

This summer, I announced an expansion to the Women's Economic Security Program, which supports community-based training programs across the province that help low-income women build the skills, the knowledge and the experience they need to get a job or start a business.

Our Investing in Women's Futures Program provides safe spaces and skills training to help survivors of gender-based violence and women experiencing social and economic barriers to gain financial independence.

Since 2021, these programs have helped over 14,000 women through local programs and services and helped thousands of women to secure employment, start a business or pursue further training and education.

Our government is also modernizing the school curriculum and increasing exposure to STEM, skilled trades and apprenticeship pathways so that more girls and young women can access in-demand, fulfilling and well-paying careers, including in sectors where women are traditionally under-represented. We've invested over \$1.5 billion into Ontario's skilled trades to help more women and, in particular, girls to build a passion for the trades early in life and access careers in the skilled trades. We're also supporting female entrepreneurs with training and tools through a province-wide network of regional innovation centres, Small Business Enterprise Centres, and programs like Futurpreneur that support entrepreneurs and small business owners.

I want to thank our minister of small business for the work that she's doing to empower so many women of Ontario to seize the future in entrepreneurship.

We're also increasing access to safe, affordable, high-quality child care so that more women can choose to work or go back to school, knowing their children are in a healthy and nurturing environment.

I'm proud of our government's investments in a more equal and inclusive Ontario that is full of opportunities for our women and girls. And I look forward to continuing our work with communities and service providers across the

province to help more women in Ontario achieve the success that they deserve. When women are empowered to excel, they also help strengthen Ontario's economy and benefit all of us.

Before I conclude today, I want to draw my colleagues' attention to two other days of significance for women and girls in Ontario.

On October 11, we celebrated the International Day of the Girl, to recognize the unique challenges and inequalities faced by girls, and the need to protect their rights and create more opportunities for their prosperity.

1510

As a mom of three girls and two boys, I want to ensure that we are creating an Ontario that has the same opportunities for my girls as my boys.

October 15 marked the International Day of Rural Women, an occasion to recognize the invaluable contributions of rural women to our society and the roles that they are playing to feed families and communities and fight against hunger.

This October, I invite all Ontarians to join us in recognizing these dates and celebrating Women's History Month. This month is an opportunity to learn more about the history of women in our province, to celebrate their achievements, and to thank the trail-blazing women who in the past fought to secure the rights and opportunities that we enjoy today.

Together, we will honour the women who came before us and empower the women who will be leaders for the next generation, because when women succeed, Ontario succeeds.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Responses?

MPP Jill Andrew: It is my honour to speak on behalf of the Ontario NDP official opposition as we recognize Women's History Month. This year's theme is about women at work and their economic growth.

I have the privilege of standing here and working as the MPP for my community of St. Paul's thanks to voters, thousands of whom were likely women. The women's suffrage movement in Canada fought tooth and nail so we could not only vote but also see our names on a ballot. The 1929 Persons Case initiated by the Famous Five women made it so most women—as Indigenous and racialized women were initially excluded—were able to work towards change in both the House of Commons and the Senate as recognized persons by law. They rose up and met the political moment of their time so we could rise and meet the moments of ours today.

In the early 1970s, Rosemary Brown was the first Black Canadian woman to become a member of a provincial Legislature and the first Black woman to run for leadership of a federal national party. She ran for the federal leadership of the NDP. Rosemary frequently said, "Until all of us have made it, none of us have made it." And she said, "We must open the doors and see to it they remain open so that others can pass through." These quotes should serve as a constant reminder of the responsibility each of us as MPPs in this House, especially those of us who are women—must ensure that we support other women; open

the doors wide, keep them open, so that women in our workplaces and our communities feel seen, heard, valued and respected.

Today in Ontario, women, on average, continue to earn only 68 cents for every dollar that a man makes. The wage gap is worse for Indigenous, Black, and women with disabilities. Pay equity legislation passed over 30 years ago, and we are still to see it actualized. This is something that this Conservative government—as well as actually making pay transparency a real thing, and not just tinkering around the edges. This government could do that today, during Women's History Month.

Last week, we celebrated Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. These workers, predominantly women, work tirelessly to take care of our littlest ones.

I'm so thankful to the Central Eglinton Community Centre EarlyON program in our midtown community.

This Conservative government must address key issues impacting all ECEs, like equitable wage grids, access to benefits, and opportunities for recruitment and professional development.

We, the NDP, have also committed to a salary scale starting at \$25 an hour for all child care workers and 30 bucks an hour for registered ECEs, paid sick days, paid professional development time, and paid programming time. These are tangible steps this government has failed to take, so far, but could commit to today to support women in the workplace.

Last week, I spoke to the Association of Ontario Midwives, who had a very clear message for the Premier: First and foremost, stop fighting nurses and midwives in court. Midwives are health care professionals. Stop all the attempts at suppressing their wages. I also learned that their funding had been pretty much frozen for approximately 15 years, so I guess that points to the Conservative government, but also the former Liberal government. This is a sustainability issue and one the Premier of Ontario sitting right now and his government can tackle today, during Women's History Month.

I am very excited to see the fall economic statement that this government puts forth because that document, to anyone who's watching, will be the document that tells us what this government's priorities are and whether or not women are centre to that priority.

I also want to say that women experiencing intimate partner violence can't focus on their economic growth. We need Bill 173 passed. We need to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. Not only will that help survivors, but it will strengthen the protections around them. It will also increase resources to the front-line workers, usually women, who are supporting intimate partner violence survivors.

There is plenty that this government can do to support women's economic growth, but the political will must be there. I'm hopeful that come the fall economic statement, which is being published and shared by this government

this week, we will see how important women are in this province of Ontario, during Women's History Month and throughout the rest of the year.

MPP Andrea Hazell: I rise to acknowledge and celebrate Women's History Month. This month, I would like to recognize trail-blazing women politicians such as Agnes Macphail, Wilmot James and Dr. Jean Augustine. Their courage and determination have opened doors for many and laid the groundwork for greater representation and advocacy for women's rights.

October 18 is recognized as Persons Day in Canada, marking the 1929 decision that established women as legal persons. This was a historic ruling that opened the door for women to be involved in public and political life.

We must also acknowledge the ongoing challenges that women face, including gender-based violence, pay inequity, and barriers to attain leadership roles.

We must recognize that there is still significant work to be done right here at Queen's Park. With only six Black MPPs, representing less than 5% of this House, it is imperative that we take action to increase diversity and equity.

I am committed to fighting for the rights and voice of my daughter, and all women and young girls.

Let us celebrate the achievements of women but also commit to action. We must support initiatives that uplift women, provide equitable opportunities, and ensure their voices are heard in decision-making.

Madam Speaker, I am sharing my minutes with the member from Kitchener Centre.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Recently, I heard a quote in historical fiction: "Women don't get dreams, they get husbands." Women's lives were confined to small spaces and narrow roles, and history was written by and focused on white male leaders.

Today, we aim for balance in our remembering of history, by celebrating women like Mary Ann Shadd Cary, Mary Two-Axe Earley, Rosemary Brown, and Hide Hyodo Shimizu. These women achieved great things, challenged gender norms and insisted on equal rights.

Today, however, women continue to see a wage gap, earning less than men for the same work. The gap is greater for BIPOC women, mothers, gender-diverse people and folks with disabilities. This effect is greater in positions of leadership, with more CEOs named John than are women.

Here in the Legislature, I look around and see we're not there yet—so today and every day, I pledge to spend more time celebrating women for their courage, leadership and dedication to justice for all.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Steve Clark: I move that the following changes be made to the membership of the following committees:

On the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, Mr. Allsopp replaces Mr. Yakabuski.

On the Standing Committee on the Interior, Mr. Cuzzetto replaces Mr. Allsopp.

1520

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The government House leader has moved the motion that the following changes be made on the membership of the following committees:

On the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, Mr. Allsopp replaces Mr. Yakabuski.

On the Standing Committee on the Interior, Mr. Cuzzetto replaces Mr. Allsopp.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Essex on a point of order.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I wish to correct my record. This morning, during question period, in response to a question put by the Leader of the Opposition, I stated that 1,700 new patient positions had been created at the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre. The actual number is 2,270. Thank you.

PETITIONS

ÉDUCATION POSTSECONDAIRE DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ça me fait extrêmement plaisir de présenter ces pétitions. J'aimerais remercier M^{me} Nicole Sabourin de Hanmer dans mon comté. Les pétitions s'appellent « Appuyez l'Université de Sudbury ».

On sait tous que les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes du Nord ont travaillé pendant plus d'un siècle pour la création d'une institution d'enseignement supérieur francophone pour, par et avec les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, et ça, ça s'appelle l'Université de Sudbury.

La population franco-ontarienne, celle du Nord, est unanime. Le gouvernement provincial doit financer l'Université de Sudbury. Ils ont préparé des cours. Dès septembre prochain, les étudiants pourront s'inscrire à plus de 36 nouveaux cours, tous en français, à l'Université de Sudbury. Mais vous savez, madame, le gouvernement provincial donne zéro—pas un sou à l'université francophone de Sudbury.

Ce qu'on demande, c'est que les universités soient respectées, que l'université francophone de Sudbury reçoive sa juste part. Ils ont fait plusieurs demandes au gouvernement de l'Ontario. Le gouvernement de l'Ontario nous a annoncé, le vendredi juste avant la fête du Canada, qu'il n'investirait pas dans l'Université de Sudbury. Les gens du Nord-Est ne l'ont pas accepté. L'université ne l'a pas accepté non plus. Ils vont offrir des cours.

Le gouvernement doit prendre ses responsabilités et financer l'Université de Sudbury comme ils financent toutes les autres universités.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Just before I move to the next petitions—I know it's a recurring thing—I need to remind everybody that you need to provide a summary of the petition, and not make a political speech necessarily.

I will move to next petitions. I recognize the member for Niagara West.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the privilege of presenting to the Legislature and tabling today—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I apologize to the minister. I was just reminded of a rule that I was not aware of: Ministers cannot present petitions.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): There you go. We all learned something this afternoon.

All right. Further petitions? I recognize the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario”—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Sorry again. The member for Whitby, the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills was standing before you were, so I'll recognize you after, if that's okay with you.

Mr. Lorne Coe: That's fine.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I have a petition here supporting the manufacturing industry in Ontario. We know that Ontario has, because of different policies, pushed all the manufacturing outside; 300,000 jobs went outside Ontario. Our government has been changing that.

This petition is supporting the manufacturing jobs. I support the petition, and I put my signature on it.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The benefit of being brief.

Laughter.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're working on it. We're working on it.

Okay. Next petition.

EDUCATION

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank the 930 residents of Peterborough, Lindsay and many other communities that feed into Fleming College for this petition, entitled “Stop

the Cuts: Reverse Program Suspensions at Fleming College and Defend Young People's Futures!"

The petition notes that there was a sudden and unprecedented suspension of 29 programs at Fleming, which represents one fifth of the college's offerings. It also goes on to say that many of those program suspensions were in environmental areas, which is certainly a place where we need graduates to deal with the climate crisis. It comments on the fact that the cuts to programs will have a very detrimental impact on the businesses that rely on graduates of those programs and will, therefore, have a negative effect on the local and regional economy, as well as the spending that students do and the economic boost that students give to some of those small communities.

It also talks about the fact that these program cuts were conducted without any consultation with staff, faculty, students or industry partners. Therefore, it calls on the Legislative Assembly to reverse those program cuts and to have a public consultation to make sure that the graduates of Fleming College are meeting local economic needs.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Mr. Lorne Coe: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: "Whereas supporting the adoption of electric vehicles is essential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and combatting climate change;

"Whereas the growth of the electric vehicle industry presents significant opportunities for economic development, job creation and technological innovation in Ontario"—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Excuse me. Okay.

Well, this petition is being really controversial. What is the point of order?

Mr. Joel Harden: The honourable member from Whitby is reading the petition out, which I understood to be forbidden in this House.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): All right, and I will go back to the member from Whitby with a reminder that we're not supposed to read the petition. You're supposed to give a brief summary.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'll be happy to read the summary. I'll do that right now.

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Implement the policies that encourage the adoption of electric vehicles, including supporting the growth of Ontario's EV manufacturing sector."

I'm going to affix my signature to it, Speaker, and give it to page Keerthana.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Okay. Before we get to the next petition, for everyone who's here and everybody who's listening, petitions are supposed to be presented with a brief summary of the substance of the petition, not reading the petition and not a political speech. If we can refrain from doing these things, and offering a

brief summary so people know what the petition is about, that would be appreciated.

I'll move to the next petition and I will recognize the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

LANDFILL

Ms. Sandy Shaw: We'll see how this goes.

I have a petition here, entitled "Stop the Dresden Landfill Expansion." It's signed by many, many constituents of the Lambton–Kent–Middlesex riding, and it is their opinion that municipalities should have the right to refuse a project that they believe would greatly impact the health and the environment of their residents. This Dresden landfill will be within one kilometre of town, one and a half kilometres from an elementary school, so they believe that this project is a threat to the environment, the watershed and endangered species.

Because there was no study related to this and that it will have impacts on infrastructure in the region, they are asking or petitioning the Legislative Assembly to immediately halt and hold any expansion of the Dresden landfill and investigate other methods to dispose of Toronto's garbage and southwestern Ontario waste, and not have it all end up in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

1530

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I have a petition here that speaks to electric vehicle manufacturing. It speaks to creating high-quality jobs and it speaks to boosting the Ontario economy. It calls upon the Legislature to strengthen the EV manufacturing sector and to support the transition to clean energy.

I support this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Lily who, undoubtedly, will deliver it judiciously to the table at the centre of this Legislature.

ADDICTION SERVICES

MPP Jamie West: This petition is entitled "Petition for Funding of Supervised Consumption Service Sites and Consumption and Treatment Service Sites." It has been gathered by the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario.

Basically, what they talk about is that we're looking at almost 10 Ontario residents per day who are dying from overdose deaths, with a total of 3,753 deaths last year alone. They talk about communities across Ontario that have been waiting months to learn about final approval of their CTS applications. They would like to reopen the supervised consumption sites that existed in Windsor and my riding of Sudbury. They would like funding to be immediately provided to keep the supervised consumption site open in Timmins.

I would have tabled this earlier but we weren't sitting at the time. There have been many, many signatures. I know this is an important issue across the province. Just bringing the attention to the number of deaths—to think

there's almost 10 Ontario residents per day. I often think about when the Tylenol poisoning happened; eight people had died, and we had stopped everything across North America to address it. We need to address it.

I support this petition. I'll affix my signature and provide it to page Lily for the table.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Christine Hogarth: This petition is about the development in the Ring of Fire and our investing in critical minerals. It's calling on the government to look at Ontario's future and prioritize the Ring of Fire to help create high-quality jobs and to boost Ontario's manufacturing sector.

I'm going to give it to Samika to bring to the table.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Danika Delarosbil, who lives in Blezard Valley in my riding, for this petition. The petition is called "Neurological Movement Disorder Clinic in Sudbury."

Basically, the hundreds of people who have signed the petition would like to have a neurological movement disorder clinic in Sudbury. Those are our problems: diseases like Parkinson's, Huntington's, dystonia, Tourette's and many others.

The city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, so they would very much like to have a neurological movement disorder clinic in Sudbury to serve the people of the northeast, that will be staffed by a neurologist who specializes in the treatment of movement disorders, a physiotherapist and social workers, so that people from northern Ontario do not have to travel anymore to gain access to those services.

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

TUITION

MPP Jamie West: This petition is entitled "Fight the Fees." They were talking about the cost of going to school for people. Tuition has increased since 1980 by 215% for undergraduates, and for grad students, tuition has gone up by 247%. If we want a more informed, educated workforce, they believe we should have lower tuition costs.

Some 15% of our students in Ontario will have an average debt of about \$17,500, which takes almost 10 years to pay back. With the changes the Conservative government made to OSAP and student financial assistance in 2018-19, there's been a \$1-billion cut in assistance to students.

The three asks for this: They are asking for free and accessible education for all; they're asking for grants instead of loans, as well as legislating students' right to organize. I believe they won this fight by pushing back against that change to not be able to organize.

I do support this petition. I think that it's very important to have affordable education for our young people, so they can become better people in society and achieve their dreams. I'll affix my signature and provide it to Jaimie—what a beautiful name—for the table.

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I have a petition here, and it's regarding the manufacturing sector in the province of Ontario. The petition speaks to matters in that sector. For example, it speaks to manufacturing being a critical driver of the economy. It also speaks to various industries across the province—I won't list them, but it talks about those industries. It talks about how important it is to strengthen the manufacturing sector and how important it is for Ontario's manufacturing sector to remain competitive so that it can continue competing in a global economy. Finally, it calls upon the Legislature of the province of Ontario to foster innovation and to promote local supply chains.

I think that those are very important issues—especially the promotion of local supply chains, and I would add other supply chains.

I support this petition. I will affix my signature to it and hand it to Lincoln, who I will ask to deliver the petition to the Clerk at the Clerks' table.

RETIREMENT HOMES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Madame Audette in Val Therese in my riding for this petition. It's called "Oversight, Regulations and Limits on Fees Charged by Retirement Homes."

As you know, Speaker, most of the people who live in retirement homes are seniors on fixed incomes.

The price of a retirement home—and I can talk about my in-laws. It's \$5,400 for a 340-square-foot apartment in a retirement home. Who pays that kind of money? I don't know, but they had no choice but to do it.

Not only is the rent through the roof in most retirement homes, but they are allowed to increase the cost of every one of the services. To be a retirement home, you have to offer at least two services—let's say laundry and meals—but if they deliver your pills, if they help you with transfers in the morning, they are allowed to charge. They are allowed to increase those fees at any time, and they do. All they have to do is give you notice. I think the notice has to be 30 days. Every couple of months, the fees go up. This is wrong.

The retirement homes in Ontario need stronger oversight. There are people who haven't got a choice but to live there. We should, as people elected, make sure that they have some protection, and this is what the people who have signed the petitions are asking for. I fully support them.

I will affix my name to it and ask page Marie-David to bring it to the Clerk.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRENGTHENING CYBER SECURITY AND BUILDING TRUST IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 VISANT À RENFORCER LA CYBERSÉCURITÉ ET LA CONFIANCE DANS LE SECTEUR PUBLIC

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

Bill 194, An Act to enact the Enhancing Digital Security and Trust Act, 2024 and to make amendments to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act respecting privacy protection measures / *Projet de loi 194, Loi édictant la Loi de 2024 visant à renforcer la sécurité et la confiance en matière de numérique et modifiant la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée en ce qui concerne les mesures de protection de la vie privée.*

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. McCarthy has moved second reading of Bill 194, An Act to enact the Enhancing Digital Security and Trust Act, 2024 and to make amendments to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act respecting privacy protection measures.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes clearly have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

1540

SAFER ROADS AND COMMUNITIES ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 POUR PRÉVOIR DES ROUTES ET DES COLLECTIVITÉS PLUS SÛRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 21, 2024, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 197, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act / *Projet de loi 197, Loi modifiant le Code de la route.*

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Sarkaria has moved second reading of Bill 197, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

REDUCING GRIDLOCK, SAVING YOU TIME ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LE DÉSENGORGEMENT DU RÉSEAU ROUTIER ET LE GAIN DE TEMPS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 28, 2024, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 212, An Act to enact two Acts and amend various Acts with respect to highways, broadband-related expropriation and other transportation-related matters / *Projet de loi 212, Loi visant à édicter deux lois et à modifier diverses lois en ce qui concerne les voies publiques, les expropriations liées aux projets d'Internet à haut débit et d'autres questions relatives au transport.*

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I believe the debate was left off with questions still on the clock for the member for Ottawa Centre.

I'll ask for questions.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: In your discourse, you talked a lot about the safety of people in our community.

I want to say that in my municipality of Hamilton, the municipal council works very hard to make sure that people are safe, whether they're biking, whether they're walking, or whether they are doing other forms of transport. They take that very seriously, and they make those decisions with evidence. If there's a tragedy in our community, if there is a very dangerous intersection, they act on that, and they make local solutions and local changes to keep people safe.

The idea that this government is going to override municipalities' ability to plan when it comes to things like bike lanes, and that they won't even take into account the criteria, which is to keep people safe, is really disheartening to me.

What do you say about a government that will override municipalities that know their communities and their constituents best?

Mr. Joel Harden: Well, the sad thing I have to say is that I've seen it before.

I remember my first summer in this place, when the government decided to eliminate half the city council seats in the city of Toronto during an election—

Interjections.

Mr. Joel Harden: —for which they applaud loudly. The irony is, the same constituents who need the services are now just dealing with more staff.

The problem is, they have contempt. Their boss wanted to be mayor of Toronto, and from six years ago to this day, he has been waging a grudge match against the city of Toronto. I don't understand why we've had to be witnesses to this facade.

The fact of the matter is that the member is right; we have talented staff across all the municipalities in this province who make evidence-based decisions, not fantasy-based decisions in the Twilight Zone, where this government is currently living when it comes to road violence and road safety.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to my colleague from Ottawa Centre for those thoughtful remarks on this bill.

I'm going to talk about traffic in Ottawa, which is what we, of course, both know best. We are really fortunate to have lots of paths and lanes for active transportation, like the NCC trails, the multi-use pathways, bike lanes. None of those are contributing to gridlock in the city.

What is contributing to gridlock is public servants going back to work in the office, which is something that the Premier called for with no idea of what the local situation is in Ottawa, and an LRT system that doesn't work because the Liberals and the former Conservative opposition required that all construction projects for transit like this be built by public-private partnerships. Now we have a train that doesn't have round wheels, with doors that don't open in the heat and the cold, and which just periodically stops running for no reason. So people who are commuting to work can't actually use the LRT to do that. Instead, we all sit on the 417 for very long periods of time, wishing that we had alternatives.

What should the Premier be doing if he actually cared about reducing congestion in Ottawa?

Mr. Joel Harden: It's a great question.

I just want to acknowledge that the member has said quite rightly that the Premier pushed for this return-to-work situation without any additional funds in transit for the city of Ottawa. My goodness. How is it that the Premier thinks we get around in our community, in the city of Ottawa? Yes, some folks use cars; other folks use bikes, but transit is a critical thing, and according to our mayor, we are \$120 million short in operating funds. We have buses that need repair that are sitting in garages because we can't get them on the road, because this government keeps shortchanging transit. And then what happens? Gridlock happens. And then what happens? We get whining and complaining over there about bike lanes. It's absolutely ridiculous.

Funny thing; when the Premier did his little presser in front of the 401, I didn't see bike lanes clogging up the 401—did any of you? But I did see a highway overloaded with cars and trucks, and we could be diverting some of those trucks to other opportunities.

Those are real solutions.

These folks live in the Twilight Zone.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question? The member for Flamborough—Glanbrook.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you. It's nice to see you in the chair this afternoon, Madam Speaker.

To the member from Ottawa Centre: Hamilton is allocating \$60 million to build and expand bike lanes in the city of Hamilton. Last year, residents who have one of the

highest tax rates in all of Ontario were forced to endure and absorb an almost 7% increase in their property taxes. This year, the city is looking at an almost 9% increase in property taxes.

Wouldn't you agree that spending \$60 million to expand bike lanes in a city where there is no evidence—in fact, I'm in the city, and my colleagues who work in the city of Hamilton will probably and must agree that there are rarely ever bikes in these bike lanes. Do you not agree with me that this is a waste of taxpayers' dollars, when people are struggling to put food on the table?

Mr. Joel Harden: I've enjoyed talking to the member in the past, but on this, we will disagree.

I've ridden a bike in your great city.

I have also seen, sadly, the tragedy last week of an e-bike user hit and critically injured in your city.

I've also been contacted by the family of a cyclist who was training to compete for Ontario, who was critically injured on a downhill. The reckless motorist who injured that athletic cyclist, someone who could compete for this province, filmed the situation as a revenge video, and the police in your city are investigating.

We have a serious matter of road rage. I don't care if it's a driver, a cyclist, a scooterer—whoever is operating a vehicle with reckless disregard for human safety should be held to account. There is nothing in this bill that does that.

If we build safe infrastructure, people could ride safely. There would be a barrier between the person who just wants to get around their community and the reckless vehicle driver who is doing harm. That's the more important adult debate we have to have in this place.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: We've seen the report on Marketplace on training institutes for truckers and how they bypass the MELT system by charging less and giving licences to people who should not be behind the wheel, to be honest with you. We heard the minister say there are a few bad apples, but I can tell you, in the report, there are more than a few—it's systemic. I talked about this when I debated the bill—about how it affects northern Ontario. But this is not just a northern issue. It's an Ontario issue.

We've got people who are driving 18-wheelers with heavy loads in the back—drivers who shouldn't be driving. What should the ministry do to correct that? And what are they going to do about the institutions that have done that—because do you blame the institutions that gave the licences that could kill people on the road?

Mr. Joel Harden: The member is absolutely right.

I have a good friend of mine in my family who is a truck driver and works really hard. He delivers fuel for the Flying J across the 401. One of Darrell's big beefs is when there are new people on the road who do the entire industry disrespect. This is the problem.

You have been offering the government the advice for a long time; the member from Sudbury has; the member from Nickel Belt has; the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane has—that we have more inspectors on the road, that we clear our roads, that we invest in our roads. That is

a serious debate about road safety. That is the debate we need to have for folks who are travelling in your community, in any community.

But what we are dealing with is a government that has just elected the biggest cabinet in Ontario history. We're talking about a \$100-billion tunnel. We're trapped in the Twilight Zone. It has no connection to the reality of making sure people can get around our communities safely—and that's what we need to go back to. We need to go back there.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I want to let the member know that I share his enthusiasm for the television program he referenced during his speech.

I also want to ask him a serious question, which is, in this tug-of-war between bike lanes and auto traffic—I'm sure that the member also has, like myself, seen various cities around the world that have taken a different approach than North American cities with regard to separating bicycle traffic from automobile traffic. I've seen these much, much better examples in other countries, and I'm sure that he has seen them, as well. I'm going to suggest to the member that, ought not that to be the better approach, rather than merging bicycle traffic with automobile traffic, the way it is being currently done in certain situations in this city? Is it not a much better approach to totally separate bicycle traffic from automobile traffic?

1550

Mr. Joel Harden: It's also good to know there are other Rod Serling fans in this House. He was an absolute genius of television creation.

The fact of the matter is this: People want to get around the community safely, and they want the most direct and prompt route.

We base our decisions about infrastructure on evidence—not sentiment, not feeling.

The member has asked about other comparisons. I'll cite the city of Paris in France. I had the occasion, last summer—we saved up for a while, and we did a family trip to France.

Mayor Hidalgo of France recently announced they crossed a milestone last year, which was set for the Olympics, to encourage active transportation, of bikes, scooters, power chairs, pedestrians. There were more active transportation users in a single year, according to Mayor Hidalgo, than automobile users in the downtown in Paris.

Mayor Valérie Plante is reporting very similar outcomes in her city. People are healthier. People get to where they need—but the member is right; we need to make sure the people are safe.

I believe in the engineers; I believe in the planners who work—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you very much. We're going to move to further debate.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I'll be sharing my time with the energetic member from Scarborough-Guildwood.

This afternoon, I will focus my comments on the active transportation portion of Bill 212, the “not reducing gridlock and not saving lives act,” 2024.

This government never lets the facts get in the way of a good story. I'm going to take some time here to debunk the malarkey that they've been spewing all over this province about safe cycling infrastructure. I'm going to speak on fact versus fiction.

Fiction: 1.2% of Ontarians commute to work by bicycle.

Fact: 22% of Ontarians bike on a daily basis. That's 3.2 million people.

Fact: 68% of Ontarians ride a bike on a monthly basis.

Fact: As of September 12, 2024, people in Toronto have taken 4.7 million bike-share trips. Ridership surpasses previous years and is expected to be more than six million bike-share trips by year's end. That is equivalent to almost 40% of the population of Ontario who are hopping on a bike in a single year.

Fiction: Bike lanes clog up our streets and cause congestion.

Fact: Toronto has 5,600 kilometres of roads, and less than 5% of those roads have bike lanes.

Fact: The 401, the Don Valley Parkway and the Gardiner have no bike lanes, and they are backed up with congestion beyond belief.

Fact: The bike in front of you is the car that is not. Each bike on the street equals one less car, and that actually reduces congestion.

Fiction: Bike lanes cause delays for commuters.

Fact: In a study of nine new and popular bike lanes in Toronto, including Yonge Street, University Avenue and Bloor Street, the average delays of traffic post bike installation was about 30 seconds—30 seconds.

Fact: Some of this can be chalked up to the fact that traffic is getting worse everywhere. It is hard to isolate the impact that bike lanes have because they exist alongside other things, like construction and development, that slow down traffic. After all, many of Toronto's most congested streets do not even have bike lanes on them. Remember, when someone who drives chooses to bike instead, it is one less car on the road.

Fact: 87% of Ontarians are people who bike and drive. It is not us versus them; it is us, period. Stop trying to divide us.

Fiction: Small businesses suffer with bike lanes. I'm going to tell you a story of the Bloor Street bike lanes.

Fact: Monthly customer spending and the number of customers increased at the shops after the bike lanes were installed.

Fact: Road safety for all road users has improved, with fewer fatalities after the bike lanes were installed.

Fact: There is no evidence of increased response times as per chiefs of Toronto fire and Toronto paramedics.

Fact: Brian Burchell, the general manager of Bloor Annex BIA, asks, “Are we building highways or are we building main streets?” Highways do not encourage main street economic activity.

Fiction: Cyclists do not bike in the winter.

Fact: Montreal is cleaning Toronto's clock. They are leading the charge in installing the most bike lanes in North America. Calgary and Edmonton are also investing in safe cycling infrastructure. They are winter cities.

Fact: We are in a climate emergency, and winters are getting warmer. We should get more people onto their bikes and out of their cars to help slow emissions.

Fiction: You are stuck in traffic.

Fact: You are traffic.

Now I'm going to speak about our number one duty here, as public servants: to serve the public and keep Ontarians safe. We need to provide housing, fund education, build transit, ensure access to health care, and keep Ontarians safe overall. What we don't need to do is overstep into municipal governance.

This bill is smoke and mirrors, to distract from the real issues at hand. Here we are, debating bike lanes, while 2.5 million Ontarians do not have a family doctor. We have overcrowded classrooms that are in a state of disrepair. We have young families and people across the province who cannot afford a place to live. The government is failing in many of these areas and will definitely not improve congestion with this bill.

I'm going to tell you how deeply personal this piece of legislation is to me and many other people.

In August 2014, I was on my bike, biking down to the beach, to the jazz fest. I was biking down Woodbine Avenue, and I stopped at the red light at Gerrard and Woodbine. When it was green, I crossed. There was no one in front of me, no one beside me. I was biking at the side, as I always do, because there were no bike lanes. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a car getting closer and closer to me, and next thing you know, I saw the metal of the car coming into my handlebar. I got knocked off my bike, onto the road. As I was going down, I wasn't sure if I would ever get back up. I didn't know what the outcome would be. I was scared for my life. Someone called the ambulance, and I went to the hospital, where my worried husband and my frantic and petrified small children came to find me. Luckily, I was okay. In the blink of an eye, it can happen. I was very, very lucky. As a Toronto city councillor, I darn well made sure that road was safe for everyone else after me, and I put bike lanes in on Woodbine Avenue to keep everyone safe. I'm very proud of that.

Recently, we've heard from a family with a different outcome. Alex Amaro, a beautiful 23-year-old young woman, did not survive her cycling collision in 2020 on Dufferin Avenue. She died on a street with no safe cycling infrastructure while she was simply trying to get home. Alex's parents, George and Karen Amaro, told the story of their daughter's tragedy on CBC recently and wrote the Premier a letter entitled "Bike Lanes Could Have Saved Our Daughter." Before any of you vote on Bill 212, I implore you to listen to that interview and hear Alex's story. Her father, George, made a poignant and pleading comment when he said, "We definitely want motorists to get home safely, but we also want everyone to get home safely to their loved ones."

1600

Why is this government pitting people against each other? Why is the life of a person who drives more important than a person who bikes? Why does this horrendous bill prioritize your life over mine? What you're saying to me with this bill is that you value people who drive but you don't value people who take another mode of transportation and you don't want them and me to get home safely. You do not care about the 30% of people in your community who do not have access to a vehicle, who cannot afford a car or who have chosen not to get their driver's licence or cannot obtain one. You do not want people who choose other modes of transportation to get home safely to their loved ones.

Even though, in 2017, the Premier said this, "We have to make sure there is never a death in the city. One death is way too many when it comes to bicycle riders. We have to make sure they're safe. I felt so much safer when they [bike lanes] were separated." That's Premier Ford, who was a councillor at the time, in 2017.

Well, Mr. Premier, you and the government need to put an end to this complete and utter balderdash by cancelling Bill 212 and protecting the lives of all Ontarians right here, right now.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Thank you to the member from Beaches—East York.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill 212, Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act. Unfortunately, unlike what the name states, this bill does not reduce gridlock or save Ontarians any real time.

The congestion on our roads is at an all-time high and is only getting worse and worse. The removal of bike lanes is not a solution and will never be a solution to ease gridlock in our city. One bicycle on the road is one less car on the road, and that is how you tackle congestion.

The bike lanes are heavily utilized in Toronto and this government is already planning to remove three of those bike lanes located at Bloor, Yonge and University. Each of these bike lanes sees over thousands of riders each day. Madam Speaker, on Bloor Street, there are 5,000 daily bikers and the removal of this lane would mean 5,000 more cars back on the roads. Is that what we really want for the environment?

Ripping out existing bike lanes is not only going to increase congestion, but it is also a waste of taxpayers' money, and this money could be put towards—guess what?—expanding the public transportation system and increasing bike lanes across the province, which would work towards resolving gridlock. This government's obsession with bike lanes shows just how out of touch they are with the people of Ontario.

This bill claims to be the solution to gridlock, but it just seems to be the start of another broken promise to the people of Ontario. We are in a transportation crisis right now, and if this government is serious about congestion relief, they should be expediting the public transit projects that they promised Ontarians in 2018.

There are countless projects that have yet to be completed. Let me list some of these projects: Eglinton LRT; Finch West LRT; Waterfront LRT; Hamilton LRT; Hurontario LRT; London GO; two-way, all-day Niagara GO and Milton GO; and even highway projects like four-laning Highway 69, Highway 49 upgrades and truck bypass and the expansion of Highway 7 in Kitchener–Waterloo. Why are we concentrating on ripping up bike lanes?

Over the last six years, the economic loss due to gridlock in the GTA has doubled as we are losing almost \$11 billion of economic activities in the GTA every year. No one knows when the Eglinton Crosstown LRT or the Finch West LRT will be open. These are real solutions to decreasing gridlock in our province. Ontario needs real solutions to gridlock, not decades of fairy tales like building a tunnel under the 401. This government has done nothing in the last six years to make our commute better; it has only gotten worse.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to go to questions.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: It's very interesting. The two members are both from the Toronto area: Beaches–East York and Scarborough.

To the member from Beaches–East York, you commented and you mentioned a study from the Annex BIA. I know you're a former councillor. I was wondering if you know how many BIAs there are in Toronto. Do you believe that all areas of Toronto are identical and the same? Just your thoughts.

And my other question is, have you discussed your comments with the executive director, John Kiru, who is the chair of the BIAs for the entire city of Toronto?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Of course I know about BIAs; I was with you at city hall.

Toronto is a very unique city. It's a city of neighbourhoods, and absolutely the neighbourhoods are very different. The Beach, with swimmable beaches, is quite different from my friend in Scarborough and your riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

But do you know what? Shops and businesses have said, and the facts are there, that businesses thrive when it's a walkable, livable, urban—you build urban livability, basically, in your area. And do you know what? I'm hearing from my residents, and I am sure you're hearing from yours. I'm hearing from a man named Richard who told me that he and his wife purchased bikes. She's 65, he's 68, and their life is completely different. They're healthier. They're getting around the city now in physically separated bike lanes, and they're so thankful.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: A letter recently put out by 59 scientists states that emissions from transportation are the largest and fastest-growing source of greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario. We are set to not meet our 1.5-degree targets, leading us to an unlivable planet. I wonder if the member could speak to how we need to rethink how much gas we burn and how much choice we give, so

people have the choice not to burn gas and not to be part of this.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much for that question. It's interesting that you would say that, because we know emissions are not healthy for us. They're not healthy for the planet; they're not healthy for ourselves. There's actually a letter signed by 100 ER doctors, begging for bike lanes to remain in existence and talking about the health benefits of them, not only for humans but also for the planet.

We are trying to reduce congestion. We're trying to reduce greenhouse gases. Putting in safe cycling infrastructure is an easy way to do that, cheap and cheerful. But if you rip it out, you're going to waste a lot of money doing that—

Ms. Donna Skelly: Cheap?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Well, it's cheaper than a billion-dollar boozedoggle, that's for sure. And do you know what? I don't put a price tag on someone's life, actually. So safe cycling infrastructure is good for everyone.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to the member from Beaches–East York. Her story about being hit by a car was startling. I experienced something as a teen, where I was hit by a car and cracked a rib, so I know what that can be like.

Something else she said was that a lot of people really want to get a family doctor, and some people feel like this is a distraction from the family doctor. Connected to bike lanes, I think about my city. At one point, we were known for obesity and heart disease because of the lack of mobility. In fact, we have some of the best heart doctors in the world because of that. But with the expansion of bike lanes and walking paths, that number of people with heart disease has really come down.

1610

Being from northern Ontario and seeing in southern Ontario people using bike lanes and travelling with their children, I see the benefit of people getting around. You said, at one point, each bike on the street is one less car.

We need to find ways for people to travel that are safe, in a car or on a bike or otherwise. Can you please expand on how important it is that we have a variety of forms of travel and not just an ideal?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Well, thank you for saying that.

This is all a distraction from the real point, the scary fact that 2.5 million Ontarians do not have a family doctor. And I'm so glad you brought it up because cycling actually leads to a healthier lifestyle and a healthier planet.

There's a letter here—I'm sure all of you have received this; I'm sure you've read it, verbatim—from the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. They're saying that bike lanes reduce deaths from chronic diseases by increasing levels of physical activity, and a recent long-term study conducted in the UK found that cyclists who commute to work are 41% less likely to die at an early age,

52% are less likely to die of cardiovascular disease, and 40% are less likely to die from cancer.

There is no drug in the world that can deliver that kind of health benefit. It's the way to go: safe cycling for everyone, safe bike lanes.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you to the members again, and to the member who just asked the question, I'm fascinated to find out how many people in Sudbury cycle in late January to work.

But to the member from Beaches–East York, I just want to let you know there are 84 BIAs in the city of Toronto. That means 84 unique communities with different needs.

I've also read the bill and read the speaking points. Nowhere in the bill does it say that we are removing all bike lanes.

This is my concern, when I'm getting these death threats to my house. Like a man, Robert, just emailed me and said, "You are a murderer," or the gentleman who said he's going to drive by my house and throw blood on my doors because I have blood on my hands. This is the problem when we misspeak when it comes to bike lanes or other types of policies. I don't mean to be negative in here, but I don't like the fact that people are sending me these types of death threats to my house, or stopping by my house to take pictures—these cyclists—because I want bike lanes on Bloor Street removed.

So can the member opposite tell me where she found in the bill that it says we're removing all bike lanes?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I don't know where you heard me say about removing all bike lanes, because I sure as heck hope that you're not thinking of that. I was mentioning certain streets where the bike lanes, especially, have done spectacular benefits.

I'm not sure what you're hearing from your residents, but we know for a fact that we need to build safe infrastructure for everyone. We have sidewalks for a reason. We're not ripping out the sidewalks. Just because I don't see anyone on that sidewalk or I don't see anyone on that road, I'm not ripping them out. We have sidewalks so people can walk safely to get to and from where they're going. We put in cycling infrastructure as well.

And we know, without physically separated bike lanes, more people will die. They absolutely will die. I got knocked off my bike on a road without a bike lane. Alex Amaro died in vain on a road without a bike lane. So we need to put it in. It is 5% of the streets—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. Next question.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: We're certainly living through tough times. I don't think anyone has ever had to wait so long in an emergency room for a diagnostic test. There is a record number of Ontarians without family doctors. The list goes on and on and on.

And it's not easy for the government, of course, to have to wear all of this, because they'll blame anyone and never take responsibility on any of it. So now we've got a \$100-billion tunnel. We've got constant fights being picked with

those living in urban sectors who have a progressive mindset on the future.

So my question to you is, how much do you believe about what they are doing is a cynical distraction to try to tell people not to focus on the fact that their lives are way worse now than six years ago, just focus on something else? Do you think there's any of that in any of the moves that they're doing here, or do you think this is something else?

MPP Andrea Hazell: Thank you for that question.

I totally agree with the member. A lot of these policies that are coming out, especially with this Bill 212—absolutely, it's a distraction. We know fully that this is not going to get rid of gridlock; it's not going to get rid of congestion. It is just to distract us, like the announcement of building a tunnel on the 401, which we know is not going to get built—it's over \$100 billion.

We're also looking at the \$1-billion spend—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. There's no more time.

We're going to move to further debate.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Order.

We're going to continue debate with the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I'm really thrilled to join in on this debate.

A piece of this legislation—the entire legislation is certainly not about bike lanes, but the Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act, 2024, is about some common sense and helping us get home to our families quicker.

On top of the \$70 billion we're spending on transit for the Ontario Line—I'm a Toronto member, so I understand it's a little different. I've lived in northern Ontario. I've lived in Thunder Bay, I've lived in Sault Ste. Marie and I've lived in Sudbury, so I know where it is where you drive all the time. I've lived downtown; I've lived in the Annex, so I actually understand the difference between the people who live in the Annex versus the people who live in a suburb of Toronto like Etobicoke.

It's an interesting debate, but I'm actually sad a little bit—I kind of mentioned it in my last question—that this has become a debate of cyclists versus drivers, and that certainly shouldn't be the case.

I am a driver in the city of Toronto. I appreciate—and we all have the choice, if we want to take transit, if we want to take a bike, if we want to take a car to work. That is our choice, and no one has that right—they can't take that choice away from us. So if I want to drive, I should be able to drive. I pay for gas, and that money goes into the coffers. And 200 million of tax dollars goes into the city of Toronto to help pay for our transit system.

Along Bloor Street, in my riding—that goes from one end to the other—we have a subway line, the Bloor-Danforth Line. We also have a bike lane. I sent out a message to people in my riding once we talked about removing bike lanes, and I got over 600 emails within a couple of hours from people saying they want these bike

lanes removed—and what we're talking about is being removed in my community of Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

As the member opposite from Beaches–East York said, all neighbourhoods in Toronto are different, so what works in one person's area may not work in another—and that's what part of a community is all about. So our community voices must be heard. I am speaking on behalf of the residents of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, which is what I was elected to do.

Over the summer, I had the opportunity to knock on doors in my community, but I also had the opportunity to go on a business tour, and one of those business tours was along Bloor Street. It was a disaster. You had CaféTO, you had bike lanes—they were installing them, taking them out, moving them aside. Cathy of Beaulieu Vision Care said, "Christine, come to the front of my window." So I walked to the front of her window—I was there with the BIA, which is called the Kingsway BIA, for those who don't know Etobicoke. It's very different from the other Bloor Street BIAs, because they all have different names. Again, I'll mention that there are 84 BIAs in Toronto.

1620

Mine, the Kingsway BIA, we walked up and down the street and it looked like a construction zone. This is a beautiful area of my community. This is one of my main streets of my community. It's not working. It's not working for the people of Etobicoke–Lakeshore. We have asked for a rebuild or redesign of this bike lane. Councillors will have none of it.

I have cyclists calling me, who came to see me at our pumpkin event on the weekend, saying to me, "We're cyclists. We love cycling." Hey, if you want to cycle, cycle. They said, "I won't cycle on Bloor Street because it's dangerous." That's the piece that we seem to be forgetting. We're not talking about removing bike lanes where they are working in the community; we're talking about removing potential problem areas in the future.

If I had my way, I would remove the Bloor Street bike lane immediately and maybe add University on that, because why would you have a bike lane when there are hospitals, ambulances? That's mind-boggling, but that's a discussion for another day. I'd like to concentrate on my riding because that's important to the people who elected me.

Every single one of our BIA members, our stores, are losing money. Now, people quote this Annex report—and I understand the Annex. If anybody knows Toronto, the Annex is not too far from this building here. I lived there. I went to the Madison. I'm sure people remember that. I was a young, 20-something living in the Annex. Did I have a car? I didn't even own a car then, because you didn't need one; you could walk everywhere. So, people are accepting of bike lanes. It works for that community because that is a biking community, a walking community.

But when you move to the suburbs of Toronto, like Etobicoke, people drive. People ask me, "How the heck am I going to get my kids and their hockey bags on a bike to the hockey arena?" It's not feasible.

We have to look and work with the communities where these bike lanes are. Unfortunately, my councillor doesn't want to listen to the community. It's not just the businesses; it is the people in the neighbourhood. I'd actually like to read a couple of quotes from some people in my riding. This one is from Mrs. Picard. I won't give her address, but it says:

"I personally witnessed, last weekend, an ambulance, with its lights and sirens going, at a complete halt, then inching through traffic, completely blocked by the traffic on Bloor Street. It was horrifying to watch. Prior to the installation of the bike lanes this wouldn't have happened. People's lives are at risk because of these lanes." That's a constituent.

Here's another one, from Patricia: "Getting out of a passenger seat of a parked vehicle along Bloor Street means exiting onto the bicycle lane instead of a sidewalk, and for elderly people or people getting children out of their car seats that can take a while. And finally, it is not just bicycles using those lanes, but also motorized vehicles travelling at high speeds. "I wish the government every success on implementing the new legislation and hopefully even undoing what the city has done to Bloor Street."

Here's a quote from one of my businesses along Bloor. As I said, I have talked to every single business owner on that street. It says: "I'm an owner of Carriage Trade, located on Bloor Street West. I would like to see the bike lanes removed as soon as possible. It has been a deterrent for a number of our clients to come in and visit our shop. The traffic congestion has become a problem. This has directly affected our business." This is a business owner, folks.

She continues, "I also live in the Kingsway, and have seen an alarming increase of vehicles going through residential homes, trying to avoid Bloor Street. With kids walking to and from school, this is very dangerous. I have also witnessed near-fatal accidents of bikers almost getting hit, with cars parked on the street blocking drivers' views and trying to make a turn, it is easy to miss seeing a biker speeding by on the bike lanes."

I have to agree with this woman, because I have had that same problem myself. Sadly enough, when I was on my tour of Bloor Street businesses, I actually saw a cyclist get hit. Now, no one was hurt. But if you are ever—well, don't even go that route. But if you're trying to turn out, just the way that it is designed, it is so hard for a car to see, and then the bikers who whiz around—and it is impossible. I witnessed this.

You can tell me all the data you want and you can tell me what the Annex BIA says, but that's not what the people in my community are saying. If you look at the list of BIAs that have "Bloor" in their name—Toronto is a big city. We all know that. Out of the 84, we have the Bloor Annex BIA, Bloor by the Park BIA, Bloor West Village BIA, Bloor-Yorkville BIA, Bloorcourt Village BIA, Bloorville BIA. So for those who think that the Bloor BIA is representative of the Kingsway BIA, you are incorrect. The Kingsway BIA is 100% opposed to these

bike lanes and wants them removed as soon as possible so their businesses can get back to business.

Now, a little bit more about my community and what I've been hearing. Earlier this summer, I also had the opportunity to put out a survey which was posted in our local paper down on the Lakeshore, asking people their opinions on the bike lane in my area of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, that Bloor Street piece. We received hundreds and hundreds of emails, people responding to the survey, and 60% of my residents—and these are the residents from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, because it is our community that is affected—said, “Please get rid of these bike lanes for safety reasons. It’s taking longer to get to work. It’s taking longer to get home. It is unsafe.” And this is partially due to the design.

Now, we were at a town hall not too long ago, where I was circled by cyclists. I want to thank 22 Division for being there. They're always out there looking out for us. I asked each one of them where they came from. Well, they all come from High Park. They don't even live in the riding—and I appreciate everyone's point of view, but this is a local issue, the Bloor Street bike lane that we want removed. I appreciate people coming in, but the people in my riding do not want these bike lanes.

I personally, as a driver, like bike lanes. I like when I drive to work—sometimes I take different routes. This morning, I took the Gardiner, but the last couple of days I've been coming along College or Dundas, and when you're driving to and fro, that hour drive for 12 kilometres—and I guess, if you lived in northern Ontario, if you ever said it ever took you an hour to drive 12 kilometres, they'd think you're crazy, but it does. It takes about an hour and sometimes about an hour and a half to get home. There are bike lanes on the road, and I do appreciate that they have their own path, but they have to be careful where you put these bike lanes. They need to be on the right roads.

Over the weekend, I was talking to some parents. They like to cycle, and they want to make sure that their kids have a safe place to cycle, and I totally agree. I grew up in small-town northern Ontario, Thunder Bay, and my mother gave us a square where we were allowed to bike in or cycle in, but we weren't allowed to go on the busy roads. That's just common sense. I'm not sure why you would allow your child to cycle on a busy road that cars are going fast on, but that's a choice.

Right off Bloor, if you know the community, we have the Kingsway and a lovely area. They don't have sidewalks. If you ask police about speeding in local roads, where do people usually go? Well, if they can't get home and it's congested, they will sneak into the local roads to get home, and usually, they drive a little faster, sometimes. Well, in my opinion, if I'm walking my dog or my kids are walking, I'd rather a cyclist be on that street than a car.

So we are now taking cars off Bloor, and they're going into the local roads so the cyclists, which there are none, according to the stats that the BIA has put forward in the area—very, very few; certainly not 22%. It's a very low number. For the two or three cyclists that come through

our community during the day, our cars are now heading off into our local roads, where there are no sidewalks, so it's a safety factor.

When we talk about moving bike lanes and having bike lanes on the proper roads, it is safety for everybody—safety for pedestrians, safety for cyclists, safety for drivers. As I mentioned, I like bike lanes. I like to have a separate path. We have beautiful, beautiful trails in Toronto that you can take north to south in my riding, east to west in my riding—beautiful trails. Why do you need to cycle along Bloor? There are other roads. People say, “Which roads?” Well, one lady said, “Put them on my road because I don't want them on Bloor.” She lived on Prince Edward. She's just scared. She's scared to actually go and drive or walk on Bloor Street because of the cyclists.

Unfortunately, it's not all. They're not all bad actors, but many cyclists don't obey rules of the road. I've heard this from our police officers. I witnessed it. Even yesterday, driving home, when I was trying to turn, a cyclist came in and hit my side door, and then he started screaming at me because I was trying to turn. Well, I'm trying to turn because I can't see when they come up around the corner. It's just really hard and frustrating as a driver.

1630

We all have to live in this community. We all have to live in this province. We really need to look out for one another, but not every road is a road for a cyclist. And if you are going to cycle on a busy road, you really need to watch and obey the rules. That is really important.

I want to actually read a couple other quotes that I have from some of my residents, people in Etobicoke–Lakeshore who are concerned about cycling and cycle paths. Did I say “psychopaths”? I almost did, eh? Maybe.

This one is from Therese, who lives in Humbervale, and she said: “I would like to preface by saying that I am a cyclist and I understand that cycling is an important mode of transportation for many”—just similar to what the member from Beaches–East York said.

“Safety is of concern to me. I've witnessed fire trucks and ambulances blocked with nowhere to pass due to the configuration of the street.

“I'm also concerned about cyclists and of hitting one, especially when I'm making a right-hand turn,” similar to my experience I had yesterday. In addition, bike lanes “are used by motorized scooters and e-bikes. I have witnessed their riders zip” in and out of traffic “and place themselves at grave risk.

“Parking on the street is treacherous, drivers disembark into a traffic lane. Clearly this is more dangerous for the elderly, disabled and children and parents trying to get toddlers and babies out of a vehicle.

“My neighbourhood has seen an increase in the volume of vehicles, some travelling at excessive speeds, zipping through to avoid Bloor Street. There are no sidewalks in my neighbourhood, which makes it dangerous especially for the elderly, disabled and for children. I would be remiss if I didn't point out that there is a school in Sunnylea. Residents of streets to the north of Bloor have witnessed the same trend.”

This is a constituent who is concerned about safety, not just for herself, but for her community, and that's what we are. We are a community in Etobicoke. If this one legislation will help the people in my riding to feel safer on their roads, safer in their homes, safer walking around their neighbourhoods, safer getting to work, it's safer for all, and I would certainly endorse this legislation, as I do.

I'm going to read a little bit more because I have lots of quotes. I won't read any more mean tweets because those ones kind of bring us all down.

How did I miss that one? Sorry about that. This one is from Linda: "I don't know how you can disregard and discount the lost productivity of so many people losing upwards of 15 minutes a day, the stress of driving through increased traffic, the pollution of idling cars and the character of residents in the neighbourhood. We play hockey—try carrying a hockey bag to an arena halfway across town several times a week—try shopping locally by bike for a family."

These are just common issues from people in Etobicoke. We are a suburb of Toronto. We drive. We go to the grocery store, we bring our car and we fill up our car with groceries. We take our kids to baseball and to soccer. We drive our cars. We just want our streets to remain safe.

Just to touch a bit more on our businesses along Bloor—I have to give a shout-out to our King Street BIA. They have been amazing and supportive. They brought this issue to our attention, and it's sad that our businesses are actually losing money.

I want to give a shout-out to our minister of small business, who has been working so hard to help our businesses. She came to my riding on Small Business Week to meet one of our local businesses. She's there, and guess what they asked about? Bike lanes. Any time you go anywhere in Etobicoke, they will tell you that's their issue. Over the summer, I found it fascinating when I knocked on doors that the number one issue in my riding was bike lanes. It didn't matter where you knocked. It was bike lanes: "Remove them." Some people said, "We're moving out of this community. We can't handle the bike lanes. We can't handle the congestion on our local streets. We can't handle the congestion in our neighbourhoods. We don't want to go shopping."

A senior would say, "I used to pull into one of the places and grab some flowers." She says, "I can't park my car. I can't get my cane out because there's a bike lane and there's these little"—I don't know what they're called, the cement things that we all kind of try not to hit when we're parking our cars. People trip over those, so you have to just be careful.

I guess my plea to the city of Toronto is, when you are installing these bike lanes around the community, think about the community you're installing them in. Ask the community their point of view. If at the consultation, as I was told by CBC, there were only 23 people from that entire community who showed up, maybe you need to consult again—because that's how many people showed up to the consultation where the councillor said, "We're going to install these bike lanes." Twenty-three people

made the decision for the community of Etobicoke–Lakeshore that we're going to have this bike lane on Bloor Street.

Again, this government is not opposed to bike lanes. Please tell the cyclists we are not opposed. We want them to be safe; we really do. We want everyone to be safe. We are part of community. This bike lane is not working for my community. There are certain bike lanes in other communities that may not work, but it's not for me to comment on. That's for the local people to comment on.

Let's make our communities work. Let's pass this bill. Let's remove the bike lane, even though that's not in here. I know that's not in the legislation, but I'm asking, please remove the bike lane on Bloor Street for my community members. I just thank you for allowing me to have the time today to share the thoughts and the comments from the people of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, the people who elected me to be here.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's always a little bit puzzling when we hear people from Toronto saying, "Well, if you don't have a car, you cannot go play hockey." I would refer you to Mitch Marner, a forward with the Toronto Maple Leafs who actually takes the subway to go play at the Scotiabank Arena. You don't need to have a car to play hockey if you live in Toronto.

The bill is called Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act. Have you given any thought whatsoever to the idea that was put forward by the NDP to make sure that commercial truck traffic would be allowed to take the 407? I have the pleasure of driving down to Toronto every Sunday night—my driver is right there to my right—and driving back to Sudbury every Thursday night. I would love for all of this truck traffic on the 401 to be on the 407. Do you figure that would help with gridlock?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you for the question. I know Sudbury. I lived there for a while, and I did that commute for a while, because I got a job in Toronto and I was still living in Sudbury, so I had to do that commute every weekend—not an easy one, but it's getting better because I know that those roads are getting much better and much safer to drive now that the twinning is happening along the road.

We are building the 413 and the Bradford Bypass. This government is about building. We are building new infrastructure to make sure we get people from A to B. Think about Brantford: How many seats did we win there? How many did the NDP win there? I'm not sure. But we certainly have done well to make sure that the people who need to get to and from work by building the 413—we're going to do that and get it done.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions? I recognize the member for Niagara West. I'm sorry. I recognize the associate minister for electricity—electrification and—

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I'll roll with it. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I want to thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for her participation, and I have to say that the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore has always been a fierce and strong advocate for her community. You can tell the passion in her voice when she speaks about this issue. This is clearly something you've heard a lot about from your constituents.

I want to ask if the constituents you speak with about this project—you know, give me a sense of where they stand on this issue. We hear from the members of the opposition who make it sound like the streets of Toronto are absolutely jam-packed full of bikers who absolutely would be completely opposed to any sort of changes that moved these bike lanes into secondary streets, and we hear the similar tone of voice from the members of the Liberal Party. What's the polling looking like when you're speaking with people in your riding—not the formal polling but just the conversations that you're having? Do they support this measure? Would you say that there's a huge amount of opposition to it? I know in my riding I've heard only support, and I'm curious what it looks like in Etobicoke?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you to the member for the question—and I just actually have to comment. We talked about Mitch Marnier. Interestingly enough, Mitch Marnier's best friend where he hangs out and goes for cocktails is the number one person opposed to bike lanes and is actually selling T-shirts that—there may be a nasty word on it. His hockey jersey and stick are in that establishment, which is called the Old Sod. I'll give Tyler a little shout-out at the Old Sod. So, yes—opposed to bike lanes, very much so.

1640

My residents are very opposed to this—I'm not saying all of them are. Everywhere we go, there are always people on both sides. That's how it is. For three days, I did a quick little poll, and I had a little over 600 people who wanted the bike lanes on Bloor Street immediately removed; and then I had about 91 who wanted them to stay, but they were really confused, because they talked about the BIA Annex report, and they thought businesses were fine.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I think where I'm concerned is that it just becomes such a push and pull when we're talking about road safety, on a broader issue. Everybody wants road safety, whether you're riding a bike or whether you're driving a car, and to have this so contentious—and the member talked about getting safety threats or being threatened. That's concerning.

When we have these debates, we should have a fulsome debate; we should have information backing up why government created legislation and policy.

In this legislation, you create a section, schedule 4, dedicated to the bike lane issue. You mentioned some reports, and you did some consultations—but quite frankly, I don't know if governments should be consulting before the legislation comes to the House, because oftentimes we hear last-minute that this is being presented. So would the government maybe step back and allow this

consultation to happen before they start implementing schedule 4, as it's so contentious?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I want the bike lanes removed today. The legislation can pass or not; these bike lanes need to be moved from my community. They're not working. They're not safe. Nobody wants them. The councillor is saying she wants to keep these bike lanes. We do not want them in Etobicoke–Lakeshore. We don't want them in Etobicoke Centre either. They are not working. A very small group of people want these bike lanes. So that is not in this legislation—when I'm saying that I want these bike lanes removed.

What the legislation is saying is that they will have to have consultations through the government if they want to remove a lane of traffic for these bike lanes to go on. Nobody is saying we don't want bike lanes; we just need to consult if you're removing a lane of traffic. So we have to look at roads, and if they're removing a lane, let's talk about it; let's see if it's going to work for that community.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Madam Speaker, I'm very glad that the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore brought up that last point, because it was something that I was actually observing as a visitor to this city.

The point that I think I just heard her say was that the bike lanes had not been built—I will use my words now—but they had actually stolen an automotive lane and converted it into a bike lane. That is something that I've actually observed as a visitor to this city—that they were actually not building bike lanes, but that they were actually taking existing automotive lanes and then converting them into bike lanes. I'm not an engineer, but I think anybody actually driving on a four-lane road that then gets converted into a two-lane road would understand that that's going to bottleneck traffic. So I would like to ask the member: Is that what has occurred? I'm just a visitor to this city. Please let me know.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: To the member from Essex: You're always welcome in the city of Toronto—our big, beautiful city that we have.

That is exactly the problem. We are removing a lane of traffic for a bicycle lane. We've done that in certain places and it has worked, but we have done it in places where it doesn't work. Cyclists say it doesn't work. Pedestrians say it doesn't work. Store owners say it doesn't work. Seniors say it doesn't work. People with disabilities say it's not working. So you have to make sure we have the right way of building a bike lane properly. But if you are removing a lane, where does that traffic go? They go in the local roads. So I would prefer cyclists go on the slower roads, the local roads, versus our arterial roads.

I'm sure any parent would much rather see their children with a cyclist behind them than a child with a speeding car behind them.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Final question.

MPP Jamie West: There was a time when the Conservative government was known for small-government fiscal responsibility.

Fast-forward to today: We have the largest cabinet size and the most expensive cabinet size in Ontario's history.

And then, as much as you talk about bike lanes, there's a lot in this bill about Highway 413 and the weakened safeguards for it—alternative environmental impact; no public consultation; no requirement to publish the estimated costs; no requirement to study the impact on traffic and trip times to see if it makes sense; no requirement to evaluate any alternatives to this; no requirement for review with a subject matter expert.

Why would a party known for fiscal responsibility decide, "We don't need to look at costs. We don't need to review how ethical or how responsible this is to do. We don't need to review with experts"? It just doesn't make any sense to me. I feel like the bike lanes are a smoke-screen to hide all of this.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I actually like that question, and it allows me to correct—when I said "Brantford," I meant to say "Brampton" earlier. We won every seat in Brampton.

Mr. Will Bouma: And Brantford.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: And Brantford too—one special guy for sure.

So it allows me to correct my record on the city's name. The words had stuck—we had Toronto in our head.

We were talking about the 413. We want to get people moving. We want to get people moving from A to B, so that is why we are building highways that we will continue to build, because this Premier believes people deserve to get home. This country, this province is exploding with people. People drive. People need to get from A to B, and you can't always take transit. If you could take transit, great—but it's kind of hard to take it to Brantford.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: As always, it's a pleasure to rise in this House to talk about important bills.

This bill is about traffic. It's about making sure that people across Ontario can move safely. I am disheartened to see that this bill doesn't centre on people who use active transport, like our kids walking to school, like people in bike lanes, like pedestrians. It's not grounded in that.

This is not a bill that's aimed to protect the citizens of Ontario, and that is really disheartening, because that is your job. That is the job of the government—to make sure that Ontarians are safe and remain safe, especially when it comes to our children. You have before us a bill that makes no attempt—it doesn't even put in there the criteria of safety when it comes to the decisions that you are making with transportation in our province, and that is really quite shameful.

Before I get into the meat of this debate, I want to talk about how, in my riding, we've had many, many tragedies, as have all people across Ontario, and these tragedies are increasing across all of our ridings and in our communities.

In Hamilton, in just a short little while—I want to talk about the children we have lost unnecessarily. There was a young boy named Jude Strickland who was 11 years old. He was walking home from school—as we all do. He wasn't in a bike lane. He was walking home from school, and he was struck and killed in his own neighbourhood.

There was a 15-year-old boy named Yaqoub Saeed—this is just last year—who was killed, coming home from school, in a hit and run.

There was a little eight-year-old girl who was on her way to her school pageant—eight years old, ready to go to her school pageant, and she was killed by a hit-and-run driver.

These stories need to be reflected in this bill, and they are not. These tragedies are not influencing the bill that you have before us, and that is a huge shame. I would just say that if ever you had a government that took those stories into account, you would have better legislation for the people of Ontario—legislation that's actually serving to benefit average Ontarians; not to benefit, as this government does, your insiders, your connected developers, the people you work for, who aren't the people of the province of Ontario.

The bill is entitled Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time—so, absolutely, I'm going to say that after six years, people are definitely feeling stuck, but the gridlock that they're most concerned about is the gridlock that they see when they try to access health care. People are stuck in emergency rooms. They're stuck on stretchers, waiting in emergency room hallways. They're stuck in emerg because they can't access a doctor—

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: Point of order.

1650

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Excuse me, to the member.

Do we have a point of order? The member for Niagara West.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I appreciate the passion that the member opposite is bringing to health care, and when we have the opportunity to debate legislation on health care, I'm very confident that she will raise again that passion.

Right now, of course, the legislation has to do with the matter at hand—this legislation being around traffic; specifically, bike lanes, and some other issues that she might want to talk about.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I'll go back to the member, and I'm sure you're going to get back to the focus of the bill.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Certainly—and the title of this bill is "reducing gridlock." I'm sure I struck a nerve with the member from Niagara West, because the kind of gridlock that your constituents are facing is the kind that I'm talking about when it comes to health care.

If this bill was truly, as you would like to suggest, about transit—if that was really true, then do you know what you would do? You would have a timeline for the completion of the Eglinton LRT. There's no end in sight for the Eglinton LRT.

If this bill, as the member from Niagara West wants me to refer to, was truly, truly about traffic, you would take suggestions that came from all kinds of community members, such as removing the commercial traffic off the 401 and onto the 407.

I think it needs to be said that there are solutions that are before us that don't cost hundreds of billions of dollars, but they're not in this bill. This bill is a boondoggle of suggestions for transit that, in some ways, are mega-projects and fantasies that will never come to fruition under this government's watch.

While you would like to focus on asphalt, trucks and cars, I'm sorry that you do not want to hear about the people who are stuck with no housing, who are stuck in tents because they cannot find adequate housing, who are stuck paying the bills for this Premier's schemes and scandals. Gridlock and stuck in traffic? People in Ontario are going to be stuck with this bill for years and years to come. That's where they're going to be stuck, and that is definitely a core part of this bill—spending the taxpayers' money without any accountability and without any cost whatsoever.

People are tired of this. People are tired of seeing the Premier get up and just pull stuff out of the air. They're tired of people saying, "The Premier has this new hare-brained scheme he thought about: a tunnel under the 401 that is in no way anywhere in transportation master planning." A \$100-billion tunnel under the 401? People are going to be stuck paying the tax bill for that when they would really like to see their taxes go to making sure that their children can get the cancer treatment that they deserve when they have been put on hold time and time again. They would like to see the money that you are going to be spending on this mega-highway, this megaproject, this fantasy project—they would like to see that money spent on things right now that they're suffering from. Some 2.5 million people do not have a doctor. Put that money that you're spending here into health care. That's what people want to see, and that's a priority.

You have failed to deliver on the basic needs of the people of the province of Ontario, and this bill is further evidence that you don't get it—you don't get what people need; you don't get what people are struggling with. You're just headlong bent on doing whatever comes to the Premier in a fever dream.

The full substance of this bill provides absolutely no evidence whatsoever for any of the schedules of this bill. You do not have traffic engineering studies for the 413 or for the removal of bike lanes. You're going to build the 413, which will pave over approximately 2,000 acres of class 1 farmland. There's no agriculture impact study associated with that. In fact, my colleague here had it best when he talked about the 413—I can hardly read your writing. There's no requirement to public estimated costs, no requirement to study impacts in traffic, no requirement to—can't read that—no requirement for—can't read that either. Basically, there's no requirement for studies, no requirement for providing dollar figures. This is just, "Trust me. We're going to spend your money, and you're

going to be okay with it. You're going to be happy about that." I would suggest that people are not going to be happy with that.

I would say the people are already not happy with a government that has all the priorities wrong. Let's just be honest. Let's just get real. This is a government that has, now, the largest sub-sovereign debt in North America. I remember, when we first got elected, we heard all the time about the Liberals, who did have an enormous amount of debt. This government now has \$411 billion of debt—and growing. In fact, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation says that every Ontarian's share of that debt is \$28,000. When you talk about how you're going to pay for it—we hear that all the time—when you talk about saving money, you're not in any way concerned with the tax dollars that you have absolute control over, because your actions, your bill, your spending, your lack of accountability shows otherwise. The party with the taxpayers' dollar is full-on in the province of Ontario.

MPP Jamie West: It's even stronger.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It's even stronger. Now it's a rave. It went from a party to a rave, I think.

Let's be honest again. Each of you sitting here—you know, as do the people of Ontario, that this government, Ford's cabinet, is the largest cabinet in the history of Ontario; it's the most expensive cabinet in the history. The cabinet gravy train, again, is alive and well in this province. My question is, why would the people just trust you, why would they continue to trust you, when every single sitting member has a parliamentary assistant role or a made-up new ministry? You had a member who didn't even take a seat, who was given a pay bump.

You're not fiscally responsible. You're not in any way accountable, especially when it comes to spending on yourselves.

The title of the bill says, "Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time"—but it's not going to save you time, and it's probably not going to save you money.

We've seen that this government has a tunnel—I don't know where we came up with the number, but \$100 billion. I think that's probably a bargain for a tunnel. I can't even imagine the overrun and the costs. When we look at the overrun and the costs for any project that Metrolinx has—\$100 billion to complete a tunnel? That's probably a steal. But whose money is that? Who is spending \$100 billion? Are you going to spend \$100 billion? No. We are. Taxpayers in the province of Ontario are going to spend \$100 billion. That is money that's coming out of our already underfunded health care.

You need to know—the people who are listening to this—that the people of Ontario are starting to understand that this government spends the least per person in Canada on health care. You are pulling up the rear when it comes to spending on the health care needs of people—last. This government—one of the biggest provinces, Ontario—per person, last, and going down. But you have \$100 billion to build a tunnel under the 401. You have a lot of money to build a luxury spa parking lot—what is it, almost \$650

million? You seem to have a lot of money for the Beer Store giveaway.

My question to you is, how are you going to pay for all of this? It's a really legitimate question. You're spending billions and billions with your megaprojects. How are you going to pay for it? There's no answer to that, and there's certainly not going to be any answer in this bill, because there's absolutely no evidence that any of this makes any sense.

These plans that you are making and the money that you are going to spend on these plans is inappropriate use of this taxpayer dollar.

You don't have any studies that show that the money you are going to spend on the 413 will reduce travel time. There are no studies. You cannot produce those studies. You haven't costed the 413.

People do not know how much the 413 is going to cost—and the Bradford Bypass—but you just expect the people of the province of Ontario just to dig deeper and say, “Yes, no problem. I don't have a doctor but, hey, I've got more money for you for these uncostered projects because I trust you. I trust the government that is under an RCMP investigation.” I don't think so.

1700

This is a government that not only will be accountable to the taxpayers for the money that they're spending, they don't want to listen to experts. So I find it remarkable right now, as the government is talking about embarking on these huge building and infrastructure projects, that the Professional Engineers Ontario are on strike for the first time ever in 35 years.

Professional Engineers Ontario are public servants who are involved in the design, planning and oversight of billions of dollars of infrastructure projects, and they are also the engineers who monitor our water and our air quality, mine safety and much, much more. But they are on strike, and there seem to be no plans for this government to get back to the table.

My question is, if building infrastructure is such a priority for this Premier, why aren't you investing in planning? Why aren't you investing in the design of these great projects with our already excellent public servants who are in PEGO, Professional Engineers Ontario?

This is an organization that is really concerned—these are professionals. Let me say, they're responsible for \$85-billion worth of infrastructure projects in the province of Ontario. Also, when they initially met with the province, they said they were optimistic that the government would be taking their advice and that they would be moving forward on these projects with evidence-based planning, good planning, safety engineers. But now what they're seeing is a government that wants to leave this organization behind and take advice from who? I mean, we don't know.

Who is planning this? Who is behind the construction of the 413? There's a legitimate question. If it's not Professional Engineers Ontario, who are public servants, who take an oath, who are accountable to us, who are you taking advice from?

Now, as it stands, the Ontario engineers plan to remove members from the Highway 413 and Bradford Bypass projects. So your own experts that have been planning infrastructure projects in the province of Ontario for decades are now planning to remove themselves from the oversight and management of these projects. They said they were going to begin pulling their members from work related to the 413 and the Bradford Bypass, which we know are two key projects in this bill.

You're not accountable when it comes to the billions of dollars you're going to spend, and apparently, you're not willing to take advice from PEGO. And I think it needs to be underscored that it's not even that you aren't going to take advice from them; it's so obvious that you don't value their expertise. You don't value their professionalism. You think that you can go out and do this—with whom? Are you going to engage private-sector friends of the Premier to do this consultation? That's what you do with everything, so it would be no surprise to me if that's how we're going to build this mega infrastructure that you're planning.

Why wouldn't you invest in in-house engineering professionals who go above and beyond? They've taken an oath. They're public servants. We should be respecting their role.

MPP Jamie West: Very affordable.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: And they are very affordable. But they're leaving the public service because they're not respected, they're not paid properly. Why wouldn't the government—again, another question that it would be great to have an answer to: Why? Why is the government allowing these professional engineers to walk when they're about to embark on these huge projects?

The cynic in me says it's because, again, they don't want any accountability. They want to hire people who, when the Premier says jump, they say, “How high?” It has nothing to do with actually building what's most appropriate, but it is building what the Premier wants.

I'm just going to end by saying that—it has been said before, and it's quite clear. We've had a lot of discussion about bike lanes, which was an unfortunate conversation because that's not the problem here. That's not the problem that Ontarians are facing. They are facing no housing, no doctor, no health care, no job. That's what people are facing.

This government's strange decision to pick a fight with people that support bike lanes is really just a cover for the kinds of things they want to do with the 413.

I think it would be important to know that in this bill, there are two schedules, schedules 2 and 3, that add to the enormous unilateral power that this government has given themselves to build the 413. We know that they are not going to do an environmental assessment, so they're not going to study the impacts to the species at risk. They don't even have to say what the purpose of Highway 413 is. They can just build it with no purpose, and there is no requirement for them to publish the costs.

It also fast-tracks this government's ability to expropriate your property. If this government wants it, they don't

even have to justify it. They can take it. They have enormous powers under the Environmental Assessment Act, which they have completely dismantled. They don't have to prove to anybody that the land that they want is the land they needed. There is no need. They can just come and say, "This is a priority project; thank you very much," with no explanation or nothing.

The overreach on the part of this government is the thing that is most sickening. It is not just that they are going to spend hundreds of billions of dollars of your tax dollars when you don't have health care. It is that they are not accountable and that the heavy hand of government can come to your community, to your property, and say, "Hey, you know what? Class 1 farmland? Too bad. Hey, you don't want broadband, you don't want a highway through your property? Too bad. It says right here that we have the right to take it," and that overreach is scary, and this is why this bill is scary.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to questions.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I always enjoy hearing from my colleague across the aisle. I know she cares passionately about the people in her riding of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas and I know that she would probably agree that traffic congestion, especially on the 403 going down the hill or up the hill, depending on whether you're going to or from Ancaster, is a big problem in the city of Hamilton and with commuters from her constituency, as is driving to Toronto. I would say at least the majority of members in the House probably drive to the chamber, and I am sure the member has as well and has experienced the traffic congestion along the 403, the QEW and the Gardiner. It is a big problem, and it is a big problem for her constituents.

I would love to see the 403 expanded. I would love to see even a consideration of building the old Mid-Pen highway. You talk about getting trucks off the highway? We need to build more roads.

Does the member opposite agree that traffic congestion is a huge problem in her riding?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Traffic congestion is certainly a problem. We have on this side of the House proposed really easy solutions. The 407 is built. The taxpayers paid for the 407. They paid for it, and the Conservative government basically gave it away for a song. It is an underutilized transportation infrastructure that already exists.

If we want immediate results to ease congestion, take the truck traffic off the 401 and put it on the 407. The government owns a portion of the 407. You have absolute control to do that. You could do that today. If you really are looking for solutions, there is one before you.

I have to say, I am concerned this government is not actually looking for solutions to congestion. They are looking for an excuse to build expensive infrastructure that will make their friends rich.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

MPP Jamie West: Thank you as well to my colleague for her debate. At one point, she was having a difficult time reading my notes, and I'll read them to her.

In this bill, Highway 413 has these weakened safeguards. There's an alternative environmental impact assessment, not the standard one that is normally done. There is not public consultation, like is standardly done for highways. There's no requirement to publish the estimated cost that is required for any other project of this size. There's no requirement to study the impact on traffic or if trip times will stay.

The Liberal government, as you remember, abandoned this because it saved seven minutes. Let's look at that. There was no requirement to evaluate any sort of alternatives, like putting truck traffic on Highway 407 and no requirement for review with a subject matter expert. She also said in her debate that Mayor Rob Ford had said, "The party with the public taxpayers' money is over." I feel like the Premier heard "party" and was like, "Oh, my God. The vault is open."

1710

Why would they have a bottomless pit of money for this and to create this giant party of a cabinet, the largest that the province has ever seen?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It's a legitimate question and I don't have an answer for you. It's a question that the people of the province of Ontario should be asking: Where is this government getting this money from? It's coming out of their pockets. Not only is it coming out of their pockets, the government doesn't even have to give them a receipt. They don't have to. They just say, "Hey, yeah, just trust us. I'm taking your money, but we're going to deliver you a quicker trip home."

You know what? There's no guarantee of that, but there is a guarantee, based on this government's performance, that they will continue to take unilateral power for themselves. They will continue to work on the behalf of their vested interests and rich people getting richer. That you can count on.

The 413 is years and years away. People need help today.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Will Bouma: The member suggested that the 407 would be a great solution for our truck traffic. Everyone knows—and in fact, the engineers that she has so much respect for have told us that the 407 will be at capacity within the next five or six years. So that's not actually a solution.

What I would like to ask the member—since she doesn't want to build any highways; she wants to take a lot of car traffic off the roads with more bike lanes which, as we heard from the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, will push them onto side streets where there are no sidewalks to keep pedestrians safe. What is the NDP's actual plan other than—we can't do the 407, because it's going to be at capacity. What is her actual plan to solve gridlock? That's my question for her.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would ask the government that. What is your actual plan? Because your actual plan—there's no evidence. There's no studies that suggest that this plan makes any sense. There's no costing. So what is actually your plan? Where is the evidence that we need this? Where is the evidence that this will fix congestion? Where is the evidence that you are going to build it right? Where is the evidence that what you're doing won't end up costing Ontarians way more than they ever expected?

My answer to you is, why are we putting all of the taxpayers' money in this one megaproject when you could be doing these small—in the spirit of the world series—singles and doubles? That's what we need. We don't need this grand slam, because this is a government that swings and strikes out every time.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I noticed with great interest the reactions of the government members every time my colleague mentioned health care. It was quite noteworthy that the government members had no understanding of the connections between health care and vulnerable road users.

A number of years ago, I was actually hit by a car in the Speaker's riding, at the intersection of Laurier and Nicholas. I was lucky that there was not a level zero that day and that an ambulance came fairly quickly. I did not have a family doctor at the time, so I had no follow-up medical care.

We are now in a position where 2.5 million people in the province have no family doctor and our hospital ERs are full. We have many level zeros, code reds, code blacks, where ambulances are not available and coming to meet people. I think my colleague very rightfully referred to this as a situation of gridlock in our health care system.

Can the member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas speak to how this bill is a distraction on the part of the government from what we actually urgently need, which is a fix for that gridlock in our health care system?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: That's an excellent question. I think it just shows, yet again, that this government is failing to deliver on the basic things that people expect from a government. People expect, when they go to emerg, that they will be able to be seen. They expect, when they call an ambulance, that there will be one available. They expect that they should be able to have a primary care physician.

But guess what? In the province of Ontario, none of that is happening. You can pick up the phone to call for an

ambulance and it's a roll of the dice as to whether an ambulance is going to be there, or you have to get someone to drive you or you have to call a cab, which is happening in this province. So for this government to talk about gridlock—it's like, read the room. Are you tone-deaf? Because the gridlock that people are struggling with is the wait times in emergency with their kids who have broken a leg in hockey, or their mom that might be having a stroke. That's the gridlock that people want you to spend money on, not your fantasy projects.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Will Bouma: I appreciate the passion of the member from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas.

It's interesting, Speaker, that when we proposed the Ontario Line, the opposition stood in this House and said the exact same thing: "There's no way you can do it. It's a dream project. It's impossible. We don't know what it will cost." And yet it's getting done. It's going to be done on time and under budget. It's getting built. And to the people of Ontario, this just shows how out of touch the opposition is with what's actually going on and what the real needs are of the people of Ontario.

And again, instead of saying what their plan is, which was the question that I asked the member previously, all I get is, "Well, what you're doing is impossible." And yet we've demonstrated over the last six years, Speaker, that what we're doing is extremely possible and getting done.

So again, my question to the member is: What is your plan to reduce gridlock in the province of Ontario?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Well, I find it very interesting that this member can stand up and talk about what we on the other side have said about transportation without mentioning Metrolinx.

I mean, your million-plus-plus-dollar man Phil Verster is not delivering on any—

Mr. Will Bouma: No plan. No plan. No plan.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Do you know what? I wish the member for Brantford—Brant would actually come to order, because this is beneath you to behave like this—or maybe it's not. But I'm trying to answer your question, which is that your government subsidizes Metrolinx with no accountability. That's not a plan.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): That's the end of the debate for this round.

Report continues in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, OOnt
Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day
Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,
Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Allsopp, Tyler (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Jeux
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	Oakville	Associate Minister of Mines / Ministre associé des Mines
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
		Premier / Premier ministre
		Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (IND)	Carleton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hamid, Zee (PC)	Milton	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé des Forêts et des Produits forestiers
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jama, Sarah (IND)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
		Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Associate Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre associé de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Electrification / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Électrification
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises et de l'Approvisionnement
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform / Ministre associé de la Lutte contre le vol d'automobiles et de la Réforme relative aux mises en liberté sous caution
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences Deputy Government Whip / Whip adjointe du gouvernement
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (IND)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
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	