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of Ontario



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N° 182A

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Mardi  
19 novembre 2024

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Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Trevor Day

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 19 November 2024

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 19 novembre 2024

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### SAFER ROADS AND COMMUNITIES ACT, 2024

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

Mr. Sarkaria moved third 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 Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Would the minister care to lead off third reading debate.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** For the last quarter century, our province has had some of the safest roads in North America, and we're very proud of this record. Ontario ranks among the top five jurisdictions with the lowest fatality rates. This is evidence of our dedication to road safety, but we know there's always more we can do to protect drivers and families. Since the day our government was elected, we have taken decisive action to make our province as safe as possible, and that starts with our roads.

In 2021, our government tabled the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act, which introduced tough new measures to combat street racing and stunt driving. That bill showed Ontarians that safety isn't an option and it must be taken seriously. With the Safer Roads and Communities Act, we're ready to go a step further. We're proposing the strictest penalties in the country for impaired driving. We're taking bold action to keep car thieves and stunt drivers off our roads. We're giving transportation enforcement officers the tools they need to ensure commercial vehicles are held to the highest safety standards. And we're doing it all to make sure Ontario remains the best place to live, work and raise a family.

I'm sure everyone here is aware of the needless tragedies that can result from impaired driving. Many of us have been impacted by these tragedies personally and know somebody who has been impacted. Drugs and alcohol contribute to at least one in three deaths on Ontario roads. In 2022, over 20,000 Ontarians had their licences suspended for impaired driving. That's one driver for every 26 minutes. That is simply unacceptable. Worse, a roadside survey conducted by the ministry found that one

in five drivers who provided breath or oral samples tested positive for drugs, alcohol or both.

The unfortunate thing is that while most Ontarians follow the rules—they don't get behind the wheel while impaired and they value the safety of those they share the road with—even one impaired driver on our roads is one too many. These people are accidents waiting to happen. They are putting lives at risk, jeopardizing the safety of everyone on our roads and, as a father, and many in this House who have children—we can't imagine the unbearable pain so many parents, siblings, friends and family have suffered when their loved ones didn't make it home. This needs to end now.

That is why, if the Safer Roads and Communities Act passes, we would introduce a lifetime suspension for anyone convicted of impaired driving causing death. If you kill someone because you choose to drive impaired, you will lose your privilege to drive in the province of Ontario for life. It's as simple as that. Those who lost their lives never get a second chance; these drivers don't deserve one either. Getting behind the wheel under the influence is a reckless decision, and we're sending a clear message that it's never worth it.

Stakeholders across the province have voiced their support for this legislation, like the heroes at Mothers Against Drunk Driving, an organization at the forefront of the battle against impaired driving. Steve Sullivan, the CEO of MADD Canada, and Carolyn Swinson of MADD Toronto have experienced first-hand the tragedies that result from impaired driving. Having their lives torn apart by the reckless choices of impaired drivers, they have passionately advocated for the need for a tougher stance. We agree, because frankly, there's always a safer option than driving impaired, whether it's calling a ride, walking, taking transit or just simply waiting it out—no event, no urgency is worth getting behind the wheel and risking lives across this province while being impaired. And every one of these situations can be avoided.

For too long, Carolyn and Steve have had to fight to make their voices heard. Well, our government is listening. We have a responsibility to do whatever we can to ensure Ontarians get home safely to their families each night. Impaired driving isn't a temporary lapse in judgment, it's a choice with repercussions that last a lifetime.

The lifetime licence suspension is just one of the tools we're using to crack down on impaired driving. Another one is ignition interlock devices. Currently, convicted impaired drivers who meet certain eligibility requirements can voluntarily install an ignition interlock device in their vehicle—doing this could reduce their licence suspension—

that means they're not required to install an ignition interlock. This also means many drivers opting for a longer licence suspension so they can eventually get back on the road without ever using an ignition interlock in their car. If someone is choosing to go without driving rather than using an interlock, there can only be a few reasons I can think of as to why. That loophole must end. That's why our government plans to introduce regulations that will require anyone convicted of impaired driving to install an ignition interlock for a prescribed length of time when their licence is reinstated.

Our government believes there should be no option to bypass an ignition interlock, giving abusers of alcohol the ability to knowingly put lives of other people in danger. What kind of message does that send? We need to do everything we can to stop drivers from repeating history. Ignition interlock devices ensure that those convicted of impaired driving are closely monitored and given time to rehabilitate. When you choose to put other people's lives at risk with your recklessness, you should have to prove you deserve your driving privileges back.

#### 0910

Our government is also proposing a zero-tolerance condition for anyone convicted of impaired driving. This would apply to anyone found with the presence of alcohol or drugs in their system and would begin after a driver completes their mandatory ignition interlock period.

I'd like to take a moment to reflect on a tragedy that struck my own community of Brampton, and a father who was forced to endure what no parent should ever experience. His 15-year-old daughter was walking to celebrate her birthday on what would have been an ordinary Friday night; tragically, another impaired driver struck another vehicle, which then spun onto the sidewalk, hitting her. Some might call this an accident, but the fact is, it wasn't. The driver chose to get in that vehicle while under the influence and a young girl paid for it with her life. That night, this loving father was expecting the joy of sharing cake with his daughter, not the devastation of police officers at his door with this unimaginable news. As he said himself, "She was the light of my life. I just don't understand why my baby is gone." We owe it to this father and all others impacted by impaired driving to say enough is enough.

If the Safer Roads and Communities Act passes, drivers will face longer roadside suspensions for first- and second-time drug-and-alcohol-related offences. These suspensions will apply to drivers who perform poorly on field sobriety tests or have a blood-alcohol concentration above the legal limits. It would also apply to young and novice drivers who violate their zero-tolerance conditions.

Currently, drivers face a three-day roadside licence suspension for their first occurrence and a seven-day suspension for their second occurrence, but that's not deterring some people. The Safer Roads and Communities Act would give roadside licence suspensions more teeth. Drivers would receive a seven-day roadside suspension for their first drug- or alcohol-related offence and a 14-day suspension for their second, because they only work if

they're strong enough to persuade people away from making the wrong choice.

Recognizing the impact of addiction, drivers would also be required to complete a remedial education course after their first offence and enter a treatment program after their second. Escalating penalties are a key component of our effort to curb impaired driving—if you get caught making the same mistake again, you'll face a longer suspension.

Right now, there's some inconsistency going regarding when you'll get a clean slate. That's because the look-back periods for impaired driving penalties aren't all the same. Currently, licence suspensions and administrative monetary penalties have a five-year look-back period; if you commit the same offence within that same five-year period, you'll face a steeper penalty the second time. But ignition interlock and remedial education requirements have a 10-year look-back period. The Safer Roads and Communities Act, if passed, would bring all look-back periods to the duration of 10 years. We need to show impaired drivers that the government has a long memory, especially when it comes to putting innocent lives at risk. Get behind the wheel impaired and you'll have to wait an entire decade before the slate is wiped clean, if at all.

None of our work to make roads safer could be done without our police officers. We rely on our police officers across the province to enforce the rules on the road, and we need to support them with every tool available to stop impaired driving. The Safer Roads and Communities Act, if passed, would amend the Highway Traffic Act to clarify that police can stop drivers for sobriety testing on or off the highway. Police have always had that authority, but we want to make it crystal clear, because there should be nowhere to run when you're driving impaired, and you shouldn't be able to avoid charges on a technicality. If you see flashing lights coming, your time is up and you're going to face the consequences of your actions. Road safety stakeholders across the province are expressing their support for this bill and their fight, and our collective fight, against impaired driving.

Michael Sanderson, president of the Ontario Association of Paramedics Chiefs, says that introducing tougher penalties for all forms of impaired driving will save lives.

Anne Leonard, president of Arrive Alive Drive Sober, has voiced her support for mandatory ignition interlock requirements for all convicted impaired drivers.

Scott Butler, the executive director of Good Roads—an association dedicated to improving roads and road safety in Ontario—says that strong penalties act as strong deterrents.

This legislation is about more than getting tough on impaired drivers. It's about saving lives, and safety will always remain the number one priority for this government.

As we all know, auto theft has also become a plague across this province. In Ontario, a car is stolen almost every 14 minutes. Auto theft has increased by 72% since 2021. In Peel region, motor vehicle theft increased by a staggering 187% between 2019 and 2023. Stolen cars are being shipped to other countries and sold on the black



market, and the people stealing the cars aren't afraid of the consequences. And it's not just theft; cowardly criminals are using weapons to carjack Ontarians, leaving the impacted victims, their families and their communities traumatized. In Toronto alone, violent carjackings rose by 78% after the pandemic.

This has gone far beyond just a road safety issue or a vehicle issue. This is a full-fledged public safety epidemic, and it's clear more must be done. That is why, if the Safer Roads and Communities Act passes, anyone convicted of motor vehicle theft under the Criminal Code would have their driver's licence suspended. First-time offenders would receive a 10-year suspension, second-time offenders would receive a 15-year suspension and third-time offenders would face a lifetime suspension for their driver's licence.

To crack down on car thieves, we need to do everything in our power to deter would-be criminals. We continue to call on the federal government to reform bail policies and get tougher on crime so these criminals aren't out on our streets terrorizing your communities. But we will do everything within the jurisdiction and scope of the provincial government to deter these car thieves and car thefts. Thanks to many of our efforts, and the hard work of our policing partners across the province, we've seen so far this year auto theft decrease by 16%. We're ready to take our efforts to the next level by passing this legislation. No one in the province deserves to be held up at gunpoint and told to hand over their car keys, or to live in fear of what might happen to them when getting behind the wheel or getting into their vehicle. Tougher penalties would make would-be car thieves think twice.

But don't just take our word for it. Just ask auto industry and stakeholders across the province. The Motor Vehicle Retailers of Ontario, whose members includes more than 1,000 auto retailers, have expressed their support for a lifetime ban for those who have been convicted of auto theft for the third time.

We need to get tough on the criminals. To date, the penalties for stealing cars haven't been strong enough. Brian Kingston, president and CEO of the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association, says that the profits currently generated from auto theft outweigh the risks for thieves. I'm proud to say that in Ontario, we're doing everything possible to change that equation, and we'll continue to call on the federal government to also help us in our fight against violent carjackings and auto theft and implement much-needed bail reform.

Car thieves and impaired drivers aren't the only risk on our roadways. Wannabe stunt drivers trying to get likes on social media increasingly have no regard for public safety, and the problem has been getting worse in recent years. Last year, police issued 12,000 immediate roadside licence suspensions for street racing and stunt driving, the highest number before the pandemic. It's hard to think of something more selfish than rolling the dice with people's lives just for a quick adrenaline rush.

## 0920

In 2021, our government introduced legislation that increased licence suspensions and vehicle impoundments for stunt driving, street racing and aggressive driving. Courts now have the discretion to suspend a convicted stunt driver's licence, but minimum suspensions aren't applied in all cases. That is just simply not good enough. If our Safer Roads and Communities Act passes, it would amend the Highway Traffic Act to ensure that anyone convicted of stunt driving faces a mandatory minimum licence suspension. Stunt drivers would face a one-year suspension for their first conviction, a three-year suspension for their second conviction and a possible lifetime for their third. We can't expect these drivers to take road safety seriously without strong sanctions. We know stunt driving kills. Anyone thoughtless enough to engage in it should pay the price.

As the times change, the province has a duty to keep pace with new issues that we're facing on our roads. We've seen a rapid increase of e-bikes on Ontario's roads. Some of these bikes are larger and faster than other ones, bringing new challenges to road safety. While legally they are capped at 32 kilometres per hour, in practice, many are built to look like e-bikes and drive much, much faster, putting the rider and any cyclists or pedestrians in their path at risk.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach for regulating e-bikes in Ontario, and the Safer Roads and Communities Act aims to address that issue. If the Safer Roads and Communities Act passes, it would create regulation-making powers within the Highway Traffic Act to categorize e-bikes into distinct classes. Each class would have its own safety requirements, such as speed and weight limits, as well as operator requirements, such as minimum ages for drivers and passengers. This is an important step forward towards ensuring safer roads for all Ontarians no matter how they travel.

To make our roads safer, we must address all risks that drivers encounter. Increasingly, that includes commercial vehicles. Large trucks are involved in many fatalities in our province. That is why, last year, we began an initiative to increase commercial vehicle enforcement in northern Ontario. Since this has begun, MTO officers have conducted 6,594 inspections and laid 5,298 charges, including 912 for speeding. Earlier this year, we opened a \$30-million commercial vehicle inspection station on the Trans-Canada Highway near Thunder Bay, and we've continued to make improvements to inspection stations across our province to ensure we're doing everything in our power to enhance commercial vehicle safety as we carry out our work to build a better Ontario.

We are ramping up efforts to take unsafe trucks off the roads, and we're saving lives. We have plans to do even more to enhance commercial vehicle safety if the Safer Roads and Communities Act passes.

Transportation enforcement officers are vital to keeping our roadways safe, and we need to give them the support they need to get the job done. The Safer Roads and Communities Act would strengthen transportation enforce-

ment officers' ability to carry out the Ministry of Transportation's commercial vehicle enforcement program. If the bill passes, transportation enforcement officers would be permitted to exceed posted speed limits for enforcement purposes, with traffic required to move over for MTO vehicles when their lights and signals are flashing. And officers would have the authority to seize fraudulent and suspended drivers' licences. These measures would build on the success we've achieved to date by strengthening commercial vehicle enforcement across the province.

As I've mentioned, Ontario roads have been ranked some of the safest in North America, but we always have a responsibility to do better and to do more. As our population continues to grow, so does our responsibility to keep our roads safe for the millions of people who call this province home. With more people using our roads today than ever, the need to protect drivers has never been greater. We owe it to all the people who have helped make Ontario such a great place to live, work and raise a family.

The Safer Roads and Communities Act captures our vision for the future and a safer Ontario for everyone. As the House considers the merits of the Safer Roads and Communities Act, I would encourage everyone to think about what's at stake here—lives are at stake. By introducing some of the stiffest penalties in Canada for impaired driving, motor vehicle theft and stunt driving, we're coming down hard on threats to public safety. By laying the groundwork to categorize e-bikes into distinct classes, we are showing Ontarians that we can adapt quickly to evolving safety needs. And by enhancing transportation enforcement officers' ability to carry out commercial vehicle enforcements, we're building on our success at improving commercial vehicle safety across our province, and we're helping to ensure a brighter future for all Ontarians.

Madam Speaker, I hope that the members opposite have had a chance to look at the piece of legislation and consider supporting tougher measures on impaired drivers, tougher measures on those convicted of auto theft and join this government in our continuous commitment to keeping our roads safer in all parts of this province. That also includes building more roads, building more highways, like the 413, the Bradford Bypass, the Garden City Skyway bridge, and ensuring that we keep this province moving. As we see congestion at an all-time high, we have a duty to build, and that's why we continue to build the largest public transit expansion in the history of North America.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Further debate?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm pleased to be able to stand in this place as the official opposition critic for infrastructure, transportation and highways to discuss the Safer Roads and Communities Act, which has already been through this House, to committee and back. Very quickly, actually—this government moved this bill quite dramatically with another bill, through time allocation, and here we are. I'm glad to be able to add what I hope are thoughtful comments in a limited amount of time, which

is disappointing as critic, to not have that full hour to share what we heard at committee with folks.

This bill accomplishes a few things but certainly not enough, as we're used to seeing. I'll start by saying the rise in auto thefts that we're all concerned about has been a nightmare for communities across the province, especially in the GTA. But we need to see real solutions to prevent auto theft, like cracking down on re-VINing stolen cars, working with manufacturers on tracking technology and more solutions. Policies like what we see here are fine, but there aren't deterrents in this bill. They're after-the-crime measures in terms of penalties, but how are we protecting Ontarians in the first place? The Conservatives on one hand are claiming to bring the toughest penalties against impaired drivers, but they're downgrading DUI charges in court. Ontarians need a government that can deliver the promises they make, not one that's just providing lip service.

And I'll say, as someone who has served as the critic for transportation and highways for a while now, this government speeds through the process and has created awkward legislation, like the e-bike sections of the MOMS Act. And the MOMS Act—the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act, or whatever it was—was a tangled mess in a lot of respects, which we told them it was because that's what we were hearing from e-bike users. And yet, here we are, with sections of the MOMS Act that have never actually been proclaimed. Provisions in that act haven't been proclaimed, but in this act, they're being repealed. They're still doing consultations on e-bike classifications because they couldn't get it right before. And, granted, it's worth taking the time to have those consultations, but why the rush before when they knew it was wrong, as it had been flagged by the entire cycling community?

**0930**

Much of this bill deals with penalty and punishment after the crime, and nowhere do we see preventative measures to keep road users and drivers safe, like the NDP has put forward with Bill 15—which is my bill, more on that later, Speaker—and Bill 40, a vulnerable road users' act: Things that are not only preventative but have to do with the actual vulnerable road users. Certainly this government doesn't ever consider them, or hasn't in my lifetime in this place.

The government has failed to make use of more effective measures to crack down on impaired driving and car theft, such as properly staffing courts to avoid backlogs instead of routinely allowing drunk drivers to plead down to lesser charges. That's something we've raised in the House, and we don't see a solution. Or they could be verifying or investigating VINs to make sure that stolen cars aren't registered with fake VINs—again, Speaker, stay tuned for more on that.

Let's start out with e-bikes and potential classification. Right now, we're in the "just trust us" phase of this government's legislation. They're looking to change the language, possibly increasing red tape for e-bike users, unfortunately; we don't know. Bill 197 removes the definition of "power-assisted bicycle" from the Highway

Traffic Act, which means e-bikes will now fall under the definition of “motor-assisted bicycle,” with vehicles like mopeds, which require class M licences, plates and insurance. We’re not sure if the government is intending to regulate all e-bikes similarly to mopeds. We would love to know if the government—we had tried during committee to get the government to provide more details about its plans for new e-bike regulations.

Speaker, I think all of us—anybody using the roads in any capacity has seen e-bikes and changing active transportation methods. Some e-bikes look like bicycles—kind of that bicycle-style, with maybe a little bit of extra pedal assist. Some of us are getting older. I look forward to adding that extra oomph when I need it. Some of them are more of a throttle assist—think of a moped—almost like a motorcycle.

I think everybody recognizes there are challenges on the road, and we want people to be safe. We heard that from all presenters and all sides at committee. But what the government is going to do is yet to be determined. Some of the things that we had heard at committee were about the provisions that were never proclaimed from the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act. They were never proclaimed. Some of them were good, as we heard in committee, and now here we are, and we’re seeing them repealed. But we don’t know if those same provisions that are being repealed but hadn’t been proclaimed but apparently were good are carrying forward in the next chapter in the regulations—which, of course, we have no idea what they’re planning to do.

Jamie Stuckless came to the committee and let us know that Ontario is the only jurisdiction that has the minimum age requirement on passengers, that the 2021 MOMS Act proposed to repeal the age restrictions, but again, those provisions aren’t going to happen now at all. So she had questions about the age restrictions.

Also, motor-assisted bicycles are not allowed to take passengers. Remember when I said “pedal assist” or that bicycle-style e-bike? The government is now classifying them all as motor-assisted bicycles, so all as mopeds. So the breakdown of which ones are going to be considered bicycles versus motorcycle-style—we don’t know. And people are concerned, because a lot of people have these e-bikes, and now they’re like, “Am I going to need a class M licence? Do I need plates and insurance? Where is that appropriate? Can I still put my duckling in the seat in the back? No? Yes? Is that illegal?” Again, we have no answers to those questions.

Here’s part of a letter from Cycle Toronto. They have written regarding this bill, “It remains unclear how the removal of the ‘power-assisted’ definition for pedal-assist e-bikes will help ultimately create greater consumer and industry clarity. Not understanding how these subsequent categorizations will proceed does give us pause on endorsing this direction.”

We tried to remove this section from the bill until we had clarity, but of course, that was an amendment that the government wasn’t interested in entertaining.

Something else that Cycle Toronto had said regarding passengers, “We do think it is essential that the current ban on child e-bike passengers be removed. And as this moves forward, we hope the province will align its categorizations with neighbouring jurisdictions to minimize confusion. We think it essential that the province and HTA continue to treat a category of pedal-assist e-bikes and e-cargo bikes (what might be called class 1 and 2 bikes) just like conventional bicycles.” That’s from Cycle Toronto.

I’ll also add, and I know I can’t show a prop, but the members of the committee had the opportunity to see photos of smiling, happy e-bike users with their kidlets in the back or kidlets in a purpose-built—I don’t think that’s quite the right term—seat that’s made for them that are now going to be considered problematic. These are rear passenger seats on an e-bike. Currently, that would be illegal in Ontario. Jamie Stuckless raised that issue for us and showed us how absurd it would be. I mean, those are lovely, happy, smiling families that are actively transporting their kids around the community, and I hope the government isn’t seeking to keep them illegal—we’ll have to wait for regulations.

Here is a submission from Mr. Liam Roach, who wrote to us, further to that concern:

“I have concerns about the language surrounding the proposed changes to the HTA sec 38(2) ‘No person who is the owner or is in possession or control of a motor-assisted bicycle shall permit a person who is under the age of 16 years to ride on, drive or operate the motor-assisted bicycle on a highway.’

“In particular ‘no person under 16 shall ride on’ would prevent any e-bike to be used for the transportation of children, even within purpose-designed child seats or child carriers.

“As such, I recommend the language of the proposed bill language be modified to explicitly allow the carrying of children within purpose-built carrying systems (or words to that effect). Additional speed or power limits could be part of this language if there are any safety concerns.” That was submitted by Mr. Liam Roach.

These are common-sense things, I would say. But again, without knowing the government’s intention, without having a better understanding of how they’re choosing to classify—without any of that, it’s “just trust us.” And, Speaker, I don’t trust them. I lived through the MOMS Act; that was a mess. I was not wrong, but you would think that they thought I had just lost my marbles. And yet hundreds of people had flagged the challenges, and they willfully ignored them.

As I said, the government has been known to speed through the process. They’ve created awkward legislation in the past. We heard from hundreds of people at that time with Bill 282, but Bill 197 removes the definition of “power-assisted bicycle,” which means that all e-bikes will now fall under the definition of “motor-assisted bicycle.” We’re hoping that the government makes sure not to create red tape for e-bike users.

We’ve talked a lot in this House about VINs. We’ve talked a lot about car theft. I have been raising the issue ad

nauseam about the need to protect the VIN registry and ensure that stolen vehicles can't just get legitimized through our VIN registry, be issued a fraudulent VIN and then drive off into the sunset. Ontario's become an ATM for car thieves. It is shocking to me. And, Speaker, fun fact: As I ask questions about just how vulnerable the system is, I must be right because no government member has answered back and proven me wrong.

**0940**

So all of these questions that I'm asking about how it could be, in the event of a fraudulent VIN trying to get into the system, that there aren't flags, that the government doesn't inspect or investigate any of them, that we have cloned, duplicated VINs all over the province—and I'm going to say—the government knows this—the MTO and the government know how bad the problem is, and they're choosing not to fix it. If I'm wrong, I want one of them to tell me, because I think I'm on to something, because they're so quiet, and normally, they don't do quiet.

Speaker, I want to talk about VINs and car theft. This bill hopes to deter car thieves by threatening longer licence suspensions, but it doesn't address this government's failure to verify vehicle identification numbers. They allow stolen vehicles to be registered with fake VINs. After-the-crime penalties are important, but people are experiencing violence and violation with auto theft, and what we need to also focus on—with the after-the-crime penalties being one part—the protective measures, the prevention side.

There have been reported stories of folks who have bought stolen vehicles unknowingly from dealerships. They can't get stolen vehicles insured. They might not find that out until they're in a collision. People who didn't intend to buy a stolen vehicle don't have a clear path forward for remedy. The dealerships might take them back. Are they going to take the responsibility for having sold unknowingly a stolen vehicle? Because these vehicles are in our system, folks.

What we see in this bill we hope will serve as deterrents, but as car thieves are unlikely to be deterred by penalties as long as the potential for significant financial reward remains so clear, I don't know how effective this is going to be. If a would-be car thief is going to lose their licence or get in trouble but they can climb the ladder of organized crime, I don't know how they're going to feel about, "Uh-oh, I'm getting my licence suspended"—they're already stealing cars. They may drive without a licence; they might already be doing that. So not to diminish this, but it can't be the only measure. That is not preventative, folks.

I want to get back to VIN fraud. VIN fraud is rampant. We don't have a VIN verification system, other provinces do—I've read about that in this House in an article from the Star. But why don't we have a VIN verification system? Seriously, none. At committee when I raised this, the parliamentary assistant—who was actually a breath of fresh air; I thought that he gave real answers, but I don't think he was entirely correct on all of this stuff. But he did try to keep talking about the feds. Well, that's an important

part of the conversation, but we have a provincial responsibility and a provincial lane that we could stay in a little bit and make things better. So we are provincial; I want to stay in our lane and own up to our responsibility. There's defiance with either the minister or the ministry; they are not fixing this.

I have no idea how many vehicles are registered in the province every year. Anybody? Half a million? A million? I don't know—a lot, I imagine, and zero VINs are double-checked or investigated or verified, zero. If I'm wrong, prove me wrong. Zero problematic VINs are verified or investigated. How many cars currently are registered in the province that have duplicated or cloned VINs? How many are there? Are there five? Are there 100? Are there 50,000? Or 100,000? Do you know? And why don't you know? Or do you know and you're not fixing it?

Anyway, I don't understand why on earth this government would keep a broken drive-through lane for criminals so lucrative. For the government members that might think I'm incorrect, then I challenge you, because I think I'm right. Ask your minister and his team. I think that they are wilfully choosing to ignore this problem. They're choosing to allow re-VINing because I think they know that they are pretending that it isn't happening. If you think I'm wrong, prove it. P.S. You won't be able to.

We heard from other people at committee. We heard from Aviva Canada. They're the second-largest casualty insurer in Canada. They said that they insure about 900,000 cars. They're focused on road safety. They came to speak in support of Bill 197, but in terms of the auto theft provisions, however, they did have suggestions—as I do, as many of us do—on how to make things better. They highlighted that auto theft is growing, that 2023 was a record year for auto theft and Aviva paid out \$800 million, and 77% of those cases were in Ontario in the GTA. They raised that the cost of these thefts is growing. They talked about re-VINed vehicles being resold or mis-sold. They said that in 2019 these were few and far between, and then now we're in such a different situation. They've seen an increase in fraudulent claims.

The government members heard from the insurance industry—but they have been; they've been hearing from former law enforcement, they've been hearing from current law enforcement. Back to the VIN: Why aren't they doing anything that is provincial responsibility in terms of prevention, keeping those fraudulent VINs from getting into our registry, getting on our roads?

Speaker, I'll stay in the vein of auto theft here. The transportation enforcement officers who do important work on our roads have been highlighted in this bill. There is a provision in this bill about speeds that they're allowed to drive as needed. But that is not enough when it comes to the transportation officers and the work that they do. We need to be better supporting them. We need to pay them—we need to pay them to keep them. The biggest thing that can be done is actually pay the people who we are bringing to the job, and they're not staying. They're getting training—I think it costs something like \$165,000 to bring someone in and train them. But then they're leaving to go

to other jobs, other government jobs, other regulatory officer positions that pay so much more. So we need to pay them to keep them. They come in at \$82,000, they get their training program, but then the Ministry of Labour might train them as MOL and hire them at \$102,000 per year. It's a lot of money to train them. They want to do the job; let's pay them to keep them.

I started by saying I wanted to connect this to auto theft. At Gananoque, which is the eastern-most truck inspection station in the province, they've had 26 stolen vehicles come through their inspection station. Their enforcement there at Gananoque is going to be going 24/7. They are increasingly interacting with criminal elements and, in the last eight months in Gananoque, they said they have recovered 26 stolen vehicles. That's a lot.

It's changing all over the province. It's not just Gananoque. Because if they want to avoid Gananoque that's now going to be going 24/7, they can drive way out of their way, because stolen vehicles are worth it. They go up north. When we have truck inspection stations that I have been asking about in terms of their repair, in terms of their usability—I did find out at committee from the ministry that some of them are not in the best state of repair. There is calibration to be done; some of the scales and truck inspection stations need work. Well, then get on it.

This government wants to light \$48 million on fire to rip out bike lanes but they can't pay transportation enforcement officers, the front line in the fight against auto theft, or make sure that we have the tools. They're building shiny new stations, but with this business model, they're not even going to be able to open it or run it. The government has problems to solve when it comes to the transportation enforcement officers. We have a lot of work that could and should be done on the roads, and this government knows what it is, and they need to do better.

**0950**

This bill talks about impaired driving. Many impaired drivers can avoid criminal convictions thanks to this government's policy that allows drivers to plead guilty to lesser, non-criminal charges. That policy was put in place during the pandemic in an effort to relieve court backlogs. The policy is still in place, and that results in even more serious criminal cases being tossed out due to unconstitutional delays. So how effective will the change that we see in this bill about higher penalties for impaired driving—which is good and we support—be when the government has a policy allowing impaired drivers to plead down to non-criminal offences under the Highway Traffic Act, avoiding criminal convictions?

We heard from Good Roads that came to talk to us at committee. They reminded us of Vision Zero. They reminded us that this was another opportunity to focus on vulnerable road users. Vulnerable road users are not limited to cyclists or pedestrians or folks in wheelchairs who would use the bike lanes, it's also officers at the side of the road, construction workers—people who utilize our roads without the protection of a steel cage like a car driver.

So, again, we had brought forward proposed amendments, part of the member from Ottawa Centre's bill, the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act, which is vulnerable road user legislation. We tried to move that, and the government, of course, wasn't interested.

My bill—I had reintroduced this bill a few times, but it is the Fairness for Road Users Act (Contraventions Causing Death), which would allow a meaningful change for families across the province, who not only have lost a loved one or had someone suffer significant, catastrophic injury, but then also have the additional injury and insult of a maximum \$500 fine in the event of terrible things happening. That's what is currently on the books. So my bill, you would think, would fit with this government's big-penalty push about more fair penalties, and yet it is stuck in limbo.

This is a bill that has important measures but certainly doesn't have that prevention side, the protective side. This was a real opportunity for the government to do better to ensure that our roads in Ontario are far safer.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 197. I want to commend the member for Oshawa. She really hit the nail on the head, which is that so much in this bill is good, but it's really performative. It's the government, probably because they want to call an election, to be seen to be doing something about a serious issue. Well, if you were serious about it, then you would do something about the VIN duplications: that you would manage it, that you would measure it, that you'd be able to answer the questions that the member from Oshawa asked.

When we're trying to correct problems like auto theft—and it's a serious problem; I had a neighbour who has lost two cars. I bought a Club for my car even though it's eight years old, because I know it can be stolen and somebody wants the parts. You can't just say, "We're going to do these measures and suspend people or give tougher penalties for stealing a car or driving suspensions." I'm not sure that's going to stop people. It sounds great. It sounds really good. It will look good on a brochure, all of this stuff. But are you actually getting at the root of the problem? Are you actually trying to manage what's happening with car theft in Ontario and the problems that we have with the VIN verification system? That's the hard stuff.

The government is good at the easy stuff and talking about the stuff that you're going to do, and it's wonderful and things are great and we're going to have tougher penalties and it's going to be so much better. Well, on auto theft, you're not actually doing the thing that needs to be done and you're not even talking about it because it's a hard thing to do.

It's easy to say the easy stuff. It's easy to say, "We're going to suspend their licences longer," but we're not going to do a damn thing about the root of the problem: the VIN verification system.

We'll be supporting this bill. I support the measures for driving suspensions for impaired drivers causing death; I

think we're all for that. But if you want to get at the root of auto theft, you've got to do something about the VIN verification system. You've got to actually measure it. You've got to be able to answer the questions that the member from Oshawa asked, that all of us ask. That's what our constituents expect from us.

Thank you very much, Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 197.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 29, 2024, I am now required to put the question.

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

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

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

*Third reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Orders of the day? I recognize the associate minister.

**Hon. Trevor Jones:** Good morning. There's no further business.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** This House stands in recess until 10:15.

*The House recessed from 0956 to 1015.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### FENELON FALLS AND DISTRICT LIONS CLUB

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** It's my pleasure to rise in the House to recognize the 50th charter anniversary of the Fenelon Falls and District Lions Club. Earlier this month, we celebrated together at a luncheon at the Royal Canadian Legion in Fenelon Falls, which paid homage to the history and impact of the Lions. The Fenelon Falls Lions truly live up to the motto, "We Serve." Since the Fenelon Lions Club was chartered in 1974, their members have done vital work for uplifting our community.

I am so proud of the leadership that they have displayed through their work at local and international levels, from their annual fundraising for the Salvation Army during the holidays to organizing seniors' teas and gift receptions at Fenelon Court long-term care, to supporting Camp Kirk's unique programming for children and youth with special needs, to supporting the Walk for Dog Guides for the blind—and these are just a few of the accomplishments that they have. They are part of what makes Fenelon Falls the great place that it is.

Thanks to the current president of the Fenelon Falls Lions Club, Jim Bellwood, for his strong vision and following his family's tradition in the Lions.

Congratulations to Lloyd McIntyre for receiving a lifetime membership and Deb McIntyre for the Melvin Jones Fellowship award.

I want to recognize the dedication of two founding members that were there, William Barber and Kenneth Le Masurier, for their continuous service even today. And thank you to every Lion who has volunteered over the past 50 years. I cannot wait to see what the next 50 bring.

### COMMUNITY CARE OF ST. CATHARINES AND THOROLD GREAT HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** Last week, I spoke about food security in St. Catharines, and I wanted to continue bringing awareness to the work that our local food banks and food providers do to make sure families, children, students and seniors are fed each and every day.

Every year, Community Care of St. Catharines and Thorold hosts their Great Holiday Food Drive, collecting non-perishable food donations through local grocery stores, schools and individual drop-offs. Every year, food items, hygiene products, winter coats and monetary donations are donated to this worthy cause in support of local residents and families who need them the most. In the past, this event has raised over \$300,000 in monetary donations alone.

This year is a special one, with Community Care celebrating 20 years of this incredible event. What started in 2004 in response to local needs, this event has grown into a large-scale donation drive that now helps Community Care respond to the surges in food bank use we have seen in the last year.

In October, this organization filled 13,383 tummies, a substantial increase, though, from almost 9,000 people who used the food bank program in October 2023.

On December 13, I will be making a donation to the Great Holiday Food Drive, and I urge everyone listening who is financially able to also make a much-needed donation to a local provider of your choice in your communities.

### SPECIAL CARE NURSERY

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** It is my pleasure to rise this morning to discuss an exciting announcement that took place last week at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton.

Alongside my colleagues Minister Jones and Minister Lumsden, we visited the hospital to share a capital funding announcement that will support the redevelopment of the special care nursery. The special care nursery provides neonatal intensive care to infants and their families across southwestern Ontario. The redevelopment will ensure that newborns and their families have better access to specialized neonatal intensive care and family-centred birthing supports. This will include enhanced infection prevention and control, more private rooms, capability to accommodate state-of-the-art design standards, a designated room to store pumped or donated milk and other supports tailored to the early developmental needs of infants. This is welcome news for the city of Hamilton and all staff and patients at St. Joe's Healthcare.

**1020**

While there, we had the opportunity to tour the current neonatal intensive care unit and to meet the beautiful newborns and their families, as well as the amazing doctors and nurses who shared their excitement and gratitude for all of this funding.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton president, Mike Heenan, and all staff for their leadership and commitment to providing exceptional care for all who enter the hospital.

**HOMELESSNESS**

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Last week—last Friday—10 people in their seventies and eighties took refuge at the Out of the Cold program at Eastminster church in my riding. Some were in wheelchairs, others had major mobility issues. East End United reports that they had a full house that night, 40 people sleeping in the pews. They set a record for Out of the Cold meals. They served 160 dinners. For context, last year, the next-highest was around 130 meals—and that was much later in the season, not week 3.

Prior to the pandemic, there were 16 Out of the Cold programs offering overnight covering every day of the week. Now there are only three: First Interfaith on Tuesdays, Yorkminster Baptist on Wednesdays, East End United on Fridays. City shelters were already regularly turning away 200 people nightly over the summer, and this number doesn't capture the people who don't get through on the phones or those who feel the shelter system is too unsafe for them to use.

People in their seventies and eighties in wheelchairs don't go to sleep in a church overnight because they have a place to live. In this Conservative Ontario, there are many seniors now who are living in desperate situations, including living on the streets.

Hunger for the homeless, homelessness for seniors: That's the government's legacy. It's a shameful legacy.

**REMEMBRANCE DAY**

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** Last week, we gathered as a nation to observe Remembrance Day, a day that transcends time, reminding us of the profound sacrifices made by Canadian soldiers. Over 120,000 brave Canadians laid down their lives, choosing to protect freedom and peace for future generations. Their courage and sacrifice are woven into our history, a legacy that we will forever be bound to honour.

This year, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the illegal invasion and occupation of Cyprus by Türkiye, I had the privilege to honour our Canadian peacekeepers, 25,000 of whom have served in Cyprus over the years. Standing in the United Nations buffer zone is a monument dedicated to the 28 Canadians who lost their lives serving there. It was a stark reminder of the vital role Canadians continue to play far beyond our borders to mediate peace in places of conflict.

We met with Major John Rice and Lieutenant Josh Carroll, who served with the United Nations Peacekeeping forces. I presented them with a Canadian flag, which now proudly flies beside the monument dedicated to those fallen peacekeepers. That flag is a living symbol, a reminder that even on foreign soil, the memory of our Canadian soldiers is held in reverence.

May we always remember their sacrifice and let their legacy guide us in our pursuit of peace and freedom. Lest we forget.

**COST OF LIVING**

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Today, I rise to amplify the ever-growing struggle of Ontarians trying to afford their day-to-day and provide for their families.

It is November, and the holiday season is fast approaching—for many a time to enjoy with family, friends and community. It was not long ago we had hope, we had happiness and we had the money to support this and so much more. Our monthly bills could be covered by our income, food was always in the fridge and we could save for emergencies. We thrived and we had the means to help others thrive too. The cost of living is the amount a person needs to spend to cover basic expenses, such as housing, food, taxes, health and personal care. In Hamilton Mountain, these expenses are becoming complex decisions and, for many, becoming harder and harder to cover each month.

Living paycheque to paycheque has taken on a new meaning. Many are now living bill to bill, paying rent or mortgage payments with nothing much left when the housing is paid. Food and health care have become an afterthought.

This is the reality for so many. We hear from middle-income families who are trying to stretch a dollar to provide for their families and communities the way they have in past years. When cost of living is out of reach, quality of life feels next to impossible. We must all work together to solve this crisis, stop legislated poverty and get back to hope and happiness.

**ERIN HUXLEY****LANSDOWNE CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I am pleased to rise today to acknowledge a talented author from the Brantford–Brant community, Erin Huxley. Erin celebrated the launch of her first book, *Harmony Woods: Penny and Freddy Search High and Low*, with a live book reading, book signing and meet-and-greet last month.

This wonderful event also served as a fundraiser in support of Lansdowne Children's Centre. I have had the privilege of working closely with Lansdowne Children's Centre and it excels in providing personalized care for children with developmental, physical or communications challenges. Lansdowne is a pillar of the Brantford–Brant

community and beyond that supports families through holistic, high-quality programs.

Harmony Woods emphasizes the importance of musical education in early childhood development, a cause that Lansdowne passionately advocates for. Harmony Woods also stands out among children's books as it combines an engaging story with educational elements, emphasizing themes like curiosity, teamwork and discovery, which makes it both fun and meaningful for young readers.

I am proud to represent the vibrant Brantford–Brant community and its talented artists and educators, like Erin Huxley. It is incredible to see gifted authors come together with specialists at the forefront of child care in our province to ensure that the books kids read will be positive influences for their entire lives. Thank you, Erin. I hope that this is just your first publication of many.

### TAXATION

**Mr. John Fraser:** Six years ago, the Premier promised everyone an income tax cut. It was very clear. He said it multiple times. The Premier proposed an income tax cut, and six years later—six years—nothing—bubkes—nothing has happened.

Right now, in Ontario, we all know families are struggling just to keep their heads above water, to pay their rent or their mortgage, to put food on the table, to clothe their kids. Times are hard for too many Ontario families. What families need are tax cuts that are permanent, that are lasting. That's why Ontario Liberals put forward two measures that will help families at this difficult time with the affordability crisis. The first is an income tax cut and the second is removing the provincial sales tax from home heating and hydro. Two measures—simple, straightforward—that will save families about \$1,150 a year.

Tax cuts that are lasting and permanent are what families need right now. Again, Speaker, the Premier promised an income tax cut six years ago and never delivered. And when we proposed cutting the sales tax on home heating and hydro, this government voted against it. They voted against a small business tax credit. So this Premier and this government talk a great game, but when it comes to actually delivering tax cuts that are permanent, they can't do it.

### ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 586

**Mr. Rick Byers:** Colleagues, on November 2, it was my great pleasure to attend the wonderful reopening of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 586 in Hepworth. It was January 21, 2022, when a raging fire completely destroyed the Hepworth Legion, as well as the Bruce Grey Music Hall of Fame. These two facilities have been under the same roof and were mainstays of the community. Hepworth and all of Grey-Bruce were shocked.

1030

Branch 586 had received its charter in 1958. Meetings were held at the Royal Hotel until 1963. The Legion hall

had been built to be the Hepworth Country Music Auditorium; it was purchased by Branch 586 around 1975.

The music hall of fame was founded in 2015 by our late, great former colleague Bill Murdoch and his close friend Arnie Clark. The hall had hosted many great acts, including Mel Tillis, Leroy Van Dyke and “Whispering” Bill Anderson. It was also filled with amazing memorabilia, including Alfie Fromager's practice guitar and Harry Parker's fiddle. These were all lost in the fire, as well as many special posters and photographs. Happily, the music hall of fame reopened in June of this year in Branch 6 in Owen Sound.

The November 2 Branch 586 reopening was a great occasion. Pipers led the parade and there was a terrific turnout from the community, including former MPP Bill Walker, Hepworth resident. Jim Copp, who led the rebuilding efforts, told us about the amazing community support the project received. It was an example of the great culture in Grey-Bruce.

Congratulations, Branch 586, on your rebuilding and fantastic opening. Your new legacy has begun.

### CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTRE

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** This past Friday, the Grandview Kids Jerry Coughlan Building in Ajax was officially opened by the Honourable Michael Parsa, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. The new, fully accessible, state-of-the-art children's treatment centre will serve more than 6,000 children and youth with physical, communication and developmental needs in Durham region. This new centre was made possible through a provincial investment of approximately \$85 million.

Building a new state-of-the-art children's treatment centre for children and youth with special needs in Durham region is one more way our government is ensuring hard-working families can connect with specialized services no matter where they live. I'm so grateful to Premier Ford and other members of our cabinet, as well as the Durham IV, for fulfilling the dreams of thousands of children and their families. Once again, we're getting it done.

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 9(g), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required and, therefore, the afternoon routine on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, shall commence at 1 p.m.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mike Harris:** We have a wonderful delegation from Waterloo region here today. I'm not going to read everybody's name, but I'd just like to highlight our mayors and regional chair: Karen Redman, Dorothy McCabe,



Berry Vrbanovic, Sue Foxton, Joe Nowak, Natasha Salonen and Sandy Shantz. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

I'd also like to highlight two of our wonderful chicken farmers from the riding of Kitchener–Conestoga who are here joining us today: Scott Buchan and Wendy Lantz.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On behalf of the official opposition—and many others, I'm sure—I'd like to welcome Chicken Farmers of Ontario and Ontario Pork to the House. I can't think of a better thing than to have Ontario bacon at lunch and Ontario chicken wings for supper. Thanks for being here.

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** I would like to welcome representatives of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario as well, with whom I had a great meeting this morning. Welcome to Queen's Park, Jordan Fois, Jason Devet, Bryan Fieldhouse and Haldimand county's very own Hank Lise. I'd like to thank CFO for all they do to keep our food banks winged up. Thanks very much.

**Hon. Rob Flack:** I'd like to welcome the Chicken Farmers of Ontario, who are here, in particular Murray Opsteen, chair of the chicken farmers, and Denise Hockaday, the CEO; as well as pork producers Ontario Pork, here with Tara Terpstra, the chair of Ontario Pork and Ken Ovington, the general manager.

As the member opposite said, enjoy a little protein today: pork at lunch, chicken at night. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I'm very proud to have a good friend here in the gallery today, Dr. Asif Doja, who is a neurologist at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and the co-creator of an amazing podcast called Doctor Vs Comedian—you should all tune in to it. Dr. Doja's daughter Alina is one of our pages. I'm very honoured, Alina, that you are working with us, and nice to see you, my friend.

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** I'd like to welcome Michelle Wodchis-Johnson, president of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, and Jasmine Bates, president of the College Student Alliance. Welcome to your House.

**Hon. Kevin Holland:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today a civics class from Hammarskjöld High School who are here visiting us, as well as four students from Confederation College: Robin Gathercole, Geetika Verma, Rushi Tilva and Kevin Joseph.

As well I want to give a welcome to Shawna Kozak, a friend and neighbour who is here as part of the Insurance Bureau of Canada.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I would like to welcome the amazing student advocates who have come from across the province today to participate in a joint advocacy effort from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, the College Student Alliance and Ontario Student Voices.

In particular, I want to welcome Michelle Wodchis-Johnson, president of OUSA; Malika Dhanani, the executive director of OUSA; Jasmine Bates, president of the College Student Alliance; Michael Tahir, vice-president of the College Student Alliance; Olivia Villeneuve, the policy and advocacy lead from the College Student Alliance; Lynn Courville, the executive director

of Ontario Student Voices; and Olamipo Ogunnote, director of advocacy and strategic partnerships at Ontario Student Voices.

Thank you so much for coming today to meet with MPPs.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I'd like to introduce my good friend Glen Hodgson, who is from Parry Sound. He is a teacher and president of OSSTF District 4. But more importantly, today he's going to watch his daughter Autumn in action as a page.

I also want to welcome the pork farmers and chicken farmers of Ontario. I'm just saying choose my barbecue sauce tonight for your wings. It was recommended by somebody on my staff, Shelley Thrasher. Thank you, Shelley.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** It was awesome to welcome earlier today Kincardine District Secondary School. They're a special school in the riding of Huron–Bruce.

Speaking of Huron–Bruce, I'd like to welcome chicken farmers' Rick Kaptein and my neighbour Adrian Rehorst.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would also like to welcome some guests from Ontario Student Voices: Sara Ortiz, Ganyo Soh, Kate Keaney and Tal Sarig. I'm looking forward to meeting you later today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** I just wanted to welcome Jeremy Prinzen, who is here today on behalf of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario and is a great resident of the Bay of Quinte. Thank you for coming and welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I would like to welcome members from Electric Mobility Canada: Audrey Dépault, Evan Wiseman, Luis Leal and Maureen Shuell.

I'd also like to welcome individuals from OUSA, including Dreyden George, Marcus Nieva and Polina Vaynshtok; and London North Centre constituents Kathleena Henricus and Michelle Wodchis-Johnson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** I would also like to welcome members from the Chicken Farmers of Ontario, in particular, two people from my riding of Flamborough–Glanbrook: CFO board chair Murray Opsteen and Kathryn Goodish, who is the senior director of communications and stakeholder relations. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It was a pleasure to meet with the College Student Alliance. Two students made it from Sault Ste. Marie: Teena Gilstrap and Isabella Vergara Bedoya. I also met with Rishi Vatish, Francis Osifo, Naisha Suthaharan, Olivia Villeneuve, Ana Downes, Jorge Briones, Miren De Los Reyes and Yash Patel.

I also had the pleasure to meet with Ontario Student Voices. I had representatives from both Cambrian College in Sudbury and Confederation College in Thunder Bay: Kate Keaney, Jamie Hopkins, Kevin Joseph, Rushi Tilva and Geetika Verma.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

1040

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** I am pleased to welcome Bryan Fieldhouse from my riding of York–Simcoe. He’s here today as a member of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

**MPP Jill Andrew:** I would like to welcome the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance: ED Malika Dhanani, who’s here today; along with Michelle Wodchis-Johnson, University Students’ Council at Western University; Mark Chrabalowski, Brock University Students’ Union; Jazzy Abbott, McMaster Students Union; and Ben Jesseau, Wilfrid Laurier University Students’ Union. I’m looking forward to meeting with them this week to discuss food insecurity, housing and responses to hate-motivated attacks.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** I would like to welcome Doug Duimering, Jennifer Huberts and Dave Vandenberg, great chicken farmers in my riding, and also all the pork producers here from Perth–Wellington and Ontario Pork as well. There’s lots of pork in Perth–Wellington.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch, Speaker.

*Remarks in Anishiniimowin.*

I want to thank the leadership of Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg, also called Pic Mobert First Nation, who are here at Queen’s Park. With us from Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg are Chief Louis Kwissiwa, Councillor Myles Kwissiwa, Councillor Jeff Desmoulin, Councillor Basil Sabourin, Councillor Wayne Sabourin, Joe Moses, Paul Michtics, Crystal Pirie and Charles Alderson. Meegwetch for coming.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** I’d like to welcome the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, the College Student Alliance and Ontario Student Voices, as well as, from Let’s Talk Science, founder and president Bonnie Schmidt, vice-president Richard Longtin as well as Nathan Kostiuk. Thank you for the meetings this morning.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I also would like to add my voice in the chorus of welcomes to the Chicken Farmers of Ontario. This morning, I had a wonderful, informative and absolutely delightful meeting with the delegation. I want to single out Denise Hockaday, who is the CEO, as well as Murray Opsteen, who is the chair of the board of directors.

Also, I want to send a very warm welcome to the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance for your lobby day. I look forward to our meeting this afternoon.

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** It’s my honour to highlight two of our wonderful pages today as well as their respective proud parents supporting them from the gallery.

From Kitchener South–Hespeler, we have Ahilan Sathiyamoorthy, who has his very proud dad, Sanj Sathiyamoorthy, supporting from the gallery. We also have our page captain from Cambridge, Aida Becker, and her very proud mother, Justice Nicole Redgate, who I actually had the honour of working with in her capacity as a crown in the Kitchener crown’s office. Thank you so much both to Aida and Ahilan for your dedicated service in the House today.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I’d like to welcome members of the College Student Alliance: Jasmine Bates, Kristine

Galvan, Teena Gilstrap, Naisha Suthaharan and David Ward. I’m looking forward to meeting you later.

I also want to just say how glad I am that the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance and Ontario Student Voices are still here and working hard on behalf of university students across Ontario.

**Hon. Todd J. McCarthy:** I’d like to welcome from Durham region to the House today Mr. Ferd Longo, a fine and upstanding business person in our community and one who believes strongly in giving back to the community. Welcome to the House.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I’d like to introduce Caitlin Laskowski from the Chicken Farmers of Ontario. Thank you for joining us here today.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** I would like to recognize an old friend here today, Richard Longtin, the VP of Let’s Talk Science, Canada’s largest science, technology, engineering and math outreach organization. Richard is joined by Let’s Talk Science president and founder, Dr. Bonnie Schmidt, and Nathan Kostiuk, responsible for stakeholder relations. I look forward to seeing them later this afternoon.

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** I’d like to recognize my friend Ewa Antczak, who is here in the House today. Thank you, Ewa, for coming.

**Hon. Sam Oosterhoff:** Jordan Fois, Kim Tsementzis and Andrea Veldhuizen: Welcome to Queen’s Park.

**Hon. Mike Harris:** Thank you, Speaker. Last one, I promise: I do see Eric Schwindt hiding up in the public galleries. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I’m going to ask our pages to assemble for their introductions.

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to introduce to you, members, this new group of legislative pages: from the riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, William Banbury; from the riding of Cambridge, Aida Becker; from Dufferin–Caledon, Charlotte Chummar; from Ottawa South, Alina Doja; from Parkdale–High Park, Ekam Brinley Dosanjh; from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas, Jack Hambly; from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Autumn Hodgson; from the riding of Milton, Macarius Kamel; from the riding of Scarborough Centre, Dawson Kwan; from the riding of Pickering–Uxbridge, Jonah Martin-Nguyen; from Etobicoke Centre, Elyse Miller; from Willowdale, Kamila Mofrad; from Scarborough–Agincourt, Andrew Yang Muhlbacher; from Brampton East, Maadhav Saini; from Kitchener South–Hespeler, Ahilan Sathiyamoorthy; from Whitby, Donnique Stephen; from Ajax, Anuva Sud; from Markham–Thornhill, Ananthamhee Shakthi Thirunadarajah; from Don Valley West, Juliet van Wyk; from Timmins, Elissa Wakeford; from Don Valley North, Ryan Wang; and from Richmond Hill, Laura Yahlou.

Please join me in welcoming this group of pages.

*Applause.*

## USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN HOUSE

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Before I ask for oral questions, it seems appropriate and necessary to once again remind members that the rules of the House prohibit members from using smart phone cameras to record the proceedings in the chamber. This rule is found in standing order 22, which states as follows: “The use of laptops, tablets and smart phones is permitted in the chamber and committee rooms provided they are operated silently, do not impair decorum and are not used as a telephone, recording device, camera or prop.”

Any recording of House proceedings using a personal electronic device would be a contravention of the standing order and, therefore, clearly out of order.

*Interjections.*

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

1050

It is now time for oral questions.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Good morning, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Hospitals all across Ontario are struggling: emergency room closures, shorter hours and now another hospital, North Bay Regional Health Centre, is being forced to reduce services just to keep the lights on. Sadly, this isn't that surprising, because Ontario is in last place for per-person health care spending in the entire country.

Meanwhile, this Premier is cutting deals, insiders are cashing in and patients pay the price for this government's failure to deliver on the very basics. Why is this government choosing to leave rural and northern patients stranded while pouring billions of dollars into luxury spas and wasteful schemes?

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

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Speaker, since this government took office in 2018, the health care budget has gone from \$60 billion to \$85 billion, which is an increase of \$25 billion. No government has put more money into the public health care system than this government.

We must always keep in mind the quote from the former Liberal Minister of Health, George Smitherman, who said that the previous Liberal government “starved” the health care system in order to balance the budget. Of course, we will not repeat the mistakes made by the former Liberal government. We will continue to invest in the health care system in the province of Ontario, building new hospitals, building new training facilities for our medical professionals and providing free tuition in the province of Ontario for anyone seeking to study nursing at our—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. We're not off to a good start. The member for Hamilton Mountain will come to order. The member for Ottawa South will come to order. The Minister of Red Tape Reduction will come to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary question?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Perhaps the member didn't hear my question. I was asking about North Bay.

I'm going to go back to the Premier again. North Bay's hospital is short nearly 100 beds today. They're looking at a critical shortage of 600 staff in the next few years, and not just that—there are 7,100 people who do not have a family doctor in North Bay. People are getting sicker and sicker, and they can no longer depend on their local hospital because of this government's reckless decisions.

North Bay deserves better, so when will this government get Ontario out of last place and put patients first?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Ontario reports on non-priority emergency department wait times, and this government is assisting by bolstering the nursing workforce. We have an additional \$10 million of funding going to help 1,000 nurses upskill and train for remote hospitals and developing better emergency department care. That, of course, is in stark contrast to the previous government which, as the previous Minister of Health observed, starved the health care system in order to balance the budget.

Mr. Speaker, we're not going to repeat those mistakes. We are training more nurses in the province of Ontario. Since 2018, we have trained or upskilled 80,000 nurses who are registered to work in the province of Ontario. We're going to continue making investments. We're going to continue training nurses, who, of course, will benefit from free tuition from our colleges and universities.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Maybe the member for Essex will care if I make it about his riding for just one moment, because there are 12,755 people without a family doctor in Essex right now.

Yesterday, I asked about Hamilton and Huron-Perth, and today it's North Bay. Ontario is in last place in the country when it comes to health care spending—last place in the country. Emergency rooms are closing—

*Interjection.*

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

The Minister of Energy and Electrification will stand in his place and withdraw.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition.

Start the clock.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** And they should be ashamed. Ontario is in last place in the country when it comes to health care spending. All Ontarians get with this Premier are headaches, not homes; delays, not doctors; spas, not schools. Getting health care is the right of every Ontarian, every Canadian, and this government is failing to deliver that in North Bay and all across this province.

So my question to the Premier is, why does this government always choose private profits over public care when Ontarians are stuck waiting in a broken system?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Members will please take their seats. The government House leader will come to order. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will come to order.

The member for Essex can reply.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I'm glad the Leader of the Opposition made the question specific to the riding of Essex. Let's talk about my riding, the riding of Essex. We received a promise from the former Liberal government that they would build a new hospital in our region, and then they reneged on that promise. And then, the new Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford, came and said he was going to go to Queen's Park and he was going to fight like an 800-pound gorilla to get us that hospital. Lo and behold, we have a brand new hospital that is on track in the riding—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Windsor West will come to order. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** If you repeatedly ignore the Speaker's request to come to order, you will be warned, and if you don't listen to me at that point, I'll name you. We're six minutes in. That means we've got 54 minutes to go.

Start the clock. The next question.

## FUNDRAISING

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Maybe I can shed some light on why the government is so focused on funnelling public dollars into private corporations. In September, the chair of the Ontario Conservative Party fund sent an email to cabinet ministers assigning them fundraising targets. Yesterday, the Attorney General stood here and said that this was a mistake. Certainly it wasn't supposed to go to ministers in their official capacity, right? But if this were true—to the Premier—why did it open with the greeting, “Hello, cabinet ministers”?

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

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Only the NDP would think that having two to five fundraisers would be some sort of offside thing. They can't even retain a director of fundraising.

Now, what they should do—I did come up with an idea last night. I thought, “How can we help them?” If the labour organizations are increasingly supporting the Progressive Conservative Party, surely there are some that are staying with them. So I thought, “Who could help them?” Well, Fred Hahn has 86 donations personally to the NDP and its candidates, so I was thinking maybe they could turn to him for a little bit of help in recruiting a new director of fundraising, because they want somebody who

has worked for an organization in either labour or in a volunteer capacity.

Look, we're happy to work with the NDP. If they really think there's something, we'll have a conversation. But they just want to clip media and send it to the Integrity Commissioner, and maybe somebody will make a story out of it. There is nothing here.

*Interjections.*

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

The supplementary question?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Let's just go back again. This doesn't seem like an accident, pretty clearly. Once again, they're changing their stories. I have to say it feels a little bit like we're travelling back in time to 2016, because it feels a lot like the Liberal cash-for-access scandal all over again. We know how these guys work, right? The Premier cuts deals, insiders cash in and it's the hard-working people of Ontario that pay the price.

The Conservative fundraising chair wrote to the cabinet ministers' chiefs of staff and instructed them to come up with a fundraising plan. He even referred to having discussed the matter at the government's caucus retreat this past summer.

**1100**

Some 2.5 million people in this province don't have a family doctor. Housing starts are the lowest they've been since the 1950s. Why is this government focused only on cashing in on their connections?

*Interjections.*

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

The Attorney General.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Political parties do fundraising, Mr. Speaker. That's the story.

Now, what we should be focused on in this House are things that matter to the people of Ontario, things like affordability, like the hospitals that are being built in Mr. Leardi's riding, the 50 hospitals that are being built, cutting the gas tax, cutting the stickers. We're removing bike lanes. We're doing so many things for the people of Ontario, and the NDP would have us focus on fundraising.

I would suggest maybe the NDP should focus on fundraising, because when I watch what's going on over there, they are so divided. I don't even know who their stakeholders are anymore. Doors are open: IBEW, operating engineers, LIUNA. Mr. Speaker, they can keep Fred Hahn, but we will take the rest.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Here's why this matters: Our health care system is collapsing while the Minister of Health diverts hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to private health care companies. You can't get a doctor, but you can talk to the minister for \$500 this week. Tickets are on sale right now on the Conservative Party website.

The Minister of Transportation couldn't find the time to listen to people speak at committee for more than an hour, but if you cough up a thousand bucks, you can meet with him for as long as you want this Thursday night.

This government needs to do their job for the people of Ontario. Isn't this just another example of your ministers cashing in on their connections while the people of Ontario have to fight to be heard?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Members will please take their seats. The government House leader will come to order. The member for Ottawa Centre will come to order. The member for St. Catharines will come to order.

The Attorney General may reply.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** They are so incensed, they are so outraged that a political party would hold a fundraiser.

We want to talk about access: The Premier gives out his phone number to every Ontarian. We were at the operating engineers unveiling of a \$25-million training centre to double the amount of crane operators available in this province as we build the province of Ontario, and you know what he did? He went to the 35 trainees, and he said, "Get out your phones. Here's my phone number." And I said to them, "He will answer your text. He will answer your call. Don't send him a 'merry Christmas' because he will answer that too." He gets flooded.

Now here's my question, Mr. Speaker. If the opposition is so out of sorts because of access to government, I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to give out her personal phone number.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. The Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Start the clock. The next question.

#### MUNICIPAL FUNDING

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Premier. Municipalities presented their health and homelessness strategy way back in 2023 to this government. Cities have requested homelessness become a health priority, as Ontario currently has 1,400 encampments. The city of Kitchener released its 2025 budget on Monday, outlining its priorities and proposed tax rate increases for residents.

This year's proposed budget makes urgent investments in infrastructure in the community, but, Speaker, our municipalities should not have to bear the full brunt of this work. They are at a tipping point and are asking the province—this provincial government—for a new deal.

To the Premier: When will municipalities get the respect and financial assistance that they deserve in this province?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Before I ask the minister to reply, members will take their seats. The government House leader is warned.

The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, through you, to the member opposite for the question.

Mr. Speaker, there is no government—and I've been around for a long time—in recent memory that has done more for municipalities in this province.

Let's talk first about the 45% increase of transfers to municipalities over the last five years. That's about 10% a year.

But wait, there's more: Think about the infrastructure funding from our Minister of Infrastructure through the housing, water and sewage fund, which is creating opportunities right across the province for more infrastructure in our communities.

But wait, there's more: The Minister of Infrastructure has also put in a plan for a housing infrastructure program for roads and bridges and culverts within those same communities.

But wait, there's more: The Ontario municipal fund—another \$100 million to help 320 small, rural and northern communities—

*Interjection.*

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

The supplementary question?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Speaker, municipalities have taken something like 10% of every tax dollar but are responsible for 17% to 18% of all the expenditures. It cannot continue. It's not sustainable. Kitchener mayor Berry Vrbanovic said it best: "The model of funding, has remained virtually unchanged since 1867 and simply isn't keeping up with modern issues facing communities."

The province's new deals for both Toronto and Ottawa have shown that you recognize that there are financial pressures on all of Ontario's municipalities. Municipal taxpayers are collectively subsidizing the province to the tune of \$4 billion ever year.

To the Premier: Municipalities across the province are calling on the government to negotiate a new financial agreement with them as they struggle with growing costs. The question is, will you listen and will you negotiate a fair deal for Ontario cities?

*Interjections.*

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

The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Well, Mr. Speaker, an irony of all ironies: Just this morning, our Minister of Housing and our Minister of Red Tape Reduction met with all the mayors of the region of Waterloo. In fact, just last Thursday, we met with the mayors of Waterloo, the mayors of Kitchener, the regional chair, and do you know what they said? They said, "Thank you. Thank you for listening. Thank you for acting. Thank you for putting into motion the things that are growing in our communities like the Building Faster Fund, like doubling the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund."

Let's not forget the 40% increase in the Homelessness Prevention Program, of which the region of Waterloo was a big beneficiary. No government has done more for the region of Waterloo and all Ontario.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Hamilton Mountain is warned.

The next question.

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Will Bouma:** My question is for the Minister of Energy and Electrification. The previous Liberal government's failed and ideologically driven energy experiments burdened hard-working people and businesses with billions of dollars of bad deals. Their bad planning led to some of the highest increases in electricity costs on the continent.

Our government was elected to clean up their mess, and unlike the Liberals, we are taking real action and providing Ontario families and businesses with affordable and reliable energy. The minister is taking Ontario's message to the world, helping to secure domestic supply while exporting our clean tech to foreign markets.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how we are securing the affordable energy for Ontario's families and helping to deliver energy security to foreign markets?

*Interjection.*

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

The Minister of Energy and Electrification.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I want to thank the member for Brantford–Brant for his question and his leadership in this House.

Mr. Speaker, the world is turning their attention to Ontario. We have become the envy of the world as a clean energy superpower. We were in Poland and Estonia to help secure deals for Ontarians—export markets that are so critical to creating jobs and growth in Ontario. Eastern Europe understands that they need to decouple dependence from Putin.

Today is the 1000th day of war in Ukraine. It's why we went to Eastern Europe with a message that Ontario's clean technology, our small modular reactors, could displace Russian resources with clean, democratic technology made here in the province of Ontario, creating jobs and revenue for our people. We signed an agreement with Estonia to help deploy non-emitting nuclear power into their Baltic state—again, another nation on the front lines of Russian aggression.

We are committed to reliable power for our people, affordable power for Ontarians, but also deploying our technology to the world to create energy security abroad so that we create better jobs back home.

1110

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

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Thank you, Minister, for that great response. Ontarians count on a strong and steady energy system to power their homes, their businesses and their communities. For years, they faced high costs and uncertainty. Under the Liberals, Speaker, energy bills soared and reliability was ignored. Families and businesses paid

the price for the Liberals' bad decisions. Rates went up as much as 300%, costing people an extra \$1,000 a year.

But our government is showing strong leadership and we are taking a different path. We need to continue to recognize the importance of nuclear energy as a cornerstone of a clean, reliable and affordable energy system. Nuclear energy provides over 50% of our baseload power, keeping the lights on and costs down.

Speaker, can the minister please tell us how expanding nuclear energy is making Ontario's energy system more reliable and showing that we are a world leader in nuclear energy production?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I was very proud to stand with the member from Durham yesterday where we announced that the refurbishment of a unit at Darlington has returned to service five months ahead of schedule in this province—a compelling case study that our province and our Premier are building on time and on budget when it comes to large-scale nuclear refurbishment and, of course, our small modular reactor fleet—again, on time and on budget. It is our value proposition to the world. No one can make that claim.

The return of this unit at Darlington—four to five units have now returned ahead of schedule or are on time—produces power for 900,000 families. It is going to insert a \$90-billion injection to our GDP, and 14,000 jobs will benefit across the nuclear supply chain.

We support non-emitting nuclear energy, and I hope all members of this House will vote in favour of this non-emitting source of reliable, clean, affordable power in the Affordable Energy Act.

### NETMIZAAGGAMIG NISHNAABEG FIRST NATION

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** This morning, the leadership of Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg First Nation declared a state of emergency. The First Nation is experiencing increased violent crime, drug trafficking by gangs, addiction, overdoses and sex trafficking, but the lack of a police presence and the delays in emergency response has created a crisis.

To the Premier, will you commit today to answer Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg's specific calls to action to bring the First Nation out of a state of emergency.

*Interjections.*

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

The Solicitor General.

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** To the member opposite, this is a serious matter. That's why earlier this morning I spoke with Chief Jeff Skye of Anishinabek Police Services to discuss just how serious this is.

Mr. Speaker, when the Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform and I went to Yellowknife and we sat at the federal, provincial and territorial meeting in Yellowknife, we told the federal government that the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program, which was introduced over 30 years ago—we must revisit it so that the declaration of essential services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis

policing are addressed in legislation. Mr. Speaker, when the federal government comes to the table and antes up more money to do the right thing, Ontario will do it as well.

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

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Speaker, this minister cannot use jurisdiction as an excuse to walk away from this issue.

Suicide rates and substance abuse issues are rising in this community. The community is doing what they can with the resources they have, but they are stretched beyond their capacity and have already incurred debt.

What actions will this government take to ensure to finally provide the First Nation with the same level of support, security and access to services as other communities in Ontario?

*Interjections.*

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

The Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** Thank you very much for that very, very important question. This government has taken mental health and addiction issues extremely seriously—

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I direct that he be removed from the gallery.

The Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions had the floor.

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** As I was saying, we are taking very seriously the issues relating to mental health and addictions in the province. We have developed the Roadmap to Wellness. We're making substantial investments, not—

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. I direct that he be removed from the gallery as well.

I will remind the visitors who are present in the chamber that there are to be no outbursts from the visitors' galleries.

Start the clock. The Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions can finish up.

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** As I was saying, the focus of this government has been and will continue to be to build a treatment and recovery model that ensures that everyone in need of help in the province will get the help when and where they need it. What that means is looking at and creating opportunities for individuals to get the help they need from the beginning, which is detox, withdrawal management, treatment, and then supporting them to transition back in—

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

## TAXATION

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Ontario's natural resources sector is the backbone of our economy. It powers our infrastructure, from schools to hospitals, and keeps our province moving

forward. Aggregate producers, for instance, play a crucial role in the construction industry. Every new road, bridge and building depends on their work.

But this industry is under threat. The Trudeau-Crombie-NDP carbon tax and heavy-handed regulations from Ottawa are making it harder and more expensive to operate. Families are seeing these increased costs in their grocery bills, higher gas prices and the cost of building new infrastructure. They are hurting.

Can the minister please explain how our government is standing up for Ontario's natural resources sector and protecting jobs from the damaging impact of this harmful tax?

**Hon. Graydon Smith:** Thanks to the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for the great job she does and, occasionally, the ice cream as well.

To build a school takes 650 loads of aggregate. A kilometre of subway tunnel—4,500 loads of aggregate. To build Ontario, we need aggregate, and this government is supporting the aggregate sector every single day, reducing costs, reducing burdens on them, ensuring that source is close to where it is used.

But, of course, the carbon tax is punitive to the aggregate industry. I know the friends across the aisle have been puffing out their chests about tax reductions in the last couple of days. Hey, some advice: Begin at the beginning. Get rid of the carbon tax, which pushes up the price of every school, every kilometre of highway, every kilometre of subway tunnel. It's punitive for Ontarians.

Speaker, the choice is clear: You can support taxation, or you can support—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. The minister will take his seat.

Supplementary question?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I thank the minister for that great answer, and the many aggregate producers in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock are going to be happy to hear that, too.

Ontario is growing fast. We need more homes, more schools and more hospitals. None of this happens without aggregate. Every home needs a solid foundation. Every road and bridge needs strong materials.

**1120**

Our economy depends on our natural resources, but rising costs are making it harder. The Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax adds to that burden. It drives up the price of fuel for trucks that deliver aggregate. It makes everything more expensive—construction, shipping, even the daily operations of small businesses. The people of Ontario can't afford this. Families are struggling. Businesses are cutting back. Builders are worried about how they will meet the demand.

Can the minister please share how our government is protecting builders and families from these rising costs and ensuring Ontario's growth stays on track?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Graydon Smith:** Speaker, I can hear the chirping across the aisle already.

Reduce the carbon tax. That's what we need to have happen in Ontario. That's the first thing that needs to happen.

I'll say it again: Begin at the beginning. Support the industries that build Ontario. Support the aggregate sector.

Speaker, 21,000 truckloads of aggregate move in Ontario every single day; two million truckloads of aggregate every single year. The Trudeau-Crombie-NDP carbon tax impacts every single load.

Over the next 25 years, we need to build a lot in the GTA, all around Ontario—homes, hospitals, long-term-care homes. We want to build for Ontarians. We need to get rid of that carbon tax.

It is simple. Friends across the aisle, pick up the phone and say it again: Begin at the beginning. Get rid of the carbon tax. Make Ontario better.

### ADDICTION SERVICES

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

Minister, a person dies every two and a half hours from the toxic drug supply in Ontario. Consumption and treatment sites have been instrumental in preventing thousands more deaths.

Without CTS, you can expect more calls to first responders, which means limited availability for other emergencies. You can expect busier emergency departments, where people already wait way too long.

Why is the minister putting more strain on our first responders and on our emergency departments?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Respectfully, why is the member opposite not standing up for the families who have to stop taking their children to a playground because it's too close to a consumption site? Why does the member not understand that having these consumption sites within 200 metres of a child care centre, a daycare, an EarlyON centre, a school is not appropriate?

We need to offer people pathways out of addiction; we do not need to enable it.

*Interjections.*

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

The supplementary question?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Speaker, if this government, if this minister could stop downloading their responsibilities onto municipalities, we would have cleaner, healthier communities across this province, but yesterday, that member voted against my leader's motion to do just that.

The minister is closing consumption and treatment sites and leaving a long gap before any other services, before the 10 hubs become available.

Why is the minister downloading her responsibilities to our municipal partners?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Categorically false—when we made the announcement at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, we were very clear that 19 demonstration HART hubs were going to be part of our solution to offer people hope, to make sure that they have a pathway out of

addiction. These 19 HART hubs are going to provide social services. They're going to provide mental health supports. They're going to provide pathways and treatment out of addiction. They're going to support supportive housing.

We are moving away from a system that enables people to continue to use illicit, illegal drugs, and we are changing to a system that takes people to a pathway to treatment.

### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** In Doug Ford's Ontario, small business bankruptcies have more than doubled in the last year.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to interrupt and remind the member that we refer to each other by our ministerial title or our riding name, not by our personal name.

The member for Don Valley West can continue.

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** But yesterday, the Conservative government members stood up to vote against our Ontario Liberal tax cut for small business. Those Conservative members each delivered a very clear message to the small businesses in their riding: No tax cut for you. Sadly, Speaker, it's a pattern.

It's like what they say to 29,000 people in Don Valley West and 32,000 in the Premier's riding who don't have a family doctor: No doctor for you. People in Ontario who need their government hear "No help for you," while the government says, "More money for you" to their rich insider friends.

My question to the Premier: When will he start saying no to his insider friends and yes to helping small businesses in Ontario?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To respond, Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Oh, man, where do I start? Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member opposite for that question.

Was anyone around in 2020, when this government cut the small business tax? Do you remember that? Does anyone remember how that party voted over there? They voted against it. This is a party that came up with a good idea to modernize alcohol and bring it into convenience stores in 1985. This government got it done by allowing convenience stores, over 4,000, to sell more alcohol in their stores. They told us that it's going to create 7,000 more jobs.

Did they vote for it or against it? They voted against it. Yet they stand up and say, "Oh, look at us. Rather than being the carbon tax party we are, we're going to cut"—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa South is warned.

Supplementary question?

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** You know, with Taylor Swift in town this week, I'm going to take her advice about that response and just shake it off.



As members, we are among the more fortunate in our province. We have a regular paycheque, benefits and a roof over our head. But there are so many people, including small business owners, who worry about keeping their doors open another month under this Conservative government. There are those suffering on the streets with drug addiction and the record-breaking one million people visiting food banks last year, who, sadly, are living another lyric of Taylor Swift's: "3 a.m. and I'm still awake, I'll bet you're just fine / Fast asleep in your city that's better than mine."

The government can't keep looking away from its pattern of saying yes to their insider friends while people in Ontario struggle. Again, to the Premier, when will he start saying no to his insider friends so he can say yes to helping the people of Ontario?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Red Tape Reduction is warned.

The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** I have to go down history lane here, because when electricity prices went up 300% under the Liberal government, that increased costs by \$1,000 per year. Who put the tolls on the 412 and the 418? Who brought in cap-and-trade, putting in a carbon tax for the people of Ontario? Who increased driver's licence fees? They did.

Well, we just announced, in the fall economic statement, \$12 billion of relief for the pocketbooks of the people of Ontario, \$8 billion for the businesses of Ontario and \$3.7 billion for the small businesses of Ontario.

Bonnie's record speaks for itself: Every time she talks about anything, she talks about raising property taxes, like she did in Mississauga, because there's not a tax that she hasn't seen that she doesn't like. It's this government that's reducing taxes. It's that party that raised taxes and fees for the people of Ontario.

#### WATER AND SEWAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I won't make a reference to Taylor Swift like the opposition did there.

My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. Housing is a growing concern for families across Ontario. People are worried about finding a safe and affordable place to call home. Young families want to stay in their communities, close to their loved ones and close to their jobs. But they can't do that without more homes being built. Building homes, though, isn't just about the brick and mortar. It's also about the infrastructure that supports them. We need water systems that deliver clean drinking water and manage our waste water system safely. Without that, new homes can't be built.

1130

Our government has said that we want to make it easier for municipalities to get the infrastructure they need to support the new housing initiatives. Speaker, can the minister please tell us how the Housing-Enabling Water

Systems Fund is helping to build more homes across Ontario?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Thank you very much to the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, the NDP have been throwing around accusations that we're not doing enough to enable housing in the province of Ontario. This was included in our 2024 budget, and what we are doing is we are spending \$970 million to support 54 water infrastructure projects in 60 communities across the province of Ontario to unlock approximately 500,000 homes.

Mr. Speaker, let's just look at Sudbury: We're investing \$35 million to unlock 3,000 homes in Sudbury. In Cobourg, we're investing \$25 million to unlock 2,200 homes. In the city of London, we're investing nearly \$24 million to unlock 17,000 homes. In Vaughan, we're investing \$35 million to unlock 20,000 homes. And in beautiful Peel region, I joined the Premier to announce \$35 million to unlock 47,000 homes.

Mr. Speaker, what the NDP fail to understand is that you cannot build a home if you cannot provide—

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

**Mr. Dave Smith:** It is very clear that building more homes is a top priority for our government. But homes do not get built overnight. Municipalities need the right tools and support to get started. For years, we've heard about the barriers that prevent housing projects from moving forward. One of their biggest challenges is the need for proper water and waste water infrastructure. Without these critical systems, shovels can't get into the ground, and families are left waiting for their homes that they need.

Our government has made it clear that we will work hand in hand with municipalities to address these challenges. Speaker, can the minister please tell us how our government plans to continue supporting municipalities in building the water infrastructure needed to build more homes?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** I'm happy to. What the NDP fail to understand is that we are addressing the number one need raised by municipalities across the province, and 444 municipalities have supported this, Mr. Speaker. So not only are we providing \$970 million, we also have a second stream of \$250 million for additional water/waste water infrastructure, as well as \$400 million for roads and bridges and any other works related to unlocking more housing opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, we are doing everything we can to support our municipalities in order to build more homes in Ontario, and we'd hope the NDP would support this.

#### UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE FUNDING

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question is to the Premier. Speaker, this government's failure to address the financial challenges facing the post-secondary sector is putting futures at risk. Right now, there are 30,000 more domestic students at Ontario universities than this government provides funding for, a number that is expected to grow to 100,000 by 2030. But without the international student

tuition dollars that have subsidized domestic tuition students for years, these 100,000 students won't be able to get a spot.

Will the Premier commit today to a funding formula that ensures that every qualified domestic student who wants to attend a post-secondary institution in Ontario is able to, now and in the future?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** Speaker, funding for our post-secondary education system is higher than it's ever been. On an annual basis, we do \$5 billion worth of funding for our publicly assisted colleges and universities. On top of that, this spring we gave \$1.3 billion of funding to our post-secondary education system. That is a historic investment, almost the largest investment in over 15 years.

We understand that there is more that needs to be done. That's why we've invested \$15 million into the Efficiency and Accountability Fund so our public colleges and universities can go through third-party reviews to understand if there are efficiencies to be had. The response to this fund has been extremely overwhelming, including schools that are in a good financial setting. They are asking to be part of the program because they understand what the opposition doesn't understand: that there are efficiencies to be had and it's not always throwing taxpayer money at the system.

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** This government's "historic" investment in post-secondary education leaves Ontario the lowest of any province of Canada in terms of per-student funding. Ontario students, communities and employers deserve a stable and sustainable post-secondary system; under this government, however, at least half of Ontario universities and a growing number of colleges are reporting deficits. There's a \$30-million deficit at University of Windsor, a \$50-million deficit at Mohawk College, a \$75-million deficit at University of Waterloo, at least a \$26-million deficit at Carleton. Programs are being cut at Queen's, at Guelph, at Fleming College, and many more to come.

Students, post-secondary faculty and sector experts have warned for years about the consequences of chronic underfunding. Why is this government ignoring that?

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** Part of that \$1.3 billion that we invested into the sector this year includes \$903 million. With \$700 million across-the-board funding increases, that adds up to 7% over the next three years. On top of that, we had \$203 million for top-ups for institutions of greater need. We will remain committed through the SMA 4 process to ensure that we have a very robust system that works for all students across Ontario.

I will remind the students who are here today that when the NDP were in power, tuition rose three times the rate of inflation. A little closer, when the Liberals were in power, it rose three times the rate of inflation. We have inflation over the last few years of around 20%; if they were in power, our tuition would have gone up 60%.

We are the party that cares about affordability, and we'll continue ensuring that our students have a world-class education system.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** My question is for the Premier. Like many taxpayers, I'm tired of a government that continues to lie in bed with oil and gas giants who are fuelling the climate emergency and gouging us. Look at the track record: For the first time ever, they overturned the Ontario Energy Board's decision that would have saved customers money because it was going to hurt Enbridge's multi-billion dollar bottom line—\$5.8 billion in profit for them last year alone; \$19 million for their CEO.

They give Enbridge a free ride to use our land and our infrastructure without paying anything, ripping off the people of Ontario and depriving us of the money we need to build homes, schools and child care centres. As a result, climate chaos. It's making us sick and it's driving up the cost of living, and forcing us and our kids into an unlivable reality.

My question for the Premier: Will he stop the sweetheart deals and do the right thing and put the people of Ontario before fossil-fuel billionaires?

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Mr. Speaker, the only sweetheart deal that was signed in this province were the 33,000 contracts the Liberal Party signed 10 times over—contracts that this Premier put an end to. In 2018, we got elected to fix the hydro mess, which, respectfully, the Green Party enabled, as did the NDP.

We took a different approach. We're using competitive procurements to drive down prices, because, unlike the members opposite, who seem to only prioritize a clean grid, we also prioritize affordability for the people we serve. That's why we stand against a carbon tax; that's why we are ensuring nuclear non-emitting energy—which is one of the most affordable forms of energy to expand in the province—on time and on budget.

The contrast could not be more clear. We are reducing emissions. The only jurisdiction in the country to do so without imposing a punitive carbon tax for the people of Ontario.

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

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** Again, to the Premier: With all due respect, emissions are going up. It's proof that this government doesn't have a plan. In fact, seven teenagers are taking this government to court because of it. You can't even say the words "climate change"—it was mentioned once in the fall economic statement. Flooding, no plan; fire, no plan; extreme heat, no plan; mitigation, no plan.

In fact, last year alone, insurance billings from climate disasters more than doubled to over \$8 billion. We are in the hockey stick, everyone. We should be worried. There

is no plan and no accountability. For every litre of gas, 18 cents is profit for the oil and gas sector, and for every dollar spent due to inflation, 25 cents goes to oil, gas and mining. Monopolies like Enbridge are ramping up pollution and profits, and the Ford government is giving them a free ride.

1140

My question for the Premier is, why does this government continue to subsidize oil and gas, putting out the red carpet for billionaires like Enbridge, who are causing climate chaos and gouging Ontarians?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Mr. Speaker, Ontario has one of the cleanest grids on earth and we are proud of that reality. Under our plan, by using nuclear energy as our baseload solution, we will actually have a cleaner, greener grid as a consequence.

But the Greens could be like their Finnish Greens, who actually support nuclear energy. They can see the light, that if we want to have baseload energy that is reliable, enduring and affordable, then nuclear is the future. We understand that, which is why in the Affordable Energy Act, we prioritize this non-emitting form of energy.

I hope the members opposite will reflect on the 70,000 families who depend on nuclear energy because at Darlington yesterday we put a unit back on five months ahead of schedule, supporting a \$90-billion lift to our GDP. Some 14,000 people will benefit.

So, Mr. Speaker, for every dollar we invest, we get a \$1.40 out, according to the Conference Board of Canada. We are investing in a clean future without imposing taxes on the people of this province.

#### RED TAPE REDUCTION

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** My question is for the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement. Under the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, businesses in Ontario faced challenges as provincial systems in place used to register and communicate with businesses were slow, outdated and costly. Entrepreneurs spent hours navigating red tape. Speaker, as a small business owner who started my own business in 2004, I recall trying to navigate that red tape, to the point where I hired somebody to help me through these complex processes as I was too busy trying to land clients.

Our government has promised to cut through this clutter and make it easier for Ontarians to start and grow businesses, to ensure people spend less time dealing with government paperwork and more time focused on their goals of serving their clients and making money.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how the new Ontario Business Registry is helping to simplify processes and save time and money for businesses and individuals—

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

The Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement.

**Hon. Todd J. McCarthy:** I appreciate the timely question from the excellent member for Newmarket–Aurora.

Our government is committed to delivering on our promise to make life simpler and better for Ontario businesses. This is what the Premier speaks about when he talks about our government creating the conditions for prosperity and for the creation of jobs. By harnessing emerging technologies, we have launched the new and enhanced Ontario Business Registry. This innovative platform provides millions of Ontarians, whether starting or growing businesses or not-for-profits, with easier, more affordable and round-the-clock access to essential government services. The OBR is a prime example of how we are supporting both individuals and businesses across our province.

We are reducing costs for Ontarians by eliminating licence plate renewal fees and cutting gas prices, and we know how important it is for businesses to have the conditions and access to government services to thrive.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** For years, businesses and non-profits faced long wait times for standard processes. People had to rely on outdated methods like mail and fax. These delays cost time and money, which businesses do not like. It frustrated business owners and slowed down growth.

Sadly, the previous Liberal government allowed these decade-old systems to deteriorate, hurting individuals and businesses. That is why our government needs to take action to fix these problems, to make it easier for organizations to manage their affairs, to bring Ontario systems into the digital age and provide faster and more reliable service.

Speaker, can the minister please share more about how the changes to the Ontario Business Registry are helping not-for-profits by resolving ongoing issues that hurt their business operation?

**Hon. Todd J. McCarthy:** By way of supplementary, I can say clearly to the House that our Ontario Business Registry, new and enhanced, is saving time and money for Ontarians by replacing an outdated, decade-old system with a modern system offering nearly 100 different online transactions accessible across Ontario. Since its launch, over six million transactions have been successfully completed, transforming processes that once took four to six weeks by mail or fax into instant digital services.

Furthermore, alongside the OBR, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act has come into force, modernizing the governance of Ontario's not-for-profit organizations by transitioning their paper-based filings to digital platforms.

Under the Premier's leadership, we remain committed to making doing business more efficient and putting more money back in the pockets of hard-working entrepreneurs across Ontario.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Joel Harden:** My question is for the Premier. Unfortunately, seniors in Ottawa got some bad news recently: Transit passes have doubled. The cost of a transit pass in Ottawa is slated to increase from \$49 a month to \$108 a month. That's happening because our city, sadly, is in a \$120-million hole in operating our funding system for public transit. Right now, we're asking seniors to bear that cost—low-income seniors.

So I'm wanting to believe, Speaker, that in this House we may fight on 90% of the things, but 10% of the time we would agree seniors matter. This House has to spend the money to make sure their transit passes don't go up by 120%.

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

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** We have worked very closely with the city of Ottawa and provided significant amounts of funding to help support that municipality. Everything this government has done has been to focus on keeping costs down for the people in this province. That starts with fighting against the carbon tax, which that member unfortunately supports—to take it to the highest levels ever seen. But thankfully, our government will oppose that every step of the way.

This is a government that has been committed to One Fare, which saves transit users \$1,600 a year, which the members opposite have voted against—one of the most transformational pieces of getting people onto public transit: One Fare in the GTA. The NDP has voted against saving people \$1,600.

Whether it's the city of Toronto, whether it's the greater Toronto area or whether it's the Ottawa region, we are always there to support the municipalities and make sure they can keep their transit moving and their cities moving forward.

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** The seniors of Ontario deserve a lot better than that. They are the people that built everything around us in this House. Everything in our communities we have by virtue of seniors.

I don't know if the House is aware; we've made some inroads on seniors poverty in recent decades, but we still have a very serious problem. We have a third of people in Ontario—seniors—living on incomes of less than \$22,000 a year. One of the biggest constituents of public transit in our city of Ottawa are seniors. This government has said very clearly that there's a new deal for the city of Toronto to operate transit, but for my city, there's a \$120-million hole.

So my question, seriously, to the minister: Will he sit down with our city of Ottawa and give us the same respect that Toronto has gotten to make sure no senior—no low-income senior, no hard-working senior, no respected senior—has to pay twice the amount of money for their bus pass?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Members will please take their seats. The Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform will come to order.

The Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Mr. Speaker, where has that member been? This province sat down with the city of Ottawa and signed a historic \$530-million deal—talk about respect for the Ottawa taxpayers and sitting down with them. That member has been absent. He doesn't want to work to support that city. This government, this Premier, we have worked together with the city of Ottawa and their officials. In fact, this past year, we spent and invested over \$30 million in gas tax funding to support the transit needs of Ottawa.

Whether it be making sure that we're signing the deal that we did, over \$500 million for the city of Ottawa, which unfortunately that member even refuses to acknowledge, which highlights his ineffectiveness in making sure he can support the members and community in Ottawa, we will continue to be focused on making sure we keep costs low, we keep removing tolls that we removed with sticker fees off of vehicles—

*Interjections.*

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

The next question.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** My question is to Solicitor General. Across Ontario, families are worried about reports of rising crime. They're worried about their safety and the safety of their families and their loved ones. In our towns and cities, we see the impact of gang violence and illegal guns. We hear stories of stolen cars, of break-ins and senseless violence. Ontarians deserve to feel safe walking down the street or driving to work. They want to know that our government is taking action to protect them and that law enforcement has the tools and support to fight crime.

Can the Solicitor General please tell this House what our government is doing to address crime and to help our police keep our communities safe?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** I want to thank my great friend from Flamborough–Glanbrook for the serious question.

Earlier this morning, I was at the PAO, the Police Association of Ontario's conference. We made an enormous announcement, saying that when it comes to the mental well-being of everyone that keeps Ontario safe, our government's commitment of standing by them is absolute and constant. That's why we made a great announcement of over \$32 million.

Look at what we have done, as actions speak louder than words: \$51 million to fight auto theft and \$112 million to get the violent and repeat offenders off our streets. In Toronto alone, \$25 million, since 2018, to support the fight to get the guns off our streets.

But Mr. Speaker, we call on the government today and every day: Step it up at the border. You know your

inspections are not working. You have work to do. Go to the border and see for yourself.

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

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** While tackling crime on our streets is critical, we cannot forget what happens after an arrest. Our correctional system plays a critical role in keeping communities safe. Sadly, under the previous Liberal government, it was overburdened, understaffed and underfunded. This created risks, not just for correctional officers but for the public as well. We need modern facilities that can handle today's challenges. We need a system that ensures that those who break the law face consequences. Ontarians want to know that our government is serious about this issue.

Speaker, can the Solicitor General please tell us what our government is doing to strengthen our corrections system and to protect our communities?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Last week, I was in North Grenville with our local member, our great House leader, and we made a reaffirmation that we are moving forward with that correctional facility, to add over 200 beds to eastern Ontario. That's on top of 300-plus beds in Thunder Bay. That's opening new beds in the regional intermittent centre in London—over 600 beds are going to be open.

Our message to those who think it's okay to wreak havoc on our streets: It's not. We've got room for you.

I also want to comment on the fact that since the associate minister and I made an announcement calling on the federal government to make meaningful bail reform, where is Bonnie Crombie? She's hiding. She's weak on public safety and everyone knows it.

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

This House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1154 to 1500.*

## ROYAL ASSENT

### SANCTION ROYALE

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Before we invite the members to introduce their visitors, I beg to inform the House that in the name of His Majesty the King, the Administrator has been pleased to assent to certain bills in Her Honour's office.

**The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim):** The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act / Loi modifiant le Code de la route.

An Act to amend various Acts with respect to honouring military veterans / Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les hommages rendus aux anciens combattants militaires.

An Act to amend the Election Finances Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** I'm so proud to introduce the legislative page from the beautiful riding of Markham—Thornhill, Ananthamhee Shakthi Thirunadarajah, a dedicated student from Parkland Public School; her parents, Aingaran Thirunadarajah and Sancharieni Mahalingam; her grandparents Sangarappillai and Kohiladevi Thirunadarajah, and Kanthar S. and Nirmalanthy Mahalingam; her siblings Athmikan, Ananditha, Ameyathman.

Welcome to the Legislature of Ontario. Thank you for being here.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### SAFER DRIVING TESTS ACT (ENDING THE PRIVATIZATION FAILURE), 2024

### LOI DE 2024 POUR DES EXAMENS DE CONDUITE PLUS SÛRS (METTRE FIN À L'ÉCHEC ENGENDRÉ PAR LA PRIVATISATION)

Mr. Mantha moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 224, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to driving examinations / Projet de loi 224, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les examens de conduite.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Would the member like to briefly explain his bill?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** The Safer Driving Test Act (Ending the Privatization Failure): Subsection 32(5) of the Highway Traffic Act provides that the Minister of Transportation may require persons to submit to examinations and to meet other prescribed requirements in connection with obtaining a driver's licence. The bill amends the act to require that those examinations and requirements be administered by an employee of the Ministry of Transportation.

Bill 225, An Act to amend the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 with respect to a beverage container deposit program / Projet de loi 225, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2016 sur la récupération des ressources et l'économie circulaire en ce qui concerne un programme de consignes applicables aux contenants de boissons.

RESOURCE RECOVERY AND  
CIRCULAR ECONOMY AMENDMENT  
ACT (BEVERAGE CONTAINER  
DEPOSIT PROGRAM), 2024

LOI DE 2024 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA RÉCUPÉRATION  
DES RESSOURCES ET L'ÉCONOMIE  
CIRCULAIRE (PROGRAMME  
DE CONSIGNES APPLICABLES  
AUX CONTENANTS DE BOISSONS)

Ms. McMahon moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 225, An Act to amend the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 with respect to a beverage container deposit program / Projet de loi 225, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2016 sur la récupération des ressources et l'économie circulaire en ce qui concerne un programme de consignes applicables aux contenants de boissons.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Would the member like to briefly explain her bill?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I would love to. Thank you.

The bill amends the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016.

Currently, section 107.1 of the act authorizes regulations governing the collection of blue box materials. The amendments expand this regulation-making power by allowing cabinet to establish and govern a beverage container deposit program and require and govern collection depots for blue box materials.

New subsection 107.1(5.1) requires the payment and refund of a specified minimum beverage container deposit in accordance with the regulations.

New subsection 107.1(5.2) requires grocery stores and stores operated by Brewers Retail Inc. to act as collection depots and provide beverage container deposit refunds. It is an offence for Brewers Retail Inc. and grocery store owners to fail to comply with subsection 107.1(5.2).

FIXING TRIBUNALS ONTARIO  
BACKLOGS ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LA RÉDUCTION  
DE L'ARRIÉRE DES TRIBUNAUX  
EN ONTARIO

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

Bill 226, An Act to make changes to the appointments process for members of adjudicative tribunals, to establish a panel to provide recommendations to the Attorney General on matters relating to adjudicative tribunals and to provide for the establishment of temporary panels to adjudicate matters before the Human Rights Tribunal and the Landlord and Tenant Board / Projet de loi 226, Loi

visant à modifier le processus de nomination de membres aux tribunaux décisionnels, à créer un comité chargé de présenter au procureur général des recommandations sur les questions ayant trait à ces tribunaux et à prévoir la création de comités temporaires chargés de régler des cas devant le Tribunal des droits de la personne et la Commission de la location immobilière.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Would the member like to briefly explain their bill?

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Yes. Thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity.

Fixing Tribunals Ontario Backlogs Act, 2024: This bill makes amendments to the Adjudicative Tribunals Accountability, Governance and Appointments Act, 2019, the Human Rights Code and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006.

Section 14 of the Adjudicative Tribunals Accountability, Governance and Appointments Act, 2019, is re-enacted to require the Public Appointments Secretariat to compile a publicly available list of appointees and intended appointees to adjudicative tribunals that includes certain information, including information about their attendance before the Standing Committee on Government Agencies and to prohibit the appointment or re-appointment of a person to an adjudicative tribunal without the approval of the chair of the tribunal. A new section, 22.1 of the act provides for the establishment of an access-to-justice panel tasked with making recommendations to the Attorney General with respect to enhancing the independence of adjudicative tribunals and improving access to justice for people appearing before adjudicative tribunals.

The Human Rights Code and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, are both amended to provide for backlog reduction panels, those being panels of adjudicators tasked with resolving cases at, respectively, the Human Rights Tribunal and Landlord and Tenant Board. The Standing Committee on Government Agencies is to determine the cases to be resolved by the backlog reduction panels. Each of the backlog reduction panels is to be dissolved once all cases referred to it have been resolved.

1510

PETITIONS

ADDICTION SERVICES

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition that calls on this Legislature to continue support and operation of supervised consumption services and associated harm reductions in the province of Ontario. Supervised consumption sites are an evidence-based treatment to the toxic drug supply crisis that we have in the province. It also addresses public health concerns

around use of drugs, reducing the need for hospitalizations and emergency room visits.

The petitioners ask that we not only continue to support, but that we also provide support for voluntary, publicly funded treatment, which is not currently available to everyone who is seeking it in the province of Ontario.

I wholeheartedly endorse this petition. I will sign my name to it and send it to the table with page Alina.

#### CHILD CARE

**MPP Jill Andrew:** This petition is titled “Deliver \$10-a-Day Child Care Now.” The people who have signed this petition recognize that \$10-a-day child care is a game-changer. It’s a game-changer for women, for parents who are being bogged down by the affordability crisis here in Ontario. It is one of the most single-handed, foundational pieces that this province can do to ensure that women and people who have children have a successful pathway in their careers. If at home or at work, they don’t have to worry about child care.

This petition is calling for the government of Ontario to deliver \$10-a-day child care and to do that now, since families are drowning in some of the highest child care fees in the country and they simply can’t wait any longer for relief.

I really agree with this petition—I wholeheartedly do—on behalf of women and dads and non-binary families across St. Paul’s who are trying to get an affordability solution, and \$10-a-day child care is an affordability solution.

#### ADDICTION SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Paul-André Gauthier, a well-known nurse practitioner from Sudbury, for this petition. It reads, “Petition for Continued Operation of Supervised Consumption Services and Associated Harm Reduction Programs.”

Speaker, every two and a half hours, someone in Ontario dies from the toxic drug supply in Ontario. Supervised consumption and treatment services sites have been instrumental in preventing thousands and thousands of deaths across our province. The closure of consumption and treatment sites will increase the number of preventable deaths, injuries, hospitalizations, emergency visits and incidents of HIV and hepatitis. The sites not only give access to addiction treatment services, but also other health and social services for people who need them.

The provincially commissioned review of the Riverdale consumption site found that it is was desirable to maintain and enhance the funding for consumption and treatment sites, but the closure of the sites will withdraw the health services for people who use drugs and is a denial of their right to access health care. It will also lead to increased drug use in public places. When they are there, they’re part of the continuum of care.

The people who signed the petition are asking the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision to

close the consumption and treatment sites that are already established and fund them adequately.

They would also like to see an increase in the number of consumption and treatment sites available in communities like mine—Sudbury, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie.

They would like to ensure that publicly funded and not-for-profit, evidence-based treatments are funded in Ontario.

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

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I, too, have a petition. It is a petition to raise social assistance rates.

We know we are all in an affordability crisis in Ontario. People are struggling to make ends meet.

We know that quality of life affects your overall health—physical and mental—and that of your family as well.

Speaker, 230 organizations recommend the doubling of OW and ODSP.

I am very happy to support this. I will affix my name and send it with new page Charlotte.

#### ADDICTION SERVICES

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** It’s very important to all my constituents—especially Alana Pawley from London, who signed this petition. The reason we want to advocate for a continuum of health care is because supervised consumption sites are under threat and they are being closed. We know that people have addictions. It’s a health care issue. In order for them to access health care, they need access to supervised consumption sites.

Every two and a half hours, a person dies of a drug overdose. This is why the supervised consumption services are so important. If we close these sites down, what’s going to happen is, people are going to die. Those things could be prevented, if they were able to access safe supply. When we close these sites, what’s going to happen is the increase to emergency rooms, first responders, incidence of HIV and hepatitis C. Those things will increase.

So the people in London are actually petitioning this government to reverse the decision to close these supervised consumption sites.

Make sure that any community that needs that health care continuum has access to that. Make sure that these sites are not-for-profit and evidence-based, so that anyone who has a disease—an addiction; it’s a health care issue—has access to health care on a continuum, so they can get treatment and actually help themselves and help this province do better when it comes to health care.

I sign the petition, and I will give it to page Laura to deliver to the table.

## ONTARIO PLACE

**MPP Jill Andrew:** This petition is titled “Save Ontario Place,” and it’s signed by members of my community in St. Paul’s and folks across Toronto. It expresses to this Legislature how important Ontario Place is. Speaker, 50 years of public enjoyment, of public space—truly a heritage landmark in our province.

This petition echoes the frustration of Ontarians who are worried about the government’s priority to create a billion-dollar luxury foreign spa, as opposed to investing in repairs to Ontario Place; prioritizing environmental sustainability, accessibility, inclusivity; and, number one, consulting with community—which this petition, signed by hundreds of folks, elaborates that they were not consulted on.

This petition asks this Legislature to halt any further development plans for Ontario Place, to put the people of Ontario over profit, and to invest in the communities and the urgent crisis we have of homelessness, housing insecurity, food insecurity, as opposed to handing over a \$1-billion gift to a foreign Austrian spa company.

1520

I couldn’t agree more. So I’m going to affix my signature and hope that this government will save Ontario Place.

## HOUSING

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I have a petition here, and it speaks to the issue of housing in the province of Ontario. It refers to the fact that we’ve experienced remarkable population growth: over three million new individuals in the last three years. It also speaks to the issue of a shortage of housing, and it also speaks to the fact that many families need suitable homes that are safe and that they can afford to purchase.

To summarize, it says that housing costs have increased and that many people find it very difficult either to rent a home or to purchase a home.

At the end, it calls on the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario to prioritize policies and programs that accelerate the construction of new homes and rentals.

I certainly support this petition. I’m going to sign it and give it to page Jonah and ask him to bring it to the Clerks’ table.

## ADDICTION SERVICES

**MPP Jamie West:** This petition is titled petition to resume operation of supervised consumption services and associated harm reduction programs. I want to thank the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario for collecting these petitions, and I want to recognize Denise Sandul for all of her work around supervised consumption sites and treatment for people living with addictions.

Basically, what it spells out—and this number is shocking: A person in Ontario dies every 2.5 hours from the toxic drug supply in Ontario. It points out that

supervised consumption sites, or consumption and treatment services sites, have been instrumental in preventing thousands of deaths from the toxic drug supply, and closing these will increase the number of preventable deaths, injuries and hospitalizations. It will also increase emergency room visits and the incidence of HIV and hepatitis.

As well, it points out that SCS or CTS offer access to other health and social services, including addiction treatment, health care and other access like that.

The provincially commissioned review of the South Riverdale CHC found it desirable to maintain and enhance funding for the supervised consumption sites.

It also makes the argument that the closure of a supervised consumption site is the withdrawal of health services and a denial of these people’s right to health care.

It also points out that closing these sites will lead to an increase in drug use in public spaces, and that health care should emphasize prevention as well as treatment in the full continuum of care.

So they’re asking the Legislative Assembly to reverse the decision to close these sites and to ensure that all the established supervised consumption sites remain operational and have adequate funding. They also want to increase funding for the sites so they can help in a more holistic way. And they also want to ensure access to voluntary, publicly funded, not-for-profit, evidence-based treatment.

I support this petition. I’ll affix my signature, and I’ll provide it to page Alina for the table.

## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** I’m pleased to present the petition today. This petition speaks to how quickly the population of Ontario has been growing and the pressures that growth has put on our traffic system, our transportation systems, straining the infrastructure across the province. It speaks to the idea that these are quality-of-life issues, whether that’s talking about the commute and the amount of time it takes for people to get home, for people to access the services across the province. And it speaks to the idea that by expanding our transportation network, by building the roads that are necessary, that will support the community growth in a way that is fair and equitable to everyone.

If I may summarize, Speaker, this petition is asking this government to prioritize highway construction to accommodate population growth and enhance the quality of life for residents all across Ontario.

I very much support this petition. I will sign it and hand it to page Ekam.

## CHILD CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank John Duggan from Val Caron in my riding for these petitions. They’re called “A Future for Child Care in Ontario.”

The petition is quite simple. There are a lot of shortages of child care spaces because of the disparity between the



demand and the availability of child care. We need 65,000 more child care workers to meet the demand for \$10-an-hour child care.

Early childhood educators and workers have been historically undervalued, with low pay, poor working conditions and high turnover.

So they ask the Legislative Assembly to immediately establish an early years and child care workers advisory committee to develop recommendations on how to support the early years and child care workforce and address staffing shortages, including through a salary scale, increased compensation and improved working conditions.

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

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our petitions for this afternoon.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SAFER STREETS, STRONGER COMMUNITIES ACT, 2024

#### LOI DE 2024 VISANT À ACCROÎTRE LA SÉCURITÉ DANS LES RUES ET À RENFORCER LES COLLECTIVITÉS

Mr. Kerzner moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 223, An Act to enact two Acts and to amend various Acts with respect to public safety and the justice system /  
Projet de loi 223, Loi édictant deux lois et modifiant diverses lois relatives à la sécurité publique et au système judiciaire.

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

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** It's a pleasure to rise today and to speak on our government's bill.

I'll be sharing my time with the Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform, the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

It has been an honour to work with the associate minister, the Attorney General, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Transportation on Bill 223, the government's proposed Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act, 2024.

Without a doubt, I have never seen a government in my lifetime more preoccupied with the urgency of public safety for every Ontarian, and our preoccupation means that we're not going to stop. People have told us to stop: "Stop. We don't need it. We're going in the wrong direction." And I said, "You're totally wrong. You are absolutely, totally wrong." That's why, day after day, thanks to the leadership of Premier Ford, we have prioritized public safety, with no modern-day precedent of any other government that has taken this so seriously.

It's a top priority for our government. It's not just the slogan, Madam Speaker, and I'll tell you why: We will always put the safety of the people of Ontario first. We will always prioritize the rights of the public over the rights of the criminals, including those convicted of the most serious, egregious and heinous offences. The people of Ontario will always be able to count on us to protect the inherent rights we all have to live safely in our own homes and communities.

It's simple: We all want to have the right to wake up our kids in the morning and see them off to school, to check in on our loved ones and our seniors, to go to work, to come home at the end of the day, to shop, to play in the park and to pray. This inherent right, fundamental to everyone in Ontario—equal—means that we must cherish this, and we must make sure, in every action we take, this inherent right is preserved.

Our commitment to the people of Ontario on public safety started on day one under the government of Premier Ford. After years of neglect, after years of the Liberals in office, who never wanted to talk about it—they never attended a badge ceremony; they never went to a march past at the Ontario Police College so they could see the pride in the people graduating to become police officers. They never invested in the correctional system. They did absolutely nothing. They brought public safety to zero in priority.

### 1530

That's when Premier Ford stepped in and he said, "We're not going to take that. We're going to say thank you to everyone who keeps us safe. We're going to have their backs and we're going to work hard every day to earn their trust." And that's exactly what we've done.

Ontario, like many jurisdictions across the country and beyond, has seen increases in serious violent crimes. These are alarming trends, and some of this criminal activity is linked to organized crime. We also recognize that there is a growing concern as to whether policing tools such as the 23-year-old Ontario Sex Offender Registry are keeping up with the times.

I just want to give some dimension to the Ontario Sex Offender Registry. It was a prior Progressive Conservative government that led by example. I'll talk more about it later in my remarks, but Premier Mike Harris went forward when others told him also, "Don't do it. Stop." He did and we became the first jurisdiction in Canada, even preceding the federal government, to set up our own Sex Offender Registry in April 2001. That government took a first-in-Canada action with the proclamation of Christopher's Law.

My office is in regular contact with police services that have been calling for new measures to make sure that the Ontario Sex Offender Registry reflects today's realities, to better protect the province's most vulnerable people, particularly our children.

I would say, Madam Speaker, nothing has personally affected me more than meeting the parents of Christopher, together with the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and the member from Thornhill and the

Associate Minister of Small Business, who were there with us last week. It was overwhelming for us to begin a conversation, not understanding how we would process the pain that they went through.

A young, beautiful boy, 10 years old, in 1988, was brutally assaulted, taken and killed. They worked for almost 15 years to make sure that somebody heard their plea that we had to move forward with our own Sex Offender Registry, and they did. It was overwhelming, and I know my colleagues will speak about their experience in meeting the family. The family told us that they turned pain into something positive, that they saw this into reality.

I hear the same concerns from parents in my own community of York Centre and in others across the province. I listen very closely. We take all these concerns very seriously. That's why the proposed Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act, 2024, builds on the previous work of this government, including the Enhancing Access to Justice Act—which we did earlier this year, 2024—and the Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, 2023. These acts combined have delivered more support to victims of crime; strengthened bail compliance, one of the greatest challenges confronting this justice system; improved fire safety; and built a more responsive and effective death investigation system. Those were done in the prior bills this government came forward with. At the same time, the proposed amendments to the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, contained in this bill today ensure that the groundbreaking policing legislation that came in force on April 1 of this year continues to support police services, police oversight and the people of Ontario.

Madam Speaker, this government has fostered unparalleled relationships with our associations: the Police Association of Ontario, and I had the privilege of being there today and speaking at their conference; the OPPA, the Ontario Provincial Police Association; the Toronto Police Association; the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police; the Indigenous police chiefs association; and the list goes on. On the fire side, it's the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs and the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association.

Madam Speaker, we worked hard to listen to our stakeholders. The issues that were important for them are important for us. Across the board, it is an honour of a lifetime to call the fire chiefs early in the morning on my way to this beautiful House of democracy, to call the police chiefs so that I can listen to what is happening; I can listen to them. They are incredible people that work hard every day, because they can make a substantial difference in our community's life every day, and that's what we expect that people should do—our firefighters; our police officers; our correctional, probation and parole officers; those amazing 911 call operators; the animal welfare inspectors; the paramedics. Everyone that has a role, they can make a substantial difference in a community's life every day.

Madame la Présidente, la raison pour leur service est de faire une différence dans la vie des gens lorsqu'ils ne s'y

attendent pas—parce que nous croyons en notre province et notre avenir.

It's because we believe in our province. We believe in the power of making a difference, and we'll never stop. We will never stop working to make sure that we have their backs.

Je suis fier de nos policiers, nos pompiers, nos premiers intervenants et de tous ceux qui assurent la sécurité de l'Ontario tous les jours.

Our government is proud to stand by everybody that keeps us safe. The contributions they make are substantial.

It would not be possible to come forward today without the contributions of other ministries as well. The Ministry of Transportation's proposal, as example, to establish a new provincial offence and penalty for vehicle-related fraudulent transactions will, if passed, provide a valuable law enforcement tool. That's important. We've said we will crack down on people that think it's okay to steal a car with VIN fraud. It's not. We will find you, and we will put you where you belong: in jail.

Thanks to Premier Ford, we've established a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to people who want to wreak havoc in our community.

The Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform and I travelled to Yellowknife. I told the story here in the Legislature, that we sat at a table with our provincial and territorial colleagues, looking straight in the eye of the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada and the Minister of Public Safety, and we said, "Your time is up. Do it now. Enact meaningful bail reform so we don't have this vicious cycle that two, three, four times are back on the street." It's completely unacceptable. And we don't have to see people like a beautiful OPP officer, Greg Pierzchala, killed near Cayuga, Ontario, just before New Year's of 2022—so innocent, so wonderful, and he was killed by a violent and repeat offender who was out on bail.

Although the total facts are not known, it was reported by the Toronto Police Association that in my own constituency of York Centre, the accident that took place at Bathurst and Wilson, where a wonderful bus driver was taken to the hospital, together with other people, was because of an auto theft where somebody may have been out on bail.

Enough is enough. Our government will do whatever it takes no matter the cost, no matter the threats, no matter the odds, and we will not be afraid to make sure public safety is our priority morning, noon and night.

I want to talk again about Christopher's Law, because there's nothing more basic than the fundamental community safety, than protecting society's most vulnerable people from sex offenders.

Again, in 2000, the government moved forward and passed Christopher's Law. It was named after a young boy, as I mentioned, who was the victim of an unspeakable tragedy at the hands of a convicted child molester with a long record of committing heinous crimes. This act established Canada's first sex offenders registry in 2001. Anybody in the province convicted of a prescribed sex offence is automatically added to the registry.

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But technology has moved forward in over 20 years. The Internet, social media, email addresses—it has changed a lot. That's why we wanted to come forward in making sure that we update it with the passage of time and the advancements of technology, including social media. We know this is necessary, because the number of sexual assault cases in Ontario has increased significantly in the last 10 years.

Amendments to Christopher's Law contained in this bill, Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act, will, if passed, equip police services with additional information that can help them prevent, investigate and solve crimes of a sexual nature. It's very important that we take this opportunity and make sure that we do everything we can to keep everybody, the most vulnerable, safe in our province.

I'm really proud that thanks to the wonderful, wonderful efforts of the member from Thornhill and the member of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock—for them and for us, it's personal. We're going to continue to make sure that we will send a message out: that those heinous people who think they can get away with it can't.

I also wanted to say there are so many other parts of this bill that deal with, on the public safety side, important things. We want to make sure that at the end of the day, we will continue to move with the times. This will not be our government's last attempt to continue to prioritize public safety, because we do it every day.

I have to tell you something: When you have the privilege like I have to tour the four corners of our province, firstly, you see how big it is; secondly, you see how incredibly fortunate we are to live in a place like this. But the fundamental rights we all have are the same if we're living in the smallest of communities, if we're living in a large urban centre. If we're going through First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities—it's the same. We all have a right to ensure that we can live safely in our communities. That's exactly why, together with my colleagues, we've worked hard, day and night, to transmit a message that is positive, that has resonated with people in Ontario.

I knock on doors in my own community of York Centre. I hear it day after day: "We're scared. It was never like this. What has happened? Why are so many autos being stolen? Why are there so many guns on our streets?" And I say to them, "Our government will not rest." Whether we're coming forward with the \$51-million investment to fight auto theft and fight it hard; whether it's the \$112-million-plus investment with the Bail Compliance and Warrant Apprehension Grant; whether it's putting more boots on the ground, which is undeniable, because they're on our streets—we've taken class sizes that were 40 and 50, only 20 years ago, per class, three classes a year; now we're at 525, times four. The last announcement we made, the last 80 spots of the 2,000-plus—we want to make sure they can go to smaller services and be available for First Nations police services

when that call comes that they have a candidate who wants to serve.

There are so many people in Ontario who have said the same thing. There is no modern-day precedent to the seriousness to which your government, our government led by Premier Ford, has taken public safety. And do you know what, Madam Speaker? We're only getting started.

I believe we're living in unprecedented times. There's a lot we can't control in the geopolitical world we are in. But what we can control here in our Ontario are the legislation; the regulations; the expectation, the tone and the confidence that a government must have to lead and to send a message across Ontario. This will always be our priority.

Madam Speaker, it has been a privilege to speak today on this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** I recognize the Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform.

**Hon. Graham McGregor:** Thank you, colleagues. It's a pleasure to be here in the House this afternoon, speaking to—my notes say "historic," and I'll say "historic," but also just, frankly, a really good, decent, common-sense bill, which is going to keep Ontarians safe all across the province.

We've been crystal clear, as a government, that the safety of the people of Ontario and our communities is a top priority. In fact, if you talk to not only our government, but if you talk to residents out there in the streets, public safety is top of mind for residents, whether it's in my riding of Brampton North or communities across Ontario. I look at the member from Mississauga—and Barrie, and the areas around Barrie, in Scarborough, in Oakville North–Burlington, in Whitby, in Brampton Centre. This is a top priority for the residents we serve. If we can't deliver public safety for our residents, then what are we doing here?

This bill has a lot of measures on how we can deliver concretely on that promise of public safety for our residents.

I'd like to thank everyone involved in making this bill possible: the Solicitor General, the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, the Attorney General, the Minister of Transportation. All have key items in this bill. I'd like to thank them, their staff in the ministries, as well as the Premier for his leadership. And I'd be remiss if I didn't thank the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and the member for Thornhill for their contributions—and, frankly, the contributions of the PC caucus to put this bill together, which I hope that members of this House will support because it will make life a lot better and a lot safer for a lot of people.

First, I'd like to talk about how the measures in this bill, if passed, help combat auto theft and make us all safer.

We are consistently seeing cars being stolen across the province. These thefts are often linked to fraudulent inter-actions and transactions, often including fraudulent vehicle identification numbers. A car and the insurance and everything else that goes along with it is a huge

expense for a family. Make no mistake, this is a crime that takes a real toll on its victims. For many, many Ontarians, a car is the biggest purchase that they're going to make—for the vast majority of Ontarians, it's at least top three. You think about a house and some other purchases and then a vehicle. It disrupts your life when your car is stolen. Even if your car comes back, you feel like you've been violated, your rights have been violated. There's a criminal who was in your car. And our government has, quite frankly, had enough.

I want to dissuade the House of the idea that auto theft is just a property crime. We know, from consulting with law enforcement, that the reason why cars are being stolen is because organized crime can make money off of it. It's very lucrative for organized crime. The funds from stealing and selling cars of Ontarians are used to fund organized crime, human trafficking, drug trafficking and weapons trafficking all across Canada, North America and the world. We're sick and tired of seeing our stolen vehicles being used to fund this organized crime and all the consequences that come with it for our communities.

We can send a simple message for car thieves and organized crime networks today, if we pass this bill as a House. If we were to pass this bill and put it forward, we would be sending a clear message to these organized criminal networks that we are coming after them, because our government and this House should, and always will, put public safety first. That means putting the rights of law-abiding citizens over the rights of criminals. We'll never apologize for that.

The measures in this bill build on what we're already doing. We're investing over \$150 million to help police find and dismantle organized crime networks and put thieves behind bars. This includes a new preventing auto thefts grant that's supporting 21 police projects across the province with \$18 million over three years, beginning in 2023-24, to support new and enhanced crime-fighting measures targeting auto theft.

In addition, we created the provincial auto theft and towing team, led by the OPP, and a new Major Auto Theft Prosecution Response Team.

We're also investing in the GTA-greater Golden Horseshoe investigative fund to stop the illegal export of stolen vehicles and target violent crime linked to criminal organizations. This will provide police with the resources they need, including cutting-edge technology.

And we're investing \$134 million to help police services acquire five new police helicopters for police services in the GTA and Ottawa regions. Equipped with the latest technology, these helicopters will help keep highways safe from violent carjackings, auto theft, street racing and impaired driving.

#### 1550

Frankly, with the resources we are putting into police hands, auto thieves will simply have nowhere to hide. But there's far more to do to ensure that when we go to bed at night, we know that our cars will still be there in our driveways when we wake up.

That's why our government is proposing changes that would create a new provincial offence under the Highway Traffic Act for knowingly providing a false VIN when applying for a vehicle permit. The penalties, if passed, are stiff and will be a significant deterrent to anyone considering this crime.

I want to be clear. The majority of cars that are stolen in Ontario are for export, and we continue to call on the federal government to do a better job there. We need proper scanning happening at the Brampton and Vaughan rail yards. We need outbound cargo to be properly scanned at the port of Montreal.

But when I say that the majority of cars are exported, that means there is a minority of cars that are staying domestic. A big way that they're staying domestic is through acts of VIN fraud, through ServiceOntario. We're closing those loopholes. We're continuing to work on that to make sure that we're closing the loopholes that we can. But putting this law forward—a penalty of up to \$100,000 for knowingly submitting false information in the process of a VIN and up to six months in jail.

By putting this law forward, this House could send a simple message to auto thieves: If you don't want to spend time in jail, leave other people's vehicles alone.

I'd like to take a moment to talk about what's not in this bill. Combatting crime is a team effort. It requires the hard work of law enforcement, and we can always count on that. It requires the provincial government—and this bill is only the latest example of how this government is doing everything we can to put public safety first. And it requires the federal government, which continues to let us down.

Speaker, what our bill doesn't include are changes to the Criminal Code. That's because the Criminal Code is federal jurisdiction, but it is what tells judges how long they can sentence not only car thieves but also carjackers and other violent criminals. It tells judges the parameters around bail. A properly functioning Criminal Code is absolutely essential to a safe society, but it's increasingly clear we don't have that. Time and time again, we hear of a crime, and the alleged perpetrators are out on bail; or we hear of arrests, thanks to the hard work of law enforcement, and by the time they get to the podium to inform the public, those arrested are already out on bail.

I'll speak about a time in Peel region. Earlier this summer, we were there for the announcement of Project Warlock, which was an initiative funded by this government, led by the Peel police—but partnered with other law enforcement agencies. Eighteen people were arrested, and over 150 Criminal Code charges—these were for things like violent home invasions, carjackings, people walking up and putting a gun to somebody's head, saying, "Give me the keys to your car." By the time we were doing this announcement to celebrate finding these heinous individuals committing these crimes—nine of the 18 individuals were out on bail by the time we were doing the press conference.

I hear some liberal-minded, progressive folks—we put out a letter three weeks ago, prescriptive of what we would like to see in the Criminal Code. We hear progressives and

lawyers losing their minds, saying we're draconian, saying we're unconstitutional—

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** So-called progressives.

**Hon. Graham McGregor:** So-called progressives. That's right.

Madam Speaker, I'm not a lawyer. I'm not a judge. I'm a pretty regular fellow, but I read the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. You can look it up on your cellphone. It's not too hard—maybe for some of the members over on the opposite benches, but pretty easy, I think, for PC members. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms talks about reasonable bail.

The scenario that I just talked about says that everyone has a right to reasonable bail. The scenario I talked about where you had nine of 18 individuals out on bail by the time we were announcing their arrest—where you have a Toronto police officer who was shot at earlier in October, shot at by an individual who was out on bail after over two dozen offences, including multiple breakings and enterings; when you have a scenario like Constable Greg Pierzchala, who was killed by an individual who was out on bail for a gun crime, who had a piece of paper, a gun ban, a piece of paper saying they shouldn't own a firearm. That individual should have been held behind bars.

When you see scenarios like that that we're running into time and time again on bail, how is that reasonable? I'd say that's not reasonable. I think judges, like everybody else, have to realize that they serve the public, not the other way around. And if that makes me draconian, if that makes me hard right, if that makes me out of hand, Madam Speaker, then do you know what? I'm proud of it, because I was sent here by residents to stand up for their public safety, just like every member of this caucus. We will never apologize for demanding law and order in the streets of Canada.

Far too often, we're seeing these individuals out on bail, committing crimes again and again. The landscape in Ontario has changed drastically in the last few years. We're seeing increased instances of violence, violent car thefts and, most concerningly, the repeat violent offenders I've talked about who are let out again and again and again and who commit more crime on our streets.

Just yesterday, in the dark, early hours of the morning, in the Solicitor General's riding, there was another horrific incident. Here in Toronto, two vehicles—allegedly stolen—were travelling at a very high speed down Wilson Avenue. One of those vehicles, a BMW, collided with a TTC bus travelling down Bathurst. It struck the bus hard enough to spin the bus into the opposing lanes. Nine people were injured; eight people were taken to hospital, some with life-threatening injuries. Our thoughts go out to them and their families. But it can be no surprise to anyone in this House to learn that there are allegations we've heard that two of the people in the BMW were out on bail—one for a violent robbery. That was just one of the recent ones of these horrible events.

We can't forget about the ones that we talked about before. The incident of the police officer being shot in broad daylight at Yonge and Eglinton by an individual

who was out on bail—over two dozen charges. As I mentioned, when you hear these scenarios, two thoughts cross your mind: one, hopes and prayers that the officer will be okay, and thoughts for their families. And then the second thought—and a thought that we shouldn't be having, but it's a way that we've been trained and conditioned by the scenario and the times that we're living in. The second thought that crossed my mind: Was the alleged shooter out on bail? Fortunately, the answer to question one is that the constable will make a full recovery. But yes, as happens time after time, his alleged assailant was out on bail with a probation order not to possess a firearm.

Ontario's justice system is creaking under the weight of a flawed federal bail system. It makes communities feel unsafe. It makes police officers vulnerable. Our government has had enough. This has to end.

Our government is acting. We're strengthening Christopher's Law. We're tackling VIN fraud. We're doing so much else in this bill, and even more outside it, like hiring new judges and prosecutors to address court backlogs. But these judges must abide by the same broken catch-and-release system. We need the federal government to act, as we have continually called on them to do; as myself and the Solicitor General called on them to do three weeks ago. We repeated that call again yesterday, and we repeat it again today.

We are joined in the tabling of this bill by members of the Police Association of Ontario and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. Both of those organizations acknowledge the good work that the Ontario government is doing. We're throwing everything we can into public safety, to keep residents safe—the God-given right that we all have to be safe in our communities. They acknowledge the provincial leadership but unanimously have all called on the federal government to step up and do their part.

The catch-and-release bail system simply has to end. We want and need meaningful bail reform. It's time for the federal Minister of Justice to—just as we've been doing—work to keep people and communities safe. That's why we've called specifically for the federal government to enact the following: mandatory minimum sentencing for serious crimes to ensure appropriate penalties, like firearms offences—the firearms offences that they repealed in Bill C-5.

If you unload a firearm in Ontario, to spend a minimum of four years in prison—I think that's just common sense. But to some folks out there, the so-called progressives of the world, that's draconian; that's unconstitutional. We saw the Liberals say, "We don't even know if that's going to work."

I'll tell you, Madam Speaker: What's not working is giving a hardened criminal a piece of paper saying, "Don't commit any more crime." That doesn't work. Do you know what does keep them? Putting that individual behind bars. Don't give them the opportunity.

What we've seen time and time again—we have Liberal legislation in front of us, a weak Liberal Criminal Code and we see weak-kneed judges interpreting that. The pendulum has swung so far in the direction of the rights of

criminals and suspected criminals, nowhere near where it needs to be to keep Ontario communities and Ontario families safe. That's why we're saying enough is enough. We need bail reform now.

**1600**

Speaker, the measures that we're asking the federal government for:

- mandatory minimums;
- provisions to deny bail for offenders charged with serious offences—murder, terrorism, human trafficking, drug trafficking, carjackings and home invasions;
- requiring ankle monitors as a condition for individuals charged with serious crimes;
- eliminating some of the time credits that defence uses to delay trials, delay proceedings.

This would complement the measures that we're putting forward in the bill. We need the federal government to do their part. We are doing ours.

We are building jails across Ontario to make sure we have the capacity that we need to keep people locked up. We've invested in police. We've got almost 2,100 police constables being graduated across Ontario. That number was 1,400 under the previous government. We have a court system that is bolstered with resources and more resources coming on the way. Last year, the court system actually processed more cases out than we took in for the first time in a decade, under this Attorney General's leadership. We have helicopters on the way. We have automatic licence plate readers for our police services. We have investigative money that they can tap into to work collaboratively, to data-share, to tackle these crimes. Where we are being let down is a weak, ineffective Criminal Code that we need to change.

Now, colleagues in this House can all step up. We've asked the opposition to join our calls for bail reform. They have repeatedly refused to do so. But with this bill, here is another opportunity for the members of the NDP, the members of the Liberals, the Green Party and the independents to stand up and say, "Public safety matters to me and matters to my constituents. I'm going to do the right thing about it." I certainly hope that those members take the opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** It is indeed an honour to rise today to speak on the introduction of the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act. I would like to express my appreciation to the member for York Centre, our Solicitor General, for leading the development of this proposed legislation and his strong dedication to community and public safety.

I'd also like to thank the member from Brampton South, the Minister of Transportation, and the member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro–Medonte, our Attorney General, for their important contributions to this legislation and their unwavering advocacy for safer streets and stronger communities.

Some of the most pressing issues facing our communities are mental health and addictions. That's why we created Roadmap to Wellness, our government's plan to

build a world-class mental health and addictions system, through which we're investing \$3.8 billion over 10 years to fill gaps in mental health and addictions care, create new services and expand programs. As part of our 2024 budget, we are investing an additional \$396 million in funding over three years to improve access and expand existing mental health and addiction services and programs alongside supportive housing initiatives.

Through the Roadmap to Wellness and the Addictions Recovery Fund, our government is creating more than 550 addiction recovery beds and new innovative models of treatment, like mobile mental health clinics. But we recognize that more needs to be done to give people their lives back through treatment and recovery.

In the communities where supervised consumption sites have been established, there have been reported concerns expressed about community safety. Our government has heard that the status quo of these sites is not working and, in fact, is having a negative impact on communities. Parents are worried about the discarded needles that their children could pick up. Some parents no longer feel comfortable sending their children to the local elementary school or have pulled them out of their local daycare. Neighbourhood businesses are concerned about the disruptive behaviour and increased crime around drug consumption sites that impact their livelihoods.

Just last year, as an example, compared to the rest of the city, there was a 113% higher increase in reported rates of assault near these sites in Toronto. In Toronto, there have been numerous stories of altercations, stabbings, shootings and unfortunately even a homicide in the vicinity of one of these sites. Residents near Ottawa's sites are concerned about the drug-related crimes in their community. Violent crime was up 146% near Ottawa's Somerset site. Homicide was 450% higher near Hamilton's Urban Core site.

Reports from police services in Ontario and indeed across Canada indicate that hydromorphone distributed at consumption sites is in fact being diverted and trafficked, increasing the supply of dangerous and illegal drugs in communities where these sites operate. We are hearing more and more about the tragic outcomes of an approach that accepts and promotes the use of illegal drugs over treatment and recovery. The parents I talk to are desperate that more needs to be done. Our priority must always be to keep our community safe, especially when it comes to protecting our children. Our government is once again standing up for our communities and our families and taking action to address these problems.

As part of the legislation being introduced today, we are proposing important changes to supervised drug consumption sites, which is a key step in keeping our communities safe while doing more to support the recovery of those who are struggling with addictions. The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act would, if passed, establish the Community Care and Recovery Act, which would prohibit the operation of supervised consumption sites within 200 metres of a school or a child care centre. Sites currently located within the 200-metre buffer zone would need to stop providing supervised consumption services no later

than March 31, 2025. The nine remaining provincially funded consumption treatment sites which are located outside of the 200-metre buffer zone will continue to operate, but with enhanced mandatory reporting requirements, transparency and procedures established by the Ministry of Health.

The proposed legislation would also require municipalities and local boards to seek provincial approval prior to making or supporting requests to the federal government for exemptions under federal legislation to stand up new supervised consumption sites, or prior to applying for safe supply service program funding or supporting such applications. It would make it clear that municipalities and local boards do not have the power to apply to the federal Minister of Health for the decriminalization of the personal possession of illegal drugs.

As we move ahead with this proposed legislation, I also note that our government is introducing new measures to enhance public safety for the remaining sites. We are establishing stronger community safety and security plans and policies that aim to discourage loitering and improve community engagement and conflict de-escalation.

Speaker, these measures are just part of the solution. The cycle of addiction is not being broken by supervised consumption sites. For many people, these sites are just a revolving door where people go to consume drugs but never move toward treatment or rehabilitation. We recognize that Ontarians deserve more than a health care system that enables people struggling with addictions to continue to use illegal drugs. We must ensure that those facing addiction challenges receive the support they need, including access to supportive housing, while protecting our communities and maintaining public safety. That is why in August I announced that we are creating up to 19 new homelessness and addiction recovery treatment hubs, or HART hubs, across Ontario, supported by a \$378-million investment.

The HART hubs will build on similar existing hub models that are already in place in some communities in Ontario and successfully providing people with care. They will reflect regional priorities by connecting people with complex service needs to comprehensive treatment and preventative services that can include primary care; mental health services; addiction care and supports; social services and employment supports; shelter and transition beds; supportive housing; and other supplies and services, including naloxone, on-site showers and food. The HART hubs will also add up to 375 highly supportive housing units that will help some of our most vulnerable people in need of transition to more stable long-term help.

#### 1610

HART hubs are in addition to our investment of nearly \$700 million invested each and every year for supportive housing through the Homelessness Prevention Program and Indigenous Supportive Housing Program. With a focus on treatment and recovery, HART hubs will not offer safe supply, supervised drug consumption or a needle exchange program.

By creating HART hubs, we are supporting the treatment and recovery of individuals with these kinds of complex service needs: those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; have substance use and mental health challenges, and social services supports or employment needs. With these types of community-based supports, clients should have a greater ability to function independently and should have stabilized or improved mental health outcomes through treatment and recovery.

Through these hubs, there should be a number of system outcomes, including better integrated service delivery through on-site, connected and co-located services, and pathways to broader community services such as community health centres, youth wellness hubs, hospitals and other services and supports. With enhanced system coordination, there should be increased opportunities for collaboration and to better identify and address the needs of hard-to-reach clients.

The nine provincially funded CTS sites that will need to be closed due to being within the 200-metre buffer zone have been encouraged to submit proposals to transition to HART hubs. These sites could be eligible for up to four times more funding under the HART hub model than they receive currently from the province as a supervised consumption site. The 10 remaining HART hubs will be established through a call-for-proposal process. Two of these will be Indigenous-led hubs. The deadline to submit applications was in mid-October, and decisions about successful applicants are expected to be finalized after careful consideration of the proposals.

Addictions, mental health and homelessness are some of the most pressing and challenging issues in our province. By taking steps to improve community safety and creating new HART hubs, we are taking real action to support our communities and providing comprehensive, accessible and compassionate treatment and care that can give people hope for recovery.

Local leaders have expressed their support for these initiatives. Drew Dilkens, the mayor of Windsor, said that this announcement “is a real game-changer. This major investment will truly support people to get their lives back on track through needed treatment and recovery, while ensuring that neighbourhoods in Windsor and across Ontario remain safe.”

The mayor of Greater Sudbury, Paul Lefebvre, expressed that “collaboration between the province and municipalities is key to addressing community wellness. The HART hubs reflect a focus on treatment and recovery, which mirrors efforts Greater Sudbury and local health providers have been using. I look forward to working with the province on helping people transition to stable, long-term housing.”

From the mayor of Guelph, Cam Guthrie: “I commend the provincial government for moving forward with a detailed plan to save lives, restore families and improve communities struggling with the stranglehold of addictions. I am confident that the new HART hub model, focused on recovery, will show the positive results cities

have been desperately requesting for our most vulnerable citizens, not just in Guelph, but across Ontario.”

A quote from the mayor of Brampton, Patrick Brown: “Grateful for the Ford government’s focus on treatment for addictions and not band-aid solutions.... I share their concern about the proliferation of safe injection sites in areas close to families and children. This needs to stop.”

Barrie’s mayor, Alex Nuttall, stated that, “Today’s announcement by the provincial government will deliver safer streets for the residents of Ontario through increased funding for mental health and addictions support as well as preventing injection sites from being located next to daycare centres and schools. I commend the provincial government for taking these necessary steps to protect our children and our residents.”

Our government recognizes how many of our municipal partners have been strong advocates and supporters for providing better access to mental health, addictions and homelessness services in our communities, and we greatly appreciate all their efforts in helping us build healthier and stronger communities across Ontario. The proposed legislation to support community safety and creating the new homelessness and addiction recovery treatment hubs are bold and innovative actions our government is taking to better connect people with the effective mental health and addictions care they need.

Speaker, I will only add that I hope that, on careful consideration, the members opposite will understand that what we are proposing in this legislation is a move forward to ensure that people have a pathway out of addictions. We have an opportunity here to provide more services, not less, with the implementation of our HART hub model.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** I recognize the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** First, I’d like to thank the Solicitor General, the Minister of Health and the Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform for their thoughtful presentations this afternoon and for allowing me to join in the support for this bill.

Speaker, we all know that auto theft has plagued this province in recent years. That’s why our government is taking decisive action to crack down on car thieves, and we are already seeing the results. Thanks to our efforts and the hard work of our policing partners across the province, we’ve seen a reduction in auto theft in Ontario by 16% this year. But we need to keep up the full-court press, so in May we tabled the Safer Roads and Communities Act, which would establish some of the toughest penalties in Canada for motor vehicle theft. That bill has now passed; we have dealt another blow to car thieves.

Building on our successes, there is always more we can do. This bill, the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act, will take those efforts even further. If passed, this legislation would create a new provincial offence for knowingly providing a false vehicle information number, VIN for short, when registering or transferring a car. These registrations typically involve stealing the VIN from a legitimate vehicle and using it to register a stolen vehicle. We are putting an end to this behaviour. With fines as high

as \$75,000 for a first conviction and up to \$100,000 for subsequent convictions, those convicted of knowingly providing a false VIN could face jail times of up to six months and driver’s licence or vehicle permit suspensions for up to a year, because we need to send a clear message that crime never pays.

We’re doing this because we’ve witnessed a troubling increase in the cases of VIN fraud in recent years. Between February 2023 and April 2024, ServiceOntario investigated more than 600 separate cases of fraudulent vehicle registration. To crack down on VIN fraud, we need stronger deterrents. This new provincial offence would tell wannabe car thieves not to waste their time, because our government is responding to their new tactics and equipping our police with the tools that they need.

#### 1620

The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act will ensure that we’re doing everything in our power to stop car thieves in their tracks.

In addition to holding reckless car thieves accountable, our government is also cracking down on careless drivers. Too often, we’ve seen cases of reckless driving in parking lots that are leaving people seriously injured, or worse. In 2023, 14 fatal collisions occurred in parking lots in Ontario, and more than 1,200 collisions resulted in personal injuries. Often, these events in mall parking lots are the precursor to car rallies and drag races, which are even more dangerous.

Currently, careless driving causing bodily harm or death, under the Highway Traffic Act, applies only to those incidents on public roadways, meaning that there has been a loophole in parking lots, where some bad actors have been beyond the reach of the law. This means that too many cases are slipping through the cracks. It also means that police can’t pursue a careless driving charge if someone is injured or even killed in a parking lot. But we have to change that.

If this legislation passes, it would expand the Highway Traffic Act’s application of careless driving and careless driving causing bodily harm or death to parking lots. This would include any parking lot—private lots, commercial lots, industrial parking lots—and any connecting drive-ways and roads. These changes will help local police respond to and prevent unsanctioned events such as car rallies and street racing.

When high-risk driving is leading to serious injuries and deaths in parking lots across Ontario, we need to say enough is enough, and we need to take action.

The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act would strengthen our police’s ability to pursue careless driving charges and would serve as a strong deterrent to drivers who continue to put other people’s lives at risk.

Speaker, we all know the consequences of careless driving can be tragic. Our government has absolutely no tolerance for that. Careless drivers need to be held accountable for their actions, and it’s our job to give the police and the courts the tools they need to see that process through.



Our government is determined to give the police the time they need, as well, to thoroughly investigate cases of careless driving so we can hold culprits accountable. Currently, careless driving and careless driving causing bodily harm or death, under the Highway Traffic Act, have a limitation period of six months. This means that the police only have six months to conduct their investigations, collect their evidence and lay charges. Well, Speaker, with the high level of complexity involved in investigations today, sometimes that is simply not enough time—not when police may need to interview the injured and collect detailed and elaborate data from vehicles. It may involve obtaining a warrant. It may even involve having a reconstructionist attend the scene. Depending on the circumstances, an assessment from the Centre of Forensic Sciences may even be required to determine whether charges are warranted. Those assessments can take several months. Needless to say, six months just isn't always enough time.

If the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act passes, it would extend the Highway Traffic Act's limitation period for careless driving and careless driving causing bodily harm or death to two years. This would give the police the time they need to investigate cases, to collect evidence and, most importantly, to hold careless drivers accountable.

Speaker, Ontario's roads have ranked among the safest in North America for more than 20 years. This is something that we can all be proud of. We know that commercial vehicle enforcement plays a critical role in that record and in road safety overall.

That's why the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act will also help commercial vehicle operators understand what their responsibilities and obligations are, while also helping them to correct issues of non-compliance.

Under the current rules, commercial vehicle operators have the ability to launch an appeal at any time when a decision is taken against their CVOR certificate. This means that years could pass before an appeal is launched.

If the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act passes, it would amend the Highway Traffic Act to give CVOR certificate holders a 30-day window to appeal a decision. This will help eliminate lengthy appeal delays and ensure both quicker resolution and quicker accountability. The legislation would also create a framework for an administrative penalty program that would enhance the oversight of commercial vehicles and keep our roads safe.

The current court-based process for CVOR violations is time-consuming and costly, both for the operators and for the enforcement personnel. By introducing administrative penalties, we'll resolve CVOR violations more quickly and help reduce the burden on the operators.

Keeping our roads safe also means acting quickly when violations occur. Currently, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles can place conditions or restrictions on a CVOR certificate only at the time of issuance, suspension or cancellation. Our legislation would give the registrar the authority to place conditions or restrictions on a CVOR

certificate at any time, allowing us to take swift action against commercial vehicle operators who flout the rules.

Speaker, since day one, public safety has always been our number one mission, and it always will be. There has never been a government that has prioritized the safety and the security of Ontarians like this government, under the leadership of Premier Ford.

The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act, if passed, will allow us to deliver on each and every one of these objectives, and it will pave the way toward building a stronger, safer Ontario for everyone who calls this great province home.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** We're going to go to questions.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I would like to address my questions to the Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform. I appreciated his remarks, especially as we're talking about countering VIN fraud—I see a small piece in this piece of legislation. There was a lot of fanfare before we actually got to see the legislation.

I know a lot of vehicles are registered every year or put on that provincial vehicle registry. I'm curious to know how many of those are ever investigated, should there appear that there's a questionable VIN or a partial, duplicate, improper or suspicious VIN. I think the answer is, zero of them are investigated or verified. Certainly, I don't think that there's any physical checking happening, which would actually determine the accuracy of the VIN prior to registration.

My question is, why won't this government institute a VIN verification system so that we have a preventive measure to protect Ontarians from VIN fraud? This government is big on after-the-crime measures. Where is the preventive VIN—

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Thank you.

The Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform to respond.

**Hon. Graham McGregor:** I appreciate my colleague for the question.

As my colleague rightly identified, VIN fraud is a growing problem in Ontario. We know the majority of vehicles that are stolen wind up overseas. That means there is a minority of vehicles—a quite large minority, frankly—that are staying here, domestic. The way they are doing that is VIN fraud.

The specifics of the VIN verification services—I think my colleagues met with some of the people I've met. I certainly appreciate their input.

Madam Speaker, we've implemented measures to close some of the loopholes through the ServiceOntario process. That has already happened.

And then, in this bill, by implementing six months in jail time, up to \$100,000 offence—I know my colleague thinks that's minor. I know, in the NDP approach to crime, they would probably blame the cars and cut the criminals some slack.

We're putting in a new offence, where we're going to hold offenders accountable and lock them up. It seems like

the right thing to do, and we certainly hope that our opposition colleagues will support us in this work.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Next question?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** My question is for the Solicitor General.

The safety of people in Ontario is a top priority for all of us here in the Ontario Legislature; it always has been. And every day, I see evidence of how the Solicitor General is working to improve this. In fact, this morning, I saw it at the Ontario police association conference that we attended together, in his interactions not only with the police officers but the general public, when he walked in to where the conference was.

1630

My question is, how does the proposed legislation—beyond the time that he had to speak this morning—ensure that public education on crime prevention and awareness is effectively integrated into our communities within this great province?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Because we're going to have Crime Prevention Month. That's contained in the piece of legislation, as well. Crime Prevention Month is an opportunity to thank the people who are our protectors and pillars of our public safety: our police officers; our firefighters; our correctional, probation and parole officers. We want to acknowledge a month that says thank you.

Why is it that we've never seen, before Premier Ford—in the last 15 years, the government led by the now-independent Liberal Party ever attending a badging ceremony? The Minister of Health was the first person to attend a badging ceremony in 15 years, because she cared, because my predecessor cared. And we care today.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Next question.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** This is what the 50,000 members of the registered nurses' association had to say about section 4 of the bill: It is "a death sentence that will lead to unsafe communities and higher costs."

"Legislation introduced by Premier ... Ford's government is a sweeping attack on harm reduction.... The move will lead to unsafe communities, increased deaths, overwhelmed emergency services, and escalating health care costs. Nurses say the Ontario government will bear responsibility for the avoidable loss of life."

But if you don't trust nurses, maybe you would trust the *Lancet*, the world's leading peer-reviewed medical journal, which says that supervised consumption sites prevent overdose deaths on the site; as well as the overdose mortality rate decreased significantly in their neighbourhoods.

Given the health impact of schedule 4, would you consider removing schedule 4 from this bill?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** No. I think the member opposite is missing the point. We are transitioning consumption sites into full-service sites, HART hubs, where people get service, whether it is for social services, for mental health, for addictions, pathways to recover.

We have to give people more hope because we cannot allow individuals—the only option is to continue to provide them with drug supply. We can do better in Ontario. I know that so many of our clinical health care providers see the value in that full-service model. In fact, the HART hub model—when they are operationalized—can evolve into almost four times the amount of funding that we currently provide for treatment sites. It's a better system because it gives people hope.

At the end of the day, if we're not a government and a health ministry that gives people health, then we're doing the wrong thing.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** The next question.

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** I joined the Solicitor General and caucus colleagues at the Peel police headquarters last week, where we announced the introduction of this legislation. It was very much welcomed by law enforcement agencies—and then also acknowledging the need for this legislation. Hearing from the Stephensons, the family, of the horrific murder of their young son, who was kidnapped, abused repeatedly, killed, his body left in a field—it made your heart just break.

My question is to the Solicitor General. Can you please explain to this House the need to pass this legislation and why everybody must, must support it?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Well, I want to thank my colleague and friend. She was there. She saw something—by speaking to the family. Just holding their hands reminded us why, when we come home at night, we must hold our kids, our grandkids, our loved ones that much closer.

Times have changed. Nobody envisioned the Internet. Nobody envisioned social media. Nobody envisioned emails. Nobody envisioned the ability to continue on in such an improper way just because.

By the way, we went further, to say, "You can't change your name and get away with it and hide behind a new identity."

There were so many things that we looked at to strengthen Christopher's Law. What Premier Harris and this government did over 20 years ago was amazing, being the first in Canada to move forward with it. We have now taken it to another level to protect our most vulnerable.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Next question?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm glad to have a second go-around, hopefully again with the Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform, who would suggest that I might blame the cars for VIN fraud. There's always the opportunity to be flip, but I would invite him to be effective in this moment.

This is a government that knows that VIN fraud is rampant and is not closing that drive-through lane for criminals. This bill doesn't shut that door.

The associate minister mentioned that they're closing loopholes—not good enough. I want to know why this government is choosing not to institute a VIN verification system. I think they know that there are a whole bunch of

fraudulent VINs sitting on our registry right now and more getting registered every day, and they're not stopping it. I want to know why.

**Hon. Graham McGregor:** The member knows full well about the anti-VIN-fraud measures that we've put in this bill. I certainly hope the member will vote for that.

But the NDP are missing the point. We could talk about process. We could talk about technology. What we need to do is find the criminals, the scumbags who are stealing cars in our neighbourhoods, and we need to lock those people up. What I haven't heard from the NDP is them to iterate our call on bail reform.

We had a Toronto police officer shot six weeks ago. We didn't hear a word from the Leader of the Opposition, who is a Toronto-area MPP. If you look at her Twitter at that time, you've got four messages about the nomination for the member for Niagara Centre, but not one message about the family, the officer who was shot, or a call for bail reform—

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** We're out of time. Thank you.

We're going to go to further debate.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm glad to be able to stand in this House and debate a government piece of legislation. It's an omnibus bill that was introduced in the House yesterday, so here we are the next day. It's a nine-schedule omnibus bill, and it's a bill that rehashes a number of issues that the government has previously gone public with and, in some cases, has already legislated. There's a lot in this bill.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Are you going to share time?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Thank you.

Speaker, I've been reminded by everyone—I am sharing my time. So I am looking forward to sharing my time, but not yet, so hold your horses.

This is a significant piece of legislation with a lot in it and a lot to talk about. But I'm standing as the critic for infrastructure, transportation and highways, and I'm going to spend the majority of my time talking about ways that this government could do better to protect Ontarians when it comes to VIN fraud, when it comes to auto theft. There are some solutions I would hope that they would reach for.

A bit of an overview: In schedule 1, the Cannabis Control Act—it prohibits the advertisement or promotion of cannabis sales. Yes, okay—promoting and advertising authorized cannabis should be prohibited, and municipalities should be given more funding to enforce their cannabis bylaws. We don't see that in here.

Schedules 2 and 3: We've heard the government members speak about it, and I know that we will spend the time that it deserves in this House—to talk about Christopher's Law. Christopher's Law from 2000 is the provincial sexual offender registry act that requires those convicted of prescribed sexual offences under the Criminal Code to register their whereabouts upon release. We're seeing changes to Christopher's Law that are long overdue. The changes are welcome, to protect our most innocent in society. We have heard today about Christopher and the work of the Stephenson family to make the world better in

the wake of unspeakable harm and tragedy. So those changes are indeed long overdue.

Schedule 4 of this bill is what they're calling the Community Care and Recovery Act. This schedule proposes a new bill to prohibit new and existing supervised consumption sites. What we need to be seeing are decisions made by government that are evidence-based, with a focus on the continuum of care for all of our neighbours, regardless of where they are on their mental health and addictions journeys. Thousands of lives have been saved because of consumption and treatment sites, and now they're going to be closed. People will die. It is not the only part of mental health and addictions services, but it is an important part. Taking out a part that saves lives every day isn't going to help anything. I don't hear from this government that they believe the lives of people who have addictions have value when this is the tool they are reaching for, shutting down those avenues for help and support.

1640

Speaker, I have heard from community, and I'd like to share a thoughtful letter here from Devon, who writes:

“The Ford government's decision to force the closure of safe consumption sites and prevent future sites is devastating. I am writing to beg you, as the representative from a community that is suffering enormously under multiple governments' cruel public policy, to voice objection as loudly and as frequently as possible.

“We are simply hastening the death of our community members, who are unsheltered, who have substance abuse disorders and severe mental health challenges so we don't have to solve these problems and it is cruel and barbaric. Letting people die so we don't have to help them as an official public policy is unforgiveable, and that is exactly what this is.

“Please, please, please do not show a population of desperate people that we would rather have them dead than help them.

“Thank you for taking the time to read this and for doing your best.”

That's from Devon in my community.

Speaker, today we heard a number of petitions that have been sent in from across the province specific to this issue, calling on the government to continue to operate supervised consumption services and associated harm reduction programs. Folks have been highlighting that those consumption and treatment services sites have been instrumental in preventing thousands of deaths—deaths from the toxic drug supply. They have highlighted that the closure of supervised consumption services sites will increase the number of preventable deaths, injuries, hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and the incidence of HIV and hepatitis. These sites offer access to other health and social services, including addictions treatment.

The closure of consumption and treatment services sites is a withdrawal of health services for people who use drugs and is, consequently, a denial of their right to health care.

Closing supervised consumption services sites will lead to an increase in drug use in public spaces, the very thing that this government is suggesting that it cares about.

Health care should emphasize prevention, as well as treatment, in a full continuum of care.

People across the province have been sending to all of us petitions calling for the reversal of the decision to close supervised consumption services sites and ensure all sites remain operational and adequately funded. They're calling to increase funding for these sites. Also, they want to ensure access to voluntary, publicly funded and not-for-profit evidence-based treatment. It seems to be too much to ask from this government, and that is a harmful shame. People will die, and that seems to be a calculated risk on the part of this government.

Speaker, I hope the government will reconsider, will listen to Ontarians, will do the right thing by those struggling Ontarians and will remove this schedule from the bill so that we could proceed without it and have these positive conversations with other sections of the bill that could be the focus. Unfortunately, this is a significant piece, and it is a wrong decision by this government.

Schedule 7 is the Courts of Justice Act. It removes the legislated cap on the amount of time a retired provincial judge can serve post-retirement; it's currently 50% of full-time service. It moves it into regulation. This is a good idea. And the province needs to fully fund and staff our courtrooms, reopen shuttered courtrooms and consider creating more courtroom space. This is a government that is shouting from the rooftops that they're building more jails, but they're not looking after our courtroom challenges.

I have something here. This was shared with me by the Durham Regional Police Service Board. They wanted to share information in relation to local Provincial Offences Act cases dropped due to delay. This is a legal opinion they were sharing with me.

"In recent years, with only one to two courtrooms functioning, there has been a growing lack of judicial resources:

"—In 2022, there were 28 presiding days where no justices appeared.

"—In 2023, there were 27 presiding days where no justice appeared for scheduled court."

So far, this year, and this was in March—"There have been 15 presiding days where no justice appeared, and an additional eight days where courts were combined due to one courtroom not having a justice available."

This is in regard to the region of Durham Provincial Offences Court that cannot accommodate the matters before it.

They went on to say, "The regional municipality of Durham is faced with a significant lack of judicial resources due to the province of Ontario not allocating sufficient justices of the peace to adjudicate in this region....

"It is with regret that I inform Durham Regional Police Service that of the 11,000 charges being withdrawn on

Monday, approximately 35% to 45% of those were laid by DRPS.

"We will continue to prioritize our most serious cases involving high public interest."

Things aren't good anywhere, eh?

So this change is allowing retired justices to work more in their retirement. That's a stopgap measure. Coming from education and knowing that retired teachers are in high demand right now, I understand the need to be creative, but how is this the permanent solution? It isn't.

I'd like to talk about schedule 8. Schedule 8 is changes under the Highway Traffic Act to create an "offence to knowingly submit, display, present or surrender a false vehicle identification number for a motor vehicle in certain documents." So this bill creates a new provincial offence of using a false vehicle identification number, or VIN.

Fun fact: Tampering with a VIN is already a crime under section 353.1 of the federal Criminal Code, carrying a prison term of up to five years, and this bill would make this a provincial offence as well, like a speeding ticket. I guess it's supportable, but it seems like a half measure. If someone isn't deterred by the fact that it's already a crime under the federal Criminal Code, then a provincial offence may or not be the significant deterrent that this government and this minister are making it out to be. Again, this is an after-the-crime measure and arguably not preventive.

We've talked a lot about car theft in this room. Here, from the Toronto Star: "Car Thieves Could Lose Driver's Licence for Life, Ford Government Says." This is actually regarding another bill that's before this House right now.

"Under the proposed new law, anyone convicted of motor vehicle theft would automatically lose their licence for 10 years. A second conviction would mean 15 years' suspension; three convictions and the suspension is for life.

"Critics, however, said the new penalties will have little effect...

"Adam Weisberg, managing partner at Weisberg Law Criminal Lawyers LLP, called the proposed law 'misguided' and 'completely ineffective.'

"The perpetrators of these crimes are already not deterred by the prison sentences they face.

"There is little that the provincial government can do to combat auto theft, other than direct police resources at investigations into these auto-theft rings ... it's just a frustrated attempt from our province to signal that frustration to the public"....

Yes, and we're seeing that again in this bill. This government has been talking about cracking down on VINs, and I was expecting them to crack down on VINs, but that's not what's happening. We're tinkering around the edges.

Earlier this month, the Toronto police made 59 arrests and filed 302 charges after uncovering a scheme involving the registration of phony VINs by employees of a ServiceOntario location.

Basically, re-VINing has been happening right under this government's nose, and it's hard to see how making

this federal crime a provincial offence, like a speeding ticket, is going to deter that fraud.

The NDP and I have called for preventive measures to stop the fraudulent use of VINs before the fraud occurs, including creating a system to verify suspicious VINs, which exists in some other provinces.

**1650**

Speaker, front-line workers at ServiceOntario, we've seen in this case, some are—well, I suppose anyone is susceptible to corruption by organized crime, and I think that's what we have seen here. But we also know that other ServiceOntario workers came forward and do their job as well as they can with an A-to-Z menu of services that they offer at ServiceOntario. So those front-line workers are tasked with, I guess, crossing their fingers when they're registering VINs and making sure that they are indeed authentic, because in order to ensure that VINs are the real deal, they would physically have to inspect—to suggest otherwise is verifying paperwork, not verifying the vehicle, and that's an important thing to understand. There is no digital fix for this.

I'm going to read from this article: "Other Provinces Inspect Vehicles with Problematic VINs, Why Not Ontario?" This was from March 2024.

"After a 32-year career as a theft investigator with the Ontario Provincial Police, John Tod started working for a business that helps provincial governments sniff out phony vehicle registrations as a way to curb vehicle theft....

"The 17-digit VIN is a vehicle's serial number, intended to help governments, police and insurers link a vehicle to its owner to prevent all manner of auto theft and fraud.

"In Alberta and Saskatchewan, in cases where a clerk in the vehicle registration office or insurance company finds an issue with the VIN of a vehicle being registered, the vehicle is flagged for inspection....

"However, those inspections do not happen in Ontario, which makes it easy for thieves to sell stolen vehicles in Canada's largest province with little fear someone will ever check on the vehicle's history, Tod said....

"He said the lack of an inspection program in Ontario is actually making the province a destination for thieves to register vehicles stolen in other jurisdictions.

"I've been warning the Ontario government about this for four years,' he said....

"Police are starting to raise the issue."

There was a national summit a little while ago, and we saw OPP Commissioner Thomas Carrique speak in his role as the head of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. He told a House of Commons committee during that time that mandatory inspections of vehicles with problematic VINs should be mandatory. He also called for a national system of vehicle registrations. Right now, each province manages its own system.

Fun fact: We live in a province that doesn't manage its own system. Prove me wrong.

Here's an article, Speaker: "Just Bought a Used Car? There's a Chance It's Stolen, as Thieves Exploit Weakness in Vehicle Registrations

"Nearly 1/3 of stolen vehicles may now have been title 'washed' and resold"

This is from a CBC news piece in April.

"Derek Crocker bought a used Ford F-150 pickup truck from a dealership in Toronto in 2022....

"After Crocker entered what should have been the truck's unique VIN in Ford's app, the function to remotely start the vehicle never worked....

"But it wasn't until his F-150 was in an accident and required bodywork that the problem with the VIN was revealed." So he Googled the VIN number that was on his truck and found a truck for sale in Utah.

This story is worth a read, for the folks at home.

"Crocker's own insurance would not cover his loss because he'd—albeit unknowingly—purchased a stolen vehicle. After a long discussion with the dealership that sold him the stolen truck, his money was returned....

"How could two cars with the same VIN be registered?

"Provincial centres that administer vehicle registration, such as ServiceOntario, do not have a system that checks if VINs already exist in other jurisdictions." They don't even check if it exists elsewhere in our own jurisdiction. It's wild.

I've had local media ask if I'm sure that the government could actually crack down on this and could verify problematic VINs. Why aren't they? And the answer to them, and the answer to you, and the answer to the folks at home is, I don't know. How many vehicles are registered every year? That's a real question. I don't know. Half a million? A million? I have no idea.

But of those vehicles that are registered, how many of them have problematic, missing, partial, duplicate, improper or suspicious VINs? And of those that might—I don't know how they're flagged, but if they were flagged—how many are physically examined to determine if those VINs are legit? The answer to that, unless they prove otherwise, unless they tell me otherwise, I'm going to say, is zero, none. So if none of them are ever checked, how many duplicates, how many problematic VINs are on our registry right now? There is no wonder that criminals are literally coming to Ontario to do this, to launder VINs, to commit VIN fraud.

Here we have a bill in front of us that says we're going to create a provincial offence if you knowingly tamper with a VIN. Okay, but it's already a federal crime. How does this—tantamount to a speeding ticket—serve as a deterrent? It does not protect Ontarians.

I've already talked about Project Thoroughbred. The results of the investigation known as Project Thoroughbred were that the Toronto police recovered 363 stolen vehicles, valued at approximately \$14 million—they laid 302 charges at the time of this writing. It says, "According to police, ServiceOntario employees knowingly used false documents provided by car thieves to portray fake VINs as valid. The fraudulent VINs were then used to register for real Ontario licence plates for the stolen vehicles that were sold to unknowing buyers at a significant discount."

They also discovered chop shops throughout the city. Taverner said, "As you can imagine, this is a very lucrative

market for these stolen vehicles and parts, they offer high rewards financially with minimal risk.”

The Ontario government announced new legislation that would introduce a provincial offence for fraudulent vehicle registrations and re-VINing. That’s what we’re debating today.

The article goes on to say, “The offence would come with fines up to \$100,000, up to six months in jail, and driver’s licence or vehicle permit suspensions, according to the announcement made by” the transportation minister.

“Toronto police urges customers to be extra careful when purchasing a used vehicle, and to make sure they obtain vehicle history reports prior to making a purchase.” That’s what we’re supposed to do if we’re buying used vehicles: crawl under a car and check it ourselves, I guess—rely on the Carfax report. Tighten this up.

Interestingly, the province, this government, the Ontario Regulatory Registry posted—this was dated June 24, 2021, under the previous Minister of Transportation. There was a summary of the proposal; they explain about VINs and what they’re for. It says, “Sometimes bad actors attempt to fraudulently apply for an assigned VIN. They may do this to clone a VIN of another vehicle, or to mask a stolen vehicle. Sometimes they try to replace a VIN to trick buyers into thinking that an irreparably damaged vehicle that is only usable for parts is fit for on-road use.” This is the MTO, this government’s MTO. This is from their summary of proposal.

“Currently Alberta and Saskatchewan use a third-party company to properly identify vehicles and issue VINs to motor vehicles and trailers.... The company completes a detailed inspection of the vehicle, and investigation of the history of the vehicle before a VIN can be assigned. After introducing third-party investigations into their assigned VIN programs, Alberta and Saskatchewan reported significant improvements to the integrity of their assigned VIN programs, including the recovery of stolen vehicles.”

**1700**

This was related to the MOMS Act, which was the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act, 2021. The Ministry of Transportation put out this summary of proposal and said that “the ministry committed to explore options on how to improve the integrity of Ontario’s Assigned VIN Program. The objective is to reduce fraud and help recover stolen vehicles by preventing bad actors from fraudulently applying for an assigned VIN.

“That is why the MTO is seeking feedback on how to improve the assigned VIN program.

“One question that we are looking to include is whether the public would support requiring an investigation by a third-party company before assigning a VIN?” And it goes on: “We invite you to review the details of this proposal and submit comments for MTO consideration. Please let us know about your ideas, potential benefits, or concerns that you have as well as any recommendations to improve the integrity of Ontario’s assigned VIN program.”

That’s from the MTO. That’s from June 24, 2021. What is today? November something?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** November 19.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** November 19, 2024. What did you do with the input? What did this ministry do with everything that they heard and learned? Sweet nothing, it would seem. What did you hear from folks? Are people interested in having the VIN registry protected and having a VIN verification system? Is that what you heard? Is that not what you heard? Where is the leadership?

I’ll tell you where there’s some leadership. There was some leadership at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, on February 29, 2024. The Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, Commissioner Thomas Carrique—these are from his remarks; I’ve already referenced this before: “Today organized crime has a strong hold on the illicit transnational auto theft market. It’s estimated that 80% of passenger vehicles are exported, and 10% of these vehicles are re-VINed and sold domestically, with the remaining 10% being chopped down and sold for parts. The lucrative international market of stolen Canadian vehicles has surged, as many of the desirable vehicles are readily available in Canada and are either very costly internationally or simply not available for purchase in those countries they’re being exported to.”

He goes on to specifically say, “In response to this public and officer safety concern, and to disrupt the illicit transnational market being controlled by organized criminal networks, the profits of which often finance other criminal activities ranging from drug trafficking and arms dealing to human smuggling and even international terrorism, Canadian police leaders are calling for a strengthening of port security and monitoring mechanisms, including inspections and the use of technology, to disrupt the illegal export of stolen vehicles....

“We’re calling for verification of third-party vehicle registration, the physical inspection of problematic VINs during the registration process, and the creation of a national system for vehicle registrations.”

It was a much longer submission, but I’m highlighting the provincial pieces. Nobody is denying that there is a federal component to this, but there is an opportunity for the province to show leadership. You’re being told by insurance companies, you’re being told by police and former police—wilfully ignoring, by your own words of the summary proposal that you were seeking input to make the world a better place when it comes to re-VINing, and yet here we are.

Side note: The feds also want Ontario to do more on the auto theft push. They are interested in having provincial partners across the country. We need to make sure that our registry holds water, not just problematic VINs.

Continuing on schedule 8: Currently the registrar of commercial vehicle operators has a limited range of remedies for non-compliant truck operators, such as the cancellation of the commercial vehicle operator’s registration, or CVOR, certificate. You know, the changes proposed in this bill seem reasonable. The bill was tabled yesterday; I’d be interested in hearing from the trucking industry and road safety stakeholders to properly understand all of the impacts. But it doesn’t do anything

to address the trucking challenges that we know to be rampant in this province.

The Ontario Trucking Association says it believes “a lot of change is necessary to make the roads a safer place for truck drivers ... A recent survey by the Ontario Trucking Association shows that the top three concerns for truckers on northern highways are unsafe passing by other vehicles, the lack of truck rest areas and trained truck drivers.”

The well-trained truck drivers piece is really, really challenging for folks right now. I think everybody in this House watched the CBC Marketplace episode “Hidden Camera, Internal Memo Reveal How Unqualified Truck Drivers Are Getting onto Canada’s Roads.” It was shocking, and we don’t see measures in this bill reflecting what we learned.

It was shared by Marketplace. A “DriveTest examiner responsible for testing people who want to obtain their commercial trucking licence” had said, “In our company, there are times where we feel that someone shouldn’t be passing and we have to pass them ... Our hands are tied.” It was someone who highlighted that there are people who “took bribes” and “gave licences.”

Behind the scenes, with hidden cameras: “Ontario’s Minister of Transportation ... declined an interview request with Marketplace multiple times” on this issue. A spokesperson from the ministry sent an email that said, “If Serco is unable to control fraud in the programs it administers, we will re-evaluate the contract with them.”

“However, the ministry was made aware of the memo from Serco multiples times, including months in advance of publication.”

Talk is cheap, guys. It’s very concerning that we have real information about how dangerous things are right now, and we don’t see the leadership. We don’t see it in this bill that the government is actually making changes.

The MPP for Thunder Bay–Superior North has asked this Premier about the blatant fraud and bribery that was illustrated in that Marketplace segment.

Truckers For Safer Highways’ Travis McDougall wrote a very thoughtful series of letters to the minister, to the Premier, and said, “It is evident that the Ministry of Transportation has failed to adequately ensure that all new drivers are properly trained and licensed. As a result, there are drivers on our highways who should not be behind the wheel of heavy trucks. This presents a serious safety risk to all road users....

“We are calling on your government to take immediate and decisive action to demonstrate that safety on Ontario’s highways is a top priority, not merely a talking point. With the winter season upon us, the dangers posed by the current situation are even more pressing, and we fear that without urgent action, we may witness further tragedies on our roads.”

Speaker, I’ll end with the government talking about careless driving as a penalty, talking about laying the hammer down with the one hand, but with the other hand, they still have policies on the books to let people plead down. That careless charge, if police officers actually lay that charge, is not leading to conviction. It’s not leading to

those penalties. People are pleading down, if they even get their day in court.

So if the government isn’t willing to fix the backlog and the court problem, they can build all of the jails that they want. They can say that they’re going to fill them, but not if people don’t go through the court system. So we have layers and layers of challenges and we don’t see this government rising to those challenges in this bill.

And with that, I will share my time. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** I recognize the member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to start my comments with schedule 6. Schedule 6, section 3 is amended to give the minister the power to issue awards related to policing.

Let me say a few words about a good friend of mine, Dan Lee. Dan Lee is a career police officer with the Ontario Provincial Police and retired as a sergeant after 31 years of service. He loved police work and his fellow police officers. His postings led him from Geraldton to Japan to Upsala and to, finally, Sudbury. He continued to work in various part-time capacities following his retirement.

Dan was the recipient of the OPP Commissioner’s Citation in 1994 and received awards from the Ontario Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics. The city of Greater Sudbury presented him with an award of distinction and a civic award, and the YMCA honoured him in 2006 and awarded him the YMCA Canada Peace Medal. The Salvation Army presented him with awards in 2023, and he was inducted into the Sudbury hall of fame in 2019 for his long-time commitment to Sudbury sports.

**1710**

Dan loved people and was heavily involved in community life in Sudbury. Some of his activities included the following: past director of the Sudbury community services board; member of the Salvation Army advisory board; president of the Sudbury sports council; co-founder of Operation Red Nose; co-founder of the Bridge of Nations; co-chair of the 2010 Ontario Summer Games; co-chair of the Special Olympics national summer games, with a long-time commitment to the Law Enforcement Torch Run. He was the founder of the OPP Strike Force group, involving at its peak four sports and 34 teams for youngsters and adolescents; and past president and committee member for the Holy Redeemer Church.

Dan was also actively involved and vice-chair with the OPP Veterans’ Association, and maintained a continued interest in Sudbury activities all along.

Talking about the Bridge of Nations, it is an absolutely amazing project that was envisioned by Ursula Sauve and Dan. Dan joined Ursula as a founding committee member to help bring the Bridge of Nations to life. That happened in 2007. He helped create a colourful and powerful symbolic celebration of all the people and cultures that make Sudbury a multicultural melting pot, a place where we celebrate our diverse heritage and live peacefully together.

I’d like to end by saying Dan Lee’s words of wisdom about volunteering. Here’s what he said, “You don’t need

special expertise to volunteer. You just need the will to engage. It's always a learning curve. Volunteering is a rewarding experience where you can enjoy accomplishing a goal in the company of the nicest possible people. You come away with strong friendships that last a lifetime and have the pleasure and privilege of meeting people from all walks of life and from all around the world. You meet the best people because the best people volunteer."

Dan passed away last Tuesday, and I wanted him to—rest in peace, Sergeant Lee.

All this to say that I support schedule 6. I support all of the schedules in this bill, except for having an issue with schedule 4. When schedule 4 came out, which was yesterday, my inbox started to get flooded instantly. So far, I have received—as of 3 o'clock when I came into this room because I stopped counting—3,088 emails regarding schedule 4 of the bill. I will read a few of them into the record.

"Nurses Warn the Ontario Government Will Bear Responsibility for Preventable Deaths that Will Ensurue from Withdrawing Essential Life-Saving Health Services." They wrote that yesterday.

"Legislation introduced by Premier Doug Ford's government is a sweeping attack on harm reduction and supervised consumption services ... across Ontario, effectively blocking municipalities from addressing the toxic drug crisis, warns the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario.... The move will lead to unsafe communities, increased deaths, overwhelmed emergency services, and escalating health-care costs. Nurses say the Ontario government will bear responsibility for the avoidable loss of life.

"On Monday, the government tabled a bill to close SCS sites located within 200 metres of a school or child care centre by March 31, 2025. This directive affects nine provincially funded sites in Ottawa, Guelph, Hamilton, Thunder Bay, Kitchener, and Toronto, as well as one privately funded site in Toronto. Since 2017, these 10 sites have prevented approximately 8,500 overdose-related deaths. By choosing to close rather than relocate these services, the government is knowingly increasing their risk of preventable deaths and health care costs, as highlighted by its own internal assessments.

"The legislation further restricts municipalities from renewing applications to the federal government for supervised consumption "sites, effectively eliminating harm reduction services in Ontario. This comes amid a devastating crisis that claimed 3,800 lives last year and over 22,000 since 2018, when Premier Ford's government first took office. The bill also prohibits municipal advocacy for decriminalizing personal drug use, disregarding evidence-based harm reduction strategies and undermining democratic processes.

"The scope of the crisis is dire, with an average of 10 people dying daily from tainted drugs" here in Ontario. "We will witness more preventable deaths because the government is sending a clear message: People who use substances are disposable," says RNAO president and nurse practitioner "Lhamo Dolkar. "Supervised consump-

tion sites save lives by providing critical mental health and health care support. You cannot help someone after they are dead," she emphasizes.

"Dr. Doris Grinspun, RNAO's CEO, criticizes the government's focus on crime reporting near remaining" supervised consumption "sites while ignoring evidence provided by the police that shows there is less crime in communities with SCS than in those without these health and social services. The Premier and his team are also aware of the proven benefits of SCS services in reducing death, illness, and health care costs. 'This is an ideologically driven policy that will cost more lives. Our health system treats those with cancer and chronic illnesses with compassion and with comprehensive services; we must extend the same care to persons dealing with substance use,' Grinspun urges. She warns of increased deaths, more discarded needles, and rising infections such as HIV and hepatitis C. 'The result will be more parents burying their children and longer wait times for ambulances. Just one HIV case can cost taxpayers half a million dollars. Premier Ford, our communities need more health care, not more ideology.'

"While RNAO acknowledges the government's August announcement of \$378 million for 19 new homelessness and addiction recovery treatment (HART) hubs, it criticizes the exclusion of harm reduction services like supervised consumptions, "safer supply programs, and needle exchanges. 'HART hubs should offer comprehensive, wraparound care, but this plan falls short and contradicts the stated aim of keeping communities safe,' says Grinspun.

"Dolkar points to a lack of genuine engagement with local communities: 'Mayors across Ontario have called for more support for mental health, substance use, and homelessness. Despite promises to listen, this legislation silences their voices and undermines their ability to advocate for public health.' The legislation also bans municipalities from seeking exemptions to operate" supervised consumption "sites, pushing more people towards emergency rooms or worse, dying on the streets. Data indicates that closing these sites will increase substance use and the presence of discarded needles, contrary to the government's assertions.

"By cutting these services, Premier Ford is creating barriers to health care for those who need it most," says Dolkar. The government's own documents highlight the disproportionate impact on Indigenous, Black, and low-income individuals who already face significant barriers. 'Harm reduction programs help build trust with care providers, opening pathways to primary care and support. This legislation will only make it harder for vulnerable groups to access essential services,' Dolkar adds.

"When elected to office, Premier Ford committed to 21" supervised consumption "sites. Seventeen were delivered and then the government stopped assessing applications for additional sites forcing Windsor, Sudbury, and Timmins to close, and Barrie to withdraw their application. With 10 sites now being closed, only eight will remain. Monday's decision is a nail in the coffin for"



supervised consumption sites “and the Ontarians that they serve. ‘RNAO calls on Premier Ford and his government to immediately reverse its decision to close SCS sites and instead adopt an integrated care model that supports both harm reduction and treatment services. The government can still change course, but once these closures lead to the first death, it will be too late,’ Dolkar concludes.”

1720

This comes from the executive director and the president of the board of the registered nurses’ association, which represents over 64,000 people.

The registered nurses are not the only ones who have talked about this. I would like to quote, actually, a physician from Sudbury. Her name is Dr. Emily Groot. Dr. Groot wrote to Honourable Sylvia Jones and Honourable Michael Tibollo, and here’s what she had to say:

“I am the medical director of Réseau Access Network’s supervised consumption site”—called Minoogawbi, La Place, The Spot. “I am a public health and preventive medicine specialist in good standing with the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Ontario. I completed undergraduate studies and medical school at McMaster University, a master of public health at the University of Toronto, and residency training at Queen’s University.

“When I finished medical school in 2010, I swore to uphold the Hippocratic oath, which includes the phrase, ‘I will prevent disease whenever I can, for prevention is preferable to cure.’ This has shaped my career: first, as associate medical officer of health for the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, then as regional supervising coroner for the north region Sudbury office.”

She went on to say: “I accepted my role with Réseau Access Network to provide high-quality care to people who use drugs, but as a public health physician, I would also like to highlight the benefits of The Spot”—La Place, Minoogawbi—“to the general public.”

“(1) Reduced transmission of HIV and hepatitis C (HCV): Supervised consumption sites are an important tool to reduce blood-borne disease transmission. This is particularly true in Sudbury: From 2012 to 2021, the rate of new HCV infections diagnosed in the Sudbury region ranged from 50.8 to 78.7 new cases per 100,000 persons per year, which is significantly higher than the rate in Ontario,” which is 31.7 to 37.4 per 100,000.

“(2) Reduced health care system costs.” She gives the example: “The average total health care costs per 30 days for Canadians with decompensated cirrhosis”—which is caused by hepatitis C—“is \$8,753. As a result of the reduction in disease transmission and improvements in health outcomes associated with supervised consumption,” sites are actually saving money.

“(3) Increased public safety: Although there is negligible risk associated with public drug use and discarded needles, these can lead to public safety concerns: supervised consumption sites reduce both. Further, supervised consumption sites either decrease or have no impact on crime or public nuisance calls.”

That comes from Dr. Emily Groot, who is the medical director of consumption services at Réseau Access Network.

But if this is not enough, I would like to quote from the Lancet. The Lancet is one of the world’s leading peer-reviewed medical journals. It was established more than 200 years ago, in 1823, and they rank among the top medical journals globally.

Here’s what they had to say: “Supervised consumption sites (SCS) prevent overdose deaths on-site....

“The overdose mortality rate decreased significantly in neighbourhoods that implemented” supervised consumption sites. So they looked at not only the prevention of death that happens in the site, but they went a kilometre around, four kilometres around, and for up to five kilometres around, they saw an eight-to-10-deaths decrease by 100,000 people.

I must say that these particular overdose mortality incidents and supervised consumption sites services were done in Toronto, and the results are Toronto-specific. They studied from after 2017, when the sites were established. They saw a significant decrease in the overdose mortality events in Toronto from May 1, 2017, to December 31, 2019, but they did not see a parallel decrease in other neighbourhoods.

They basically estimated that approximately two overdose fatalities per 100,000 people were averted in the square miles surrounding the supervised consumption sites in 2019: “Policy-makers should consider implementing and sustaining” supervised consumption sites “across neighbourhoods where overdose mortality is high.”

This comes from the Lancet, and it was published in February 2024.

To put the research a bit in context:

“Evidence before this study

“The influence of supervised consumption services ... on client outcomes is well known. However, the evidence base regarding how” supervised consumption sites “influence population-level public health outcomes is small, particularly with respect to overdose....” So this is why they started this study, which was peer-reviewed and published. It has to do specifically with three supervised consumption sites here in Toronto.

The next thing I want to read is a letter that has been sent to myself, to Doug Ford, to Michael Tibollo and to Sylvia Jones. I am copied on this—and I am receiving those letters, hundreds of them, every 10 minutes. They read as follows:

“Premier, your plan to gut and prohibit harm reduction programming in Ontario—including the closure of 10 supervised consumption sites (SCS) and no needle exchange—is a triumph of ideology over health care. People will die preventable deaths from your plan to withdraw these critical health care services.

“The scale of Ontario’s toxic drug crisis is staggering. Across Ontario, an average of 10 people per day are dying from tainted drugs. In 2023 alone, over 3,800 people across Ontario died from the unregulated drug supply.”

Harm reduction programs such as” supervised consumption sites “and safer supply save lives and open the door to treatment and recovery.

They welcome “your investment in 19 homelessness and addiction recovery treatment (HART) hubs. The investment, however, fails to recognize the scale of Ontario’s toxic drug crisis. Greater investments in housing, treatment and other services are required. Further, your ideological response to this crisis excludes important evidence-based health care services required to lead people to recovery. The 19 new HART hubs must all offer harm reduction services, including supervised consumption, needle exchange and safer supply.

They end by saying, “Harm reduction is health care.

“Sincerely,”—this one was from Claudia Winkelmann, but as I said, as of 3 o’clock when I came up, I had received 3,088 similar letters. I am not the only one; Doug Ford, Michael Tibollo and Sylvia Jones were all on that email, and this only started 24 hours ago, when the bill was tabled.

I still have a lot: “SCS closures: A death sentence that will lead to unsafe communities and higher costs...

“Premier Doug Ford and his government’s misguided measures will endanger the lives of thousands of Ontarians struggling with substance use, say members of the ... RNAO. The announced steps mean unsafe communities, more deaths, overwhelmed emergency services and spiking health care costs, and leave nurses wondering who the government is trying to serve.”

**1730**

I also would like to read a list of people from Toronto who—same thing—signed this statement. On the list of people who signed the statement, there is:

—Alan Broadbent, a Toronto businessman and social advocate;

—Philip Berger, a long-time downtown Toronto medical physician;

—Joanne Campbell, retired vice-president of community relations at CAMH;

—Gordon Cressy, former chair of the Toronto Board of Education;

—David Crombie, former mayor of Toronto;

—Dr. Cheri DiNovo, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts;

—Paul Garfinkel, inaugural CEO of CAMH and professor emeritus in psychiatry at the University of Toronto;

—Dr. Doris Grinspun from RNAO;

—Sahil Gupta, emergency physician at St. Michael’s Hospital;

—Barbara Hall, former mayor of Toronto;

—Bruce Kidd, Olympian and professor emeritus of sport and public policy at the University of Toronto;

—Dr. Vincent Lam, addiction medicine specialist and medical director of Coderix Medical Clinic;

—Steve Lin, interim chief, department of emergency medicine at St. Michael’s Hospital;

—Heather McGregor, chief executive director at the YWCA Toronto;

—David Miller, former mayor of Toronto;

—Michael Rachlis, physician and adjunct professor at Dalla Lana School of Public Health;

—Ben McNally;

—John Sewell, also a former mayor of Toronto;

—Ed Waitzer, a lawyer;

—Dr. Daniel Werb from St. Michael’s Hospital;

—Kathleen Wynne, former Premier of Ontario—and the list goes on.

Basically, they’re “a group of Torontonians united in opposition to Premier Doug Ford’s decision to close 10 ... supervised consumption sites. As individuals who have played a strong role in various aspects of public policy and public discourse, we believe this decision is misguided and represents failed policy. We urge the government to reverse this course of action and instead strengthen, not eliminate, this crucial harm reduction service, which is a key part of a comprehensive response to substance use and the overdose crisis.”

Let’s be clear: Everybody supports the HART hubs. Treatment and recovery is a path, but if you cannot keep people alive, then there is no path.

There are lots of people in my riding who have died. I’ve shared this with this House already. Every single day, a first responder will have at least seven calls for overdoses—and that’s every single day. It goes up and down, but there’s a minimum. On average, two people per week in Sudbury will die of an overdose. If you don’t keep those people alive—many, many of them want to go into treatment, want to go into recovery, but there’s an 18-month wait-list for children and over a two-year wait-list for adults to get into treatment and recovery. How do you keep those people alive, who wait on wait-lists that are so long? You do this through a supervised consumption site, and consumption and treatment services keep people alive.

We support the HART hubs. There will be 10 of them aside from the sites that are being closed. There are hundreds of municipalities that have asked for a HART hub; 10 lucky ones will be chosen. What happens to every other municipality that needs one—that wants recovery, that wants treatment, that are dealing with people with substance use and have no access and are faced, like us in the north, with an 18-month wait-list for children and a 24-month wait-list for adults? This is not acceptable. We have to provide a continuity of care so that they get better.

The last thing I wanted to talk about was schedule 1. Schedule 1 amends the Cannabis Control Act—the advertisement and promotion of cannabis that is sold unlawfully. There’s already a law for this, but I want to talk about Atikameksheng Anishnawbek that has written to the Ministry of the Attorney General to operate a retail cannabis store in Atikameksheng Anishnawbek:

“Please accept this letter as our formal request to enter into negotiations regarding the operation of a retail cannabis store in Atikameksheng Anishnawbek.

“As a First Nation, it is important to us that we regulate and control businesses that operate on Atikameksheng lands. To that end, we would always reserve the right to

control and administratively run those businesses to protect the interests of members of our community.

“It is necessary to point out that we reserve the right to license, as a governing body, those who wish to conduct all businesses, including distribution of cannabis.

“As such, formal approval from the provincial government is not a requirement for us to proceed with this process. Having said that, it is in everyone’s interest that we strive to harmonize rules and regulations between Atikameksheng, its citizens, and the policies and procedures set out by the provincial government.

“It would only be in matters where our interests may diverge that Atikameksheng would seek an independent path. At this stage, we do not foresee such a divergence.

“It is important for us to move forward expeditiously as we wish to ensure that the sale and distribution of cannabis within Atikameksheng lands is properly regulated so as to prevent third-party black market enterprises from establishment in our community.

“As we move forward, we are open to discussions with you to harmonize our processes and policies with those of the provincial government.

“We welcome your suggestions as to how we might best achieve the intended harmonization.”

They copied Minister Vic Fedeli, Minister Greg Rickford, myself, the MP etc.—

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Sorry, I’m just going to interrupt for a second.

We seem to have forgotten the long-standing rule to name people by their riding or their title and not their name. We’re seeing a lot of that on both sides, so this is just a general reminder.

I’ll go back to the member.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** No problem, Speaker. Merci.

When you look at schedule 1, if this has to do with First Nations—I can tell you that Atikameksheng Anishnawbek has written to the Ministry of the Attorney General and they have yet to receive an answer, and that was a long time ago that they started this. So if schedule 1 is made to go after First Nations, then I would say to do your homework. When a First Nation takes the time—and this is signed by the chief, and copied to me and to everybody else—please make sure that you treat them with respect and that you answer their letter, so that they can be partners with the provincial government and not have the Cannabis Control Act and schedule 1 go after First Nations communities.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** We’re going to go to questions.

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** I want to ask the member from Nickel Belt—in her very eloquent remarks, there wasn’t one comment made to echo the urgency on having the federal government move forward with meaningful bail reform. There wasn’t one comment acknowledging that our police services should be thanked for the incredible work they do. There wasn’t one comment to make sure that the violent and repeat offenders are no longer on our streets.

So my question to her is: Why is her party so silent on public safety?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I don’t blame you for not listening to every word that I say, but I started with an eight-minute dissertation on Dan Lee. Dan Lee was an OPP officer, and all of the good that he had done for our community—because we have a very active OPP retired group, as well as a very active OPP volunteers’ group, who do wonderful work throughout our community.

And I thank you for including schedule 6, which I read into the record: “Section 3 is amended to give the minister the power to issue awards related to policing.” I would support this 100%. We have a lot of police sergeants, police officers, who are very deserving of an award. The hard work that they do is not always recognized the way that it should be, and I fully support—I started by saying that I support all of the schedules in this bill. You’re going in the right direction—

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Thank you. We need to go to the next question.

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** Thank you to my colleagues from Nickel Belt and Oshawa for their very thoughtful comments on this bill and making sure that the concerns of many people across the province are expressed in this House.

My question is for the member for Oshawa. We know that a former, retired OPP officer, John Tod, who had a 32-year career in the force in the theft division has said that the government really needs to introduce a VIN verification system, that the only way that we’re really going to prevent auto theft is if we have a system to verify vehicle serial numbers before the vehicle is sold. Ontario doesn’t have a system like that right now. I don’t see it anywhere in the bill.

1740

I know that the member has spent time working on this file. Could the member please explain to us what a vehicle identification number verification program would actually do to stop theft in the province and why we should be listening to former OPP officers when they ask for something?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** It’s a layered question, but I think it’s simple: We need to have a preventive VIN verification system. Right now, we have the front lines of ServiceOntario that deal with a whole whack of services, including dealing with VINs and getting them registered. They don’t go out to the parking lot and check physically whether that VIN is legit, and that is what would be required if there were a flag about duplications or partials or questionable VINs.

As it stands now, if they were to have any question—and I don’t even know how that would get flagged—there is no system. There is nothing. There is no investigation. There is no verification.

In other provinces, they have something: this third-party thing. I don’t know if that’s the right fit for here or if it could be in-house. But certainly, listening to law enforcement, former law enforcement, the insurance industry—this government even acknowledges that that’s a

good idea. The former Minister of Transportation did a summary of proposals and a call for feedback, and that was years ago. As far as we can tell, they've done nothing with it, so there's no prevention in this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** I'm going to go to the next question.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Madam Speaker, through you to either of the members from the opposition, I know it is important to challenge government on bills that are brought forward, and I know that the member from Oshawa is concerned about something she perceives in this legislation, which is an inability to flag fraudulent VIN numbers.

But there are a lot of amazing things in this bill that I'm hoping that she would agree she would want to see passed in legislation in Ontario, for example:

- making persons with active reporting requirements ineligible from legally changing their names through the Change of Name Act—I'm assuming that the members would want to support something like that;

- giving police services more tools to monitor sex offenders and investigate sex crimes through Christopher's Law;

- to support terrorism victims by amending the Limitations Act, removing the limitation period;

- protecting children and families by prohibiting the operation of supervised consumption sites within 200 metres of a school, or licensed child care centre or early Ontario family centre; and

- requiring municipalities and local boards to seek provincial approval prior to making or supporting requests for new supervised consumption sites.

My question—

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** I'll go to the member for Oshawa to respond.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I appreciate the question because, to this member's point, this is a bill that has a whole whack of stuff in it. There are nine schedules that deal with very significant issues, or some tinker around the edges, with the exception—and she and I can agree to disagree on schedule 4. I would politely request that this government could remove that schedule so that we could support all of the other schedules.

But how we see the ending of supervised consumption, or consumption and treatment sites—we can disagree on that. Certainly, I think that we have seen thousands of lives that have been saved because of consumption and treatment sites. We are asking that the government take a more compassionate approach, evidence-based, and look at that continuum of care.

The other issues that the member has raised—absolutely, they require attention, and we're supportive and have said that.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Next question.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** The government talks about listening to police. One of the things that I've talked to government members about and something that the police have talked to me about when it comes to auto theft is

talking to auto manufacturers about things like key fobs and the technology that goes into building these cars and how much more work could be done to make them harder to steal. A lot of the reports—what I hear, when a car is stolen, it's a person who's just sending a signal, someone is picking it up, and it makes the car so much easier.

I think that in a market as big as Ontario, where we purchase new cars all the time—and manufacturers should listen if they want to do business here—it's within this purview of this government to actually reach out to them and talk about the standards we should set to having our cars protected. Do you agree with that?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I think anything that we can do to protect Ontarians from car theft, from auto theft, is important. I know it's a cat-and-mouse game, that we're dealing with organized crime and that we could come up with a solution today that is already obsolete tomorrow. But if we are not listening to the authorities, if we are not listening and acting as quickly as we can and being involved, then we're missing opportunities.

Establishing a VIN verification system is one piece. The transportation enforcement officers have talked about how many stolen vehicles they have recovered just in Gananoque. There are things going on, and we do have to be flexible and nimble. When it comes to the manufacturers, we should be partnering with everyone who can help us with this problem.

This government always points to the feds, but there are provincial measures that we could put in place today or tomorrow to help curb auto theft.

**M. Anthony Leardi:** J'aimerais poser une question à la députée de Nickel Belt. Annexe numéro 1 du projet de loi propose d'ajouter une nouvelle interdiction concernant la publicité du cannabis. En bref, ça veut dire que ça va être interdit d'avoir une pub de vente de cannabis si on n'est pas autorisé.

J'invite la députée d'offrir son opinion.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Je suis 100 % d'accord—100 % d'accord. Si vous me demandez, moi, je dirais que je n'en veux pas de promotion de cannabis du tout, du tout. Donc, te dire qu'on n'aurait plus de promotion de cannabis qui est vendu illégalement, absolument, et je vous encourage à aller encore plus loin que ça. Toute la publicité qui est faite avec les enfants, la publicité—la plupart du cannabis est consommé en fumée, qui n'est pas bon pour la santé, qui n'est pas bon pour les poumons. Donc, on veut arrêter la promotion du cannabis. Envoyez fort, vous avez 100 % mon—

**La Présidente suppléante (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Merci. Further debate?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** I'm pleased to rise today also to join the conversation around the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act. I'll be sharing my time with the Associate Minister of Small business.

If the bill passes, it will help protect our communities. It will keep the streets safer. It will be a continuation of the important work that we have been doing to achieve those two goals.

Now, Speaker, before I get going, I want to acknowledge the great work of my friend and colleague the Honourable Minister Kerzner, the Solicitor General, along with his staff, who have done tremendous work getting us to this point and leading the charge on the bill. I also want to thank the Minister of Health and her wonderful team, the Minister of Transportation, my seatmate, and of course, the others who—

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** I apologize to the Attorney General.

Just a couple minutes ago, I made a warning to use titles or riding names to identify members. I would appreciate if both sides of the House would respect that rule. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Absolutely, Speaker. I've developed some bad habits over my time here. My colleague across the way, the member from Oshawa, has encouraged me to say "Speaker" instead of "Madam" or "Mr. Speaker." I'm trying to—old dog, new tricks.

Now, Speaker, I do want to thank my colleagues, the Solicitor General, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Transportation and others who have helped put this bill together. There are so many good things happening in here. But on top of that are the stakeholders, whether it be our justice partners—in my case, the practising lawyers, the paralegals, the legal professionals and others who have provided very important recommendations. It's all working together that moves us forward, that puts us in a safer Ontario. And that's why the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act is such a necessary step to move forward.

One of the items I want to highlight are the Limitations Act changes. It's really important for keeping our communities safe and increasing access to justice for victims of crime to have a vital priority.

1750

Now, Speaker, it has been the focus of many to focus on the rights of criminals. We also think that there is a responsibility side to that. We want to focus on the victims, and we want to focus on the needs of the victims and those in our community who are, if not directly victimized, certainly affected.

The justice system needs to be accessible and responsive to all Ontarians, especially those that need us the most. It is why we are proposing to amend Ontario's Limitations Act to remove the time limits for starting civil actions under the federal Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act. By doing this, victims of terrorism would be able to launch civil lawsuits against terrorists at any time and not feel pressure to do so within a certain time frame.

Before I go any further, I want to explain that under the federal Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act, victims of terrorism can start a lawsuit against the terrorists and their supporters. Under the current law, limitation periods are already suspended if the person starting the lawsuit can't do so within the normal period of time because of a physical, mental or psychological condition. But by making these changes to Ontario's Limitations Act, Ontar-

ians would not have to prove physical or mental hardships in order to delay starting a civil suit.

We can't even imagine, some of us as individuals, the devastating impact it has on both the individual and their communities. By proposing these amendments to the Limitations Act, we are telling victims of terrorism that we are listening to them and we're making the necessary changes that would increase their access to justice. This would also send a clear signal that our government recognizes the serious nature of these crimes and we are doing something about it.

The next piece I want to touch on is protecting Ontarians through combatting the illegal cannabis market. Now, when the federal government began, six years ago, telling us that we would have a cannabis market, it was up to this government to figure out how to manage that. We had three primary principles. The first principle was going after the black market, the second principle was protecting our communities and the third principle was protecting our children. Everything that we have done around the cannabis market touches on those three primary principles.

Now, Speaker, we are providing another tool for police to go after those who are online, marketing and advertising illegal cannabis. I did listen to my colleague from Nickel Belt and concerns around First Nations. This is not a tool focused on First Nations. This is a tool focused on the bad actors in the online space, because it is a little bit of Whac-A-Mole, where they sometimes put up a site and then switch over to another site, and the public is not protected in that unregulated market. So this is a tool for the police to go after them with provincial measures, in addition to the existing tools that are there federally, the Criminal Code and otherwise. We want to go after the advertising and promotion of the sale of illegal cannabis as part of our plan to go after the black market, protecting our communities and looking after our children.

I don't think anybody thinks that we should be ignoring the illegal cannabis market and the bad actors behind it, and I would look forward to my colleagues across the way supporting us on this piece and others.

Now, one more piece in the act has to do with having part-time judges being able to lend their expertise, to use their expertise to help us as we move through the justice system. In a simplistic way, it is like supply teachers, who can come back and supply in the classroom, but only to a certain amount. This allows retired judges to come back and help us, up to a certain amount. As the context changes and as the need changes, this act will allow us to be more flexible to maximize the contribution of very experienced judges who can help with the caseload that we have, the criminal backlog that had developed. And I can tell you, Speaker, that it is an interesting update that we have tackled a great amount of the COVID backlog in criminal cases—nearly 50%, we have tackled, but that's a whole other speech.

I'm watching the clock, Speaker, and I'm going to sit down and let my colleague the Associate Minister of Small Business talk about more parts of this act.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** The Associate Minister of Small Business.

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** It truly is an honour and a privilege to rise today in support of the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act. This proposed legislation represents a significant milestone in our government's ongoing efforts to ensure that everyone in our province feels secure in their community, their workplace and their home.

Safety is the bedrock of prosperity. Without it, our families cannot thrive, our communities cannot grow and our economy cannot flourish. The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act addresses pressing safety challenges, empowering law enforcement, protecting our most vulnerable and ensuring that our justice system is effective.

But today, I just really want to start with recognizing and thanking my colleagues in the Ministries of the Solicitor General, Health, Transportation, Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement, the Attorney General and everyone for their outstanding work. Their dedication to this legislation underscores the importance of the multi-ministry approach to achieving a safer Ontario.

As the Associate Minister of Small Business, I'm especially focused on how this legislation will benefit not just individuals and families but also the backbone of our communities: Ontario's small businesses.

In Ontario, 98% of all companies are small businesses, with fewer than 100 employees. The small business community is over 400,000 strong and employs well over two million people. These enterprises are vital to our province's success, and they deserve a safe environment in which to operate, innovate and contribute to their communities.

The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act is a comprehensive and forward-thinking piece of legislation, built around three key pillars:

- (1) Safer streets: introducing targeted measures to enhance highway safety and combat auto theft.
- (2) Safer communities: providing law enforcement with robust tools to monitor offenders and strengthen protections for vulnerable populations.
- (3) A stronger enforcement: streamlining processes within our justice system to ensure accountability and deter criminal activity.

These pillars reflect our government's unwavering commitment to addressing the safety concerns that touch every corner of Ontario. From urban cities like Toronto and Ottawa to smaller towns and rural areas like Mono or Kenora, this legislation will help foster the kind of safe and vibrant communities we all want to see.

At its core, this act achieves several critical outcomes. It strengthens our ability to tackle auto theft and highway safety concerns, which directly impacts businesses that rely on transportation and logistics. Secondly, it enhances the tools available to law enforcement, ensuring they can effectively monitor offenders and prevent future crimes. Finally, it modernizes and streamlines aspects of our justice system, enabling a more efficient response to the complex challenges of today's criminal landscapes.

For small business owners, these changes are not just theoretical; they have concrete, real-world implications. Crime and safety concerns directly affect local economies, influencing everything from consumer confidence and foot traffic to insurance premiums and operational costs.

In closing, before we end this evening, by addressing these issues head-on, we're creating an environment where businesses can focus on what they do best: serving their customers, innovating and growing without the constant threat of crime disrupting their operations.

In my community in Mississauga, we have plazas where we don't want to go in the evening because there's stunt driving taking place, careless driving. This gives the tools to our law enforcement to be able to tackle that head-on, helping those businesses to succeed and thrive. Because quite frankly, when we're not going to visit our small businesses, how can they succeed? It's so important that we collectively help support all of our business communities, our vulnerable citizens, to make sure that we are all there for them. This is what this act is there for. Thank you for your time. Thank you to everyone—

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Thank you to the member for understanding. It is 6 o'clock now and we have to move to private members' public business.

*Report continues in volume B.*







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

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
		Premier / Premier ministre
		Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)</b>	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (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	
<b>Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)</b>	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
<b>Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
		Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)</b>	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
<b>Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)</b>	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
<b>Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)</b>	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
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Electrification / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Électrification
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	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	
<b>McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
<b>Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)</b>	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences Deputy Government Whip / Whip adjointe du gouvernement
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
<b>Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
<b>Skelly, Donna (PC)</b>	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources / 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
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
<b>Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)</b>	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	