

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 18B

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 18B

1st Session
44th Parliament
Wednesday
28 May 2025

1^{re} session
44^e législature
Mercredi
28 mai 2025

Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly
Greffier : Trevor Day

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House Publications and Language Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

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Wednesday 28 May 2025

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 28 mai 2025

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING LOGEMENTS ABORDABLES

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should establish Homes Ontario, a dedicated public agency with a mandate to tariff-proof Ontario's housing market by delivering new affordable and non-profit homes, streamlining development approvals, leveraging public lands and creating more good jobs for Ontario's skilled trades workforce.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): MPP Shaw has moved private member's notice of motion number 4. Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for their presentation.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Speaker, this will be the third time that the Ontario NDP has proposed Homes Ontario. This is the NDP's plan to get shovels in the ground on housing, because we will not give up and we will not turn our backs on people who need our help.

The housing crisis is worse than ever. Rising costs of housing, skyrocketing rents, unstable housing situations, high mortgage rates, years-long wait-lists for affordable public homes—this is the housing reality in Ontario, and we've all seen it in our communities.

This government has promised time and time again to fix the housing crisis, but clearly they have failed. After seven years of this government, housing starts and building permits are cratering. The province saw 33% fewer housing starts this year—the lowest in all of Ontario. According to the government's own numbers, a quarter of a million people are homeless. And the province's shelter system is full. People living out of tents in parks and public spaces—that has become the norm in Ontario.

People from all walks of life need housing. We are in the worst crisis we have seen in generations. Unfortunately, under this government, this is nothing new. What is new, however, is the added impact of Donald Trump's tariffs. Ontario is facing a challenge like we have not faced before. It's obvious to everyone that this is a pivotal moment for our province.

Ontario's finance minister said, "The situation we are in today is a wake-up call—the status quo is no longer an option."

It's time for infrastructure projects to create jobs, boost unity and spark economic growth. It's time for big and bold thinking. Homes Ontario is just that—a bold infrastructure plan.

Homes Ontario will create a dedicated public agency with a mandate to build affordable homes, just like every other province in this country does—every province except Ontario. By using the power of our provincial government, we can leverage public lands, provide grants and low-cost financing, fast-track development approvals, acquire and repair existing underused housing. This will achieve three very important goals. We need to increase housing affordability. We clearly need to boost employment. And we need to secure our industries—particularly our construction industry.

This would not be the first time that a public housing strategy has helped our province and our country get through hard times.

Governments of all stripes have built housing—truly affordable housing—for Ontario. Many people will be familiar with these homes in their communities. They're sometimes called victory homes. Sometimes they're called wartime housing. These were built following World War II, and they continue to form cherished communities across the province. Sometimes they're called strawberry box homes. In Hamilton, on Hamilton Mountain, there's an entire neighbourhood where generations of families have lived in these homes. In fact, my father-in-law—he was a bomber in the Lancaster, a tail gunner in the Lancaster—was war-blinded, and he raised his family in one of these homes on the mountain. The MPP from Ottawa told me that their neighbourhood where these homes are built has now been given dedicated heritage status. And I believe that MPP Stevens shared with me that the first home she ever owned was one of these homes.

In fact, there's a very interesting article from TVO called "Home Front: Why Housing Became Part of Canada's War Effort." I would like to add that one of the leading proponents of this at the time was a construction magnate named Joseph Pigott, who was from Hamilton. He was a long-time supporter of social housing, and he had this to say: "Wartime Housing acted like a developer, buying land and contracting the construction of houses." These homes continue to stand—but it's not just the homes that we can thank; it's the generations of families who had a stable place to live and a roof over their heads.

So this isn't just an abstract policy idea that the members opposite would like to say that it is. It's really a return to what Ontario used to do, and we obviously did it so well. Governments around the world and throughout history

have built housing, not just because it's the right thing to do—which it is, for people—but because it's good for the economy. It keeps tradespeople working. It keeps our resource industries in business. And it helps people find and keep their housing in tough economic times, which is where we are today.

The government likes to say we are in a war—an economic war. Well, what we are proposing is a wartime effort to get people housed, to strengthen Ontario, to tariff-proof our economy. We must get Ontario building.

Homes Ontario is our plan to treat housing like the essential infrastructure it is—publicly financed, built at scale and permanently affordable. By getting the government back in the business of building homes, unlocking public land, and working with non-profits, co-ops and supportive housing providers, we'll create good union jobs, skilled jobs. We will get people housed and build the kind of stable and inclusive communities that make our economy resilient.

But unfortunately, Madam Speaker, every time the NDP brings forward these policies, the government says no. They use theatrics to paint the idea that public investment in housing infrastructure is a radical idea. They try to paint publicly built homes like the ones I've just described as undesirable. They say that the government can't build housing. Yet, in the same breath, they promise to build the world's largest underground highway tunnel. But apparently, they have thrown out their hands on their promise to build homes. They say it's too expensive—again, this from a government that has given \$2.2 billion to subsidize a private luxury spa. They have \$100 billion for an underground highway tunnel. They are half a trillion dollars in debt, but they cannot find the money to build homes for people to live in.

Up to date, what has the government's solution been? We all remember that their first solution was to open the greenbelt for luxury homes on prime farmland, and we know that that was a solution that really had nothing to do with housing. The government, as we know, was forced to roll back that legislation under public pressure—and under an RCMP criminal investigation, I'll add. But since then, on housing, they've made a lot of noise but, basically, they've done nothing.

We could charitably describe what they're doing as fiddling around the edges, but they continue to ignore all of the top recommendations from their very own housing task force. To justify their lack of action, they need you to believe that there's nothing more that they can do, that they are powerless in the face of mysterious market forces beyond their control. But this government just can't get it done. For seven years, they've sat around just hoping that developers will start building. The private market will not fix the housing crisis because it's not their responsibility in the first place; it's the government's responsibility.

According to Scotiabank, Ontario needs to more than double its existing supply of subsidized non-market housing. Bill 23, where you cancelled development charges, has left municipalities cash-strapped, struggling to provide that social housing in dealing with homelessness. Reliance

on the private market alone is a policy failure. The private market will not and cannot deliver all the affordable housing we need. No one living in an encampment can afford what a private developer can profitably build. The truth is plainly obvious that housing is not a priority for this government. The government's recent budget is certainly proof of that.

Under this government, as I've said, Ontario's housing starts are declining. In fact, Ontario's housing starts recently reached the lowest number since Ontario began keeping record of housing starts. Ontario's housing industry is now so weak that it is actually fuelling increases in unemployment in the trade sector. Imagine, Speaker: 1,300 construction workers were laid off last year—construction workers in the middle of a housing crisis. How does any of this make sense?

Homes Ontario is a plan that will build more affordable houses and create more good jobs and put those skilled workers back to work. We're giving the opportunity to the government today to take real action, to take responsibility and get shovels in the ground. No more hoping, no more wishing, no more excuses or blaming other levels of government.

We've recently found support for a public housing agency from a surprising source. During the election, Mark Carney promised to create a new government entity called Build Canada Homes to get Canada “back into the business of building homes.” We certainly welcome Prime Minister Carney's endorsement of a plan that we've been advocating for years now, and we hope that this will influence the Ontario Liberals to get on board with these reasonable and, frankly, necessary measures.

But regardless of what the federal government does, it does not relieve us of our own obligation to get housing built here in Ontario—and it is an obligation. The Ontario government can no longer sit on the sidelines.

Let's quickly review the stakes here: We need affordable housing and supportive housing to reverse the increase of homelessness and the spread of encampments. We need affordable and reliable rental housing, including for those who have a dream of home ownership but need the time and relief in their budget to save up their savings. We need affordable housing for people who are planning for their retirement, who need to make ends meet on a fixed income or else risk having to go back to work. And we need affordable housing so that young families have room to grow.

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We need affordable homes across the province so that every community can attract the health care workers, the teachers, the engineers and the entrepreneurs that they need to grow and thrive and so that those skilled people are not fleeing to other provinces. We need affordable homes not just for today, but for tomorrow and for generations to come. Like the war victory homes that the government built in the 1940s and the 1950s, the homes that we build today will be passed down from parents to their children and grandchildren and will form the basis for strong and caring communities. These homes can be a

proud legacy of all of us here in this Legislature. With Homes Ontario, housing won't be a luxury; it will be a fundamental human right—because it is a fundamental human right.

So I urge this government to say yes. Say yes and offer hope to the hundreds of thousands of Ontarians without adequate housing who have put their lives on hold. Say yes and show the leadership and the courage that this moment deserves.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mr. Matthew Rae: It's my pleasure to rise this evening to talk about the motion in front of us—motion 4, from the MPP from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas—and for the remarks this evening. I just want to read it for those who may be watching at home at this hour. The motion in front of us: "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should establish Homes Ontario, a dedicated public agency with a mandate to tariff-proof Ontario's housing market by delivering new affordable and non-profit homes, streamlining development approvals, leveraging public lands and creating more good jobs for Ontario's skilled trades workforce."

Speaker, I read that for the record because one of them which really stuck out to me was "streamlining development approvals." Before this assembly we have a bill—Bill 17 before this House—which will do exactly that, building on the work that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and that ministry have done over the years to streamline development approvals, whether it was in the last Parliament, the new provincial planning statement, and whether it is, now, Bill 17 that is before this House—which will do that. So I am hopeful that at least the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas will be voting for Bill 17 when it comes to this House for that vote.

But Speaker, we're here to talk about the motion, Homes Ontario, this evening. I know one thing that came to my mind when reading this—again, I know the NDP have brought it forward a couple of times in various forms. The number one thing, colleagues, that came to my mind was, show me the money. That is what I see when I read this bill.

It's estimated that this idea will cost \$150 billion—\$150 billion, Speaker. Our government firmly opposes the proposed Homes Ontario model because it would impose an unsustainable fiscal burden on the province and could lead to significant long-term liabilities. The opposition wants to create a new government-run housing agency that would cost billions of dollars—billions with a B, Speaker—and deliver nothing. We've seen this story before. It ended with higher deficits, stalled buildings and a lost decade for Ontario.

Under this Premier, we will not allow Ontario to go back to the Rae days. As I mentioned many times in this place, I am here to improve the name of Rae in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: You're doing a great job.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you. Thank you to the member from Essex.

Speaker, we know government does not build homes; we create the conditions for them to be built. We're continuing to build on success and support the housing market, which can respond to more flexible housing demands.

I know the members opposite are saying we're not doing those conditions, that we're not creating those conditions. But Speaker, since 2018, over 570,000 housing starts have occurred in this province—570,000—and that's based off of last year's numbers. And I know we've seen record increases in purpose-built rental housing starts, Speaker. That's very important, because that's one of the affordability options for those young families or a young person looking to move out of their parents' basement. We need to build more of those purpose-built rentals—and that's what our government is doing by proposing and successfully removing the HST from those purpose-built rentals.

Our government is building on a record of success, which includes record housing starts, as I mentioned, in 2022 and 2023, and driving growth through key pieces of legislation such as the Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024, and the Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025.

I know the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas mentioned the DC exemptions. I'm not sure if the member was here this morning for my member's statement, but I had the pleasure to share about how our government's Bill 23 has saved a provider, L'Arche Stratford, over \$300,000 in development charges, which will build deeply affordable and accessible housing units in the city of Stratford because of our government's actions in Bill 23.

Interjection.

Mr. Matthew Rae: It is great—from the House leader. We need to see more of that.

Our bills are creating those conditions for those communities to move forward with those important buildings in those communities.

We're speeding up home construction by cutting red tape, reducing bureaucracy and streamlining approvals, rather than expanding public sector housing operations. Government doesn't need more bureaucracy; we need more homes—and we will continue to do exactly that.

Our government looks forward to working with our federal partners to get shovels in the ground faster and keep costs down for homebuyers. We're encouraged to see the federal government following our lead by committing to eliminate the GST on housing, as we have already done for purpose-built rentals. We also welcome the government's commitment to help reduce municipal development charges, which we all agree are slowing down growth and driving up costs. Housing is not a partisan issue; it's a Canadian issue.

As Premier Ford has said from day one, we will work with anyone who shares the goal of protecting the dream of home ownership and making that attainable for all On-

tarians, but our key partners in this are municipal governments. This government believes that working with our municipal partners, and working with them because they are in the best position to respond to local housing needs—that Queen’s Park must support, not supplant. We must support them. This includes the historic infrastructure funding that is through the Ministry of Infrastructure along with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, ensuring that our municipalities are getting shovels in the ground on those important waste water projects and water projects. As the member from Thornhill mentioned earlier today, if you don’t have a pipe to a house, someone cannot move into that house, and you need to be able to flush the toilet to give occupancy. We’re going to continue to support our municipalities to ensure that we get that infrastructure in the ground.

In the last Parliament, in Bill 185, we introduced and passed the use-it-or-lose-it provisions and ensured that land and infrastructure resources tied to stalled development can be redirected to shovel-ready projects. This was something we heard from our municipal partners over and over, and our government was listening and acted on that. Now our municipalities have that authority to reallocate those infrastructure allotments to ensure that development can move forward when a builder is there ready to build and to ensure that shovels get in the ground even quicker.

This government believes in taking an evidence-based approach and outcome-driven approach, unlike the opposition’s untested proposals.

As we have seen in other sectors, public-sector-only models fail to engage the innovation and efficiency of the private or non-profit sectors. We believe in achieving measurable progress while maintaining fiscal and financial discipline.

The opposition only offers slogans. In place of plans, they offer ideological appeals without operational detail or realistic funding models.

I know the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing was able to provide some last-mile funding, right before the election, to get deeply affordable housing units built across the province because we worked with our municipalities and our non-profit builders to identify those projects. We don’t know those projects; our builders know those projects.

United Way, for example, in my riding, has a great project in Listowel, and they were able to bring that forward and were successful in the application process to support new affordable housing units in the town of Listowel. They were actually able to move forward on that this year, and I had the opportunity to tour it recently.

We’ll continue to work with our non-profit sector, our municipal partners, and the federal government, if they choose to come to the table, to ensure that we continue to keep costs down for those building homes and ensure that we’re there for our municipal partners, investing in the infrastructure that they continue to tell us that we need.

I hope our opposition colleagues join us in calling on the federal government to invest significantly in infrastructure, because we know that’s what gets homes built.

Thank you, Speaker, for listening to my remarks this evening.

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The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

MPP Catherine McKenney: Thank you to my colleague from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas for bringing forward this bold plan, Homes Ontario. It is a plan that treats housing as a human right and as the essential infrastructure that it is. We know today that across Ontario people are struggling to find homes they can afford. In Ottawa, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is now over \$2,000. Waitlists for community housing stretch on for years. Too many people are living in shelters. People across this province are in encampments or precariously housed without stability. This is not just a housing crisis; it’s a crisis of affordability, of health and of economic opportunity.

Back in 2020, Ottawa Community Housing—which I would submit to the last speaker does build fantastic housing. What they have seen is that in their 14,000 household units, they used to be able to move 2,000 people out into the lower rental private market, and that number has now gone down to 1,200. It’s 1,200 because we don’t have the housing that’s been promised. We don’t have market rentals that are affordable to low- and moderate-income households. For those 800 people who are not moving out, 800 people can’t get into community housing and they’re in shelters. Shelters are full. They’re full across this province, and people are in encampments—and we know what this government wants to do to people in encampments.

The private market cannot and it will not solve this crisis on its own. We need public leadership; we are appealing to you. Homes Ontario is about getting the government back in the business of building housing—publicly financed, permanently affordable and built at scale. It will unlock public land, partner with non-profits, co-ops and supportive housing providers, and it will create good union jobs by investing in the skilled trades, construction materials and infrastructure our communities need.

We’ve seen what happens when we don’t plan properly. In many of the neighbourhoods in Ottawa, rapid development has far outpaced services. People are waiting for years for basic transit routes. Schools are overcrowded. Community health infrastructure hasn’t kept up. These aren’t just planning gaps; they are real daily struggles for working families.

Homes Ontario is about building complete communities from the start. Affordable housing is not only a social priority; it is an economic necessity. When people have stable homes, they are healthier, they are more productive and better able to contribute to their communities and to Ontario’s economy. We cannot grow our economy if people cannot afford to live in it.

Unfortunately, this government’s current approach is not meeting this moment. Their Bill 17, Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, fast-tracks development

without requiring any affordability, sustainability or adequate infrastructure. It hands more power to the minister to override local planning decisions but gives nothing to municipalities to help them build housing that meets their community's real needs. That is why Homes Ontario matters. It's not just about more homes; it's about the right kind of homes in the right places with the right supports. It's about ensuring public land is used for public good and that the homes we build today remain affordable for future generations.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mr. Adil Shamji: I want to thank the honourable member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas for inviting us to contemplate the very grave challenge that we face in Ontario right now. It's not actually a challenge that we face; it's a problem that our constituents face, and it is the problem—the crisis—of housing.

As we speak, there are young people who can't afford homes. I'm not sure that I can call myself a young person anymore, but I know that my wife and I would not be able to afford the home that we bought just a few years ago. People are getting evicted from their homes. Landlords and tenants cannot find justice. And every night in Toronto 10,000 people go to sleep on the streets—in Toronto. More broadly across the entire province, that number is at least 14,000 people who are sleeping on the streets. We have an unprecedented crisis of people residing in encampments because they have nowhere else to turn.

So, urgent and timely action is needed, and, regrettably, under this government, we're not seeing it. We're not seeing it, as evidenced by the tepid legislation introduced in the form of Bill 17. We're not seeing it in the budget that was introduced just a week or so ago.

In fact, as I reflect upon that budget, it makes it abundantly clear that this government has essentially done an all-out surrender on our housing crisis. In 2018, they spoke about an ambition to build 1.5 million homes by 2031, a goal which, if they're serious about achieving it, would require them to build 150,000 homes per year. Our recent budget projects 78,000 homes this year, and it had barely been introduced before the CMHC released its numbers, which actually show our government is on track—our province is on track—to build fewer than 50,000 homes this year.

Now the situation that we face in Ontario is incredibly dire, and it's fair to ask: How did we get here? Well, under this government, we have seen that they consistently choose to talk instead of act. They convened a Housing Affordability Task Force led, in fact, by one of their own previous Conservative Party leaders, and chose to ignore its recommendations, wasting years in the process. They've talked about introducing all sorts of innovations like single-stair egress, updates to the building code—which they've now been talking about for years and again reintroduced in the most recent legislation as a consultation. At what point will that consultation actually turn into action? This government has chosen to reward donors instead of its own taxpayers. For example, they

didn't hesitate to try to give up the greenbelt—until they were called out for it—instead of giving Ontarians a tax break that could make a home more accessible to them, that could make next month's rent check easier to meet.

This government has chosen to backpedal on policy instead of leading with ambition. Since 2018, they've introduced more than 10 pieces of housing legislation, each one usually reversing something that was in the last bill, so no wonder, amidst this policy chaos, confidence has been shaken in the housing sector on the not-for-profit side and on the for-profit side amongst builders, developers, and, yes, amongst people who are looking to rent out their homes as landlords, and in people who don't feel as though they can purchase a home.

In a situation like this, I would put forward that this government's job is to correct the market failure, not to replace that market. We could, for example, eliminate development charges on middle-class homes while simultaneously providing the funds that municipalities need for infrastructure through something like a better communities fund. We could waive the land-transfer tax on not-for-profit housing for seniors to make more housing available, and for first-time home buyers. We could eliminate punitive and discriminatory taxes that make homes less accessible to potential homeowners, and, of course, we could fund the not-for-profit sector and ensure that home and community care is adequately supported so that we can deliver deeply affordable housing with the wraparound supports that so many Ontarians need.

1830

Furthermore, I will say this motion very appropriately points out the need for us to tariff-proof our economy and the housing market. As we face tariffs, especially on our timber and our steel industries, I can think of no better way to insulate ourselves from American tariffs than to use that steel and timber within our own province to build something that we so desperately need, and that is, of course, homes.

But to the very direct question of should we convene a new public agency, Homes Ontario: My reflection on that is that we need action now. My very honest and genuine question is, can the members on the opposition side who are introducing this motion genuinely trust the same government that tried to centralize home care under a public agency and completely botched Ontario Health atHome? Can you trust that same government to centralize home building as well? Do you think that it's worth letting them further slow things down with more bureaucracy and their trademark incompetence? I worry that the answer to that is no.

I humbly submit that we shouldn't—at this stage, with this government—move to a public home-building agency and instead invite all members in the House to support our suggestions that can help to correct and protect our housing sector instead of replacing it and deliver the affordable, accessible and equitable housing sector that Ontarians deserve.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It's always a pleasure to be able to rise in the House and represent the residents for St. Catharines. I rise today to speak in support of this motion: that the government of Ontario establishes Homes Ontario, a public, not-for-profit agency with a clear and urgent mission to tackle the housing crisis head-on.

Across this province, families are struggling to keep up with skyrocketing rents and mortgage payments. Far too many Ontarians are being priced out of their own communities, forced to choose between housing and other basic necessities. The private market has proven time and time again that it cannot solve this crisis on its own when profit is put before people.

This is why the official opposition has long called for a bold, public solution to a crisis that demands nothing less. Homes Ontario would be that vehicle for that solution. This agency would build tens of thousands of new, affordable and non-profit homes, with a focus on permanent affordability and community ownership, not just private profit. It would leverage public lands, lands that belong to Ontarians, to build housing that puts people first.

Madam Speaker, it would also streamline the development process for non-profit and public housing projects, cutting through processes that too often stall the very development we need most. In doing so, it would create thousands of good, union jobs in skilled trades, ensuring that Ontario workers are part of building the future. This is what we need. We need to show workers we support them amidst the ongoing trade war. We know that when government steps up, communities thrive. We believe that housing is a human right and that it's time our housing policy reflects that principle.

That's why we are committed to stronger rent controls, robust tenant protections and serious investments in public and non-market housing. Homes Ontario is not just about building homes; it's about restoring hope—hope for young people and young families who want to live in communities they grew up in, hope for seniors on fixed incomes who deserve to thrive in their later years and hope for newcomers building a life here in Ontario. It's about fairness and dignity. Allowing people to live in dignity means providing great opportunities.

Madam Speaker, it's time we treat housing as a public good, not a playground for speculators. Let's build communities where everyone can afford to live, grow and thrive. This motion deserves all-party support. Let us build Homes Ontario together.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate? I recognize the member for Ajax.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: Thank you. I think it's the first time I'm speaking in this chamber with you in the chair—so very nice to see you in there.

I'm really happy to speak about the motion today, because I do agree: We've got to deliver more affordable and non-profit homes, we've got to streamline development approvals, we have to leverage public lands, absolutely, and create good jobs for our skilled trade workforce—100% agree with that. But that hasn't happened in the last seven years with this Conservative government. My colleague from Don Valley East spoke quite a bit about that.

I'll say this: When you go to the website for Homes Ontario, it asks you to provide your contact information to view the plan. To me, that's disappointing. It feels like a marketing gimmick to me. More than that, here's the problem with Homes Ontario: I don't believe we need to be creating another large government bureaucracy to get homes built. We already have the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. What we need are better frameworks and strong programs that municipalities and, most importantly, the not-for-profit sector can access.

So how many cooks do we really need in the kitchen and what are we trying to do here? Are we trying to compete with a large construction company like PCL, which is an employee-owned company? Are we trying to pick which construction and skilled trades unions would be working on this? I think we should work with all of them. There's already a limited number of planners and affordable-housing builders in this province, so any big bureaucracy here being set up is going to drain from our not-for-profit sector. We need to lift up that sector, not whittle it away.

Are we trying to create a new office with a bunch of empty desks? That isn't going to get it done, quite frankly. There are only so many people building affordable housing—

Interjection.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: And you know what? We shouldn't be wasting resources, to the member from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas. This province should work with the federal government to cut red tape to build affordable housing and ensure that we aren't actually getting in their way as a province, because we do tend to trip over ourselves sometimes when it comes to that.

I believe in the strength of our not-for-profit housing sector. I've worked with them. They're smart, they're entrepreneurial, they're full of ideas, and frankly, they stretch every single dollar that they work with and they create dollars themselves. They want to do even more, but bureaucracy actually is already getting in the way for our not-for-profit builders.

I was recently speaking with somebody who works with municipalities to build affordable and supportive housing and shelters as well, and the feedback that I received was that there are so many layers of bureaucracy in the way right now that we're no longer nimble, we're not responsive to new ideas because, guess what, they've got to be run up the chain—ideas that can save government money, ideas that can leverage existing equity that not-for-profit housing providers have and ideas that actually return capital back to government after a start-up investment.

So we don't need another big bureaucracy in the way. We need to be lean, we need to be efficient and we need to learn from the not-for-profit sector and market developers, because some of them want to build more affordable housing and they want to build rental housing too.

On Monday I was talking about how we can get market housing built by removing the HST and the land-transfer tax from new-home construction, because homes aren't being built right now. We aren't collecting revenue with excessive taxes and fees, and we're already making a bad situation worse.

This government is failing at building homes. Right now, Alberta is building more homes than we are, and it's a province one third our size. Let's think about that for a second. Creating supply actually is one way to deal with our housing crisis, because housing is a continuum; it goes all the way from market and it goes all the way to shelters supporting our unhoused. We need to restore the dream of home ownership to help families build equity and get ahead.

On the affordable ownership side, I think we do need a new plan from this government to create affordable ownership housing and no-frills buildings that you can purchase at below-market rates, with the non-profit sector or the government holding some equity to help with that; supporting organizations, like I'm sure the members of the official opposition would agree with, like Habitat for Humanity and Options for Homes, not weakening what they're already trying to do.

We need affordable rentals, co-ops and social housing to fill that gap: I agree 110%. We absolutely, 100% agree with that. But guess what: A big bureaucratic agency deciding winners and how that's going to go to work—frankly, it's not going to work. It's not going to get the job done, and that's why I don't support this motion.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

1840

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'm very pleased to rise to speak on behalf of this excellent motion put forward by my colleague the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

We have a housing crisis in the province and this government, as its budget demonstrated, has completely thrown in the towel. This motion puts forward a solution, and I want to just offer two examples of how this solution could work in my riding of Ottawa West–Nepean. They are both in the neighbourhood of Carlington.

The first is that Wartime Housing Ltd. constructed 400 war homes in the neighbourhood of Carlington. These were homes that were built by an agency of the crown federally to accommodate people during World War II who were needed for industrial jobs, who could not find housing, could not afford housing in cities, and so they built over 40,000 of these across the country, including 400 in the Carlington neighbourhood. These were very affordable rentals for workers and provided a solution to the housing crisis in World War II.

After World War II they continued to build these homes and eventually Wartime Housing Ltd. was taken over by the Canada Mortgage Housing Corp., which actually sold these homes, but they sold them at a price that was incredibly affordable to low- and moderate-income families—what would be the equivalent of about \$67,000 today—which gave people the option of owning a home and gave them a stake in their neighbourhood.

These homes still exist today. It's a very beautiful neighbourhood, Carlington. It has a really distinct look and feel to it. In fact, it's been recognized as a heritage neighbourhood by the city of Ottawa for that reason. That is an example that we could very easily bring into the present and fund that kind of housing development if we

just had an interest in taking what works from the past and applying it to the present.

The other example that I want to underline is a development at the Carlington Community Health Centre where they worked in partnership with Ottawa Community Housing to develop—I think it's 46 units of seniors housing above the community health centre. What the health centre contributed was their air space, and Ottawa Community Housing built the homes. Now these seniors have an affordable place to live that is right over a centre that provides them medical care, that has activities for them to engage in socially—all kinds of activities that support mental health and well-being. For these seniors it provides an affordable place to live but also access to great community and health supports.

This is exactly the kind of innovative thing that we could be investing in and that the private sector is never going to look towards. But if we actually get government back into the business of housing, if we're willing to support our community housing organizations, our not-for-profits and co-ops, then this is the kind of solution that could be scaled up across the province so that everybody has a place that they can call home and that they can afford in a community that offers them a great life.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Je suis très fière de la motion qui a été présentée par ma collègue de Hamilton-Ouest–Ancaster–Dundas. Dans ce moment de crise du logement en Ontario, le gouvernement se doit d'agir, et le plan de ma collègue, c'est un plan d'action.

La crise, c'est plus de 240 000 personnes sans abri en Ontario. La crise, c'est des jeunes personnes avec de bons emplois qui ne peuvent pas se permettre de s'acheter une maison. La crise, c'est des personnes âgées avec un revenu fixe qui ne peuvent pas payer leur loyer d'un mois à l'autre.

Comment est-ce que ma collègue de Hamilton-Ouest–Ancaster–Dundas, avec le projet logement Ontario, peut changer tout ça? Le gouvernement prendrait un rôle pour s'assurer que le logement est un droit humain. On parle de la construction de logements abordables, de maisons que les gens peuvent se permettre, de logements avec soutien, tant pour aider les personnes sans abri et les personnes âgées que les jeunes personnes. On parle d'un plan d'action qui va aider l'Ontario à sortir de la crise dans laquelle on est; un plan qui a été déjà utilisé dans le passé, dans l'après-guerre; un plan qu'on doit appuyer, tout le monde.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

The debate has now collapsed. The member has two minutes to reply. I recognize the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I have to say, I'm disappointed to see the Ontario Liberals joining forces with the Ford government in opposing public investment in affordable housing. We say all the time: Liberal, Tory, same old story. I shouldn't be surprised, because this housing crisis began with the Ontario Liberals and their lack of commit-

ment and investment, and the PCs just poured gas on the fire, so this is where we are today.

You clearly cannot build and develop housing on the side of the desk, which is what both the Liberals and the PCs have been doing for many, many years here in Ontario. It will be very interesting to see the conversations that the Ontario Liberals have with Prime Minister Mark Carney, who has made a very clear commitment to get “government back in the business of building homes.” I’d like to be a fly on the wall for that conversation.

What I would like to make sure that we understand is that we will keep putting this forward, because we believe that the government has the power and the resources that we need in Ontario to build the kind of truly affordable housing that we need—housing that is for the public good, not the private interests of the Liberal insiders and the PC insiders who have contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to their coffers. We believe that government should work for people, that we should leverage public lands to serve the public interests, not like the greenbelt grab, where \$8.3 billion of value went to private developers.

I would like to finally say that we believe—and we will continue to believe—that people who have stable and affordable housing contribute more to the economy and that their communities and their workforce will continue to thrive. If we truly want to put meaning to the words where we want to address Trump’s tariffs, we have to do more than pay lip service to them. We have to put policies in place that will ensure that we—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): The time provided for private members’ public business has expired.

MPP Shaw has moved private member’s notice of motion number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Pursuant to standing order 36, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

EDUCATION FUNDING

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): The member for Ottawa West–Nepean has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Education. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and a minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: This morning, the minister said he was unaware of his government’s education funding

record over the past seven years and asked me to provide him with information that explains how the Conservative government has cut funding while they’ve been in power. I’m happy to do that.

I do have to say that it’s quite shocking that the Premier would have named a Minister of Education who does not understand education funding, or at least that the minister hasn’t been sufficiently briefed by his ministry before tabling next year’s education funding. But I know it’s been a revolving door over there for education ministers—four in the past 11 months—so maybe it’s hard to be up to speed on that file.

But this really matters, Speaker, because we’re talking about the well-being of our kids here: their access to a high-quality education, access to mental health care, special education supports, safe and healthy schools and safe and reliable student transportation. I’m going to do my best to educate the Minister of Education this evening so that he can understand education funding and how it is we’ve ended up with \$6.35 billion out of the education system under his government.

To start, I need to explain some key concepts to the minister. I think this is a government that requires some financial literacy classes, but here’s a crash course for the minister. Let’s start with inflation. Here’s how TD Bank defines inflation: “Inflation is the rising price of goods and services associated with the cost of living. Inflation means that the purchasing power of money decreases, and more units of currency are required to buy the same goods and services that previously cost less.” The key thing here is that over time, the same amount of money is worth less. You can’t pay for the same number of staff or buy a school bus or build a new school for the same amount of money.

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The second concept I need to explain to the minister is population growth. Encyclopaedia Britannica defines population growth as “a change in the number of members of a certain plant or animal species in a particular location during a particular time period.” In this case we are talking about children, and the particular location is the education system, and the particular time is a school year. As the Financial Accountability Office explains, population growth “drives up the demand for public services.” As the number of students grows, we need to provide education to more kids. When your funding isn’t keeping up with inflation or student enrolment, then each dollar you put towards the education system pays for fewer educators, fewer programs, fewer schools, and each child added to the system means that pot of money has to be divided between more children.

Now that the minister has a basic foundational understanding of how budgets work, let’s look at the Conservative government’s funding. Overall, since 2018 when this government came to power, if we look at per-student funding to account for increasing enrolment, per-student funding has grown 18%. But inflation, Speaker, is up 23%. Hopefully the minister can do basic math and understands that 23 is bigger than 18.

Now let’s look year by year:

In 2019-20, inflation and enrolment growth added to 1.5% while funding rose by only 0.5%, resulting in a funding gap of \$250 million.

In 2020-21, inflation and enrolment growth added to 0.8% while funding rose by only 0.6%, resulting in a funding gap of \$285 million.

In 2021-22, inflation and enrolment growth added to 7.4% while funding rose by only 2.4%, resulting in a funding gap of \$1.5 million.

In 2022-23, inflation and enrolment growth added to 5.7% while funding rose by only 3%, resulting in a funding gap of \$2 billion.

In 2023-24, inflation and enrolment growth added to 3.8% while funding rose by 8.2% but, by now, we were so far behind 2018 levels that we had a funding gap of \$900 million.

In 2024-25, inflation and enrolment growth added up to 3.1% while funding rose 4%, but again, so far behind 2018 that we still had a funding gap of \$700 million.

For 2025-26, inflation and enrolment growth are forecast to be a total of 2.6% while funding is increasing by 3.3%, but again, we are so far behind 2018-19 funding levels that the funding gap is growing by another \$560 million.

The cumulative funding gap for this entire period is \$6.35 billion. That's how much this government has shortchanged school boards and our kids over this entire period.

I hope this clears things up for the minister and I'm happy to answer any questions he might still have.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member from Markham–Unionville.

Mr. Billy Pang: I rise today to set the record straight on the opposition's ridiculous claim that this government is underfunding our schools. Let me be clear: Ontario is making record investment in education, with funding that has increased every single year since our government took office. If the opposition wants to continue, I challenge them to table a single budget document showing otherwise. They won't, because every single provincial budget clearly shows education funding going up year after year—up, up and up.

For the 2025-26 school year, Ontario is investing \$30 billion in core education funding, the highest level in our province's history. That includes \$16.5 billion directly supporting classroom staff like teachers, early childhood educators and educational assistants. We are also allocating \$3.9 billion for special education and \$4.7 billion for critical student support services, such as librarians, guidance counsellors, mental health professionals and classroom materials. These aren't just numbers. They are investments in our children's future.

To be clear, every dollar we provide is meant to support students and teachers in the classroom. Yet, what we are

seeing from some school boards is deeply concerning. Too often the focus is not on students but on administrative bloat and globe-trotting at taxpayers' expense, from sending staff to luxury hotels and international conferences, to questionable expenditures on artwork and technology for trustees. The evidence is clear: School boards must be held accountable.

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board spent \$145,000 on a trip to Italy and followed it up with \$63,000 in legal and PR fees when it became public. The Halton Catholic District School Board spent over \$41,000 to travel to Brazil, Italy, Germany and the United Arab Emirates during a budget freeze. In Toronto, we have seen trustees purchase high-end electronics and plan cuts to programs for students while ignoring the need to trim bureaucratic weights. Speaker, this is not acceptable. That's why we've appointed a supervisor and launched financial investigations at boards where governance and spending are out of control.

Because parents expect every dollar of their tax money go to supporting students in the classroom—not junkets, not pet projects, not political crusades—we must get politics out of our classrooms. Parents want their children to graduate with strong reading, writing and math skills. They want safer schools, supported teachers and a system that is focused on helping every student succeed, not on political grandstanding and ideological crusades.

Speaker, our back-to-basics approach is working. By prioritizing the fundamentals and investing in areas such as mental health, special education and skilled trades pathways, we are ensuring that students are equipped for good-paying, stable careers. And we are doing it while delivering unprecedented capital investments: \$3.3 billion this year alone to build or expand 45 schools, creating over 25,000 new student spaces and 1,600 child care spots. Over the next 10 years, we will be investing over \$30 billion to build and expand new schools and create child care spaces across the province.

Speaker, the opposition can continue to shout about cuts that don't exist, but the facts speak louder: record investment, year-over-year increases and targeted funding that puts students and teachers first. This government believes in public education. We believe in our world-class educators, and we believe every child deserves the best possible chance to succeed.

Let me again be perfectly clear to school boards: Your job is to educate, not politicize. Your mandate is to support students, and if you fail, this government will act to ensure that our children don't pay the price.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): There being no further matters to debate, pursuant to standing order 36(c), I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1858.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
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Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Firin, Mohamed (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
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Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Leader, Third Party / Chef du troisième parti
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gilmour, Alexa (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Gualtieri, Silvia (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
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Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines
Lennox, Robin (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Deputy House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement et de la croissance économique du Nord
Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security / Ministre des Collèges et Universités, de l'Excellence en recherche et de la Sécurité
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Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire Economic and Community Partnerships / Ministre responsable des Partenariats économiques et communautaires pour le développement du Cercle de feu
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Rosenberg, Bill (PC)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
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Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Chris (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative
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Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smyth, Stephanie (LIB)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Attorney General / Procureur général associé
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Tsao, Jonathan (LIB)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
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	
Vickers, Paul (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Watt, Tyler (LIB)	Nepean	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	