

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 30A

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 30A

1st Session
44th Parliament

Wednesday
29 October 2025

1^{re} session
44^e législature

Mercredi
29 octobre 2025

Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly
Greffier : Trevor Day

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Hansard 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

Journal des débats et services linguistiques
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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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 29 October 2025

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 29 octobre 2025

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Let us pray.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND STUDENTS ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LE SOUTIEN AUX ENFANTS, AUX ÉLÈVES ET AUX ÉTUDIANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 28, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to child, youth and family services, education, and colleges and universities / *Projet de loi 33, Loi modifiant diverses lois relatives aux services à l'enfance, à la jeunesse et à la famille, à l'éducation et aux collèges et universités.*

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I was halfway through my debate of Bill 33 yesterday, so I'm pleased to be able to be pick up from there.

Bill 33 centralizes all power for our education system with the Minister of Education. I thought the Progressive Conservative party was supposed to be a party of small government and local decision-making. How can Toronto make decisions for rural communities, for northern communities, for any community? I've never seen a government of any stripe like this in Ontario that has removed local decision-making for the people and transferred power into the hands of a few, with little accountability or transparency.

Right now, Ontarians are worried, they're anxious and, for thousands of them, they are out of work. We're living through a time of great upheaval and uncertainty—economically, socially and geopolitically—and I think all of us in this Legislature hear that from people we have been elected to represent.

It's within this context—I did a double take, actually, when I read the legislation. It includes a provision where school boards must seek the minister's approval before naming schools, and I can't reconcile the very serious challenges that our province and country are facing with a government that spent time and resources deciding this was the aspect of law that we need right now. Why? What problem is the government trying to solve with that part of the proposed law?

I've only been an MPP since February, and I get a lot of emails; I can only imagine how many the minister does, after years and years of experience. I have to say, I don't think I've seen a groundswell or even one email demanding that the minister approve school names. The only word I can think of to describe this provision is "absurd." It's absurd that this is what we're spending our time on, especially in these times. It is completely disconnected from the day-to-day lives of people in this province.

So what is this bill really about, then? It isn't about governance of school boards; it is just a distraction—something the government is very good at: blame someone else for what is really the job of the Ontario government.

A couple of weeks ago, I raised concerns about an unusual deep probing the government has conducted of hospital governance. I worry that there too they are setting up local hospitals to take the fall for what is really a lack of funding from the province. And it isn't about financial management either. Under this government's watch, we're now a province with half a trillion in debt. I'm reminded that my colleague from Don Valley West aptly describes the government's financial record when she says, "Never has a government spent so much to achieve so little."

It isn't about education because if it was, they would get serious about supporting public education, recognizing that the most important investment we can make as a province in our future prosperity is education. It always has been. But no, we have a bill that transfers unprecedented power to the Minister of Education.

The Minister of Education has confirmed that closing schools and selling them off is an option on the table, something that, for all intents and purposes, has been denied to school boards for years. Without enough public funding, this is what trustees have been asking permission to do, to balance their budgets, make better use of their schools and lands, but have been unable to persuade the government to allow them to proceed. Perhaps this is where the answer lies. This is not about students or parents or education. It's actually about real estate. This tracks with the secret greenbelt deals, the Ontario Place deal and who knows what deals the province is working on under the extraordinary powers the government has granted in Bill 5.

I'm not against school consolidations or closures if we need to adjust to meet the needs of the population, to meet the needs of our kids and our families. But how will sites be selected? How will the government proceed in consultations? And if they proceed, will we see a process like Ontario Place, like the Skills Development Fund, where winners are hand-picked by the minister's office and sold

off without regard to fairness, transparency or accountability? Speaker, those were the words that the Auditor General used to describe it: the process was not fair, transparent or accountable.

Time and again, especially where Ontario's public assets are concerned, we see the interests of the public on the sidelines, increasingly fending for themselves.

As for the proposed changes implicating our post-secondary institutions, again, I confess, I cannot imagine what business the minister has in determining student fees as typically determined by elected student unions who are elected by the student body—elected. I can tell you that I have not received any emails or calls from my constituents requesting this change. There is no one in this chamber who can make the case that they know better than the students what their needs are.

But I did receive this email from a constituent, and I thought it was interesting to hear from a student in post-secondary education, given their busy lives while they are studying. It says:

"I am a student in your riding. I am writing to share my deep concerns about Bill 33, the Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025, and what it could mean for students like me.

"As a student, I already face the daily pressures of balancing classes, part-time work, and the cost of living. Access to supports on campus such as mental health counselling, food banks, peer programs, and wellness services has been absolutely essential for me and many of my peers. Without these services, I do not know how I would get through my studies.

"Bill 33 worries me because it could take away the ability of students and student associations to decide what supports are most important for us. These services are not luxuries, they are lifelines.

"We need access to these supports, and as a student I am willing to continue paying fees that help me and others succeed. I urge you to stand with students by encouraging the government to amend Bill 33, schedule 3, section 21.1, which allows" them "to regulate student fees."

That was from a student, and I'm sure many of you have students in university right now. I know my son is in university right now and those services that they get access to matter to them. The mental health services matter to them. When I was at CAMH, we worked closely with our local university to make sure there were pathways there so people could get what they need.

This just feels like the thin edge of the wedge. What if a student university newspaper or radio station makes what the minister considers an intemperate comment? This bill grants unprecedented power to the minister to take action against student unions at will.

0910

On Bill 33, the Council of Ontario Universities said this: "serious concerns for the post-secondary sector as it conflicts with governing legislation, increases administrative burdens, and fails to address the root causes of student access challenges.

"With a deep understanding of their own students and communities, Ontario universities are best placed to make decisions that support their unique mission and values. Ontario universities were designed with the principle of being autonomous entities, free from government interference and best positioned in meeting student needs."

In fact, this is something I, as a Canadian, and I know many Canadians, have really valued that we have available to us in this province.

"Bill 33 enters into areas where universities have well-established and rigorous systems and expertise that have served students well."

Again, pointing the finger elsewhere is a well-worn strategy used by this government. It's the fault of local governors or it's the fault of the federal government—it's the fault of anybody but themselves. Health care and education are the core responsibilities of the province. Ontario is dead last, by a long shot, amongst all provinces in providing provincial funding per student to our colleges and universities. In this government's own blue-ribbon panel, per-student funding was 44% of the average of the rest of Canada, while per-student funding for universities was just 57% of the average of the rest of Canada. Universities and colleges had no choice but to seek more international students and higher fees associated with them to keep their doors open for Ontario students.

This is where we are. Our public education and post-secondary institutions are in crisis. There's nothing in this bill to help to remedy that.

I think about the kids I see every day within my own riding. I think about my son, his friends, teenagers. I've seen their school system change over the time since they were in kindergarten to now. The size of the classes is far larger than they were before. You've got to agree with me on that.

I can say that, again, the mental health needs of students have changed and increased. Just this morning, we were meeting with social workers over breakfast and we were talking about how important it is to be able to provide those kind of supports in our schools, more of them, more access to that—again, more access to the kind of services students want and need in their universities.

But the move with this bill is not about that. It's not about our kids. It's not about increasing the funding that we need in our education; it's not about seeing it as an investment in our prosperity and in our economy. For these reasons, I simply cannot support this bill.

I urge the government to do the right thing: get serious about funding our public education and post-secondary institutions. If you want to put in place new legislation, put it in the places where we need it to do just that, to serve them better, to make sure that—they are an investment in our future. I don't see signs of that in this bill anywhere; maybe the members opposite do, but I don't. If we want to get serious about supporting our children's future, let's get serious about our public education system. Let's invest in them and make sure that it is there for the long term to meet their needs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Questions?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I appreciate the remarks from the member opposite.

Back in 2010, one of my former Scouts, Robert Woodrich, was the University of Windsor Students' Alliance VP of university affairs. He said this of the Canadian Federation of Students: "CFS does nothing on our campus except for undermine our stance on many issues. All we want to do is leave. We don't wish harm on any other student bodies, we just want out. They are making that very hard for us."

He's referring to CFS disallowing disaffiliation referendums held on campuses across Ontario, and Canada, for that matter. In 2010, when he made those remarks, 170,000 students represented at universities across the country who voted to disaffiliate from CFS were disallowed from doing so because of these anti-democratic fees that CFS has put in and anti-democratic practices.

My question to the member opposite is: Is she in agreement with the CFS disallowing student unions from removing fees from students, just as CFS has shown that they are willing to do?

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I do note that the quote is from 2010 and the correspondence that I had from a constituent is from this year.

Again, I come back to: What are we trying to achieve through all of this and through this bill? What are we trying to do for our universities and our colleges right now? Is this the most pressing issue to address for those students? I think that what the students are looking for, actually, is for us to publicly fund our system in a way that it deserves. If you look at the budget that's in front of us for post-secondary education, it is a decline over the next three years from this government. I expect students would like to have access to their public system, first and foremost, above anything else.

I think that that's where this government should be focusing its efforts and making sure that we're going to have the system that we need there for the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for her comments on Bill 33. I think that we are in agreement that this is truly not about public education. Some of us understand that when you do get public education right, there are a number of other issues that fall into place, like justice, the economy, strengthening democracy, for instance. The bill does give unprecedented powers to the Minister of Education, and for someone who served as a trustee for 10 years, I can tell you that though our powers were steadily whittled down to almost nothing, undermining our roles as duly elected trustees, we fought to hold our voices and our power for parents.

I really want to ask the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore: What do you think is really the motivation for Bill 33, because it certainly is not about public education?

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Thank you very much for your question. Yes, I agree with you. I don't think that the motivation is necessarily making sure we have the most

excellent public education system in the world, which is exactly what should be our goal.

In my remarks, I commented a little bit on the choices that school boards are even trying to make to balance their own budgets after being underfunded for years and years, decisions around land use—I sometimes question whether this is what this whole act is about. It's about consolidating powers of the Minister of Education for different uses of lands, selling those lands. And I can tell you, if that is this plan, I certainly will be watching closely to make sure every single cent of that goes back into our education—not that I would support it.

I believe that there are other motivations here other than just making sure that we have a truly excellent public education system for our students.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: When I'm out in the community and I'm talking to—whether it's teachers, school administrators, folks when I'm out door-knocking, what I hear over and over again is students with special needs not getting the support that they need in the classroom, and it ends up actually resulting in a lot of the issues and challenges that we're facing in our education system. When we talk about violent incidents in the classroom, a lot of that ends up resulting from larger class sizes and students in the classroom not getting that support that they end up needing. It impacts other students, then, who are just trying to learn, who are trying to do what they need to do. It comes up at the door, believe it or not, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Question, please.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: My question is, do you think that this bill is really more of a smokescreen to hide the underfunding and the challenges that our teachers and educators are facing in the classroom?

0920

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Thank you to my colleague the member from Ajax for that important question. I too hear a lot from my constituents about how we're currently not able to meet the needs of all of our students. In fact, I recently sent a letter to the Minister of Education on this topic because I've seen it in my own school board, where they were making choices to try to prioritize some of the additional educational supports that we needed for some of our kids, and that, again, became harder and harder to do.

I don't believe that this is the bill that's going to solve that issue. That is the issue that matters a lot to parents, and it matters a lot to our kids. And I'm hopeful that maybe—maybe—through other mechanisms, we'll start to address it. But this is a very serious unmet need that this bill will not address.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I have two questions for the member opposite. She mentioned in her speech—the first one was the renaming of schools. I'd ask her very, very precisely: We have a board that has spent in excess of

close to \$300,000 contemplating a change of a name for a school. That's \$300,000 that is not going into the classroom. Currently, the minister has no ability to redirect those funds back into the classroom. Would she agree that is an egregious waste of taxpayers' money?

Secondly, we have another school board that the Auditor General highlighted as being a school board where decisions were being made by trustees that were not democratic, were not open, were not in the best interest of teachers, were not in the best interest of students, but the minister has no ability to make a change in that school board. Should the Minister of Education have the ability to make changes in a school board to put them back on track when they go off the rails? If not, how should we move those school boards back on track?

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Thank you, Minister, for those two questions and those two examples. I do believe that, at the end of the day, we need good local governance. I've worked in health care for years. I know what good boards can look like—skills-based boards—and how they can function and make sure that they're using our funds accountably.

I think that the minister has some tools that would allow them to make sure that certain decisions could be made. I don't think pulling out an entire system from our democracy is the right answer, though, especially in an environment where school boards are so underfunded. I also don't believe that we should be designing legislation based on N-of-1s. I think that we should be looking at the systemic issues in our education system and tackling them head-on, which is, truly, the underfunding that exists in our province right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Thank you to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for your words. I want to take you to my own riding of Parkdale–High Park. We have a priority school recently renamed Dr. Rita Cox-Kina Minagok. It was an act of reconciliation and restitution that meant a tremendous amount to the community members there. We also have Lucy McCormick, with children with special needs who thrive because of the unique supports.

So I'm deeply troubled by this government's bill that would allow one minister from Queen's Park to undermine the voices of local staff, local families and students. We've already seen that the supervisors appointed have Conservative ties, no experience in education, advocating for privatization in some cases.

To the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore: What do you think this means for the future of local democracy in our school boards, in our colleges, in our universities—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Response?

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Thank you for your question. I'd love to come to the neighbouring riding and see the schools that you mentioned.

I think that, again, at the end of the day, the choices that we need to be making in our local communities need to be informed by that local perspective and that needs to be

preserved. This bill is not going to do that, and I think that that is deeply troubling.

But, again, I come back to, what are the issues that we should be focused on when we're talking about the education of our kids? It's, are they getting the education that they need and deserve? Are they getting that from teachers that are feeling supported? Are they getting access to the mental health—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I'm hard-pressed to find much in Bill 33 that actually supports our children and our students. Under the guise of improving oversight, transparency and the overall effectiveness of the system, there remain in this bill significant concerns about the balance of oversight and institutional autonomy. Right off the get-go, Bill 33 will remove the voice of students, parents and educators in this province. Local issues will go unnoticed, as decisions will be centred in Toronto.

A few weeks ago, one of Ontario's largest and longest-running agricultural fairs was on display: the Norfolk County Fair and Horse Show. My favourite day is Young Canada Day, a day where high school students come out and they show their school spirit, competing in road races, tug-of-war, cheerleading and various other competitions. This is a day that has been part of the opening day of the Norfolk County Fair and Horse Show for several decades. Young Canada Day holds lasting memories for all of the area's students, including me. The Grand Erie District School Board has attempted a few times to stop the tradition, and do you know who came to the rescue? Our school board trustees.

This bill is a smoke screen for the larger issue of chronic underfunding. During COVID, this government kept kids out of the classroom and online, which has created more complex needs within the classroom—\$6.4 billion in underfunding because this government refuses to keep up with inflation. We see aging buildings; education inequities, especially in rural areas like mine; larger class sizes; and less support staff. Teachers and staff are facing burn-out like never before, affecting retention and overall education quality.

On the post-secondary side, campuses have made it clear that Bill 33 is a step backwards for students. I've had students ask me why the government didn't seek out their thoughts before drafting this legislation.

Let's look at section 21.1, which will establish an unprecedented measure that grants this government power to decide which ancillary fees are required and which are not. This change could severely cut essential services that students rely upon, like mental health supports, crisis response teams, food banks and transportation programs. These are the monies of the students and their families. These are not the government's monies. Students do not view these as extra; they view them as lifelines.

Adam Chambers, a University of Ottawa student from my riding, is active on campus, and he wrote to me. He said, "As student representatives, we dedicate countless hours, months and years of our lives to listen and support

our student peers to represent them the best we can. So, whether it be ancillary fees, merit-based applications, or funding reviews, we ask that the government look to us to provide integral student perspectives when decision-making and we welcome opportunities to consult with the ministry beforehand." That makes sense, but it did not happen.

Schedule 2 is where we see an interesting expansion of overreach, as the minister is given powers to establish policy and guidelines respecting school board expense policies, including discretionary funding. The ministry can already investigate governance and financial concerns in school boards and can already establish, through regulation, reporting requirements on financial information. So I question: Why does this government need new legislation to address the handful of financial mismanagement?

I have a shared school board with the member from Brantford, the Grand Erie District School Board, who have been attempting to silence one of its trustees, Carol Anne Sloat. Carol Anne Sloat attempts to hold things to account. This trustee has been put through the wringer, and courts agree she has done nothing wrong, yet administration continues to seek revenge in an attempt to finally silence her. The point here is that the trustee is not the problem; it's administration. The only thing Carol Anne Sloat is guilty of is advocating for the people she serves, the taxpayers.

Last week, during debate on Bill 9, I described how government deliberately creates or exaggerates a situation or a problem, so they can then implement a predetermined solution that taxpayers might not otherwise accept. Bill 33 can be seen through the same lens. The role of the school board trustee has been chipped away at purposefully, in order to give the illusion that they are worthless. Bill 33 is another chip, as it will take power away from democratically elected trustees and replace community decision-making with directives right here from Queen's Park.

0930

When I was a student, trustees were in the schools and we as students knew them. But today, these school board trustees are no longer allowed to call families back and no longer allowed to intervene in problems within the schools. They're no longer allowed to act on behalf of the people they serve. We are taking away their advocacy efforts on behalf of students and on behalf of Ontario families.

Speaker, this is all a means to an end. As we know, the CBC, at the beginning of September, quoted the Minister of Education as saying that he is 100% looking at eliminating trustees. The minister is going after the low-hanging fruit here.

There's so much to say and such little time. This is not education reform; rather, it's a consolidation of power and a deep erosion of democracy, and we should all be extremely concerned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Questions?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Haldimand-Norfolk for her presentation, where she outlined that this Bill 33 is a distraction to the cuts and the underfunding of education.

When one considers statutory benefit increases, such as CPP and EI, these are increases that the board can't opt out of, but clearly, the government can, because they have not increased funding to the tune of millions of dollars for boards. They have left the restaurant before the bill arrives.

My question, though, to the member: How is installing a downtown Toronto bureaucrat going to help students in Haldimand-Norfolk, London or anywhere else?

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Thank you to my colleague for the question. Appointing a bureaucrat in downtown Toronto is going to do little to help my students and families in Haldimand-Norfolk—it will do nothing.

I go back to my example of the Norfolk County Fair and the Grand Erie District School board continually trying to do away with Young Canada Day at the fair. It hasn't been a bureaucrat in downtown Toronto, it hasn't been a bureaucrat anywhere who has actually saved Young Canada Day in Norfolk county. It has been the local school board trustees from Norfolk county who have banded together and have gone to the board and said, "This is an important day for school spirit, an important day for education, and we will continue to fight for Norfolk County Fair and Young Canada Day."

So the answer to the question is, a government-appointed bureaucrat to look after school boards is not a good idea. We need to retain the local decision-making powers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I find it curious that the NDP and the independent member are both supporting—one is supporting a board where, so far, one official has been charged criminally, where a report was issued at the absolute, utterly disgraceful conduct from the director, from the trustees on down, at the board's inability to put money back into the classroom—likely more charges to come. That member is supporting that.

The independent member is supporting a trustee on a board that changed the rules. To be clear, they changed the rules to allow themselves to go to Italy, a hundreds of thousands of dollars trip. That member is supporting that type of behaviour. Now, do you know the challenge that the minister has? The minister does not have the ability, right now, to go in and put that board back on track. I do not have the tools to do that.

Should the government of Ontario and the minister be allowed to step in when boards have fallen off the rails, when trustees have fallen off the rails? I think they do. If the members opposite don't think they do, what powers should the government have to put the boards back on track?

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: To the minister opposite, I don't support trustees going to Italy and wasting taxpayers' money. But that's a separate bill. We're dealing with Bill 33 here. Do we throw the baby out with the bathwater? How many MPPs, how many other elected officials have been caught squandering taxpayer money? Do we fire them?

Mr. Chris Glover: Not yet.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Not yet.

Trustees are democratically elected. I do not support those trustees who went to Italy. I do not support the trustee who did not pay his monies back. But this is a different issue. And you want to use that issue as a smokescreen on the \$6.4 billion in underfunding? Then go right ahead. Parents see the truth. Families see the truth. Teachers see the truth. But to say that I support trustees going to Italy is absolutely wrong and not factual whatsoever. But this is Bill 33.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions? The Minister of Education—quickly.

Hon. Paul Calandra: That's interesting, because in the instance that the member is talking about, this is a board that is running at a \$3.4-million surplus. But these board trustees—to put it clear to everybody—weren't allowed to do something, they got together in camera secretly, and then they changed the rules to allow themselves to go on an all-expenses-paid trip to Italy.

The minister right now does not have the power to step into a board that has done that and put them back on track. What tools should the minister have in legislation to allow him to put the board back on track?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: As I begin my comments today, I would like to share my time with the MPP from Windsor West.

I rise today to speak firmly against Bill 33. With my background as an educator, I saw so many kids who were placed, all in the name of inclusion, into classrooms without support. But continuing the legacy of the Liberals before them, we see the Conservatives have cut and underfunded education. They've strangled it and then have the audacity to ask it why it can't breathe.

In reality, Bill 33 does nothing to address the real challenges facing students and families in London, Ontario. This bill does not reduce class sizes, it does not put more caring adults in the classrooms, and it does not ensure children with special needs get the supports that they require. Instead, it adds yet another layer of bureaucracy: an unelected downtown Toronto bureaucrat who will not return phone calls, who will not return emails and who will not bring the voices of students and parents forward. It centralizes control and it is something that is an affront to parents and students and our democratic process.

At a town hall I hosted in my riding in London a few weeks ago, a parent shared a story that I want to share with this chamber, and it highlights why this bill is so concerning. His son, who has special needs, must travel over an hour each way just to attend school. Families like his also already face extraordinary challenges, and now, with Bill 33, they fear their voices will be fully taken away. Instead of providing support for children with special needs, this government is adding stress, removing accountability and limiting the ability of communities to advocate for their children.

Trustees in London, like those across Ontario, are elected to represent local families. They are not highly paid politicians. They earn less than minimum wage, often spending countless unpaid hours returning parent calls and volunteering to ensure every child has a chance to succeed. Yet Bill 33 threatens to sideline these elected representatives, replacing local oversight with centralized control from Queen's Park.

This is not modernization. It is top-down micromanagement. This bill gives the Minister of Education unprecedented power to take over school boards at any time, for any reason, with no limits or oversight. That's not governance. That's authoritarianism. It's a model that silences local communities and undermines public accountability. And while the government always likes to use the word "accountability," it ignores the real issues: underfunding, unsafe classrooms, violence in schools, overcrowded schools and a lack of supports for students with special needs and mental health needs.

Let's talk about funding. London schools, like all boards across Ontario, are under chronic financial strain. There is a \$6.35-billion funding gap created by this government. Per-pupil funding has not kept pace with inflation. Statutory benefits, like CPP and EI, are not funded. That's \$13 million for the Thames Valley District School Board. These are statutory increases that boards cannot opt out of. But this government, like when the cheque arrives in a restaurant, has already gotten in their car and have left. They've skipped out on the bill, expecting someone else to pick it up.

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Bill 33 does nothing to solve the funding crisis that we have in our schools. It masks underfunding with control, interference and political spin. Students in London and in Ontario deserve stable, predictable funding, not another layer of bureaucracy.

The government's flawed approach to safety in schools is also problematic. Bill 33 emphasizes policing over care. Students struggling with mental health challenges or special needs risk criminalization rather than support. What students need are caring adults, mental health services and meaningful access to resources and classrooms, not punitive measures that set them up to fail. We know that schools are safer when care comes first. The NDP's emergency plan to end school violence would actually address these issues.

Stakeholders across the province have spoken out loudly. ETFO calls this "authoritarianism cloaked in ... accountability."

OSSTF says the government is trying to distract from "chronic underfunding."

OECTA highlights the centralization of power and weakening of public institutions.

AEFO calls for real investment in French-language schools while OPSBA reminds us that trustees have worked under financial strain for years, particularly in special education and student transportation.

CUPE warns that schedule 1 changes undermine local control of children's aid society budgets.

Post-secondary groups like OCUFA and OUSA are concerned about bureaucratic burdens and underfunding that hurt students directly.

The Canadian Federation of Students has called this “a distraction to the underfunding of post-secondary education” and I could not agree more.

Bill 33 is an attack on post-secondary education. This is just the Student Choice Initiative wrapped up all over again. It's an attack on students. By allowing students who are already financially strapped to opt out of ancillary fees, it's providing them with a false choice. How do you ask someone who is already paying far too much for their education in Ontario—possibly saving a little bit more?

But this government's record on post-secondary education—I mean, we are the lowest funder of post-secondary education in Canada. We are the bottom of the barrel. Last I checked, we would have to increase our expenditures by 43.5% in post-secondary education, and that's not to be first, Speaker; that's to be second-last.

This false choice with allowing students to opt out of ancillary fees would remove things that support students such as food banks, such as mental health supports, such as sexual violence supports. What this does is, this bill actually creates red tape for colleges and universities, something that this government pretends to be opposed to, but yet when it suits them, they love creating their own red tape, or blue tape.

Bill 33 does nothing to make Ontario schools better. It doesn't address class sizes; it doesn't improve learning conditions; it doesn't support children with special needs. The minister has gone ahead and said that he's listening and that if the funding formula is a problem, they will address it. Well, on this side of the House, we have been speaking out loudly for years about the problem with the funding formula. The problem with the funding formula is that it treats all students in a cookie-cutter fashion, as if all of them will receive the same amount of money, and then the government provides school boards with a purse of money for special education. There are two problems with that: There's no guarantee that it will be spent on the student who needs it, and even if it is, there's no guarantee that it's going to be spent in a developmentally appropriate way and that will benefit that student.

Instead, what we have been calling for and we will continue to call for is a funding model based on students' needs. That way, the funding follows that student and is based on educational assessments, it's based on professionals. It ensures that that funding will follow that student. But also, the problem with the amount of money that this government and past governments have spent on special education is that it's nowhere near enough. School boards are forced to dip into additional monies and cut different programs in order to simply fund special education.

Speaker, our schools, our students and our families deserve better. They deserve predictable funding, supports for vulnerable students, safe learning environments and elected trustees who can respond to local needs. London's families deserve to have their choices heard, not silenced by downtown Toronto bureaucrats.

Instead of helping students succeed, this government is doubling down on control. They're silencing voices and putting politics ahead of kids' education. With this government, there is always an action that is cloaking a hidden action. That hidden action, many have said with Bill 33, is the seizure of land that school boards own. For what purposes? Well, we need really only look toward the current RCMP investigation of this government into the greenbelt, and how that was being parcelled off and sold off to wealthy Conservative donors, turning millionaires into billionaires.

I oppose Bill 33 as an educator and as the MPP for London North Centre. It's the wrong approach for students. It's the wrong approach for the province. We need real investments in education, not political control.

With that, I turn my time over to the MPP from Windsor West.

MPP Lisa Gretzky: I appreciate the remarks from my colleague from London and the focus on education. I'm going to use the little time that I have to talk about something else that is impacted by this bill. I'm going to talk about child welfare and child protection services and what is happening with the children's aid societies this province.

Almost half of the CASs are running deficits because of chronic underfunding by the provincial government. We are seeing—and we've raised it; I have in this House, my colleagues have raised this, parents have raised this directly with the government and the government members—the fact that parents are surrendering their children to CAS, thinking that those children with complex needs are going to get the supports and services they need because they're not getting it in community, because this government is wilfully underfunding all of those community supports for kids that have special needs. They're wilfully chipping away at public services, and so these parents get to the point—and I'm talking about it happening in the health care system when they try to access health care, mental health supports when they're trying to access therapy. The OAP, the autism program—the wait-list is astronomical in this province.

Meanwhile, the minister stands up and applauds himself when you have tens of thousands of families on that wait-list, and they're getting to the point where they feel like they need to turn their kids over to the CAS. There are children all around this province—some as young as one, two, three years old—that are currently housed in office spaces and in hotel rooms. They're being trafficked. They're coming in contact, some of these kids, with drug dealers.

Just last year, Jade—not her real name, but they use Jade to protect her identity—15 years old, a year ago this month, died. She was being housed in a hotel because there was nowhere else for her to go.

There is nothing in this bill to address that. In fact, it's the exact opposite. It's this government finger-pointing, trying to blame somebody else for their wilful negligence of the health care system, the education system, the Ontario Autism Program, mental health supports and the

justice system. This government has the audacity to bring forward a bill like this to point fingers at somebody else.

When asked to do a review, an investigation into Jade's death, this government refused—outright refused to look at the system that they've created that has led to the death of Jade and so many other children and youth in this province.

We're seeing more and more families coming forward and facing that impossible decision of where they can turn to to actually get help. This government is doing nothing. There is nothing in this bill to support those families.

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I'm going to talk about a constituent of mine who reached out just the other day. Again, she's gone to the media. She's gone to the government members. She's raised this numerous times. This parent is on the brink of collapse herself, because her child with complex needs can't get the supports and services that this family desperately needs in order to keep their child at home and for their child to thrive. And so she's contacted my office again, asking if I can help get her child adopted, so that maybe, because that child has gone through the system—one way through the system—her child will get the supports that he needs before he harms himself or someone else.

That is the state of this province. That is the state that this government has brought us to. And yet there is absolutely nothing in this bill to address that. How many children have to die?

And Jade was not the first big news story, folks. We can talk about the child who was found dead in a dumpster. The government didn't do anything about that. We can talk about the child—I remember standing here talking about a child who was literally starved to death, and this government didn't do an investigation. And if they had done an investigation, what they would have seen is their negligence, their lack of funding—proper, sustainable funding—for child protection, for the education system, for the health care system, for the programs that these kids with complex needs need.

What they would have seen if they had done an investigation back then—and this was years ago, and it continues to happen. It is only getting worse. But if they actually did an investigation, a real investigation into the root causes of the problems, that report would come back pointing the finger at them.

And they don't want to take responsibility. It is very clear throughout this bill. They want to point fingers. We talk about the education sector; they want to point fingers at trustees for the government's failures. Here, they want to point fingers at those that work in child protection and say: "It's your fault. It's not our fault."

What they need to do is look in the mirror. We are talking about children's lives here. How many children have to die before this government stops pointing fingers at everybody else and looks inward and says, "Okay, you know what? We do have work we have to do here. There are changes that we have to make"? There are systemic

changes that have to happen and the biggest systemic change is funding.

These families that are pushed to the brink, if they could access those supports in community, wouldn't be turning to CAS. No parent wakes up in the morning and says, "Today would be a great day to hand my child over to the CAS. I don't want them anymore. I don't want the hassle." No parent says that.

In order for a parent to get to that point, the anguish that comes with the thought of handing over your child and your rights to your child, because you think that that is the only way that your child is going to get the health care they need, that they're going to get the education supports that they need in schools—the number of these kids that are being excluded from participating in education, from being in school is increasing every day.

The violence in schools is increasing every day, and that is because this government is purposefully underfunding and undermining the public education system. And then these kids don't get the supports they need in school, so they can't participate in school. Then they're isolated; they can't make friends. They're not in school; they're not getting the education they need. Their behaviours start to escalate. Parents can't get the other supports they need out in the community. They can't get the therapy or the mental health supports for the kids.

It just becomes a crisis. The crisis gets bigger and bigger and worse, and these parents get to the point where they feel like there is absolutely—interestingly enough, an Ombudsman report was called *Nowhere to Turn* a long time ago, under the Liberal government. This Conservative government hasn't changed a darn thing since then, except for making the problem worse.

Bill 33 is not about child protection and making it stronger. It's not about ensuring that it's actually supporting the people who need the support. It's not about fixing the problem. It's not about stopping the deaths of children in this province. It's about this government abdicating responsibility for the decisions that they're making and trying to put the blame on somebody else. That is absolutely shameful.

So, again, I will pose the question, as my time wraps up: How many families pushed to the brink is enough for you? How many children have to die before that's enough for you, before you actually take action and reflect on what you've been doing and change course and make it better?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Questions?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I have a question for the member for London North Centre. He referenced Thames Valley. I want to just explain and see if he agrees.

The Thames Valley report highlighted the fact that not only were the trustees complicit, but that the director of education on down were doing things that were completely wrong and offside. This is a board that had some troubling signs. A couple of years ago, they were in a surplus position, but we could see things going off the rails when massive surpluses started to whittle away because bonuses were given to directors of education and superintendents, and when they went away on trips at expensive

hotels. So the surplus went into a deficit. The ministry and the minister have no ability to intervene, even when they see this happening, until the board falls into a deficit. So we have to allow things to get really bad, even though we know something is coming.

Does the member agree that the ministry and the minister should have the ability to put things back on track when they see things going off the rails, or does he believe the current system—where a board is completely in financial disarray—is the best way to protect students, families and teachers?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the minister for the question.

Unfortunately, the minister is not being entirely accurate when it comes to the audit that happened of the school board. In fact, the ministry's own audit did not uncover that trip. That trip involved 18 senior administration officials. Trustees did not vote on it. In fact, in June, trustees passed a motion prior to being taken under supervision: "All professional development opportunities, travel and catered events must be reviewed to ensure cost-effectiveness aligns with (the school board's) strategic plan." The motion also noted that expenses must be saved where possible by considering location, transportation and catering efficiencies as required.

This government has shut down families of students with special needs by blocking their opportunity to view special education advisory committee meetings. They've also, under the supervisor, sent kids with special needs home because they don't—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further questions?

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to thank both of my colleagues for their comments this morning.

This Conservative government is the most corrupt, incompetent and fiscally irresponsible government in the history of this province. They keep undermining our democratic ability to fight back against their corruption and their incompetence, so—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I will caution the member to phrase his questions more parliamentary.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay.

Bill 33 allows them to intervene and undermine democratically elected student unions on campuses, and it also sets the course to eliminate democratically elected school trustees.

To the member from London North Centre: Do you think that the government is trying to get rid of our—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I recognize the member from London North Centre.

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Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I think it's important that we all recognize in this chamber that one of the first acts from this government was to meddle with Toronto city hall elections. In the province of Ontario we see a government that is currently under threat because they're under RCMP investigation right now. They're knocking at the door, and people are going to have to come out with their hands up. Just like the Liberals before them, people will be going to

jail. Right now in the province of Ontario, we see many, many attacks on our democratic processes and the very nature of the rule of law.

This government has also told hospitals, which have record debt levels, that they need to balance their budgets and find efficiencies. They're doing the same with school boards. They want to undermine the greatest democratizing forces of our society, which are (1) the vote, (2) public education and (3) public health care.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Questions?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you for your presentation today. We've heard the Minister of Education criticize—and I think correctly criticize—the decisions of a board in that they changed the rules to meet what they wanted to do and abuse that public money, but we also know that just two weeks ago, the Premier was quoted at the Empire Club as saying, "Don't break the rules; change the rules."

A brief description from Google AI of the Premier—I'll just read it for you. It says, "This is a long-standing theme of the Premier's political tenure, characterized by his government's use of legislation and constitutional powers to circumvent judicial decisions, override municipal councils and otherwise fast-track things."

I'm wondering if you think that perhaps these trustees and administrators were learning lessons from the government about how to break and change rules and abuse their power?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I recognize the member from London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Orléans for the question. With this government, if they don't like the rules, they will move the goalposts. They are really quite concerned about the centralization of power, and that would be through a downtown, unelected Toronto bureaucrat to replace trustees.

Really, the problem here is that the government has issues with what senior administration has done in some areas, and yet they're not going after senior administration. Instead, they're going after trustees because they know trustees are a democratically elected voice for students. They advocate for special education, which they would like to cut because one of the first few actions they also did was to totally destroy the Ontario Autism Program and replace the wait-list with another wait-list.

Really, we see so many attacks on education—it is almost beyond belief, what they've done to education in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Questions?

Hon. Paul Calandra: It's curious he says we're not going after administration because on the board that he keeps talking about, the director of education was fired; there's been a criminal charge on one of the individuals mentioned in the report. The director of legal services has resigned, so there is accountability happening.

But then let's take the trustees off the table on this particular board. The fact that they did nothing—let's take that off the table. In this board, they went from a surplus a couple of years ago to a deficit. We could see it coming because they were giving themselves bonuses. They were

giving themselves bonuses and creating positions, the bureaucracy in that board that did not need to exist. The ministry could see this happening, but because they were in surplus, we had no ability to intervene and say, "This is not right. You have to change the way things are happening."

So does the member think that we should allow boards to go into deficit before we intervene to put more money back into the classroom to support students, parents and teachers?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's really quite interesting that this government would talk about the need for supervision, and yet the deficit that is with Thames Valley has ballooned while under supervision: It went from \$17 million all the way up to \$32 million. It's also curious that this minister would talk about the director of legal services because that director of legal services ran for these Conservatives.

It's really quite interesting that they tried to use these facts in a way that benefits them, but, my goodness, they don't like dealing with numbers; they don't like dealing with the truth. It's really quite concerning that this government wants to underfund and destroy public education, probably because they want to find a way to profitize and privatize the very bedrock of our democratic foundation, which is public education.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Questions?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to thank the member from Windsor West for bringing up the issue of the child welfare system as it relates to kids in care.

The Auditor General has previously identified significant issues with the child welfare system under this government, including poor adherence to protection standards, cases being closed prematurely and investigations not being completed in a timely manner. The government has done nothing to ensure the safety of vulnerable children. The member from Windsor West talked about medically fragile, vulnerable children whose parents are not receiving the support to ensure that they can be properly cared for, and therefore are considering giving up their children.

Why does the government think these parents don't love their children as much as we love our children? I'm asking the member from Windsor West to really identify what's at the heart of this government's ignorance and lack of leadership on child welfare.

MPP Lisa Gretzky: I would say that it is the government's unwillingness to take accountability for the decisions they are making; for the chronic underfunding of all of our social services, frankly, whether that's child protection, education, health—you name it.

I think it's interesting that the Minister of Education was focusing on one school board and one particular issue and talked about how they need to take over responsibility now: "The government needs to be involved." When we look at this government, we're talking about children dying in care because this government is chronically underfunding the system, so it is understaffed and under-resourced.

When we're talking about what's happening in the education system and the health care system; the number of lawsuits that this government has had against them and the millions upon millions of dollars they wasted; the fact that they've increased the size of their government, instead of spending money where it's due; maybe the federal government should introduce a bill to come take over the provincial government and put them under supervision.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Order, please. Further debate? I recognize the member from Ajax.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Order, please. The members will come to order. The Minister of Education will come to order.

I recognize the member from Ajax.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: Thank you, Speaker. I see that the Minister of Education is a little worked up before question period. I think it's a little training ground for later.

Let's talk about publicly funded education in the province. When I look at this bill, I see it as a distraction from what the root causes are that we are experiencing in our public education sector, which is really the broader underfunding of the system. This bill has got a bit of a fancy name that doesn't do that much in addressing the real problems that are affecting students and educators within the classroom. It almost feels as though this government is trying to create another crisis to undermine public education.

We've seen this movie before, my colleagues. You don't fix schools by just silencing school boards and centralizing power within the minister's office. That is going to be a recipe for disaster. We've got 72 school boards in this province. That's a lot of school boards, and I know the minister is quite busy already. So to put fingers within all 72 of them individually, frankly, I don't think is a feasible way of dealing with this. If we hear everything that's happening, that's something that I guess could very well happen because of the chronic issues that we're facing in public education.

I think it's really important that government works in collaboration with school boards, that it works in collaboration with directors of education, that it works in collaboration with the Ontario Principals' Council, that it works in collaboration with parents and with students as well, because when you have collaboration, when you're able to have these discussions and come out with what is the best pathway forward, you are going to get better results in public education. That's informed by local opinions. That's informed by local voices.

Special education: 71 out of 72 school boards in this province are spending more on special education than what's funded by the government. Again, 71 out of the 72 school boards in this province are spending more on special education than what's being provided for funding. Every single school board, with the exception of one, is overspending their allocation on special education because

the problem is that bad in this province. There is about an \$800-million to \$1-billion gap in terms of what boards spend and what that funding is provided for. That's a lot of money, but that's going to benefit students in the classroom. That's going to benefit the students with special needs in the classroom to ensure that they get the support that they need so that they can achieve their true potential and everyone else in the classroom also then has that same ability to achieve what their potential is.

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During one of the questions earlier, I mentioned knocking on doors, and I had a parent upset because there's a couple of kids in the classroom that continue to cause disruptions. There isn't that EA support in the classroom, and his kids are struggling. He went to say, "If this doesn't change, I'm going to put my kids in private education." And this isn't somebody that makes a lot of money, but how concerned that that parent is and how far that that parent is willing to go to ensure that his kid gets a better education.

Every school in this province should be a good school. Every kid should have that opportunity. So we can plaster it with the name of the bill, we can plaster it with all the other rhetoric or distractions or stuff that's happening, but at the end of the day, saving a couple of hundred thousand dollars on a school renaming—and I do agree with the minister when he talked about school namings. No school board should be spending that much. That's ridiculous. But it comes down, again, to students in the classroom and ensuring that they're supported.

Let's talk about reserve funds of school boards in this province, because many school boards are starting to get in the territory where their reserves are so low that the ministry could very easily come in and take over those school boards. But let's look at why that's the case in the first place. The case in the first place is, number one, the chronic underfunding, but number two, let's go back to COVID. School boards were given authorization—and in some ways rightfully so in the absence of provincial leadership in funding schools—to spend some of their reserves on PPE, on COVID supports, helping students in the classroom and the system adjust with what was really a very global pandemic that impacted and touched all of us in all of our lives.

Now, though, we're in a situation where we've got good school boards that have done pretty much almost all the right things—they're in a position where they could be taken over by the minister. That's something that can happen right now. And they're doing all the right things. They're spending money well. They're trying to save. And now those school boards are making tough decisions on, "How much money do we have to cut in the classroom?" That's not right. They're making decisions on technology cuts and, again, supports for students with special needs. That's not a good thing. Support for students really is going out the window.

What I'd love to see from this government—how do we deal with some of these challenges—is, again, kids with autism: Let's deliver more of that support within the

school board. The Ontario Autism Coalition was talking about that the other day. We've got to see more collaboration, as I was talking about earlier, more discussion, more working together to really solve the challenges.

With violence in schools—we hear our education partners, education unions, talk about this quite a bit, and I think rightfully so because it's their members that are the ones dealing with these challenges in the classroom day in and day out without the support that they need from this provincial government.

IEPs aren't being followed; individual education plans are not being followed. Again, it comes back to, "What's the root cause?" The system is, right now, set up to fail. That's not a good thing.

There are so many contradictions, I feel, with this government. On the one hand, a recent election proposal saying, "Well, we've got to go back to tradition"—okay, well, some of our tradition in this province is our publicly funded education system, going back to 1867. And I don't know what's going to be coming next. It might work; it might not work. I don't know. It's going to depend on those conversations that take place.

So let's make the system work better. I agree with the minister when he says the system needs to work better, but I think it's how in which we do that is the difference. If you want to support students, support the support staff instead of taking them to court. That lingers quite a bit for folks in our education sector around Bill 124; it left a really bad taste in the mouth of workers who are working really hard and supporting our teachers, supporting educators, supporting students and families in the classroom.

I've got probably a minute until we go—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I hate to interrupt, but it is now time for members' statements.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RIDING OF MARKHAM–UNIONVILLE

Mr. Billy Pang: This past summer recess was an active and fulfilling one in Markham–Unionville. I participated in nearly 100 activities and meetings, from community events and ministry briefings to discussions with local residents and festive celebrations. It was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with the residents of Markham–Unionville.

In May and June, I had the pleasure of recognizing the amazing moms and amazing dads of Markham–Unionville, honouring parents whose unwavering and unconditional love strengthens families across Markham–Unionville.

Soon after, I proudly presented the Outstanding Senior Volunteer Awards and distributed Canada Day pins to recognize our seniors and residents whose service and patriotism continue to inspire us all.

Before the end of the school term in June, I also hosted our first Shining Star Award presentation event, celebrating students who have excelled academically or in extracurricular activities and have made meaningful contributions through volunteerism.

I continued our annual landscaping recognition program, recognizing the time and effort of our residents who take care of their lawns.

Speaker, the true strength of Ontario lies in the strength of its people, and I'm honoured to serve them—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Thank you. Members' statements?

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Visiting Queen's Park today are Jillian Watt and Jen Beckley, chairs for CUPE Local 7800. They represent more than 4,700 hard-working health care workers at Hamilton Health Sciences. They're joined by hundreds of members from the Ontario Health Coalition across the province, and their message is simple: The Ford government is privatizing our public hospitals, and it will cost us all.

This government is accelerating the privatization of our public health care system. The Premier just announced 57 new private clinics that will take more than 100,000 diagnostic tests out of our local public hospitals, along with funding and staffing. This government is shifting hundreds of millions of dollars in public funding over to private clinics while our local public hospitals continue to struggle with overwhelming demand and chronic underfunding.

Remember when the Premier announced that no patient would ever have to pay with their credit card, only their OHIP card? We now know that the privatized cataract surgery clinics are routinely overbilling seniors for their procedures. We heard from an 80-year-old woman who had to make a payment of almost \$11,000 for her surgery. Just imagine the tens of thousands of dollars they are going to charge patients now that this privatization scheme will expand to orthopedic surgeries, hips and knees, as well as other diagnostics.

It's clear that this government knows seniors are facing financial hardships due to overbilling, but this Premier is clearly willing to let seniors pay the price.

WORDSWELL ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LEARNING

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Speaker, today I rise to recognize an extraordinary non-profit in my community of Don Valley North, the Wordswell Association for Community Learning. They're led by a dedicated team of individuals, including its inspiring director, Neda Farahmandpour, who joins us today, along with student Jonaya Estinvil.

For over 15 years, Wordswell has grown from a small group of young dreamers into a respected community force transforming how you learn, lead and serve. Through programs that blend academic tutoring, mentorship and service learning, more than 700 students have built con-

fidence, strengthened their intellect and discovered their power to uplift their communities.

What sets Wordswell apart is its belief that learning and service belong together, that true education strengthens both the mind and the heart. By helping young people build skills, character and compassion, Wordswell turns learning into leadership and purpose into progress.

Speaker, when youth rise, communities flourish. That's the Wordswell way, where knowledge finds its voice and youth find their power. I'm proud to recognize Wordswell's vital contribution to our community in Don Valley North and I encourage continued support for organizations that invest in the next generation.

KING CHARLES III CORONATION MEDAL

Mr. John Jordan: Over the last several months, I was honoured to present King Charles III Coronation Medals to seven dedicated and compassionate people in my riding of Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston. These medals are a testament to their exceptional contributions and dedication to their communities.

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Medals were presented to:

—Kory Earle, for his work and advocacy in supporting the rights of persons with disabilities;

—Jeff Mills, for his 16 years of service with Carebridge Community Support, as well as countless initiatives to support seniors and youth;

—Travis Mellema, Chief of the Lanark County Paramedic Service, for his dedication and commitment to improving and optimizing the levels of care for residents;

—Carol Anne McNeil, for delivering the best in care to families for over 40 years at Lanark community programs and ConnectWell;

—Dr. Peter Bell, for over 50 years of service in patient care, including his advocacy for the integration of the family health team model in Sharbot Lake—Dr. Bell recently retired after 54 years of service;

—Donna Davidson, for her work in developmental services and her support for children and their families through Lanark community programs; and

—on behalf of Minister Sylvia Jones, to Dr. Shaira Wignarajah, for her volunteer work at Baycrest Home for the Aged.

These recipients have had an immeasurable impact on many people in their communities, and I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to each of them on this well-earned recognition.

FOOD INSECURITY

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I rise today to bring awareness to the alarming statistic of food insecurity across Niagara. Food is not a luxury; it's a basic right. Yet, in my riding of St. Catharines, that right is under threat.

Joanne Heritz, a professor of political science at Brock University, recently authored a policy brief entitled

Increasing Hunger in Niagara: The Need for Action. In the past two years, food bank visits in St. Catharines have increased by nearly 150%. But it's not only food banks seeing the strain. Congregated meal programs, places like St. George's Anglican Church and Out of the Cold program, now serve tens of thousands of hot meals each year. These programs, once seen as an emergency support for those dire situations, have become daily lifelines for those on fixed incomes.

As of April, the St. Catharines Out of the Cold program now offers meals on a year-round basis, simply to meet local demands. They provided over 26,000 meals in 2024 and 2025. This is a 10% increase from the prior year.

An aging population, incomes that don't keep up with the cost of living and housing costs taking up most of people's monthly incomes: Those are the driving factors, and this government needs to address these issues right at the core.

WINDSOR SHELTER HEALTH ASSOCIATES

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I'm honoured to rise in the House today to recognize Dr. Jennifer Bondy and Windsor Shelter Health Associates for their exceptional leadership in delivering compassionate, comprehensive care to our community's most vulnerable residents.

Under Dr. Bondy's vision and guidance, her team has pioneered an innovative model that brings essential health services, including mental health and addiction support, primary care and specialist treatment, directly to individuals in shelters and supportive housing.

This includes care provided at the Salvation Army men's shelter, the H4 hub, and the Welcome Centre for Women and Families, together with other housing with support locations across Windsor.

By meeting people where they are, this model enhances access to care, reduces emergency room visits and ensures that residents receive the right care at the right time and in the right place. It is a proactive approach that addresses health challenges before they become crises, and that is why I was proud to announce \$3,881,138 in support from the province of Ontario for 2025-26.

Through Dr. Bondy's steadfast leadership, Windsor Shelter Health Associates has strengthened the foundation of community-based health care in Windsor-Tecumseh; one built on compassion, collaboration and accessibility. Together, Dr. Bondy, her colleagues and their community partners are creating a sustainable, integrated system of care for individuals who have, too often, been left behind.

To Dr. Bondy, her team and all partners, thank you for your innovation, dedication and unwavering commitment to improving the health and well-being of the people of Windsor.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, this government is attacking tenants in Ontario. Last week, the Minister of Housing

introduced Bill 60, containing direct attacks on tenant rights. At the same time, the minister announced the review of automatic renewal of tenancy, which would open doors to mass evictions across Ontario.

Seniors who are long-term tenants on fixed incomes knew exactly what that meant: that they would be losing their homes. Single moms doing their best to provide shelter and food for their children could see disaster ahead. Tenants everywhere were unfairly plunged into a state of fear and desperation. That was a nasty thing for the minister to do.

After an uproar across the province, the government was forced to back off on these consultations on ending long-term tenancy "for now." Tenants are not going to roll over. They're not going to allow this government to make them homeless. They will fight back. The government must stop attacking tenants and it must stop now.

TOP SHELF CANADA

Mr. Robert Bailey: Over the last two days, a delegation of local business leaders from Sarnia-Lambton, led by the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce, have been visiting Queen's Park to share with members of this Legislature our region's economic priorities, innovations and opportunities for growth.

One of those business leaders is Joshua Lines, founder and CEO of Top Shelf Canada, the producer of Canada's premium hot sauce, Front Street Heat—I know that a number of you had the opportunity to sample it. In response to the economic uncertainty of last year, Joshua and his team at Top Shelf Canada are busy creating an all-Canadian supply chain and food production that will allow Canadian producers the ability to take homegrown ingredients from the ground to the bottle and give Canadian consumers alternatives to corporate American grocery imports.

Joshua and his team are working tirelessly to produce and stock more of our Canadian grocery shelves with Canadian products for every taste. Joshua's new product, Thanks, is a Canadian replacement for Frank's in the US and is primed to become a staple in Canadian kitchens in the months ahead.

Joshua is also donating 100% of the profits from the launch of Thanks to the Canadian Mental Health Association and youth mental health initiatives in Canada.

I couldn't be more excited to get my hands on a bottle of this Canadian hot sauce to support this outstanding initiative. Thank you to Joshua for his outstanding work and for your visit to Queen's Park.

RIDING OF LAMBTON-KENT- MIDDLESEX

Mr. Steve Pinsonneault: It is a pleasure to rise in the House again today on behalf of the residents of my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. After a productive summer spent meeting with my constituents across this beautiful riding, I am happy to be back in the Legislature to continue working for them.

Over the last couple of months, I've had the incredible opportunity to travel across my riding, from Strathroy to Wallaceburg, to visit local businesses, farms and community events. What I heard was clear. People are optimistic about the future, proud of the work that we are doing and eager to see continued investment in our rural communities, infrastructure and local economy.

I want to thank those that welcomed me into their homes, businesses and community halls over the summer. Your commitment to making Ontario a better place is what drives me every day. I'm looking forward to continuing to work hard for my constituents and bringing their voices to Queen's Park.

BERNARD GRANDMAÎTRE

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the minister on a point of order.

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Madame la Présidente, avec votre consentement, j'aimerais obtenir le consentement unanime pour observer un moment de silence à la mémoire de Bernard Grandmaître.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to have a moment of silence for the passing of Bernard Grandmaître. Agreed? Agreed.
The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): You may be seated.

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INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a delegation of members from the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills and Private Members' Motions from the Parliament of Ghana. The delegation is led by the Honourable Bernard Ahiafor, the 1st Deputy Speaker of Parliament. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests to the Legislature.

Also joining us today are members of the Ontario Kinesiology Association, including a member from my riding of Flamborough—Glanbrook, Paula Sinclair. Welcome.

Hon. Zee Hamid: I would like to welcome from CAA—they are also doing the reception this evening at 5—Matthew Turack, Shoshana Fruitman, Anita Mueller, Marianne Bridge, Brenda Rideout and Rehana Doobay. Welcome to the House.

Mr. Will Bouma: I'd like to welcome to the House Dr. Daniel Sibley and the Ontario Kinesiology Association.

Colleagues, I was able to donate half of my liver to an anonymous recipient in the summer of 2024. I have fully recovered—and a good chunk of that was the “prehabilitation” system I was on under the care of Dr. Daniel Sibley, my kinesiologist.

The kinesiologists are having a lunch reception in room 228 today. I would urge you all to stop and hear from them about the life-changing work they are doing for the people of Ontario.

Ms. Marit Stiles: We have quite a few visitors in the Legislature today. I would like to extend a warm welcome

to UFCW members, including executive board members who are here with us today; as well as the Ontario Mining Association; CUPE Ontario's president, Fred Hahn; and the hundreds of members of the Ontario Health Coalition who have been packing the gallery this morning with the Ontario Federation of Labour's president, Laura Walton.

I look forward to seeing all of you throughout the day. Welcome to your House.

Hon. Steve Clark: I've got a number of constituents from the great riding of Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Joining us is Evelyn Weger from North Grenville, here representing the Ontario Association of Social Workers. We've got Jeff Butler from 1000 Islands and Johnstown Duty Free, here for the duty-free border MPP meeting, and Dr. Lance McIntosh from the Ontario Dental Association.

And I have a special welcome, on behalf of our page captain from Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Lorraine Holmstrom from Académie catholique Ange-Gabriel in Brockville. I want to welcome her parents, Cam Holmstrom and Allison Boone.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mme Lucille Collard: From the Ontario Dental Association, we have Dr. Brian Eckert from my riding of Ottawa—Vanier, Dr. Jonathan Mayer, and Dr. Janet Leith; and from the Canadian Generic Pharmaceutical Association, we have Gayle Peddle, Mark Holle and Jeff Connell.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP George Darouze: I'm pleased to welcome a dedicated community leader from Ottawa today at Queen's Park. Danielle McGee joins us here in her role as senior adviser for government and stakeholder relations at Ottawa Community Housing. Danielle is a long-time colleague of mine, having served in the mayor's office at Ottawa city hall from 2010 to 2022.

Welcome, Danielle, to Queen's Park.

MPP Catherine McKenney: I'd like to welcome Erin Whitmore from the Ontario Association of Social Workers to Queen's Park today. As the former executive director of the Ending Violence Association of Canada, Erin shaped and led the organization's advocacy efforts to address sexual violence in Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to welcome the Ontario Mining Association. They represent the sector of the most ethically sourced resources on earth.

We have the Meet the Miners reception tonight at 5 p.m., at MaRS. You are all welcome. Let's support Ontario's miners.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I want to introduce members of the CAA that are here today: Matthew Turack, Shoshana Fruitman, Lauren Hunter and Anita Mueller. They'll be having a reception at 5 p.m.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Madam Speaker, I want to welcome Dr. Lisa Bentley and Dr. Nafisa Ahmad, also from the Ontario Dental Association, to the Legislature today. I look forward to our meeting later and learning about all the important work that you do. Welcome.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I'd like to welcome to the house today Dr. Charles Frank and Dr. Art Worth, who are

also with the Ontario Dental Association—and a special welcome to friends and Haldimand–Norfolk constituents Lyle Benson, Ron Keating, Gail Heald-Taylor and Anita Meinen, who are here today with the Ontario Health Coalition. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: As part of the Queen's Park awareness day for the Ontario Association of Social Workers, I want to welcome Shane Joseph, a dedicated social worker from my riding of Durham.

MPP Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome Sue Hotte and Heather Kelly from the health coalition. Also, I'd like to welcome Laura Walton, president of the OFL, and the 100 members from the health coalition here that are fighting for health care across the province of Ontario.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I would like to welcome Dr. Kyle Murray, dean of the Lazaridis school of business, with his wife, Colleen, and Linda Salewsky from the Ontario Health Coalition's day of action.

And let me be really clear: Today is a very special day. My good friend and colleague from London West, it's her birthday. Congratulations.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): To all of the visitors who were not introduced, it's my fault. We stick to a very hard line of five minutes. I'm sure your representatives wanted to introduce you, but we have run out of time.

OMBUDSMAN ONTARIO ANNIVERSARY ANNIVERSAIRE D'OMBUDSMAN ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Point of order: I recognize the member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Madam Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to recognize the 50th anniversary of the Ombudsman's office with five minutes allotted to the government, five minutes allotted to the official opposition, five minutes allotted to the third party and two minutes allotted to the independent members as a group.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Agreed? Agreed. Debate? I recognize the member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Thank you, Speaker. It's my pleasure to offer a few remarks today on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Office of the Ombudsman for Ontario.

The Office of the Ombudsman was created in 1975 by legislation called the Ombudsman Act. I'd like to take you all back to the year 1975 with a few facts about that year. In 1975, the population of Ontario was approximately 8.5 million people. The Premier of Ontario was the Honourable William Grenville Davis. There were no Toronto Blue Jays. There were no Toronto Raptors. There was no SARS and no COVID-19. The minimum wage was \$2.65 per hour. A domestic postage stamp was eight cents, and people bought them because there was no email. There

was no internet. There was no ChatGPT. And the band The Guess Who broke up in 1975.

But when one door closes, another opens. After leaving The Guess Who, Randy Bachman helped form the band Bachman-Turner Overdrive, which had the hit song, *Takin' Care of Business*. And "taking care of business" is the job of the office of the Ombudsman every day.

The Ombudsman helps resolve problems with government and public sector organizations. You can contact the Ombudsman if, for example, you have a problem with the Ontario government or the public service; if you have a problem with a municipality or a university or a school board; if you believe you were treated unfairly or treated with disrespect; if you are facing what a reasonable person might consider long delays; if it seems that you are being denied answers to reasonable questions; or if you just want information about services that you feel you're entitled to.

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What else does the Ombudsman do? They resolve complaints about government departments and agencies. They give advice on what people should do. They try to explain to people why they might be unsuccessful at getting a government service or getting a government benefit. They give advice to government to improve government services.

The Office of the Ombudsman deals with approximately 30,000 cases each year and will serve you in both official languages. Thank you to all the men and women who have served at the Office of the Ombudsman and special thanks to the individuals who have served as the Ombudsman: Arthur Maloney, from 1975 to 1978; Donald Morand, from 1979 to 1984; Daniel Hill, from 1984 to 1989; Roberta Jamieson, from 1989 to 1999; Clare Lewis, from 2000 to 2005; André Marin from 2005 to 2015; and Paul Dubé, 2016 to the present day. Thank you.

Congratulations to the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario on 50 successful years of service to the people of Ontario. Here's to another 50 years of:

*Takin' care of business, every day
Takin' care of business, every way ...
Takin' care of business, it's all mine
Takin' care of business and working overtime.*

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Well done.

Further debate?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm proud to rise in this chamber on behalf of the official opposition to extend congratulations on the 50th anniversary of the Ontario Ombudsman's office and to thank them for the invaluable public service that they provide to the people of Ontario. It's hard to imagine what Ontarians did more than 50 years ago when they were treated unfairly by the government or a particular government practice that required looking into. Ontarians tried every avenue to point out a break in the system, oftentimes turning up empty-handed. Until the Office of the Ombudsman was created 50 years ago, that simple office of last resort, Ontarians had to live and suffer with the injustice. We are so lucky, Speaker, that we now have an ombuds institution in this Legislature.

Ontario's first Ombudsman, the first of seven Ombudsmen, was Arthur Maloney, who was sworn in on October 30, 1975. He was followed by subsequent Ombudsmen, each one passing the torch to the very next: Donald Morand, Daniel Hill, Roberta Jamieson, Clare Lewis, André Marin and Paul Dubé, our current and present Ombudsman today.

Today, the Ombudsman of Ontario, including the French language commissioner, Carl Bouchard, has oversight of over 1,000 provincial and broader public service organizations. This oversight includes handling complaints and investigating administrative fairness issues related to these bodies. Having a public accountability office to openly investigate and to criticize the government is invaluable to the preservation of good governance, protecting individual rights and reinforcing public trust in our democratic institutions, something that we need now more than ever before. In our current political environment, we need the Ombudsman's office to reinforce that trust.

The Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman, a collective of ombudsmen from across the country, released a document that highlighted the seven effective principles of being an ombudsman. All those seven principles are important. Ontario's Ombudsman, Paul Dubé, pulled out one as the most critical: the security of tenure. Security of tenure is not just for tenants, who had to scream their heads off this weekend to save their month-to-month leases, but also for ombudsmen as well. Ombudsmen, as Mr. Dubé has said, "should be safe knowing they can do their job without fear or favour," as it is important for them to "not have to look over their shoulders or worry about being removed from office because they put out a report that might counter the narrative of a government or contain some inconvenient truths. What politicians have told me over the years is that we love you when we're in opposition, but you're a pain in the butt when we're in government." As it should be, Speaker.

The fact that it was Ontario's Ombudsman who raised security of tenure being the most critical is worrying to me. This government needs to be able to listen to the Ombudsman and to really take his words into the heart.

In recent years, the Ombudsman has been kept very busy by holding the government accountable. We know this very well in the official opposition as we have frequently pointed out the possible areas of investigation, including the Minister of Labour's uneven and unfair preferential handout of the Skills Development Funds to PC donors and lobbyists over more qualified applicants. This is what is a break in the system.

The work that the Ombudsman does literally saves lives. I want to commend them on their work on behalf of children, in particular. They have shed light on the practice of Ontario's child welfare agencies. Housing children in hotels, motels and even offices is not helpful. Actually, we've seen significant harm, including those impacting newborns, for those who have metabolic diseases. All of these have shone a light on the injustice and a broken system.

Even with the Ombudsman's report—a landmark report, I would say now—regarding the Landlord and Tenant Board, Administrative Justice Delayed, Fairness Denied—it has been critical to my own work as the shadow Attorney General in exposing the failures in the LTB, recognizing that both landlords and tenants are stuck in a queue when the justice system doesn't work.

The Toronto Star highlighted injustices that we see in Maplehurst and the correctional facilities. And because of that, the Ombudsman, at his own discretion, picked up and started to take a look at what was happening in corrections, recognizing that he has seen a 55% increase in complaints. He then called for meaningful and systemic reform to recognize the basic rights of inmates as a moral imperative.

All of this extends, as I reach my conclusion, Speaker—is that although these truths are inconvenient, this House must recognize how important the independent accountability offices are. And it is with that—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: It is my pleasure to commemorate Ombudsman Ontario's 50th anniversary on behalf of the Liberal caucus, marking half a century of protecting Ontario's rights and promoting fair, accountable public services.

When this office was first created in 1975, the vision was that it would stand for the rights of all Ontarians. The title "Ombudsman" is a Swedish term dating back more than 200 years, and it means "citizens' representative" and is considered gender neutral.

In March 1975, Ontario became Canada's seventh province to announce the creation of an independent, impartial Ombudsman institution to protect the people's right to fair treatment by public bodies. The Ombudsman Act was passed in May that year, and on October 30, 1975, Arthur Maloney was sworn in as the first Ombudsman. And the first woman Ombudsman was Roberta Jamieson, who served from 1989 to 1999.

Since then, they have handled more than a million cases and conducted hundreds of investigations, which have resulted in more than 1,300 recommendations. Several of the Ombudsman recommendations to improve public service have been enforced, which has benefited millions of Ontarians.

Having worked in health care for over 25 years, I witnessed first-hand the role the Ombudsman played in elevating health care, addressing concerns about health care coverage and the Ontario government bodies responsible for health and long-term care. I saw how the office gave a voice to patients, families and front-line workers after they'd exhausted all their local options to raise those issues, ensuring that systemic issues were addressed and individual concerns were addressed with fairness and transparency.

Over the course of its history, seven remarkable individuals have served as Ombudsman, and I would like to specifically thank Paul Dubé, our present Ombudsman

since 2016. Thank you for your passion and dedication to promoting justice.

The office's investigations have led to meaningful and tangible changes, including expanding screening of newborn babies for metabolic diseases; more transparency and accountability in municipal and school board governance; administrative improvements at tribunals, and reforms of Ontario's correction systems; and broader civilian oversight of police.

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I would also like to acknowledge the French Language Services Commissioner for their work as part of Ombudsman Ontario. En 2018, ce gouvernement a fusionné le bureau indépendant du commissaire aux services en français avec celui de l'ombudsman de l'Ontario, malgré les objections de la communauté francophone. Ce bureau fait encore un travail important en examinant les plaintes envers les institutions gouvernementales qui ne respectent pas leurs obligations en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français. Nous comptons sur le Bureau de l'ombudsman et le commissaire aux services en français pour faire le travail nécessaire afin d'assurer que les droits des francophones soient respectés.

From its earliest days in 1975, the Office of the Ombudsman made it clear that its role is to stand for all the people of Ontario as a protector of their rights. In his 1975-76 annual report, the first Ombudsman, Arthur Maloney, used the image of a griffin, a mythical animal that is half eagle and half lion, as his office's symbol, noting that the griffin had been used by numerous cultures for centuries to signify a protector of human rights. The griffin has long represented the protection of human rights. In the original logo, the griffin was depicted among trilliums, Ontario's emblem, representing the province's diverse population. "And thus" Arthur wrote, "the Ombudsman represents protection for the social rights and cultural integrity of all."

Thank you to Ombudsman Ontario; to the current Ombudsman, Paul Dubé; to the French commissioner, Carl Bouchard, and to all the members of the team for your work listening to the public every day, and for 50 years of service, fairness and advocacy.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It is an honour to rise today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the office of Ombudsman Ontario—50 years of vital work to protect the rights of people in this province to fair treatment by the public bodies that serve them.

I want to offer heartfelt thanks to everyone who has worked in the ombuds office, past and present. Thank you for handling more than one million individual cases, conducting hundreds of investigations, and making more than 1,300 recommendations to improve public services for people across this province.

Most importantly, thank you for providing an essential place for people to go to be heard, to have their complaints addressed, their concerns investigated, advice given, and recommendations for actions taken.

To Paul Dubé, who has been the Ombudsman for the past nine years, the entire time I have been an MPP: I apologize if I've overworked your team by referring so many people to your office. But I can tell you how important it is to be able to direct your constituents and people across this province to the ombuds office, knowing that their concerns and complaints will be heard and responded to.

I strongly believe that public services play a vital role in improving the lives of people in this province. And when people don't receive the quality of service they deserve, we as elected officials need to know so that we can demand better and take actions to improve the services that people rely on. That's why I'm so deeply grateful to the team at the ombuds office for playing such a vital role in helping us to do that.

Applause.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the Premier. I want to share a bit of a pattern. When the former labour minister was in charge of the Skills Development Fund, donations to his riding association just skyrocketed. Donations then collapsed when he left that office. And then, almost immediately, the donations shifted over to the riding association of the new minister.

So how does the Premier explain this pattern of political donations rising and falling depending on who controls the Skills Development Fund?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. David Piccini: This government has shown a pattern of continual investment in key things that matter to Ontarians. Let's talk about our infrastructure investments in the fall economic statement. In the budget, we continue to make record investments. We continue to make record investments in hospitals, in schools, in an energy industry that will be self-reliant. We've said to the people that we'll protect workers in doing it. That's why workers are supporting this government in making these critical investments, because it's giving them a paycheque and putting them to work along the lines.

Whether it's construction, whether it's PSWs, whether it's nurses who have received support through the Skills Development Fund or supporting, now in hospitals, doctors as well, this fund is supporting with rapid training to meet the needs of our current and growing economy. Now more than ever, we need to continue making these investments.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Back to the Premier, because there's a very troubling number of grants that went to donors to the Conservative Party of Ontario. I'm going to give you another example: FGF brands. They were initially unsuccessful in their applications, actually, for SDF grants,

and then, suddenly, it's like they got the message. They hired the Premier's, the PC Party's campaign manager's firm—their application was suddenly approved, and they got over \$1 million, Speaker.

What happened next? What happened next is very interesting. There was a surge of donations to the Conservative Party from the founder of that company and his family. So did the Premier or the minister or anyone in their offices give an applicant any reason to believe that making a donation could improve their chances of receiving that government funding?

Hon. David Piccini: One of the priorities of the Skills Development Fund program has been to help break down barriers for women to find gainful employment. Today, we're joined by Natasha Ferguson from A Women's Work. She joined me with folks from FGF Brands just last week for an incredible round table where we talked about breaking down barriers. FGF Brands does a remarkable job for women, in particular pregnant women, and we're proud to support that program.

I would also note that two members of the board also donate to the NDP and the Liberal Party, but that's not what this is about, Speaker. This is about an organization helping pregnant women, helping break down barriers for an economy that's been rattled by an all-out assault from President Trump south of the border.

We've got to back workers. We've got to make sure we have pathways to support rapid training that helps navigate the troubling economic waters as a result of a president intent on destroying some of our key sectors in the Ontario economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Final supplement-ary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: It should have been pretty easy, Speaker, right? It should have been pretty easy. The one thing missing from that answer was a no. I mean, you're not even pretending anymore. You will not deny it.

Just, by the way, think for a moment of all of the women's organizations that could have benefited from funding that didn't get it because they didn't hire a campaign manager.

We are talking about millions of taxpayer dollars flowing to well-connected insiders who have donated to the minister and the Conservative Party of Ontario. That sounds like preferential treatment to me, Speaker. It sounded like preferential treatment to the auditor. And I tell you, if it looks like a duck, if it walks like a duck, by God, it's a duck, right?

Enough is enough. When is this Premier going to fire his minister?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, the member's not going to talk about the specifics of the fund she referenced because she doesn't care. She doesn't care about the women that FGF Brands is actually supporting. She doesn't care about the pregnant women that this fund is actually supporting. They've met their targets, their robust KPIs. In fact, they've helped more women—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order. Order.

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Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, a target of 508 women supported: They actually supported 705 women.

We're going to continue supporting Ontarians with rapid training. We see it when we see President Trump who, on the whim of feelings of things he sees on TV, will then be reactive to our economy. He is completely unstable, launching an all-out assault on our steel sector, launching an assault on our automotive sector. We've said to those workers, "We'll support rapid training that ensures you have the skill sets needed to support a resilient economy." We'll keep doing that.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Let's put this in context. In Brampton, Stellantis is packing up and shipping out. They're taking their Jeep EVs to Illinois, along with 3,000 jobs. Imagine: 3,000 families now living without hope—3,000 workers, 3,000 families. Twelve hundred workers laid off at GM in Ingersoll—their families are losing a stable income.

In Hamilton, I heard from Mike, who was out of work after 31 years in the steel sector at Hamilton wire because they've closed their doors after 70 years.

This is a jobs disaster of this government's making. To the Premier: How much do workers in Brampton and Ingersoll and people like Mike have to fork out to get this government to pay any attention to them?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: We are indeed working very closely with both General Motors and Stellantis, along with all of our partners from labour. Both companies have sat with us, with the Premier, and told us that they are indeed exploring new opportunities in both Ingersoll and in Brampton. Speaker, they both understand that their operations in those communities are integral to their entire auto supply.

We fully expect them to live up to the commitment that they have made to the province. All of the contracts that we have with them have very strong guardrails in place to protect the taxpayer.

That's why we also have our protect Ontario fund. The Minister of Finance has provided \$30 billion of firepower to help these Ontario companies. We look forward to your encouragement to those Ontario companies to continue working with us as we fight for those very jobs.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'll tell you, Speaker, those very workers said to me, to my face, that they feel like this government is focused on their retraining and not saving those jobs. They told me that to my face last week.

People are worried about their jobs. They're worried about losing their homes. They're worried about the state of our health care system, the state of our kids' education. And this Premier, what is he obsessed with? He is obsessed with campaign donations. That's what he is obsessed with.

For seven days in a row in this chamber, I have asked this Premier for his jobs plan. It is becoming increasingly clear that the only plan he has is to take advantage of this jobs disaster to let his donors and his friends cash in.

So I want to ask the Premier again: Will the Premier continue to support this Minister of Labour and his pay-to-play schemes?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, we've all heard in this Legislature many, many times something the NDP just don't want to acknowledge. Through the changes that we've made in Ontario, a million new people have new jobs in Ontario.

In fact, again, another one of the facts they don't like to hear is that before the Trump tariffs, those three months were a real indicator of the power that's happening in Ontario: 87,000 new jobs were created in the three months before those tariffs were put into place.

We've seen what's been happening, and that's why we have \$30 billion of firepower—\$50 million into the Ontario Together Trade Fund, a program this opposition does not support. All of these programs have not been supported by the NDP.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, every day I get up here and I ask questions to the Premier and somebody else answers them. It's the Minister of Labour or the Minister of Economic Development. Who is actually running this government? He stands there and they defend hand-picking winners and losers based on making sure that their friends get paid off.

The Premier's continued support of this labour minister is casting a shadow not only over the entire Skills Development Fund, but over every single MPP in their government. That is the truth: all the government MPPs.

I want to ask, to the Premier: Who is really running this government?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: The NDP definitely do not like to hear the news that we have: 20,000 manufacturing jobs were created in Ontario just in July, August, and September. These are facts they don't want to acknowledge: 8,800 jobs were created in Ontario in September. Speaker, 37,000 jobs were created in the first months of the year—in manufacturing alone—before Donald Trump's tariffs.

We've seen these tariffs come in. Premier Ford has reacted. Our Minister of Finance has put \$30 billion—we have programs that we are issuing to companies to help their survival. All of you voted against these programs that we have in place: \$40 million in our tariff-impacted community fund and \$50 million in the Ontario Together Trade Fund. You voted against all of these supports, every single one of them.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier. It's another day and it's another story of the rotten onion that the Skills Development Fund is. This morning, it's FGF

Brands, a baker here in Toronto. They received over \$1 million from the Ontario taxpayer. Now, they appeared in a video with the Premier. You can find it on his YouTube channel if you're not doing something later on tonight—you might be watching the game, though. Shortly after they appeared in that video with the Premier, they hired the man behind the curtain, Kory Teneycke, and then, subsequently, the owner and his family donated \$32,000 to the Progressive Conservative Party.

So my question to the Premier is, did the Premier tell the founder of FGF Brands to call Kory Teneycke?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Labour.

Hon. David Piccini: No, that's preposterous, and their past president donated to his party, but it doesn't matter. Who cares, Speaker? The point is, we're supporting women in training.

It's an interesting strategy that that member has, to denigrate hospitality workers. I then got a call, that day, from members of that union who saw his despicable performance, to denigrate labour unions and construction. But it's not surprising, Speaker, because they abandoned his party. Because he doesn't support a plan we tabled to build infrastructure, to build hospitals, to build schools that they shut down in rural Ontario. He doesn't support nuclear, and the men and women who are getting trained, like the millwrights. I recently attended their graduation, and they all said to me—Indigenous youth in my community—they knew that the Liberals would have shut down Pickering, would have shuttered our nuclear. They knew Darlington was next on the block with that member.

But thankfully, Ontarians voted for a third majority government for this Premier, who's going to ensure we're energy sufficient, who will make sure we're an energy—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary.

Mr. John Fraser: Somebody told Heddle Shipyards to call Kory, too, because his fingerprints are all over it. The CEO, the CFO, the director of business development—just wait—and the VP of operations all donated thousands and thousands to either the former or current Minister of Labour, as well as the PC Party, after hiring—guess who?—Kory Teneycke.

So, Premier, if you're not telling companies to call Kory, just who in your office is?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I'm happy to talk about Heddle Shipyards. The Ministry of Transportation, we have worked with them closely. We've also ensured that after years of the previous Liberal government driving out thousands and thousands of manufacturing jobs, we are working with them to build a world-class shipbuilding sector right here in the province of Ontario.

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That wasn't happening when 15 years of Liberal government in the past drove out all of these jobs. That's why we've committed to building this industry in Hamilton, building this industry all across the province. That's exactly what we are going to do, Madam Speaker: work

with the individuals at those yards—good-paying jobs that they are trying to keep right here in the province of Ontario, rather than seeing those jobs offshore, whether it be in Asia or Mexico and other places across the world. We're committed to the shipbuilding sector, no matter what the Liberals say.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the leader of the third party.

Mr. John Fraser: Speaker, I just want you to know, on behalf of all of us over here, that we've crossed the Rubicon when it comes to skills development and we're not going back. We're not going back.

Everyone knows who's running this government. We all know who's running this government. It's the man behind the curtain: the Premier's shadow Premier, Kory Teneycke. Ministers across from me know exactly what I'm talking about, no one more so than the Minister of Finance. Nothing gets done without Kory's approval. We know that. His fingerprints are all over everything this government does, all over the budget.

So can the Premier confirm that the Skills Development Fund—that sleazy slush fund—is Kory Teneycke's idea?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Minister of Labour.

Hon. David Piccini: You know, Speaker, literally the only thing the Liberals are good at are these little rhymes that he comes up with and things like that. Because when it comes to taking an actual plan to the people, a plan that's enshrined in our budget—a budget that invests in core infrastructure, a budget that invests in shipbuilding, a budget that invests in energy, a budget that invests in hospitals, a budget that puts together a package of things that can actually let Ontario stand on its own two feet in today's economy—more so now than ever do we need a Premier with a plan to protect Ontario, a plan to protect our workers.

Ontarians trust the Conservative government when it comes to navigating tough economic times. They can laugh all they want. That's why you're on the rump in the third party and continue to lose election after election.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Through the Speaker.

Hon. David Piccini: Because when they were given an opportunity to support these measures, they voted against it. They voted against the workers we're training. They want to put those workers out of work when they shutter our energy sector, Speaker.

We've got a plan. We're going to keep those workers working and we'll be more self-reliant as a result.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: Back to the Premier: I know the Premier's had an opportunity to think whether or not that \$75-million ad was really a good idea. I know he said it was the greatest ad ever in North America—which has a familiar ring to it, but I'm not going to go there right now. Then he said he's got hundreds of millions of dollars in free advertising—free advertising. But what the Premier

doesn't understand is, Ontarians will pay for it. Ontarians are going to pay with their jobs for his bad choice.

Does the Premier still really believe that this ad was in any way a good idea?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Minister of Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Madam Speaker, here we go. You know, 11 billion views, getting a message out, fighting for Ontarians, fighting for Ontario jobs: Why is that so difficult for the opposition and the independent party to understand, that fighting for Ontario is the noble thing to do?

Do you know what the Premier did this morning with Minister Rickford? They are nation building. They are working with Webequie First Nation, a First Nation working together with the provincial government, municipal government and federal government to open up the Ring of Fire and bring prosperity to the north. That party didn't do any of that while they had the time to do it.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Leader of the third party.

Mr. John Fraser: Here's the result: Talks ended; tariffs applied. It cost people jobs. That's all I've got to say. It's clear.

I know the ad appeals to the Premier's desire to be a big player in the United States. That's why he's all over Fox News and ABC. He just loves it. You can see it. I'm sure his friends in Florida are going, "Hey, look, there's Doug." I know it appeals to his desire to be Captain Canada and, one day, Prime Minister, right?

Good advertising captures attention. Great strategy anticipates consequences. We know these ads were done by an agency called Creative Currency. They do a lot of advertising with the government, and actually with the PC Party, too.

Speaker, through you, just what is the connection between the Premier and his office to Creative Currency?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, Canada and the US, as you've heard from Premier Ford, are friends. They're neighbours and they're allies. He has always said we're so much stronger when we work together.

Let's listen to a couple of people across the country who agree with him. Wab Kinew, leader of the Manitoba party: "It's clear that these ads are working. If you throw a rock at a lake and you don't hear a splash, you've probably missed. So, to my good friend Doug Ford—keep the ads on TV. They're effective, and this country is behind you."

Lana Payne from Unifor: "Premier Ford, whose province has been hit hard by the trade war, understands that we can't negotiate from our knees. We need to fight back. We can't remain silent.... That is exactly the outcome Trump is counting on." Thank you, Lana Payne.

We will never back down. We'll always support our industries and our jobs that are under threat.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): A reminder that we refer to members in the Legislature by titles, not by names, and through the Speaker.

Back to the leader of the third party.

Mr. John Fraser: I guess the question really should be: What are the connections between Creative Currency and Kory Teneycke, our shadow Premier?

Ontarians are already paying for this colossal mistake. They're going to pay for it with their jobs. That's a lot.

But you know what? These agencies often take a commission or something for placing the ads, so they get a bit of money for the whole spend of the ad, not just the creative.

I guess my question is—well, I'd like to know what the commission is, but they're probably standard; it's usually a lot of money. And this \$75 million for two ads—I'm just kind of wondering: Where's all the money going?

I think it's a really fair question. If some Ontarians are going to pay with their jobs, they should at least see some of that \$75 million back. So my question to the Premier is, how are they going to get the \$75 million back?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, we were elected to stand up for every business and every job in Ontario, and that's why we are fighting this once-in-a-generation threat from south of the border. This ad campaign is not a \$75-million campaign; it's a fraction of that. But thanks to the great work, it has achieved over 11 billion eyeballs. That's billion with a B.

That's why people like Marty Warren, head of the United Steelworkers in Canada, said, "I support Doug Ford's ads. Canadians have had enough with the Trump circus. The (new) 10% tariff"—if it happens—"on Canadian imports just exposes Trump's glass chin," said USW's Marty Warren.

"If our political leaders can stick together for all Canadians, be patient, we have the ability to land this trade war in a good place" thanks to the ads placed by Premier Doug Ford.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Merci. Ma question pour la ministre de la Santé. Does the Minister of Health want to know what all the good people in the visitors' gallery have in common? Well, let me tell you: They have all been charged for OHIP-funded services by a private, for-profit clinic, something that is illegal under the Canada Health Act. In June, 50 of the good people in here sent a package to the minister asking her to investigate the illegal billing. Why did the minister never reach out to any of those good people, never respond and never investigate?

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Hon. Sylvia Jones: As the member opposite knows and I hope individuals in the gallery know, we have a process to ensure, through the Patient Ombudsman, that investigations happen separate and apart from political interference. I would encourage everyone who believes that they need to have a question answered to reach out to the Patient Ombudsman or, in fact, the Ontario Ombudsman that we are celebrating 50 years operating in the province of Ontario today.

We know that, by expanding surgical and diagnostic in-community services, we're actually making it easier for

people to access those services in their communities faster. We've been able to eliminate wait times for cataract surgeries, and we're going to keep moving through that process because we know that people across Ontario deserve to have those diagnostic and surgical procedures quickly in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, when the government announced that they were funding private for-profit clinics, both the Premier and the Minister of Health said, "You will always pay with your OHIP card, never with your credit card." That promise fell apart. There are 150 people here in the gallery with receipts to prove it. Will the Premier and the minister refund the money that these patients had to pay to private, for-profit clinics for OHIP-covered services?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I get phone calls, I get emails, I get texts from people who tell me, "Thank you for expanding cataract surgeries in the province of Ontario." When we made expansions in Ottawa, in Kitchener-Waterloo, in Windsor, I was hearing from grandparents who were saying, "Finally, I can read to my grandchild again. I can volunteer in my community. I can drive my car again." Why? Because we made that investment, and as a result of that investment, we have ensured that people are not just languishing on wait-lists; they are actually getting the services that they deserve.

We will continue to do that work in surgical and diagnostic centres across Ontario because, frankly, we have hundreds of these independent surgical procedures that happen across Ontario, and we need to expand it to keep our capacity in our acute care hospitals.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Lee Fairclough: The Financial Accountability Office report makes it clear: This government's health care spending plan fails to keep pace with inflation, population growth and aging. The government is increasing health care funding by 0.7% when it needs to grow by at least 4% to simply maintain our current levels of care, not to improve it. That translates to a \$3.4-billion shortfall next year alone.

We know the experiences in our health care system. People are waiting in hallways, and front-line workers are stretching every dollar. Ontario is acknowledged to be the most efficient in the country.

My question for the Minister of Health: If funding only rises by less than 1%, even though maintaining care requires 4%, in what scenario do hospitals not face any cuts to service?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Listen, the member opposite should understand that the Financial Accountability Office does a moment in time. They are projecting to 2027-28. The assumption that we will make no additional investments from this fiscal year to 2027-28, frankly, is ridiculous.

We have a FES that's coming up next week. We have three more budgets and fall economic statements that will

happen before the supposed 2027-28 projection from the Financial Accountability Office occurs.

We have made investments in our health care system, and we will continue to make those investments. Why? Because the population of Ontario is growing and aging, and we know through our investments of \$60 billion in capital; a brand new medical school in Brampton and a new medical school that's coming online in Vaughan; and additional medical seats in every single medical university in the province of Ontario. We will continue to make those investments and, yes, we will continue to fund those investments.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Speaker, while health care withers, \$742 million, or 56%, of the \$2.5-billion Skills Development Fund went to applicants that were ranked poor, low or medium. Meanwhile, our hospitals are in crisis. We spend the least per person in Ontario than anywhere else in the country, and our hospitals say they're facing a \$1-billion deficit. Think about the mismanaged \$742 million. That would almost cover the gap that we actually need to deliver care to people.

This government was elected on its promise to end hallway medicine, yet patients being treated in hallways are at historic highs and wait times are climbing. How does this government justify funnelling nearly \$1 billion into low-ranked, lobbyist-backed projects while hospitals drown in a \$1-billion deficit?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: If you look at the record of our government under the leadership of Premier Ford, you see, in fact, a 50% increase in our health care spending. Where are those investments going, Speaker? They are going to an additional 3,000 new hospital beds that are being built across Ontario, in addition to the 3,500 that we've already brought online since 2018. They are going to—every single medical school in the province of Ontario has new opportunities to train new medical students, including, of course, a brand new medical school in the city of Brampton and soon one in Vaughan.

We make investments where we know we see the trends, and the trends are that the Ontario population is growing. Frankly, the hospital and health care system was decimated under the previous Liberal government, and now we are playing catch up to make sure that we not only have the capital but we have the health human resources to staff across Ontario.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Ms. Laura Smith: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. The world is facing economic uncertainty. Tariff threats from President Trump are shaking markets and undermining investments, but Ontario is standing firm. Our government is creating the right conditions for growth and new jobs, and we're keeping Ontario stable, competitive and open for business. While the previous Liberal government raised taxes and drove investments away, we are doing the

opposite. We are cutting red tape; we're making it easier for businesses to set up, grow and create good-paying jobs for Ontario workers.

Can the minister please share how, despite global challenges, Ontario continues to attract new investments and build a stronger economy?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: In fact, we recently announced a \$600-million week of investments. It was a beautiful week that week in Markdale; Chapman's put a \$200-million expansion, hired 200 people. The Premier and I had a little bit of their ice cream that day; it was great—150,000-square-foot facility, three new production lines, and it is just going to be a wonderful facility when it's finished.

In Innisfil, Northern Transformer: \$207-million facility, 151 new jobs, a brand new, state-of-the-art facility to manufacture high-voltage power transformers. The Minister of Energy and I were there to speak at that great event.

Down in St. Thomas, Element5: \$107 million, 150 jobs. This is a mass timber beam production using Ontario forestry products.

In Temiskaming Shores, Electra Battery: \$100-million investment, 53 jobs.

This is the best province to do business in, and all of those companies know exactly why they're here.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Thornhill.

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank the minister for that encouraging and great update. Global uncertainty is changing how companies choose where to invest. They're looking for stability, they're looking for reliability and a competitive edge, and Ontario has all three. We have a skilled workforce and world-class infrastructure, and a government focused on attracting investments and creating jobs. That's why companies in advanced manufacturing, technology and life sciences continue to choose Ontario as the best place to grow.

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Our plan is working, but we know there's more to do to keep that momentum going. Speaker, can the minister please share what steps our government is taking to build on these successes and lay the foundation for even more investments and job growth in the years ahead?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, there are many pieces to the puzzle that we put in place, but none better than the fact that we've lowered the cost of doing business in Ontario by \$12 billion annually. Each and every year, that's what these companies are saving. That's why they're coming here.

In Brantford, we saw Ferrero Rocher: a \$445-million plant; 500 new jobs. They've expanded their production facilities to expand the range of products that they're going to be making.

Hilton Foods from the UK: a \$192-million investment; 150 jobs. They have a brand new, 230,000-square-foot facility. They've partnered with Walmart to make new meat products to present for their customers.

In Ottawa, Ranovus: \$100 million to expand their semiconductor manufacturing facility; 125 jobs.

These are all good-paying jobs from companies that are here because we keep delivering for workers and communities across the province.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

MPP Lise Vaugeois: To the Premier: It's shocking, but our northern family health teams and Thunder Bay nurse practitioner-led clinic received an increase less than the rate of inflation after as many as 10 years with no increases whatsoever. How can we expect our health teams to provide the care people need when their staff can earn a lot more money working in a hospital or in a for-profit clinic?

Will the government finally commit to funding our team-based clinics fairly so they can retain staff and the people of northern Ontario can count on getting the health care they need?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, as we continue with our primary care expansion, an investment of \$2.1 billion, we are seeing new primary care clinics across Ontario being able to ramp up higher and take on new patients. And I think of our initial investment in February 2024, where 78 new primary care teams were approved and started taking on new patients in the province of Ontario. In June, of course, of 2025, we had that second round of applications, and again, we have an additional 300,000 patients who are being attached to a primary care clinician.

But we are also absolutely supporting and investing in our existing community health care centres and family health teams and primary care teams, because the reality is, we want to ensure that everyone continues to have that access to a multi-disciplinary team to make sure that they have the opportunities in their communities. And yes, we are investing in current community health centres and multi-disciplinary teams across Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Just a reminder to members: Do not obstruct the Speaker's view to the person who is speaking.

Supplementary?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Speaker, I think we need to get real. There are huge wage disparities in the health care sector. Care providers for people with multiple disabilities are underpaid and you've stolen their wages through Bill 124. These workers save the province millions of dollars by keeping people out of hospitals—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I'll ask the member to withdraw.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Withdraw? Okay. I'm not sure what, but withdraw.

These workers save the province millions of dollars by keeping people out of hospitals. They provide essential care but cannot live on their existing wages.

Premier, will you finally show respect to these workers, restore their wages removed through Bill 124 and increase these wages to match inflation? Yes or no?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I want to be very clear: There is no world where a \$213-million investment in existing primary care health teams is anything but an investment in our patients and an investment in our province.

We will work, absolutely, with community health teams and multidisciplinary teams, but at the end of the day, they do the recruiting, they do the hiring, and we have seen exceptional results.

When I think of communities that have not had primary care team expansions in literally decades because of former governments that chose to cut medical schools, that chose to fire 600 nurses—we are investing through expansions in primary health care teams in the amount of \$2.1 billion and in investments in our schools, our colleges and our universities to make sure that all of those nurses, those midwives, those nurse practitioners, those RPNs and, of course, those clinicians, those doctors, have opportunities here in Ontario.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Adil Shamji: For the Premier, Madam Speaker: Every generation has at least one Marie Antoinette. That person may not always like cake; they might prefer ice cream sandwiches. They may not belong to French aristocracy; they might just party with French aristocracy at fancy Parisian weddings. But sometimes it's more subtle.

While this government lives large from the circular economy of skills development funding filling donor and party coffers, it has posted the largest debt in our province's history, with nothing to show for it. Housing is down, employment is down and now health care is down.

This Premier funds health care and hospitals at the lowest rate in Canada. In North York, a family health team and its health care workers have been pit against each other because this Minister of Health and that Premier are too busy doling out SDF dollars to donors instead of funding health care properly.

Does the Premier think it's okay to give millions to his friends at bars and nightclubs while nurses and health care workers can't get paid fairly?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, it may be helpful for the members to understand—when I went to Calgary to meet with the federal health minister and the provincial and territorial health ministers, they were actually looking to Ontario and saying, "How do you do it? How do you get over 70% of your patients that are connected with a primary care team? How are you able to expand, in every single medical school, new seats for young people to be able to train in our medical systems? How do you continue scope of practice changes that mean people have access to additional services through their pharmacy, through their midwife, through their nurse practitioner, through multidisciplinary teams," where we have invested \$2.1 billion?

They are looking at Ontario for that leadership to say, "We see you can make it happen. We've seen it work." Share that good practice, and let's do it across Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Don Valley East.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'll finish the sentence for the minister in Calgary: They said, "How do you do it? How do you sleep at night?"

This government feigns outrage at the injustices facing Ontario patients even as it does nothing to address them. They say, "You'll always pay with your OHIP card, not your credit card." But when 50 patients were identified this summer who had been inappropriately, illegally charged extra fees for medically necessary care, the Minister of Health promised an investigation, but months later, nothing has happened.

Do you know what this says to patients? "Can't wait for surgery? That's okay. Let them pay for it. Can't find a family doctor? That's okay too. Let them find a pharmacist. Can't put food on the table? That's all right. Let them eat cake."

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Labour has no problem reimbursing donors using Skills Development Funds even as Ontario patients can't get reimbursed for illegal billing. Why is it that friends and donors get paid first in this province while health care workers and patients always get paid last?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Why is it that the hospital sector in the province of Ontario has had, on average, a billion-dollar investment every single year for the last three years? Why? Because Premier Ford makes sure that we are protected in the province of Ontario.

Why is it that we have more than 90% of Ontario residents connected with a primary care clinician? Well, that's because we've invested \$2.1 billion in primary care in the province of Ontario.

Why is it that we are celebrating a brand new medical school in the province of Ontario in the city of Brampton? Why? Because we've invested. We will continue to invest in our health care workers, in our hospitals and in our primary care system.

1140

I haven't even touched on long-term care. Why is that we have now, in long-term care in the province of Ontario, four hours of direct patient care in the province of Ontario? Why do we have that? Because Premier Ford is investing in—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Anthony Leardi: My question is to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation.

Speaker, Ontario's economy depends on our ability to build, to innovate and to lead the world in the resources of the future. The Ring of Fire represents one of the most important economic opportunities of our time. It's not just about minerals; it's about good jobs, clean technology and lasting partnerships with Indigenous people.

Unlike the previous Liberal government, which failed the north and left projects stalled, our government is show-

ing real leadership by working with First Nations and building a plan that delivers results.

Speaker, how is Ontario's plan for the Ring of Fire strengthening our economy and building a cleaner, stronger and more self-reliant province?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I want to thank the member from Essex for his hard work in the riding and on behalf of our caucus. I appreciate it.

Look, there has been a lot of real work being done in the Ring of Fire—we're talking about a vast region—especially over the last couple of years as we anticipate the environmental assessments for the corridor to prosperity to be completed for review by the province.

Last year, we signed letters of confirmation with Kenogamisis and Minodahmun Development corporations. These are Indigenous-owned and -operated businesses that are building commercial plazas at the junction of Highway 584 and Highway 17 in anticipation for a significant amount of movement of people and heavy machinery to build that corridor.

Of course, we signed a community prosperity agreement with Aroland First Nation that sets the stage for state-of-the-art energy capacity and clean electricity into Aroland and parts beyond.

And of course, more recently, with Geraldton in beautiful Greenstone, we signed a community partnership agreement to make sure that their commercial, industrial and corridor capacity is ready to go and we're ready to build.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer. The Ring of Fire is more than a mining project; it is a nation-building opportunity. It's an opportunity for today and for future generations of Canadians, like young Matthew here. It means new roads, good jobs and lasting partnerships that benefit communities across northern Ontario.

For far too long under the previous Liberal government, promises were made to the north but nothing was delivered. Our government is changing that. We are working hand in hand with First Nations to build critical roads, strengthen local economies and ensure that northern communities share in the benefits of growth.

Speaker, how are these partnerships helping to build opportunity and prosperity for the north?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Today was an amazing day as the chief and council and their negotiators from Webequie First Nation signed a partnership agreement with the province of Ontario to commence work on the Webequie supply road next week.

This is a road that leads directly into the Ring of Fire. It also creates optionality for the corridor to prosperity and other road options for other communities in the area. Most immediately, it sets the stage for upgrades to their airport, to build a rink and an all-purpose, multi-purpose community facility for training and community wellness. It also creates an opportunity to set the stage for job readiness and support for mental health.

I want to congratulate, and I ask all my colleagues today to congratulate, Webequie First Nation on signing this agreement with the province of Ontario so that the Ring of Fire, and their interest in it, and a corridor to prosperity can be done on their terms, in full partnership and support by the province of Ontario.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, through you to the Minister of Health: The Welland Hospital is in urgent need of modernization. A rebuild is part of the current hospital plan, but to even begin this process, Niagara Health requires a planning grant from this government. Despite repeated requests for this pre-capital grant, final approval has not been given. This has created anxiety in our community about the future of the Welland Hospital.

Investing in hospital infrastructure at this uncertain time will mean good-paying jobs in the skilled trades for carpenters, electricians and many others, as well as economic spin-offs for the community. Why is this government stalling on the planning grant necessary to rebuild the Welland Hospital?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: We have a member from Niagara who knows that, literally, within weeks, we are opening up a new hospital in Lincoln. We have a Niagara member who is not admitting or acknowledging that we're actually building, in south Niagara, a brand new facility. This is actually going to increase the access and the number of beds in the Niagara region.

We have \$60 billion in hospital capital that we are spending in regions across Ontario, of course including in Niagara, and the member opposite is suggesting in some way that we are not building hospital capital in the province of Ontario? Give your head a shake. Look at the investments that we are making and at least acknowledge that the investments that we have been making in the Niagara region continue to serve the people of Niagara—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Niagara Centre.

Mr. Jeff Burch: It's a very simple question about a specific grant that this government is not approving.

Residents in south Niagara deserve equitable access to health care and hospital care, including emergency services. Using the name "south Niagara" to describe a hospital in Niagara Falls does nothing for the people of south Niagara who need health care services in their community. But in south Niagara, urgent care centres in Port Colborne and Fort Erie are slated to close in 2028, and emergency services have been scaled back at the Welland Hospital. Those are the facts.

This government has an opportunity to restore those services, rebuild the Welland Hospital and, at the same time, create much-needed employment in the community. Will this minister stop stalling and finally approve the planning grant originally requested by Niagara Health: yes or no?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I say to the people of Niagara, thank goodness that you have elected an incredible advo-

cate in Sam Oosterhoff, the member from Niagara West, ensuring that individuals across the Niagara region not only have capital investments in hospitals but hospices and primary care expansions.

We are making sure that, across Ontario, investments that are happening in capital builds, in primary care expansions, in hospice expansions and in long-term-care expansions happen across the region. You are very blessed to have the member from Niagara West, Minister Oosterhoff, there in your corner.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Just a reminder: We refer to members in the chamber by their title, not their name.

NURSES

MPP Tyler Watt: My question is for the Minister of Health. At the Queensway Carleton Hospital in Nepean, over 30% of people that are using the emergency department are there because they don't have a nurse practitioner or family physician. Our hospitals are overburdened, and our health care workers are burning out.

A new report from the Montreal Economic Institute shows that for every 100 young nurses entering the profession, 38 of them are leaving. That's almost 40%, and we have to ask ourselves why. Nurses in my very own program have left the province to practise elsewhere, or even the country, or the profession altogether.

While this government is focused on shovelling money through the Skills Development Fund to enrich insiders like Kory Teneycke, nurses are being ignored. They continue to endure abuse, disrespect and impossible workloads.

Speaker, through you to the minister: When will this government take real action to retain nurses by improving working conditions, instead of just recruiting ones to replace those that are leaving?

1150

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I've said it many times, but it bears repeating: We have actually licensed over 100,000 new nurses in the province of Ontario since 2018.

In the Ottawa region, through the leadership of our Minister of Colleges and Universities, we've actually been able to open up a new nursing program in the Ottawa university. Congratulations. It was game-changing for young people in the Ottawa region and eastern Ontario to have that opportunity to train in the community that they ultimately want to serve in.

Specifically, as it relates to nurse practitioners, we have invested \$220 million over four years to expand nurse education. That \$225 million means that Ontario will continue to lead the country in the number of nurse practitioners practising in Ontario. I'm going to repeat that, because it bears repeating: leading Canada in the number of nurse practitioners who practise in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Nepean.

MPP Tyler Watt: My question was about retention of the current talent and nurses that we already have here in Ontario. You can talk about your record investments and your record of recruitment—

Interjections.

MPP Tyler Watt: Great. That's great. But if you don't have the talent and experience and expertise that are already there to train those new nurses, we have a huge crisis on our hands.

We recently learned that at the North Bay hospital, nurses are "so afraid to make mistakes they're crying in the bathrooms on their breaks," and that "patients are not getting the care they need due to" understaffing from funding cuts. I know nurses who have suffered permanent disabilities from violence in the workplace. It's no wonder that nurse retention in Ontario is 7% worse than last year and 68% worse than a decade ago.

We need to make nurses feel valued again. I have some suggestions for you: (1) Apologize for Bill 124; (2) implement safe nurse-patient ratios; and (3) guarantee health care for all health care workers.

Speaker, when will this government finally make nurses feel safe and valued, instead of disposable?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: You know, I look at the work that we're doing with scope of practice. That scope of practice means that nurses, nurse practitioners, midwives have the ability to offer additional services and to make sure that they have that front-line care that is so critical.

When I see the expansions that we've been making in our nurse education system—including, of course, one brand new program in the city of Ottawa—it speaks to a government who understands.

As we continue to expand our capital through hospital investments, we are also expanding our health human resources. A \$2.1-billion investment in primary care: What does that mean? It means that multidisciplinary teams of clinicians that include physicians, nurse practitioners, RNs, dietitians, mental health workers, are working together—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Deepak Anand: My question is to the Associate Minister of Small Business.

Speaker, as you know, small businesses are the backbone of our communities and economy, driving local innovation and creating jobs. We have members of IPC Seniors from Mississauga in the gallery today. Many of them are small business owners, and many of these small business owners continue to face an array of unique and evolving challenges as they face devastating US tariffs and an uncertain economy.

Whether it is higher operating costs, staff layoffs or having to increase the product prices, small business owners are navigating a more complex environment now than ever before. Speaker, can the associate minister please share what steps this great government is taking to

listen directly to the small business owners and ensure their concerns are being heard—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Associate Minister of Small Business.

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the great member from Mississauga–Malton for that very important question and the great work that he is doing to support great small businesses in his riding.

Speaker, the US tariffs imposed by President Trump are both concerning and unacceptable. Our government understands that small businesses are critical drivers of innovation and job creation in Ontario. That is why our government recently announced it is providing approximately \$11 billion in relief and support for workers and businesses as it protects the province's economy from economic uncertainty and the impact of US tariffs. We're providing \$9 billion in cash flow support to roughly 80,000 Ontario businesses by offering six months of interest and penalty relief, allowing them to temporarily delay payments for select provincially administered taxes.

Speaker, under the leadership of the Premier, Ontario will always have the back of our job creators and ensure Ontario remains the best place to live—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Thank you.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 7, relating to allocation of time on the following bills: Bill 30, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour and other matters; Bill 56, An Act to amend various Acts; and Bill 25, An Act to make statutory amendments respecting emergency management and authorizing enforceable directives to specified entities providing publicly-funded community and social services.

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

The division bells rang from 1156 to 1201.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members, please take your seats.

On October 28, 2025, Mr. Clark moved government notice of motion number 7, relating to allocation of time on the following bills: Bill 30, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour and other matters; Bill 56, An Act to amend various Acts; and Bill 25, An Act to make statutory amendments respecting emergency management and authorizing enforceable directives to specified entities providing publicly-funded community and social services.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler
Anand, Deepak

Ford, Doug
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn

Pinsonneault, Steve
Pirie, George

Bailey, Robert	Hamid, Zee	Quinn, Nolan
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hardeman, Ernie	Racinsky, Joseph
Bouma, Will	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Bresee, Ric	Holland, Kevin	Riddell, Brian
Calandra, Paul	Jones, Sylvia	Rosenberg, Bill
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Stan	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Ciriello, Monica	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Clark, Steve	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Coe, Lorne	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Cooper, Michelle	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Darouze, George	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Laura
Denault, Billy	McGregor, Graham	Tangri, Nina
Dixon, Jess	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dunlop, Jill	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fedeli, Victor	Parsa, Michael	Vickers, Paul
Firin, Mohamed	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Flack, Rob	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gates, Wayne	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Gélinas, France	Shamji, Adil
Blais, Stephen	Gilmour, Alexa	Shaw, Sandy
Bourgouin, Guy	Glover, Chris	Smyth, Stephanie
Bowman, Stephanie	Gretzky, Lisa	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Hsu, Ted	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Cerjanec, Rob	Mamakwa, Sol	Tsao, Jonathan
Clancy, Aislinn	McCrimmon, Karen	Vanthof, John
Collard, Lucille	McKenney, Catherine	Vaugeois, Lise
Fairclough, Lee	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Watt, Tyler
Fife, Catherine	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Fraser, John	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
French, Jennifer K.	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 69; the nays are 41.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1205 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Chandra Pasma: It's my great pleasure to introduce our page captain for today, Naomi Noack-Simone, from Ottawa West–Nepean, along with her aunt, who is here to visit her today, Andie Noack.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I'm delighted that I actually have two guests from Windsor–Tecumseh today. First is Abe Taqtaq, who is the owner of the Windsor duty-free store and part of the Frontier Duty Free Association; as well as Dr. Charles Frank, who's actually my neighbour. He's from the Ontario Dental Association. Welcome to both.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I just wanted to recognize a good friend of mine we saw in the gallery a little bit earlier, Paul Kossta, for visiting the Legislature today.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HOSPITALITY WORKERS APPRECIATION DAY ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE RECONNAISSANCE DES TRAVAILLEUSES ET TRAVAILLEURS DE L'INDUSTRIE DE L'ACCUEIL

Mr. Hardeman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 67, An Act to proclaim Hospitality Workers Appreciation Day / Projet de loi 67, Loi proclamant la Journée de reconnaissance des travailleuses et travailleurs de l'industrie de l'accueil.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Would the member like to explain the bill?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: Ontario's hospitality industry, including restaurants, hotels, event venues, catering companies and related services, is a key economic driver, a major employer and vital contributor to our community life. The professionals who work in hospitality bring people together, power local businesses and support tourism across the province of Ontario.

Despite their essential role, hospitality workers often receive limited formal recognition. Proclaiming February 23 as Hospitality Workers Appreciation Day would allow the province of Ontario to acknowledge their contributions, promote pride across the workforce and encourage investment in the sector's continued success.

SUR-LEEN FARMS LIMITED ACT, 2025

Mr. Pinsonneault moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr23, An Act to revive Sur-Leen Farms Limited

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

First reading agreed to.

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Chris Glover: This petition is entitled "Repeal Bill 5 and Do Development Right." It talks about the danger of this government's Bill 5, which creates special economic zones which allow ministers to override any provincial

law, including labour laws, environment laws, public health rules and even legal liability.

The First Nations leadership has been very clear that they are strongly opposed to Bill 5 because it also infringes on First Nations and Indigenous rights.

They acknowledge that we elect the Legislature to change laws, but not to pass laws that allow them to break other laws without coming back here. The purpose of the Legislature is to have a public debate and a public vote on any changes to laws; not to give ministers the power to override laws without that public process.

So they're asking the government to repeal Bill 5 and start with a full consultation, including First Nations, to do development right in Ontario.

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and pass it to page Ava to take to the table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I have a petition here to raise social assistance rates.

Yesterday, Daily Bread came to me with their hunger report, and in my own riding, it's up 34%—usage of food banks; one food bank alone was up 61%. One of the things that Daily Bread spoke of was the urgent need to double OW, ODSP. And that is exactly what this petition asks for. In fact, it points to the 230 organizations that have already asked this government to double the OW and ODSP rates.

I thank Sally Palmer for sending this to us.

I would be glad to affix my name and give this to page Alice.

TENANT PROTECTION

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm very proud to rise to present this petition. It is entitled "Ban Above Guideline Rent Increases (AGIs)!"

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario"—recognizing that there is an affordable rental crisis happening in our province and that there are massive loopholes in the current rent control laws that have led to unaffordable rental prices.

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to do the following: stop massive rent increases by reimplementing rent control for all units in Ontario, regardless of when they were built, and end the system that gives landlords the incentive to drive people out of their units so that they can rent them for much higher costs, by implementing vacancy control. And this government needs to provide real financial consequences for landlords who fail to maintain their buildings.

They are calling on this government to ban the use of mandatory above-guideline increases to pay for standard maintenance and repairs, which should be just a cost of doing business, as a landlord.

I'm proud to sign this petition and to return this to the centre table with wonderful page Simone.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'm honoured to be able to rise to present this petition to save the academic assistance program for adults with developmental disabilities at Algonquin College.

I want to say thank you to the parents and family members of these students, who have been absolutely tireless in their advocacy efforts—including Charlene and Terry White from my riding of Ottawa West—Nepean—because this program has been essential to the well-being of their children. It has provided them with a fuller, more well-connected life. It has given them an opportunity to experience post-secondary education. And ultimately, in addition to the individual benefits, it provides benefits for our province as a whole by reducing reliance on ODSP, by helping more young adults get into the labour force, and by lowering the demand for social services, particularly for supportive living, because it allows these young people to live more independently.

But all of this is set to be lost next May, unless the government steps in with funding to save the program. It only requires \$80,000 a year. That's the difference between what the students are paying in tuition and what the program costs the college to deliver.

So the petitioners are calling on the Legislative Assembly to save this essential program, which wouldn't even cost very much money to save.

I fully endorse this petition. I will add my name to it and send it to the table with page Ollie.

ONTARIO PLACE

Mr. Chris Glover: This petition is entitled "Celebrate Ontario Innovation at Ontario Place." It talks about the threat to our economy and our sovereignty with Trump in the United States, and it suggests that we should be celebrating Ontario innovations at Ontario Place, which was its original function. It was the world's first IMAX theatre, and IMAX was an Ontario innovation.

1310

They're suggesting that the \$2.2-billion taxpayer subsidy and the 95-year lease of public parkland to an Austrian corporation is inappropriate. It's inappropriate for the use of that parkland, and it's also inappropriate to be providing this kind of subsidy to an Austrian corporation instead of actually utilizing it to support Ontario businesses and Ontario workers.

It has asked the government to cancel the Ontario Place deal with Therme and to recruit Ontario companies to redevelop Ontario Place to showcase Ontario innovation and creativity to the world.

I fully support this petition. I will fix my signature and pass it to page Aayush to take to the table.

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I have a petition here today that was sent in by individuals in the riding of Essex, and I

want to thank Gary and Clarice Flewelling for sending in this petition.

This petition talks about trade barriers within Canada and how it costs the economy and costs individual families. We want to tear down these trade barriers and introduce free trade between all of the Canadian provinces so that we can unlock Canada's full potential and build a great future for this country, a great future for those students up in the gallery up there and a great future for those students in the gallery up there.

I fully support this petition, and I will affix my signature to it. I'm going to hand it to page Lorraine to bring to the Clerk's table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good afternoon, everyone. I have a petition from Sally Palmer, professor emerita, school of social work, faculty of social sciences at McMaster University, who is tireless in her efforts to encourage us to create an Ontario Basic Income Pilot or permanent basic income, because we know people are living below the poverty line. We don't want that. It is our duty to help Ontarians have a better quality of life, and certainly, with OW and ODSP, with \$730 for an individual and \$1,368 for ODSP, it's not enough to live on. I think we want to work together on that.

There are oodles of people who have signed this. I will affix my name to it, as well, and send it with page Aayush.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm proud to present this petition. The title is "Declare Intimate Partner Violence an Epidemic," and it's entitled in attention to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

We recognize that intimate partner violence impacts every single community in our province, recognizing that the Renfrew inquest had 86 recommendations, and their first recommendation is to declare intimate partner violence in this province.

We recognize that gender-based violence is a human rights violation and no one should be harmed or killed due to gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

There are a number of signatures to this petition. They're calling on the assembly to help save lives across the province by respecting experts in the field who have many years of experience, knowledge and research; accepting the Renfrew county inquest's recommendations to immediately declare intimate partner violence; joining the 106 municipalities that have already done so; and they are calling on this Legislature to immediately pass the intimate partner violence act as soon as possible.

I am proudly going to sign this petition and send this back to the centre table to the wonderful Clerks with our beautiful and talented page Ava.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

MPP Paul Vickers: I have a petition against the unfair tariffs that President Trump and the United States are levying against Canada. It's causing uncertainty and unfair duress to the people here in Canada. The auto sector and the steel sector are taking it extremely tough, and we want to make sure that it's recognized.

Therefore, the government of Ontario will continue working to get these unfair tariffs that are levied against Canada stopped against us.

I am proud to sign this petition and have my good friend Avery here take the petition to the centre table.

POLICE IN SCHOOLS

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Once again, I'm pleased to rise in this House. I'm here to present a petition that's entitled "Mandate the Removal of Policing, Carceral and Punitive Approaches from Educational Spaces in Ontario," and it is in attention to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

There is a recognition that education access should be equitable and should be built upon the structures of human rights, as well as one that allows for happy learning environments. We recognize that when you place policing and carceral approaches into educational spaces, it does a number of things, including that it brings in and introduces punitive disciplinary practices, exclusionary discipline, isolation, time-outs and exclusion restraints, corporal punishment, limitations imposed on and challenges to bodily autonomy—streaming amongst many others.

There is much evidence to prove that there are many detrimental, negative effects, especially on students who are Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQI+, disabled, neurodivergent. When you actually bring in police officers into classrooms, it does not enhance the learning environment.

The issue of policing and carceral and punitive approaches when it comes to educational spaces is not an isolated issue, but rather it's a systemic issue that leads to more detentions, more interactions with corrections, and literally, it is a pipeline of the school-to-prison nexus.

It is entirely under the jurisdiction of this government to commit to what they already have spelled out in the education system, and that is to increase accountability and standardize commitments for advancing human rights and equity across the education system.

The undersigned in this petition call on the assembly to mandate the immediate removal of policing, carceral and punitive infrastructures, practices and policies from educational spaces; to review and amend already existing legislation; and to create new legislation that simultaneously works to uproot policing, carceral and punitive culture and logic, alongside the creation of accountability measures and properly and equitably funded resourcing of healthier learning environments so that it is truly life-affirming. It should be applied from the continuum of

school, from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten to grade 12 to all the post-secondary institutions.

I proudly sign this petition and return this to the centre table with page Aditya.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WORKING FOR WORKERS SEVEN ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 VISANT À ŒUVRER POUR LES TRAVAILLEURS, SEPT

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 21, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour and other matters / Projet de loi 30, Loi modifiant diverses lois relatives à l'emploi et au travail ainsi qu'à d'autres questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Piccini has moved second reading of Bill 30, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour and other matters.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is ordered for third reading.

BUILDING A MORE COMPETITIVE ECONOMY ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 VISANT À BÂTIR UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS CONCURRENTIELLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 23, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 56, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 56, Loi modifiant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Khanjin has moved second reading of Bill 56, An Act to amend various Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1320 to 1325.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members will please take their seats.

Ms. Khanjin has moved second reading of Bill 56, An Act to amend various Acts.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Ford, Doug	Pierre, Natalie
Anand, Deepak	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pinsonneault, Steve
Bailey, Robert	Gualtieri, Silvia	Pirie, George
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hamid, Zee	Quinn, Nolan
Bouma, Will	Hardeman, Ernie	Racinsky, Joseph
Bresee, Ric	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Calandra, Paul	Holland, Kevin	Riddell, Brian
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Sylvia	Rosenberg, Bill
Ciriello, Monica	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Clark, Steve	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Coe, Lorne	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cooper, Michelle	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Crawford, Stephen	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Darouze, George	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Graydon
Denault, Billy	Lecce, Stephen	Tangri, Nina
Dixon, Jess	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	McGregor, Graham	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dunlop, Jill	Mulroney, Caroline	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Vickers, Paul
Firin, Mohamed	Pang, Billy	Wai, Daisy
Flack, Rob	Parsa, Michael	Williams, Charmaine A.

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

Nays

Begum, Doly	Fraser, John	Pasma, Chandra
Blais, Stephen	French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom
Bourgouin, Guy	Gilmour, Alexa	Sattler, Peggy
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike
Burch, Jeff	Hsu, Ted	Shaw, Sandy
Cerjanec, Rob	Kernaghan, Terence	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Clancy, Aislinn	McCrimmon, Karen	Tsao, Jonathan
Collard, Lucille	McKenney, Catherine	Vanthof, John
Fairclough, Lee	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 66; the nays are 27.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is ordered for third reading.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT MODERNIZATION ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LA MODERNISATION DE LA GESTION DES SITUATIONS D'URGENCE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 27, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 25, An Act to make statutory amendments respecting emergency management and authorizing enforceable directives to specified entities providing publicly-funded community and social services / Projet de loi 25,

Loi visant à apporter des modifications législatives concernant la gestion des situations d'urgence et autorisant la formulation de directives exécutoires aux entités publiques désignées qui fournissent des services communautaires et sociaux financés par les fonds publics.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I'm now required to put the question.

Ms. Dunlop has moved second reading of Bill 25, An Act to make statutory amendments respecting emergency management and authorizing enforceable directives to specified entities providing publicly-funded community and social services. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1329 to 1330.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Ms. Dunlop has moved second reading of Bill 25, An Act to make statutory amendments respecting emergency management and authorizing enforceable directives to specified entities providing publicly-funded community and social services.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Flack, Rob	Piccini, David
Anand, Deepak	Ford, Doug	Pierre, Natalie
Bailey, Robert	Fraser, John	Pinsonneault, Steve
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pirie, George
Blais, Stephen	Gualtieri, Silvia	Quinn, Nolan
Bouma, Will	Hamid, Zee	Racinsky, Joseph
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Hardeman, Ernie	Rickford, Greg
Bresee, Ric	Harris, Mike	Riddell, Brian
Calandra, Paul	Holland, Kevin	Rosenberg, Bill
Cerjanec, Rob	Hsu, Ted	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Sylvia	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Ciriello, Monica	Jones, Trevor	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Clancy, Aislinn	Jordan, John	Saunderson, Brian
Clark, Steve	Kanapathi, Logan	Schreiner, Mike
Coe, Lorne	Kerzner, Michael S.	Scott, Laurie
Collard, Lucille	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Dave
Cooper, Michelle	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Graydon
Crawford, Stephen	Leardi, Anthony	Tangri, Nina
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lecce, Stephen	Thompson, Lisa M.
Darouze, George	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tibollo, Michael A.
Denault, Billy	McCrimmon, Karen	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dixon, Jess	McGregor, Graham	Tsao, Jonathan
Dowie, Andrew	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vickers, Paul
Dunlop, Jill	Mulroney, Caroline	Wai, Daisy
Fairclough, Lee	Oosterhoff, Sam	Williams, Charmaine A.
Fedeli, Victor	Pang, Billy	
Firin, Mohamed	Parsa, Michael	

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

Nays

Begum, Doly	Glover, Chris	Sattler, Peggy
Bourgouin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Shaw, Sandy

Burch, Jeff
French, Jennifer K.
Gilmour, Alexa

McKenney, Catherine
Pasma, Chandra
Rakocevic, Tom

Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Vanthof, John
Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 79; the nays are 15.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is ordered for third reading.

BUILDING A MORE COMPETITIVE ECONOMY ACT, 2025 LOI DE 2025 VISANT À BÂTIR UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS CONCURRENTIELLE

Ms. Khanjin moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 56, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 56, Loi modifiant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the minister.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to the Building a More Competitive Economy Act. As my colleagues are leaving the Legislature because we have lots of work that we have to do, I want to express our great thoughts with the workers of all Ontario because this bill, this act, is very much about all those workers. We're taking decisive action to protect Ontario in the face of global uncertainty, and there's never been more steady leadership than under the leadership of our Premier, Doug Ford—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Stop the clock. I apologize to the minister. I'll allow the chamber to clear out, and then we will resume debate.

I recognize the minister.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you, Speaker. And as I continue to say very much, the importance of the Building a More Competitive Economy Act—the Building a More Competitive Economy Act sends a strong message. It sends a message that we cannot sit back. We cannot wait. We cannot wait for jobs and people's livelihoods that are depending on it. That is why it's necessary to defend those livelihoods, defend those jobs, and the Building a More Competitive Economy Act does exactly that. It helps our government maintain a competitive edge by cutting red tape and accelerating productivity to unlock our full growth.

Bill 56, Building a More Competitive Economy Act, is not just a major step forward in our government's plan to protect Ontario. It's also an example of our continuous work that we have done, our continuous promise to Ontarians—a promise that our government made in 2018 to cut unnecessary red tape, strengthen our competitiveness and unleash the full economic potential of this great province, its people and its economy.

Before I begin to elaborate on the bill, though, I want to express my heartfelt thank you to the partner ministries—the nine ministries that collaborated closely with my team at the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction. It's very much a team effort—a Team Ontario—as we are on this forefront, fighting against Donald Trump's tariffs but also putting us on a very competitive edge. And it wouldn't be possible without the work of all my colleagues, all their deputy ministers, associate deputy ministers and, really, the team approach.

Again, thank you to that team. Thank you to my deputy minister, Maud Murray, and my entire team for their collaboration on this. Their expertise, their dedication and their shared commitment shows that we're all united when it comes to shaping not only this bill but shaping our provincial economy. And that's what it's all about, Speaker. It's about practical, result-driven ideas. It's about things that are deeply rooted in the realities that face people in Ontario—the people who create the jobs here in our province.

Each one of these ministries brought forward insights of their own from their different sectors and from people that they've heard from across this province. I, too, with many of my colleagues, spent the summer months working hard, not only pounding the pavement to hear first-hand from people at their doors about the realities of their lives and what the government can do to either cut the red tape, stimulate the economy, bring more jobs to Ontario, but also travelling across the province in order to hear from my colleagues and their respective communities.

I think about a great round table and a breakfast we had with various chambers of commerce this summer; one said breakfast I had with the chamber out in Brockville. It's a very unique community because they are very close to the US border, so they are heavily relying on the Am-Can approach that is being led by Ontario's Premier. They're very proud to have Captain Canada as the Premier of Ontario because their economies are very much integrated and their livelihoods are depending on it.

Speaker, whether you're going to Brockville, whether you're going to Barrie, whether you're going to Innisfil, whether you're going to Niagara region, the resounding response has been clear. It's the united force of this Ontario government—what we're doing to create the right economic conditions for trade, for businesses, for every individual, to invest in our education system, to invest in our health care.

We are well better off now to weather the storm than we had been when we inherited the very dark days back in 2018 when we first formed government, where Ontarians were losing hope. Not only were jobs fleeing, not only to the US but other countries, other jurisdictions, because they were too mired in the red tape that was in Ontario, but we were the most overregulated province in the whole Confederation, and so companies were not just leaving Ontario for other provinces; they were leaving Ontario for other countries. We were losing investment, we were losing jobs, we were losing those job creators, we were

losing those investments. Now we're finally reshoring all those things.

1340

Since 2018, we've been able to double the amount of jobs—everything that our Minister of Economic Development has done to make this a more attractive place to invest, but also to say, “Come to Ontario. We are open for business.” The Premier says this quite often. It's more than just a slogan, Speaker; there is so much meaning. There are people's livelihoods behind what we say in terms of saying Ontario is open for business. We should be welcoming these innovators. We should be welcoming those people who build things in this province. We should be proud as Ontarians to say, “We make this in Ontario. It has a made-in-Ontario logo on it”—something that was an approach that this government has taken. But all of that wouldn't be possible without the amount of red tape that we had to cut when we first formed government and now we're continuing to do with this bill.

When we first formed government, Ontario was sitting at a C-minus grade by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Since that time, we've been able to work collaboratively with all our small businesses, our great minister for small businesses—we're just coming off the end of Small Business Month—and the work that all of our government is doing with our local chambers, with our local federation of independent business, to help them with those hurdles that get in the way.

All they want to do is they want to sell their products. They want to get involved in their community. They want to be able to volunteer on the Rotary Club, on the Lions Club. But if they're mired in paperwork and red tape, that's time we're taking away from their families. It's time we're taking away from our communities and it's time we're taking away from them earning a livelihood and them being able to expand their businesses.

That is why constantly we're always driving to introduce more red tape reduction bills, like the one that is here before us. Together not only have we demonstrated the teamwork approach by working across ministries to find these very pragmatic common-sense ideas that, again, put people in the forefront of what we do; we want to put people first, not paperwork. We've seen this in the work the Minister of Health has been doing by putting patients before paperwork. We've seen this when we're talking about the ministers of small business, economic development, transportation: How can we have a more customer service approach? This is what people expect of us. They pay their taxes; what are they getting in return? Those expectations only heighten with economic uncertainty.

I got a lovely note from one of my hard-working folks from the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction, who is reminding me that I had missed another consultation that we did this summer. I didn't want to miss that. We talked about sectors and she really well reminded me about manufacturing. I represent the riding of Barrie–Innisfil. We have a lot of different sectors, automotive being one of them. Ontario is being hit really hard right now with this economic uncertainty, especially in the auto sector. Our

Premier has been standing up not only for auto, for steel, for our forestry sector—and I can't think of a better person that we can all trust our leadership in.

When I think of the auto sector in my own riding and the impacts, we have Honda next door, in Alliston. Those folks that get on the highway to be able to do their work, day in and day out, as they're driving to get to their auto job that we're trying to protect and we're reducing red tape for so we can have more on those investments, they have to get on Highway 400. It's the investments that this government is making in infrastructure that allow them to get to work. But those very investments we're making in infrastructure actually also allow people to put on their work boots in the morning and be able to get to work. That is what we want to continue to do. We want to reduce the red tape so more people can get up in the morning and be able to do what they love to do and work and build a better Ontario.

This is really the essence of what we are trying to do under the leadership of Premier Ford. We don't work in silos, Speaker. We actually work shoulder to shoulder. We're breaking down the silos within the government, working shoulder to shoulder as a team but also with our workers out there, with all sectors of our economy.

We're telling the forestry industry, "We understand you're going through hard times." That is why in this very bill that we are debating we've listened to the forestry sector. We've acted on their ideas. We've put them in a bill to say, "We're listening. Let's reduce the red tape that's getting in the way of you being able to do your business."

Our auto sector is heavily hampered by what's happening right now. This bill sends a clear message to them. We're going to lead by example. Let's buy Ontario first.

You think about our steel sector, too. They need the certainty, the certainty that we should have in the permitting world, and this bill does that exact thing, giving them certainty for their projects so that we can reshore those investments and say, "Buy Ontario steel." Not only is it Ontario steel; it's Ontario green steel, so it has many ripple effects in the economy.

Speaker, the results speak for themselves. That is why you see that we listen, we adapt and, most importantly, we deliver. Whether it's streamlining environmental assessments, simplifying licensing requirements or improving access to skilled trades, every ministry has played a vital role in driving down costs and barriers, so our economy can become more resilient and self-reliant.

This bill is a good example of how Ontario is going to continue to go from reliance to resilience. This bill reflects the spirit of partnership, the spirit of innovation, the spirit of Ontario itself: a province that has always led the way not by standing still, but by moving forward boldly, guided by common sense and a clear sense of purpose.

We are living through an era of profound and rapid transformation. Global markets are shifting faster than any time in history. Supply chains are being rebuilt. Technology is reshaping industry, and nations are competing harder than ever to attract investments, jobs and talent. In

this environment, there is no room for complacency. Jurisdictions that hesitate will lose out. The world rewards those who act, modernize, innovate and move decisively. This is precisely what Ontario is doing.

The Building a More Competitive Economy Act continues our government's proven record of cutting red tape, moving outdated regulations and ensuring Ontario remains open for business, open for investment and open for opportunity. Speaker, we need to move the government as fast in terms of opportunity as the people ready to seize those opportunities. And across every sector—manufacturing, energy, construction, health care, and beyond—investors are asking the same questions: Is this jurisdiction reliable? Is it responsive? Can I get my permits, partnerships and approvals completed without endless delays or unnecessary costs?

Through Bill 56, we are answering yes. We are answering yes to every one of those questions. Yes, Ontario is reliable. Yes, Ontario is responsive. And yes, Ontario is the place where businesses get things done and where projects get built, because our government is not simply leading by example; we are doing everything that we can to cut red tape.

Red tape is not just a slogan for this government. It's a deliberate economic strategy, one rooted in the belief that government should be a partner in growth, not an obstacle to it. That means transforming how government operates at every level. It means making processes faster, more transparent and more predictable, so builders can build sooner, businesses can scale faster and workers can seize new opportunities without waiting months, or years, for outdated paperwork to clear.

Speaker, a lot of us are sports fans. The Toronto Blue Jays, God bless them, they have made the World Series. But did you know the SkyDome—which I fondly remember as the SkyDome, now known as the Rogers Centre—was built in 30 months, Speaker? If we can build the SkyDome in 30 months, Speaker, back in the 1980s, let's fast forward to 2025. We have the internet. We have technology. We have innovators and people ready to seize today faster than ever before. And yet, it's taking us longer to build things, but it only took us 30 months to build the SkyDome. So let's do it for the next generation. Let's show them that what we did in the past by being able to build the SkyDome in 30 months, we can continue doing for their future by building smarter, faster and better.

Speaker, our government is ensuring that efficiency never comes at the expense of what matters most, and as we're talking about building faster and smarter, the safety of our communities, the protection of our environment and the trust of the people we serve is paramount. We are proving that you can both grow and be responsible, and you do not have to compromise one without the other. We can move faster without cutting corners. We can move faster without compromising the environment and public safety.

1350

Since 2018, our red tape reduction agenda has delivered real, measurable results. To date, we have saved people

and organizations—from small businesses to local municipalities to hospitals, universities and not-for-profits—nearly \$1.2 billion and 1.8 million hours of time. That's 1.8 million hours that are no longer wasted on duplicative forms or outdated compliance requirements. That's 1.8 million hours that can now be spent innovating, expanding, hiring and serving the people of this province.

Speaker, as every business owner knows, time is money. Every hour returned to an employee and employer alike is an hour that fuels productivity and strengthens Ontario's economy. It is an hour that helps create new opportunities, new investments and new paycheques for hard-working people across this province.

Bill 56 builds directly on that success. It strengthens the foundation that we built through previous legislation such as the Cutting Red Tape, Building Ontario Act and the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act. As much as all of these acts are important, they all have one thing in common: They're helping drive us to the next frontier. They're helping modernize Ontario's permitting and approval system once and for all.

Through this bill, we are setting the stage for a government that moves at the speed of business, not the other way around. We are bringing accountability, clarity and efficiency into the heart of government operations, because when government works better, Ontario works better.

Across government, there are hundreds of permits, approvals and authorizations that individuals, communities and businesses must navigate to invest, build and grow. Each one represents a process, a gateway to opportunity, but too often, that gateway has become a bottleneck. Over time, layers of regulation have accumulated, creating complexity where there should be clarity and there should not be delays, and where we should be the driver.

These regulations and permits touch every corner of our economy, from housing to infrastructure to agriculture, mining, forestry and advanced manufacturing. These shape how homes are built, how energy projects advance, how farmers expand their operations, and how innovators bring new technologies to market. In short, they influence the pace at which our province grows.

It's important to be clear, Speaker. These permits exist for good reason. Many protect what matters most: the health and safety of our people, the strength of our communities and the preservation of our natural environment. These protections are essential, and they will always remain. But over the years, as economies have evolved and technologies have advanced, some of these rules have not kept up. That's what Bill 56 is about. These rules have become outdated. They have become duplicative or overly complex. They have created hurdles that serve no modern purpose, and those hurdles hold Ontarians back.

Some simple examples: There have been many applications that people had to physically fill in a paper for or call a 1-800 number. But we need to keep up with technology to be able to do things more digitally, and that's what this government has done. There are a lot of forms that now have been digitized.

The opposition and many folks talk about the skilled trade shortage and the importance of skilled labour, but they are also mired in red tape. There's some good feedback we received from those looking to enter the skilled trades, and that is, in order to access a tools credit loan, they used to have to call a 1-800 number, only to get a form mailed to them—simply unacceptable. That is something this government changed from day one. You go online, you fill an application and you're able to get some supports for your tools. No longer do you have to call a 1-800 number, only to get a piece of paper in the mail. Not only did it save time, it saved money and it showed those workers the respect they deserve, which is: If they want help with the support of the cost of their tools, it will be there.

That is why my ministry, the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction, has launched a comprehensive, enterprise-wide review of every economic development-related permit across government, because far too often are we mired in these complexities. So, we've sent a clear message that, across the entire government enterprise, we want to work better, we want to work smarter, and this is what we're embarking on, this permit review.

It is, Speaker, one of the most ambitious red tape reduction initiatives ever undertaken in Ontario's history—a full top-to-bottom evaluation designed to make government more efficient, more predictable and more supportive of growth.

But our goal is clear, and Premier Ford's goal is clear: We need measurable success. We need to measure success. And we need to be time-bound. By 2028, we will be reviewing 100% of Ontario's economic development permits, and we will either eliminate or transform at least 35% of them. There are about 332 of these permits. And this is just what we're trying to do, is keep up with modernizing not only our technology, but the permitting system. That means modernizing how we regulate, removing redundancies and replacing outdated processes with smarter, faster and more reliable systems.

That work will translate directly into real-world results: fewer bottlenecks, faster decisions and greater confidence for investors and communities alike. It will mean that projects can move forward from concept to construction more efficiently, and that government approvals no longer serve as a barrier to growth but as a way to assist the growth. In other words, it's about building a system designed for the future, not one stuck in the past. To get there, we're prioritizing high-impact permits first—those with the most direct effect when it comes to investment, productivity and job creation.

Our team is working closely with ministries and stakeholders to identify which processes matter most and where modernizing will have the greatest effect on Ontario's competitiveness. We are working with all our partners, and we're asking the tough but the necessary questions: Which permit takes the longest to process? We need to know. Which causes the most frustration for those trying to follow the rules? It's important information. Which can be safely simplified without compromising

public health, safety or environmental standards, and how can we apply technology to make approvals more transparent, more consistent and easier to navigate?

This is not just a paper exercise; it's a real reform. It's about bringing common sense back to how government transacts with businesses, and it's to deliver better—and we will deliver it, Speaker. We're deploying modern policy tools that have already been proven successful in other leading jurisdictions. These include the codes of practice, which replace repetitive permits with clear, enforceable standards that businesses can meet on their own without unnecessary back and forth. It's input that I heard across this province over the summer and I continue to hear on: "Why can't we just have one standard code to follow for our intended project?"

We need certainty in this global, uncertain economic world that has now become even more uncertain with Donald Trump's tariffs. The tool of using a code of practice will not only bring so much certainty to many sectors, but it will unlock many projects and create many jobs because it will stop delay and give that necessary stability.

We're also introducing the concept of "permit by rule" models, where responsible operators simply notify the government that they meet established criteria, and we eliminate the need for repetitive applications. "Permit by rule" by many is also known—it's when you self-register and then you continue to do the work.

But even in those methods where we've implemented this tool in some of our current permitting our government does, we've sent a strong message: Play by the rules, and if you don't, there are consequences. So, the "permit by rule" model will take that into account.

Speaker, we're exploring the concept of an automatic yes—or for the sports fans out there, the shot-clock model. The system is clear. It says by a certain amount of time, if you haven't heard back from whatever agency or wherever you're looking for, there will be an approval. It's a system where if government doesn't make a decision within a set time frame, the approval is automatically granted or it could be escalated. This will give many people certainty: certainty to their investors, certainty that yes, we can bring those investments back into the Ontario economy rather than seeing them flee our province into other jurisdictions.

1400

This approach will also drive accountability, set clear expectations and ensure that no business or community is left waiting for the government to act. These are modern tools for a modern economy. They are not about doing less; they are about doing better, about replacing bureaucracy with balance and efficiency with innovation.

We're also ensuring that we modernize how we do things with our Indigenous community and partners across Ontario. This process recognizes and modernizes what we need to do when it comes to meaningful consultation, respect and the rights and the principles of stewardship and reconciliation. We are committed to engaging with our Indigenous partners early, transparently and with mutual

respect, and today's announcement that Premier Ford and Minister Rickford led shows just that.

We know that progress and partnership go hand in hand and that true competitiveness cannot be achieved without inclusion, collaboration and a shared prosperity because at the heart of our approach is a simple truth: Ontario's economic success must be built on trust, fairness and respect for everyone who calls this province home.

By cutting red tape the right way—thoughtfully, responsibly, responsibly and collaboratively—we are setting the foundation for a stronger, a faster and a more competitive Ontario that works for all.

Alongside the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement, we're building on a digital one-stop system for businesses facing permit issues by the province.

Imagine—just imagine for a moment—a system where a business owner can log in once to see every permit they need, track a timeline in real time and actually receive productive, predictable updates. That's not a dream. It's happening right now and it's happening in Ontario. And thanks to Bill 56, we will make Ontario more competitive and we will see that to realization.

This single-window digital hub will increase transparency, improve accountability and empower both applicants and regulators alike. It is the digital backbone of a faster, smarter government.

When approvals take too long, projects stall. When projects stall, investment leaves, and when investments leave, jobs follow. This is a status quo the government will never accept. When we formed government 2018, we did not accept those tail lights heading south of the border. We brought them all back, and we doubled that investment and we doubled those jobs. But that is why—that is exactly why, Speaker—we are modernizing permitting. And that is what it's all about: It's about making it more convenient to invest in Ontario and protecting our economy and our sovereignty. Every permit we modernize is a signal to the world that Ontario is open for business, open for innovation and open for growth.

This bill also reflects our government's unwavering commitment to Ontario workers, the people whose skill, dedication and ingenuity powers every community across this province. We believe in "Made in Ontario," not just as a slogan but as a strategy, one that strengthens local supply chains, creates good-paying jobs and keeps more of our economy right here at home. When our government invests, we invest with purpose.

Through our buy-Ontario approach, we are ensuring that more of what taxpayer dollars purchase—from the materials to build our infrastructure to the products that support our public service—is sourced from Ontario-based businesses and helps our Ontario-based entrepreneurs.

Every Ontario-made good or service purchased is a direct vote of confidence in our people in Ontario: in our welders, the farmers, the designers, the builders, the innovators who make this province strong. It means money

staying in our community, jobs staying in our towns and opportunities that multiply for the next generation.

Speaker, this bill strengthens that vision. It helps make government a better partner to Ontario's job creators by cutting that red tape, reducing those delays and ensuring local businesses can compete and win on merit.

When global headwinds challenge industries around the world, Ontario stands firm. Premier Ford and our government will always have the backs of Ontario workers, local employers and the small businesses that form the backbone of our economy. In every corner of this province, from main street to industrial parks, the farmers to the innovative hubs, they are the spirit of hard work and resilience that defines who we are.

Bill 56 honours that spirit by ensuring that government becomes not a barrier to success but a partner in prosperity. Every challenge that we make, every barrier we break down allows people to spend more time on what matters, like the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, who actually administer over 350 harvest approvals annually. We have heard loud and clear from industry that many of these approvals are duplicative, paper-heavy and slow. But through Bill 56, we propose changes to streamline forestry management approvals, cutting red tape, reducing administrative burden and lowering costs while maintaining sustainable stewardship. These changes align with Ontario's forest sector strategy, which supports economic growth in northern Ontario and strengthens partnerships with Indigenous communities who depend on forestry for good jobs and cultural continuity.

By simplifying approvals under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, we will help mill operators operate more efficiently, support value-added wood products and keep Ontario's forest industry globally competitive. Speaker, these reforms are enabling. They will lay the groundwork for regulatory improvements to come and are in full development consultation with stakeholders.

One stakeholder that comes to mind, who I spoke with over the months, is Ian Dunn from Ontario Forest Industries Association. He put it best when we were talking about the ideas that the forestry sector had in terms of eliminating red tape and then what we ended up being able to accomplish in this bill. He says, "The Ontario Forest Industries Association ... welcomes the province's commitment to modernizing the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and advancing continuous forest management planning.

"These proposed amendments recognize the need for a more adaptive, efficient, and science-based approach—one that reflects today's modern and innovative technologies.

"By streamlining processes and enabling broader, more integrated forest management plans, Ontario is positioning its forest sector to remain globally competitive while maintaining the highest standards of forest sustainability.

"We thank the Ontario government for working with the sector to advance these important measures"—Ian Dunn, president and CEO.

Speaker, we are working with industry. We are working with workers, shoulder to shoulder, to find these efficiencies, to find the red tape reduction that makes us work smarter, better and sustainably.

Ontario's drinking water is among the safest in the world, and we'll never change that. Protecting it will remain a top priority for our government, and Bill 56 ensures that that is still a top priority and we protect our drinking water faster.

As communities across Ontario grow and expand their water systems, many have told us that even routine amendments to local source water protection plans take too long. For example—and I only have a few more minutes—when a new municipal well or intake is added, it can take far too long to approve. These processes can stretch over many months and often involve duplicative reviews that don't actually add to public safety. But through Bill 56, our government is taking practical steps to modernize the processes while maintaining Ontario's rigorous, science-based protections for clean water, and those amendments to the Clean Water Act do just that: strengthen and protect our water.

The proposed amendments would enable local source water authorities in circumstances set out by regulation to approve certain routine updates directly. This will reduce duplication, shorten timelines and give communities more flexibility to plan responsibly for growth.

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The bill also introduces a new "deemed approval" mechanism, meaning that if the minister does not take decisive action within 120 days after receiving the proposed amendment, the amendment would be deemed approved. This change will bring greater predictability and accountability to the process, ensuring, at the same time, that the existing safeguards remain firm and clearly in place.

Speaker, as I do wrap up, I think what is clear—and this bill does so much to move our economy forward, I probably need another 30 minutes to explain it all, but we have no time to waste. And that's what this comes down to. Because all summer long, as all of our colleagues have been working hard in their local communities, hearing first-hand from their businesses that are much more impacted, now more than ever, with the tariffs happening south of the border and the constant conversation—it has never been more clear how important Bill 56, the Building a More Competitive Economy Act, is.

We need to start helping people save more time, help businesses save more money and strengthen that trust and that relationship between the government and its people, as we've done since 2018. Because, Speaker, together we are protecting Ontario, together we are building Ontario and together we will get it done. I hope everyone in this Legislature understands—whether you're a forestry worker, whether you're an auto worker, or steel, we have your back and the message from this Legislature is a united message.

In the face of global uncertainty, we need to do better; we need to act smarter. This government, under Premier

Ford, will take decisive action and we will do whatever it takes, Speaker—whatever it takes—to get the economy moving and roaring again. We showed that in 2018 when we made the right choices and the right investment. We put Ontario on the forefront where it is now. We've been able to bring in so many investments in so many sectors. Think about the auto investments and life science sector. But we'll keep doing more.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Riddell): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to be able to stand in this Legislature and have a second kick at this can. Here we are debating Bill 56, much sooner than anyone outside of this Legislature would have imagined. We have skipped the committee process. We are just revving through with this particular bill.

For the folks at home, they will connect this bill with the attack on speed cameras, and so that's what I'm going to talk about as the official opposition shadow minister for transportation and for infrastructure. I'm going to take some time to address what we have heard from the Minister of Red Tape Reduction, to talk about what community members care about with this bill.

This bill is an omnibus bill that has 11 schedules. There's a whole bunch of stuff in here, but nothing in it is about saving the province from Trump. This is some tinkering around the edges and some problematic pieces. When listening to the minister talk about working better, working smarter, reviewing things, talking about good feedback that they've heard, it begs the question: If this government is indeed interested in feedback, why skip committee? Why not let the police chiefs, the former police chiefs come and talk about why speed cameras are important for road safety? Why not let the community members come and talk about why they care about clean drinking water? If we're so interested in feedback, let's allow feedback.

Speaker, the focus that I am going to hone in on today is Schedule 5. Schedule 5 of this bill amends the Highway Traffic Act. It bans speed safety cameras. I'm not sure why it's in the bill. It has nothing to do with cutting red tape or building a more competitive economy. And not to be Swiftian here, but perhaps if more kids get hit by cars in front of schools and in safety zones because there aren't speed cameras to change the behaviour of speeding drivers—maybe if more kids get hurt, there will be fewer kids in seats, and then, does that bring down education costs? I can't get there in terms of how this has economic benefit.

I do think, though, that doing away with these speed cameras is a very poor decision. I wonder what is driving it, pun intended. I wonder who was driving the over 20 ministerial vehicles that got hit with tickets from speed enforcement cameras. I wonder.

The Minister of Transportation, in this article from Global News, when it came out that “vehicles registered to cabinet ministers were snapped speeding by cameras 23 times over the past three years,” said, “We have to ensure that we are respecting the road and the speed limits that

are imposed upon it and we'll continue to do so. And it won't happen again.” Yes, that's right. It won't happen again, because you're getting rid of the speed cameras.

Speaker, traffic calming is about safer streets. School zones and community safety zones are the areas targeted by automatic speed enforcement. We need more safety tools, not fewer. Safer is better.

I want to share, from AMO—and the government will have already heard this, but they didn't want to hear it again at committee, because they've blocked committee and disallowed anyone from coming and sharing. So I'm happy to do it on behalf of AMO: “AMO is disappointed with the decision, highlighting that ASE cameras have a proven record of increasing road safety, free up police to focus on other crimes, and are paid for by speeders, not taxpayers. A ban is provincial overreach.

“AMO will advocate against the ban. It will also gather data from municipalities to quantify the ban's financial impact. This data will be used to request that the province fund the costs.” Yes, and there will be costs. So all of the municipalities are going to be gathering their data, sharing with the government, and I'm going to be interested to see if the government listens or does anything with it.

I had already shared in my original lead, Speaker, about the region of Durham, but I'll talk about here—the town of Ajax has said: “Despite clear evidence and proven results from municipalities like Ajax, municipalities were caught off guard by the Premier's sudden announcement to cancel ASE programs across the province, made without adequate notice and consultation.” They have sent a thoughtful letter to the government, but that lack of consultation is a real thing. Again, no committee, and here we are, 35 minutes each. Everybody gets five minutes. Quick, have your say. Quick, make it the law of the land. Quick, don't worry if people get run over or hit by cars or whatever; speeding is allowed now, maybe even encouraged.

We're hearing from safety proponents, the joint school board and trustee association. Parents from across the province are rallying. Here's a piece from the Star: “‘Horrible Piece of Legislation’: Ontario Parents to Rally Against Speed Camera Ban.”

This individual, “Tom DeVito ... called the prospective bill to ban the camera a ‘horrible piece of legislation.’”

He says, “When an announcement comes out of the blue that a very effective tool that's used to control very dangerous driving behaviour near schools is going to be dismantled, it kind of shocked me to my core.”

He also went on to say that “it doesn't make sense to take away something that is proven to keep children safe.” Right?

The minister got up and talked about how they are protecting Ontarians—not kids in school zones, Mike. But I guess they don't vote, right? So, I don't know.

This is not the right way forward. We have heard from retired chiefs of police, as I mentioned, who are not allowed to come to committee because they might say things like what they wrote in the letter to the Premier. They said that speed cameras are “highly effective at

changing dangerous driving behaviours and reducing collisions and serious injuries at problem locations.”

The letter said, “The results are clear: When drivers know that automated speed enforcement cameras are in place, they slow down.... This means fewer tickets, lower costs, and safer roads for everyone.”

They said, “Automated speed cameras reduce speed, injury and death, allowing police to divert resources to focus on criminal activities plaguing Ontario communities, such as auto theft and intimate partner violence....

“A well-designed (automated speed enforcement) program focused on safety first will save lives.” But that’s not what we’re doing here today, Speaker. No, no, that is not the priority of this government.

I will let my colleague speak about the other priorities of this government, but this of course is a mess and the wrong way forward.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Riddell): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Hsu: Speaker, I will be very brief. This bill with regards to speed cameras, is this Premier from Etobicoke, over in the GTA, telling the people of Kingston what’s best for them. A better spokesperson would be the mayor of Kingston. The history of what happened in Kingston—in Kingston in 2022, we had a young student, a 10-year-old, who was killed by a vehicle in front of in front of Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School, which is on Lancaster Drive in Kingston. The student was killed right in front of the school by a vehicle. We know that speed cameras work in helping to slow down vehicles, and that tragic event was the impetus for Kingston city council to implement speed cameras.

Now, Kingston city council and the mayor of Kingston implemented this in a way that was very careful and really focused on protecting pedestrians near schools. The speed cameras were only at schools. The threshold for any kind of fine or warning was set well. It wasn’t disclosed exactly, because that would betray the purpose of them, but the mayor said that the threshold was set well above the speed limit, so anybody who triggered the camera would be clearly, clearly speeding. If you talk to the mayor, the mayor vehemently argues the point that these speed cameras had nothing to do with revenue generation. They were all about protecting pedestrians around schools.

I think the last point I want to make is that Kingston is in the best place to determine whether Kingston should use speed cameras and the best way to use them, and Kingston used them very carefully. And now, with Bill 56, Kingston is not going to have that option. It’s going to lose that tool that Kingston needs to help prevent another tragedy like the 10-year-old student from Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School who was killed in front of their school.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Riddell): Further debate?

MPP Alexa Gilmour: The Minister for Red Tape Reduction said that her government was not going to compromise on public safety, that she’s putting people first, in the debate remarks that she just made, but schedule

5 of Bill 56 bans the use of speed cameras in this province, and that does compromise on public safety.

Twenty-three speeding tickets were given to vehicles registered by her government’s cabinet members. Other than those who paid the price for breaking the law, I can’t seem to make sense of the claim that the minister has made.

Which people is this government putting first? Not the children going to school every day; not the seniors or people with mobility aids trying to cross the street; not the families in my riding who still grieve the death of Valdemir and Fatima Avila and Julia Cleveland, who died when an individual was speeding; not the residents of Parkside Drive, who banded together asking for the speed cameras, who begged this government not to pass this bill. Who is this government putting first?

The fact is that speed cameras save lives. SickKids research found that they reduce speeds 45% in school zones, and studies from around the world that this government had access to show that they are effective at curbing speeds and collisions. That is why, presumably, the Ontario Association Chiefs of Police and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the vast majority of Torontonians support the use of speed cameras. That’s why the parents in my riding got up early to hold rallies, to sign petitions. They gathered at their school at 8 a.m. in a protest called Circle the Strollers. But this minister and this government did not notice that they were begging for their children’s lives.

Which people is this government putting first? It does beg the question for me: Who is this government listening to? This doesn’t appear to be a government for the people, at least not the people that I’ve just listed, but it does appear to be the government for some people.

This government has just rammed through a bill without consultation, without the democratic process of serious debate that could have improved multiple aspects of this bill, without bringing it to committee. Why? What were they afraid of hearing in those committees?

Perhaps one day we will finally hear and learn of who whispered loudly enough into the Premier’s ear, just as we have now uncovered the rot deep in the Skills Development Fund. Who paid to play this time, when it came to speed cameras? Who did this government listen to? Not the people in my riding; not the people across Ontario. It is an incredibly disrespectful act to the taxpayers, to the people who wrote petitions and letters, who rallied.

Speaker, when people die on our streets from someone speeding down Parkside Drive—a street famous for speeding, for collisions, for deaths, where a speed camera was doing a lot to reduce the speeds. When people die on our streets, will that mysterious lobbyist who whispered in the Premier’s ear, will this minister, will this government weep with remorse? Or will they carry on as they are doing now, thinking that they know best, without consultation, without listening to the people of Ontario?

I had hoped it would not come to this, but here we are.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tom Rakocvic): Further debate?

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I want to speak about speed cameras today. That seems either to be a last-minute addition to this legislation—or who knows, maybe it's the genesis for bringing forward this legislation at this time.

I look at this bill and there's a big fallacy I see here, because apparently banning speed cameras is going to help us build a more competitive economy. It's going to fix all of our problems because we've got speed cameras in this bill. There's a fallacy here; it doesn't make sense why you've got provisions about speed cameras within this bill. It's not an honest, in my view, approach from this government. So, what, trucks can speed over from the US border, run through our school zones? Is that the point? I'm trying to find the point—how we connect speed cameras to building a more competitive economy.

Is the bill another step of the Premier trying to feel like he's the mayor of Toronto? He wants to run all of Toronto and, I guess in this way now, all municipalities across our province. Does it make the Premier feel good that he's able to do that?

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The irony here today is that the government is limiting debate so that we pass this bill before Halloween, a night when kids are going to be running around in our neighbourhoods, in our communities, going trick-or-treating. Instead of making our streets safer, this bill is going to make our streets unsafe; it's going to make it worse. It won't do what the government thinks it's going to do or says it's going to do. It's another communications exercise and marketing exercise to say, "I'm standing up for the little guy," when, really, it's actually saying, "You know what? It's okay to break the law. That's fine. No problem. Go ahead, break the law. There's going to be no punishment. There are going to be no penalties."

It ignores what pretty much every expert has said on this, unless, well, you're an expert in speeding. I hope to God that a kid doesn't get hit by a car because, honestly, the government is making it open season to break the law. For a Premier who likes to talk about law and order, for a Premier who says, "We're going to get tough on bad guys," this is the exact opposite of that. I would at least say to the Premier and the government: Be consistent. If you want to say, "enforce the law," well, enforce the law with everybody, because this bill right now sure as heck doesn't do that.

There's an irony here. It's this government's solution to its own actions that allowed municipalities to put speed cameras in in the first place. It's like the Premier is acting like Superman: "I'm going to come in here. I'm going to save the day." Some days, he uses it as Captain Canada, waving the Canadian flag. Other days, it's his red cape of Superman, reversing his own decisions. There's a big irony to that. Instead of trying to make something work, you're trying to make it hurt families, hurt kids in our communities.

Where are the Progressive Conservatives of old who want to make good decisions, who want good government, who want to listen to communities and consult and make our society, I would say, a better place, and make decisions

based on facts? Not because it's the Premier's family member, maybe—who knows? There are some rumours about that. I don't know. Maybe somebody said something to him in a coffee shop and he got really upset: "We've got to get rid of those speed cameras." Or maybe it's one of his ministers or their staff who've been caught red-handed over and over again in some places. And now we're rushing: "Let's get this through Halloween. Let's get it done before Halloween. Who cares what AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, says? Who cares what the chiefs of police say?"

The government wants to position itself as a friend of law enforcement, and then completely, when it's just not convenient, "Well, you know what? Let's disregard the words of the chiefs of police of Ontario that have said speed cameras work, that speed cameras help make our communities safer. Let's ignore SickKids right down the road"—right down the road, folks. "Let's ignore SickKids, no problem. You know what? It's okay to break the law." That's what this government is saying.

"Let's ignore the school boards." I know this government is invoking a war on school boards right now, in some ways, in this province: "You know what? We're just going to ignore them even more. We're going to ignore the principals who have to corral their school communities at the start and end of each school day"—because there are a lot of cars coming in and out of schools. They're trying to make their communities in front of their schools safer.

When I go knocking on doors or you're knocking on doors in front of a school, do you know one what's of the biggest issues that I hear from folks in front of the school? Do you know what they say? "I don't want people to speed in front of that school. I'm afraid my kids, whether they're in the school or whether they're in my front yard—if they dart out and a car is going way too fast, they're going to get hit by a car." When you go on other roads in the community—you know those interior roads that end up being a bit of a feeder in and out of neighbourhoods? Same thing: The biggest thing I hear about is speeding on those streets. And we've got schools on a lot of those streets.

Just now, the minister was speaking about common sense. This legislation overall is common sense. I noticed there wasn't much talk about speed cameras. Well, having speed cameras is common sense to free up what are really limited resources that our municipalities have.

The minister spoke about modern tools for a modern economy. I think speed cameras are pretty modern, aren't they? And especially now. But not with speed cameras. We're going back in time. We're going back in time. We're going to the 1960s, folks. That's what this government is saying.

Our police officers, our police services in our communities, in every community across the province—I think we all in this House can agree, at least the public statements of this government talk about it, that we want police to go after the bad guys. We want police to go after the criminals. We want police to go after the drug dealers or the people stealing cars or the people scamming seniors. I think that's what we want the police to be going after.

When we've got this tool that is being used to some success in communities, that is working—and we've seen it; it is working. The data is there. The numbers are there. The facts are there. But no, "It's okay, break the law, folks, everybody." That's the message that this government is saying right now to the people of Ontario: It's okay to break the law.

Some of the members in this chamber, Speaker, sat on municipal councils or even were mayors. And if you think back to your days as a local councillor—and I used to work for a local councillor—do you know what you hear a bit? "Well, people are speeding in front of the school. It's unsafe in front of the school." So what do you typically do when you're a local councillor? Well, you typically then ring up the police superintendent for the area, and you say, "Hey, we've got some challenges in and around this school and this neighbourhood. Can you get some officers to go out there to do traffic education, to inform people of the law?" Well, in our school zones, having a speed camera there is a really easy way to do that so we can free up our police resources.

In Durham region—and I know my colleague from Oshawa would agree—we hear a lot around property taxes, the high cost of property taxes. When I'm at doors, that is literally—it's not a provincial issue necessarily, although it's related. It's the number one issue that I hear at the doors. The number one that residents, on their own, bring up to me is property taxes, that they don't want their property taxes to go up and up and up and more and more and more. Now, property taxes have an important role to play, of course. They help pay for our police. They help pay for, really, those important services within our community.

So, it's going to cost millions now to build new roundabouts, millions. And we haven't seen the money that's going to come from this from the government. Kind of like everything we see, it's always a day late and a dollar short on just about everything—except for banning speed cameras before Halloween. "We've got to get it done before Halloween, folks"—great job.

And the Premier says, and he's said it before, "There's only one taxpayer. Folks, there's only one taxpayer." So what, now we're going to pay for all of this stuff out of the provincial treasury? Is that what the Premier is suggesting? Because we see their actions. They talk a great game, talk a really great game, about so many different issues, but the delivery, the execution—or frankly, no follow-through. We see that time and time again, sitting in this chamber, in the media studio outside or in the newspaper. We see it all the time. But there's only one taxpayer, right, folks? Well, guess what, if you're a property tax payer in this province, your property taxes are going to go up because of this bill. Your life is going to be more expensive because of this bill, folks. That is what is going to happen.

In the city of Brampton, they spent \$50 million on putting in a system of speed cameras all across the city of Brampton based on the rules, the regulation that this province put in place. That's what they did in the city of

Brampton. I think last week there were a couple of members in this chamber from Brampton patting themselves on the back, really proud of themselves. "We're going to get rid of speed cameras. We're going to make our communities more unsafe." That's what those members were essentially saying in this chamber. That's what this government is essentially saying in this chamber. "We're going to make communities more unsafe." That's what they're saying. That's not a good thing, folks. That's not something to be proud of.

I think back when I was having Thanksgiving dinner with my family. Ironically, it was in Brampton. It's where some of my family lives. They live in Brampton. We were talking about speed cameras around the dinner table. The folks that are in Brampton, at least around the dinner table there—and we would always talk about politics all the time—they were incensed because, you know what, they don't speed. They're teachers. They work at the local school. They see it every single day. They want their kids to be able to walk down the street and be safe and have some level of protection—but not in Brampton, folks.

And by the way, city council, now you're on the hook for \$50 million. Good job. Good job, Premier. But there's only one taxpayer, right? There's only one taxpayer.

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When we think of this government sometimes, they're lighting money on fire. They could be lighting money on fire with this—\$50 million in Brampton. We can say millions upon millions upon millions in municipalities all across this province that have spent money on putting in this program. Then they say, "Oh, well, we're going to build the roundabouts." Okay, more millions—millions upon millions upon millions. Let's just light that money on fire instead of having a program that is effective and can be made more effective to achieve really good public policy goals, really good, important government decisions. Great job. Great job, Premier.

So bottom line, to anybody watching at home or later on: Your property taxes are going to go up because of this. Your police services are going to struggle under the weight of having to deal with additional things or, when you call them—well, I guess they're just not going to show up, because they can't. Great job, Premier. Great job. Let's interfere more in local affairs all around the province.

Let's talk about signage for a second. If we look at the regulation right now, there are already signage requirements in the regulation. But you know what? We're going to make it bigger. We're just going to make it bigger. You know those big signs they put on the highway, the "Building Ontario" or "Protect Ontario" signs that this government likes to bring all around the province? "We're protecting Ontario." That's what the sign says. I haven't really seen it in action, but we're protecting Ontario. That's what the government says. We're just going to make a bigger sign.

Okay, maybe that's good for the sign vendors, the sign companies. We're going to put some flashing lights as well. Yes, that's really going to solve the problem. Because we've got flashing lights in some of these places

already. We've got these signs in some of these places already—well, in all the places with speed cameras there. It's the requirement. It's in the regulation.

But if you're a driver, you can't see that. You get the notification on Waze when you're using Waze or something else, and maybe you get a ticket. You remind yourself, "You know what? I'm not going to do that again. I'm not going to speed in that school zone again."

Speed humps—let's talk about speed humps. That was the other thing: We're going to build speed humps. Well, speed humps is always a complicated debate because, again, any of you that were at city council before or have some awareness of that, you'll know every time there's a report to council around speed humps, what you tend to hear from emergency services is that speed humps are going to slow down the response time of the fire truck. Speed humps are going to slow down the response time of the ambulance when it could be life saving. There are situations where I think it makes sense to put speed humps in place, absolutely—raised crosswalks, other areas, 100%—and I think we can design some of them differently. But if we go on the city of Vaughan website—let's look at the city of Vaughan's website and what the city of Vaughan says about speed humps: "Studies have shown that certain traffic-calming measures, especially vertical measures such as speed humps and raised crosswalks, can slow fire trucks and other emergency vehicles by about eight to 10 seconds each." That builds up and builds up and builds up.

If we look at some of our schools—well, you can't put a roundabout in front of the schools. There's no room to put a roundabout in some of these schools.

Now, I wonder if this bill or provisions were a reaction to government ministers or their staff getting caught red-handed going 70 in a 40 zone, other vehicles stunt driving, essentially, on the highway—ridiculous behaviour.

So, the government had a choice, I think, in this, and they made the wrong choice. They could work to make the regulation work, to take the feedback. We hear feedback every now and then from the public. We hear it every day in our emails on a lot of different topics. Well, take some of the feedback that we get around that. Take the feedback from the chiefs of police. Take the feedback from municipalities all across the province. Take the feedback from SickKids. Take the feedback from experts. This isn't a new thing, folks. Take that feedback. Make it work. Make it work better.

I think a good government that makes good decisions takes in feedback, listens and adjusts so we have better outcomes that protect people's lives, that make life safer, that make life easier as well. Right now, this is a government that just wants to make life easier for people who just want to speed in school zones. "No problem, folks. Go 80 in a 30 zone." But for that kid or an adult or a senior, that's the difference between life and death. That's what that is.

Does this government want that on their conscience? It talks about tough on crime, talks about protecting people, protecting Ontario. Well, you're not protecting kids in school zones. I'll tell you that right now.

And I hear some of the comments around these being cash grabs. In some cases, frankly, they are. I think some municipalities haven't used this program very well. So, again, make adjustments to the program instead of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

The town of Ajax's approach was very reasonable. Three speed cameras exist in the town of Ajax. Those speed cameras are rotated around from school to school every month based on complaints, based on concerns. The town of Ajax's approach is reasonable. Other municipalities' approach on this has been reasonable.

I know that, in some places, they're saying, "Well, it's a cash grab." Okay, make it work better. Make it work to serve what the intended outcome is, to make our kids and communities safe in front of schools. Do something like ensure people don't get tickets under 10 kilometres an hour. There was a lot of stuff bandied around on that, right? "Oh, people got a ticket with two kilometres, three kilometres over." I don't think we've been able to find any proof publicly around this so far—I really don't. I don't think we found any proof around this, but we're going to throw out these false arguments. We're going to throw out this garbage and just try and trick the public and say this is what's happening. Come on. Come on.

Ensure that the revenue from these speed cameras goes towards road safety improvements. I agree with that. I think that should happen. Some municipalities are already doing that. Don't throw it in general revenues. I agree with the Premier when he says, "Oh, these municipalities are throwing this revenue into general revenue to offset the taxes that they charge." Okay, so put it into road safety improvements. Put it into roundabouts, actually. You want to talk about roundabouts. Put them into roundabouts. Put them into road safety measures. That's going to ensure no one in other parts where there aren't school zones are going to die if they get hit by a car.

You talked to Brampton. They believe the user should pay. The person breaking the law should pay. Well, not in this case. "Go ahead, break the law." That's the message from this Premier. So it's not about costs. It's about safety at the end of the day, and they're one of the most effective, safest ways to protect our kids and our families. They make a proven difference.

Municipalities invested in these speed cameras in good faith. They took the direction from this government. They said, "Okay, we're going to design and implement a program, and sign contracts associated with this," to implement the direction of the program that this government put in place. Except now, Doug Ford pulled the rug out and came in as Superman, saving the day. That's what the Premier is trying to do.

I don't know if the Premier thinks the public is that stupid to know that he was the one to put this in place in the first place. I just want good government, folks—good government that makes good decisions based on facts, based on information that respects the taxpayer's dollar, because there's only one taxpayer. That's what government can be. Right now, it's not even close. But we're going to build a more competitive economy by getting rid

of speed cameras—because that’s what the title of this act is, Building a More Competitive Economy Act.

And on the other provisions of this, they don’t want to send it to committee—probably because the speed cameras are in there—so that we don’t get feedback and input from stakeholder groups. We didn’t sit for quite a while in this Legislature. I know I was doing work in my community, but we didn’t sit for a while in this Legislature—an extended summer break in some ways. The Premier’s tan was quite nice.

Hon. Trevor Jones: It’s awful.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: Well, it’s the truth. It’s the truth. It is absolutely the truth. We got elected to serve our communities. We got elected to debate and deliberate legislation, not come up with games to say, “You know what? Building a More Competitive Economy Act—well, let’s just throw speed cameras in there too. Let’s say it’s okay to break the law,” because that’s what this Premier is saying. That’s what this government is saying: “It’s okay. No problem, folks. Not a problem. Go ahead, break the law.”

On this side, Ontario Liberals want to strengthen community safety. We want to build up communities. We want to ensure that we make good decisions. With this bill, I don’t think we’re making good decisions on this. Thank you, Speaker.

1450

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tom Rakocevic): Further debate?

MPP Catherine McKenney: In Ottawa Centre and across Ottawa, really, we have a lot of elevators—elevators everywhere, elevators in buildings. Thousands of people every day take elevators up and down, go to work, they go shopping. What would you think if I told you that, in Ottawa, between 2017 and 2020, 95 people died in elevators—95 people. What would we be doing here in the Legislature? Well, we would make sure that we had every regulation in place to make sure that people like us—all of us here, our family, our friends—were safe in elevators.

But between 2017 and 2020, 95 people died on the streets in the city of Ottawa. They were drivers. They were passengers. They were pedestrians. They were cyclists. Over 47,000 were in collisions, and many of those were life-altering. They were catastrophic. But we normalize road traffic deaths. It hardly makes the news. Most of the time, it doesn’t make the news and, if it does, there’s a collective shrug and we all move on.

Schedule 5 of this bill now is going to ban one of the most effective measures we have to slow down traffic—to calm it. Sure, things like speed humps and big flashy lights—I’m not sure that I agree with roundabouts—but there are other measures that also slow down traffic.

But if you really cared about the people who are dying—and this is not an anomaly, the 2017 to 2020 number. If you really cared about those people, you would do it all. You know what? We would leave the speed cameras. We would put in the big flashy lights. We would put in the

speed humps. We would do everything we could to keep people alive on our streets.

In 2017, I was a city councillor, and I came with one of my colleagues, Councillor Leiper, whose ward neighboured mine, and we appeared before committee here and we made our case. It was actually quite pleasant. It was a pleasant visit. We made our case. And we went away because we were told almost daily from people that that we hear from that they were worried about their kids, about people they cared about being hurt on streets.

We got legislation that allowed for speed cameras, and they work. The evidence is really very clear that they just slow down traffic. They don’t stop it—not like construction projects everywhere that can’t seem to manage in the province and in cities. They don’t stop it, but they do slow it down.

And if you think about what that means for a pedestrian—I don’t know how many of you like pedestrians. Those are those things you see framed in your windshield. If a young adult is hit by a vehicle and that vehicle is going 50 kilometres an hour and has to stop within 30 metres, the chance of survival is 10%. One in 10 people hit by a car going 50 kilometres an hour will survive, the vast majority of the time with catastrophic injury.

If that vehicle is going 40 kilometres an hour, the chance of survival is 60%. But if that same vehicle hits a young adult and is travelling at 30 kilometres an hour, the chance of survival is 90%. You’re saving eight lives just by asking people going through school zones to go 30 instead of 50. It doesn’t get you there any slower, but it will save eight lives, on average. It’s beyond comprehension that that’s not something we would all say—“Oh, my gosh, if only I could have saved all those people in elevators. If only I could have just done something that would have saved that life.”

I travel across the border to Quebec twice a week. I go running in the Gatineaus. As soon as I cross that border, there are speed cameras. I actually got caught by one once, and I have never sped again down Maisonneuve Boulevard—but nobody else does either. When I’m coming back on that same road, every single time that I’m going through Gatineau, everybody is doing 50. And then, when we hit Ontario—boom, they take off. So you are actually allowing people to just come into the province and speed. They don’t do it where they have speed cameras.

I ask you to think about Vision Zero and what that means. We can end all traffic fatalities. People say, “Oh, come on. It’s not reasonable to think that we can have zero fatalities.” Well, then I would ask each and every one of you to think about just one family member you’re willing to give up to a traffic fatality. We can end all traffic fatalities—the same way we actually don’t lose people in elevators every day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tom Rakocevic): Further debate?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I’m proud to rise to speak to Bill 56, entitled, so-called, Building a More Competitive Economy. This bill has 11 schedules. Much has been said about many of the different schedules.

The one schedule that I'd like to focus on is schedule 5. Schedule 5 pertains to changes in the Highway Traffic Act. The schedule specifically bans safety cameras by repealing part XIV.1 of the Highway Traffic Act, which then gives the Minister of Transportation the power to order municipalities to install signs—my goodness, signs—in school zones.

The schedule also does something else which has not been spoken to in great detail, but I do want to highlight it because I think it's important for those who are watching the proceedings today. The government is proposing, through this bill and through schedule 5, that they would block any lawsuits from municipalities and instruct the crown to ensure that any breach or termination or frustration of a contract as related to the automatic speed enforcement equipment supplier or vendor following the repeal of part XIV.1—that they would just be prohibited from proceeding, which, of course, this government has the powers to do. You're writing laws. But imagine putting forth a piece of legislation that you know is going to be harmful, that you know will be disruptive to commercial contracts, and you're saying right out front, "It doesn't matter, because we're going to protect the government from any type of breach of trust or bad faith or any type of obligations having to do with fiduciary duties." That is remarkable. That tells us that, at the very heart of what the government is doing, they know that they are wrong.

The main take-away of this bill, of course, is about banning municipalities from using speed cameras and then asking the municipalities to hand over their right to install signs in front of schools. And that's about it, Speaker.

1500

There really isn't much more to schedule 5, except, if we unpack that, what we learn is that we heard from hospital for SickKids as well as Toronto Metropolitan University, who have studied this issue greatly, and they have expressed to all of us through their reporting that the cameras—the automatic speed enforcement cameras—actually reduce speeding in school zones by 45%. These findings are consistent with many other jurisdictions that have done the same, because no jurisdiction makes significant changes to road-use allocation without actually doing great study.

The Premier has falsely claimed that drivers are getting ticketed for driving a few kilometres over the speed limit. That's simply not true, because in Toronto and many other jurisdictions they set that trigger at 11 kilometres over the speed limit prescribed. So it's not that if you speed over the limit by one or two kilometres per hour, you instantly get a ticket. That's not the case. You have to be going 11 kilometres or more, and then the automatic speed cameras kick in.

The government has said that municipalities would be setting out these regulations to ensure that they could catch more—I guess, "law breakers," let's call them, because that's exactly what they are. Except that the Premier has hinted, and quite brazenly so, that these tickets are cash cows, but what I've just described is a situation that is quite balanced and we know that that's not the case. There

is broad and strong consensus that these speed cameras are not being used as revenue tools for municipalities, but rather they're being carefully considered before deployment into the areas.

A speed camera on Toronto's Parkside Drive has issued over 65,000 tickets. That speed camera has been vandalized many times. The highest speed clocked by that camera is 154 kilometres in a 40-kilometre zone. At that impact rate, someone dies. That is how it works there. And that is what the government is proposing by eliminating these cameras.

What we hear also from the Ontario Chiefs of Police is that they are strongly in favour of these cameras. These cameras work; they know it. And as you all know, police outfits are data-driven organizations and they wouldn't step out to say what they've said if they didn't really mean it. What they have said—let me read this: "Employing ASE tools has been proven to reduce speeding, change ... behaviour and make the roads safer for everyone—drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and especially children and other vulnerable road users." The association has urged the Premier to reconsider his plan to get rid of these cameras and to not put pedestrians at risk.

And then, finally, Speaker, I want to highlight something that is happening in the courts, because obviously these tickets are issued and you have to deal with them in the courts. We know that in one year alone we saw the government drop 333,000 highway traffic charges, and this includes very serious offences such as careless driving, driving while under suspension, stunt driving. They also have highlighted the fact that the government cabinet ministers have been caught speeding more than 23 times, driving 70 kilometres in a 40 zone, 151 kilometres, up to 162 kilometres. If this government was really serious about reducing speeds, then they would start with their own cabinet ministers.

I say let's keep our speed cameras. Let's do that as soon as possible. We must defeat this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Riddell): Further debate?

MPP Tyler Watt: I rise today to speak against Bill 56, the so-called Building a More Competitive Economy Act, 2025. This is an omnibus bill, which means there's a lot of different and irrelevant stuff in this bill. I can't help but wonder what speed cameras have to do with building a more competitive economy. Maybe so people can get to work quicker, but now that everyone is back to work in person, they're certainly stuck in traffic on the highway, so I'm not too sure about that.

But this bill is presented by the government as a means to streamline regulations, enhance labour mobility and to boost competitiveness. It sounds good, but the devil is in the details. Let's be clear: This bill is nothing more than a reckless assault on environmental protections and workplace standards in Ontario. It prioritizes short-term gains for a select few at the expense of our communities, our natural resources and the trust Ontarians place in their government. I urge this House to reject this bill in its current form.

Let me start with Schedule 5, the speed cameras which we've been hearing lots about today. I don't understand why this is even a thing. I've had hundreds and hundreds of people reach out to my constituency office who are deeply upset about this. I don't think it's controversial to say that we want our kids and students to be safe when they're walking to school.

Why does it have to be all or nothing with this government? Can we not compromise and maybe keep speed cameras at least in school zones? I thought this government was all about public safety. This is going to jeopardize the safety of our kids and people who are going to school. In Barrhaven, in my riding of Nepean, we had a 13-year-old a couple years ago who was hit by a hit-and-run near Barrhaven school and was traumatized with a traumatic brain injury. Perhaps that could have been prevented if we had a speed camera enforcement there.

With the speed cameras, it grants the minister sweeping powers to override municipal authority, and we know how much this government loves to meddle with the municipalities. These cameras enhance road safety, particularly in school zones. Now the government wants to erase them entirely, removing a proven tool that deters speeding and protects our children. Can we at least compromise and keep them there? I don't understand why it has to be all or nothing, and most people are pretty in agreement to that.

Turning to Schedule 1—I'll give everyone a break from speed cameras—which amends the Clean Water Act, 2006: This is a direct threat to the hard-won protections stemming from the Walkerton Inquiry's 121 recommendations. Source protection plans are locally developed safeguards for our municipal drinking water, yet this bill empowers the minister to prohibit policies from these plans at their discretion. It's a broad, unchecked authority that could weaken vital protections against water contamination.

If the government has specific concerns, they should address them transparently and not hide it behind an egregious omnibus bill. Clean water is a fundamental right. How can we afford to gamble with it in the name of red tape reduction? It's important, but it shouldn't be at the consequence of our water.

Finally, Schedules 3, 8 and 10 loosen critical requirements for professional titles and activities in health care, eroding public trust and safety. Schedule 3 expands the definition of "pharmacist" or "pharmacy technician" beyond those registered with the college, potentially allowing unqualified individuals to supervise pharmacies or dispense drugs. Left to regulations, this could vary wildly in standards, compromising the safety of Ontario's pharmacies and the health of our residents.

Schedule 8 permits non-authorized professionals to dispense hearing aids or handle dental devices, bypassing the expertise of dental technologists and surgeons. Schedule 10 grants the LGIC power to exempt people from title protections across a slew of professions, from audiologists and speech-language pathologists to dentists, midwives and more.

Titles like "pharmacist," "dentist" or "physiotherapist" currently require rigorous college membership and training. Weakening these protections diminishes the value of our professionals' qualifications and invites confusion and, potentially, outright fraud. Patients deserve to know their providers are qualified, and not diluted standards that prioritize competitiveness over competence.

Speaker, this bill's other schedules, such as the minor tweaks to the Ontario Heritage Act or updates to the trade agreements, do little to mask its core flaws. It's an omnibus power grab that buries dangerous changes under a veneer of efficiency. The government claims it's about cutting red tape, but it's really about cutting corners on safety, the environment and professionalism.

1510

Ontarians expect better: transparent governance, strong protections and policies that put people first. I call on my colleagues across the aisle to reconsider, amend these harmful provisions or vote down this bill entirely. Our province's future depends on it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Riddell): I recognize the member from Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: It's a pleasure but a bit of a surprise to be rising to speak on Bill 56 today. Just four hours ago, the government passed a time allocation motion which is rushing this bill through the House. It means that there will be no public consultations; there will be no committee meetings. This will be voted on probably within the next hour or less. The reason the government is voting it through is because it's just so incredibly unpopular.

Bill 56 is entitled building a more competitive economy by removing speed cameras bill. I don't know how you build a more competitive economy by removing speed cameras, but it doesn't seem to be working.

I'm going to couch my comments in some quotes I heard the Conservative Minister of Red Tape Reduction speaking to earlier, and I took a couple of quotes from her. She talked about how, in 2018, when the Conservatives took over the government, it was the "dark days" of losing investment. Well, at that time, in 2018, there were 7.3 million Ontarians employed. Today, it's 7.0 million. So, there are 300,000 fewer people working in Ontario than when this government took control almost eight years ago. We have the second-highest unemployment rate of any province in the country, 7.9%. The government always talks—"Oh, it's the tariffs, it's tariffs." Well, even before the tariff threat, this government gave us the second-highest unemployment rate.

The housing starts are the worst in Canada. There was a report by RBC in August that said Canada doesn't have a housing problem; Ontario does, because Ontario's housing starts are dropping off a cliff, and it's partly because this government refuses to follow the NDP's advice and actually build some non-government houses, some not-for-profit housing, to actually get the government back into the business of building affordable housing so that people will have an option and a home to buy, but the government voted against our Homes Ontario bill.

The other numbers, like building a strong economy: The Liberals left in 2018. When they left, there were 50,000 people in Ontario who were homeless. Today, it's 80,000 who are homeless. There are 1,400 encampments in the province. That's on this government. They're not building a more competitive economy. In fact, many of the people who are homeless in this province are unable to afford homes even though they're working full-time jobs. One in 10 people in this province is now using a food bank. So, you're not building a competitive economy in any way, and I think removing speed cameras isn't going to help.

The other quote from the Minister of Red Tape Reduction today: She said, follow the rules or there will be consequences. That's a good truism. That should be the case. If you're breaking the rules, there should be consequences for breaking the rules—except when it comes to the Premier and his ministers, because the reason they're removing—when Premier Ford said, “Oh, we're going to remove these speed cameras; they're a cash grab,” he said there are people getting tickets with two kilometres over the speed limit. He's never shown any evidence that that ever did happen. But through FOIs, through freedom-of-information requests, Global News has been able to determine that 23 vehicles driven for or by ministers of this government have gotten speeding tickets.

Interjection: Terrible.

Mr. Chris Glover: Yes—and one of the tickets was a \$3,300 fine for going more than 50 kilometres over the speed limit. Fifty kilometres over the speed limit is not just speeding; it's reckless driving. It's a very strong penalty. But you know what? The government has protected themselves. They say there should be consequences after you break the rules, but when they released these freedom-of-information requests with the minister's vehicle speeding, they redacted the name of the person who was driving.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The rules don't apply to them.

Mr. Chris Glover: The rules just don't apply. It's the same with Bill 5. Bill 5, which the government passed this spring, allows the government to declare any part of the province a special economic zone where they can break any law that they want. That's not democracy.

The government has the power to change laws. That's what we elect governments to do: to change laws. But they have to do it by introducing a bill and having a public debate and a public vote. This is government by fiat. Bill 5 is government by fiat. The government just says, “Oh well, we're going to declare a special economic zone, maybe Ontario Place, and so we can break any law in the redevelopment of Ontario Place.”

The other quote from the minister was, “When projects stall, investments leave.” This is true. You want to be able to show the investors who are thinking about investing in Ontario that you can get projects done. You have to have a positive track record. Well, this government has one of the worst track records, and the embarrassment of this government is the Metrolinx Eglinton Crosstown. It started in 2011. It is now six years and \$4 billion over budget. And they were just testing the fares, being able to

collect the fares in there, and they had to postpone the projected opening date. We still don't have a date for opening that Crosstown LRT. It's absolutely shameful.

And it's not just the embarrassment; it actually costs us money. The Toronto Region Board of Trade says that gridlock costs the Toronto region \$44.7 billion each year. If the Eglinton Crosstown had opened when it was supposed to open, six years ago, it would have relieved some of that gridlock. It would have saved us some of that \$44.7 billion that is being wasted every year in gridlock in this city.

The other quote from the minister is that this government is providing certainty to investors so they will invest in our province and don't leave for other jurisdictions. I will just give the example of Ontario Place. When the government asked for bids for Ontario Place, they said in the contract that the contract may go to a company that has a low score on the application, and it may go to a company that did not even bid on the contract at Ontario Place. In fact, they had to sign a non-disclosure agreement. And who got the contract at Ontario Place? Does anybody remember? Therme—Therme, which had claimed they owned six spas in Europe but actually only owned one, and claimed they had \$100 million in the bank, which they did not.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's great to see you in the chair.

Well here we are, folks; here we are. Usually I'm happy to see you and happy to debate things, but I'm not happy about this, just robbing Ontarians of their voices, their chance to speak, their chance to come to committee; different groups, your residents, Ontarians who you represent, and you are denying their voice. That's not democratic. That's not fair. It's not transparent. But I guess it's your new MO.

We're here discussing Bill 56 again. There are many issues with this bill, starting with the bogus name of it.

Schedule 1, water—I'm going to hold the minister to her words that she opened up with, about keeping Ontarians safe, especially with our drinking water. We cannot play games with our drinking water, folks. I might remind you about Walkerton, a little town in Ontario. There's a great book you could read in addition to Dalton McGuinty's book you have. It's called *Well of Lies*. It tells the story of what went wrong there. We don't want that to happen, so we'll be watching for that.

1520

Schedules 9 and 11: There we are with endangered species, species at risk. I am going to look up your public schools and high schools, and find your science teachers, and see how you did in your science classes because you obviously do not understand biodiversity, and how you can't just protect one area where, for example, the Blanding's turtle sleeps and then where it lays its eggs—different spots. But you're not protecting the commute; you're not protecting the rest of the area. It makes no sense

logically—completely illogical, so many problems with that.

But let's get to schedule 5, the meat of the matter: speed cameras. No one asked for this except, maybe, those of you over there who speed and get the odd ticket that costs a fortune. But here is the logic, right? Like anything, cause, action and then repercussion. If you don't want to pay a fine for speeding, don't speed, right? It's not a cash grab, as you say. Just obey the law, obey the rules.

When I was a city councillor with the Premier, we lowered the speed limits on residential streets because there are scientific facts behind lowering speed limits and safer streets and safer Ontarians, especially those who are vulnerable, children. Look at our pages. Look them in the eye. Do you not want them to be safe? It's fact that an increase in 10 kilometres can mean the difference in a fatality versus an injury. Why ever would we mess with that?

If you're so big on jobs, look at all the jobs you're taking away in, for example, city of Toronto transportation services. But again, why are you meddling in municipal affairs? We have enough to do provincially, right? Like health care, education, housing. Let's get the bloody shovels in the ground and be bold about it. But no, the Premier wanted to be mayor. He is acting mayor of Toronto, just meddling in municipal affairs all the time.

Interestingly enough, the city of Toronto had their infrastructure committee today. I went to the last one, where speed cameras were on it. There were a million items pertaining to speed cameras today. They're upset. As a city councillor—many of you were in municipal government, including the Premier—the number one call, complaint, concern and suggestion, and I was shocked at this, was always about the car. I wish it were about trees. Unfortunately, it was not. It was about parking, parking pads, speeding and traffic-calming measures. So many residents of all ages and all demographics want traffic-calming measures.

The best, most effective, easiest traffic-calming measure is the speed camera. The speed bumps, guys, they don't work. They work for the first few weeks, and then people know where they are, and half the cars can just fly over them and not even feel it. Roundabouts—are you kidding me? I tried to put a roundabout in where there was a fatality on Lakeshore coming into Woodbine, in the Beach. I wanted a roundabout. I'm all for it. They are expensive but I wanted it. But it's too tight in the city.

Interjection.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Okay. I will come to Brockville. Come to the Beach. There's no room in Toronto for these roundabouts, downtown proper.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you, and that's time.

Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Khanjin has moved third reading of Bill 56, An Act to amend various Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Third reading vote deferred.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND STUDENTS ACT, 2025 LOI DE 2025 SUR LE SOUTIEN AUX ENFANTS, AUX ÉLÈVES ET AUX ÉTUDIANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 29, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to child, youth and family services, education, and colleges and universities / *Projet de loi 33, Loi modifiant diverses lois relatives aux services à l'enfance, à la jeunesse et à la famille, à l'éducation et aux collèges et universités.*

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Ajax, who I believe had the floor this morning.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: It's very good to be continuing the conversation we were having around Bill 33 this morning. I see the Minister of Education eagerly coming back to his seat in the chamber.

I was about to talk about trustees. I was going to mention that when I talk to folks in the education spaces and when I had the opportunity to know trustees from before and after, local matters in public education—having local voices, making local decisions—because we're a really big province and the communities all around our province have different needs, different dynamics. And between the different publicly funded school boards, as well, there are so many differences, so having local voices, having local representatives on their school boards is super important.

Trustees help families navigate the education system. Sometimes you end up in situations where a family has a challenge and they try to go through the teacher, the principal—the steps, right? There are steps that you have to take. They eventually either will contact my office or they will contact their local trustee, seeking help. In some situations, absolutely, we're able to help. In other situations, the rules were applied fairly, and it's unfortunate—there might be a difference of opinion or a lack of resources, or whatever it might be. But I know of situations, since I've become an MPP, that I've had the privilege of helping families in my community on.

Trustees, in some ways, are that line of last defence, the person of last resort, and I want to make sure that we have that in our public education system—that trustees are there, being able to be that person of last resort. They're connected into their communities, as well.

I think we've seen some stories of trustees acting bad. I can think of different television shows from the 1990s that we might be able to apply some situations to, and I think

we've got to look at that. We've got to make sure that box works. We've got to make sure trustees are being effective and that they are staying within what the Education Act requires them to do.

When we look at situations where we have supervisors right now in school boards—and there are varying reasons why you might have a supervisor in place, and, I really think, some justified reasons from time to time as well. There are times when governance breaks down. There are times, on the staff side of things as well, when things break down. We've seen that before. But it's something that needs to be used very sparingly.

When I look at this bill, the ability to put in a supervisor, in my view, is far too broad; it's too broad in just allowing the minister to take over school boards.

I said earlier that there are 72 school boards. The minister doesn't have 72 fingers. It's going to be hard for 72—I mean, 10 fingers, 10 toes, maybe; okay, 20. That's still a lot of school boards if you were to think about that.

1530

We need to narrow, in my view, the scope of that public interest part. There are justified situations where a supervisor can and should come into place, but that's not in every situation. To give that discretion just to the minister, whichever—the minister of the day, a future minister; who knows who that's going to be? I think it's a bad move, and that decision should really still rest with cabinet. These are big decisions, and putting in a supervisor in a board can be very disruptive. It may not actually achieve the intended outcomes in which you're seeking to look at.

There are some situations where, whether it's financial, other pieces—we're paying some of these supervisors, I think, what is it, \$350,000 or around there, in response to scandals of tens of thousands of dollars. We've got to be very careful in terms of how we use that supervision power.

It's almost kind of like a double standard when I think of some of the debates that we have in the House around the Skills Development Fund. The actions of the government and maybe the Ministry of Labour—if they were a school board, the government probably should be putting that ministry under supervision. I really do believe that. If we want to apply it the same way as how we look at school boards, how we look at things are operating. I think it's a double standard. I think it's important that cabinet has that decision when it comes to appointing a supervisor.

And I fear the path that this bill intends to go down. I fear it because school boards have a lot of land. School boards have a lot of property. In some cases, that property is very, very valuable. Is it a land grab? I guess time will tell. But I think that's a very real fear.

If I look at the Toronto District School Board, before they were put under supervision, the Toronto District School Board trustees, of their own volition, to try to get their house in order—and it's a really big house, and it's a bit of a messy house, because it was an amalgamation of different school boards. Trustees on the Toronto District School Board asked for permission to be able to close schools so that they can deal with their own affairs and

uphold the responsibilities that they have and consult with those local communities. The government said no in that way and then put in a supervisor later. We'll see what that supervisor ends up doing in this area.

I think that local matters in education; having that local governance able to make those decisions, to be empowered to make those decisions as well.

Earlier on I spoke about some of the structural challenges with public education, the underfunding. I know we're spending more than we ever have before. We're also, as a province, bigger than we ever have been before as well. And we know that that gap in special education is \$800 million to a billion dollars. It's a lot of money. If we fix that piece, we're going to fix a lot of the other pieces that are happening in public education.

Around school renaming: I don't think giving ministerial power around school renaming is good governance. What, is the PC Party going to be soliciting donations next on how to name schools? I think we've got to create a—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Don't give them any ideas.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I know. I might be giving too many ideas here.

Create a box. We've had these debates at different school boards around school renamings. Some argue it's not a very good practice to name a school after a living individual, for example, because you don't know what's going to happen next. The ministry has that ability to set the parameters and let school boards then go off and make their own decisions. They need to consult. They need to consult effectively. They need to do it thoughtfully. So what the ministry should do, I've said it a little bit: Create a box. What are the requirements? What are the expectations of trustees and also school administrators? The ministry doesn't need this whole new suite of legislation in order to fix a lot of these issues. The ministry can prescribe the policy requirements.

What happened in the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic board shouldn't have happened. Trustees should not have changed their own policies to be able to go on a junket to Italy. That's not right. That's not good use of taxpayer dollars. That doesn't uphold confidence in the public system. Sometimes you see times where trustees or boards—some of these individual trustees make some decisions, and what that does is that's all we end up talking about instead of the really good work that teachers are doing in the classroom, the really good work that EAs and ECEs and social workers and other folks in our education system are doing. Some of those scandals end up distracting from it. So we do need to put, in some ways, a little bit more of a box around what's happening, and that means good travel and expense requirements.

Procurement and school naming requirements: Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater on this. Make the system more effective, make it work better so that, as the minister says, we are supporting students; we are supporting families. I'm just not quite sure that this is the approach which we need to be doing around that.

Hold boards accountable for results, not by micromanaging but measuring outcomes and supporting success.

Public education is a really big beast in this province, and we need to provide better support for our school boards, especially right now around technology, AI and innovation. To have a different process from school board to school board to school board, frankly, is a waste of time. It's a waste of individuals' time at those boards.

We need to look more at how you do some of those things centrally. How do you provide that coordination and support so that, for some technology tools in the classroom, that really wouldn't be very much different if you were in Thunder Bay or in Durham or in Peel or wherever. We need to support that in the classroom. Things like human resource supports, even—some type of centralization of support. Back services, especially with smaller boards as well—because sometimes you're dealing with really challenging issues and you need an outside perspective, legal advice, to be able to do that.

It would be good to see things to help make new school builds go faster as well. I've written to the minister around that, and I hope the ministry is looking at that. How do we make education work better? How do we build schools faster? How do we save money? But I think with this bill, it should go to the committee. I think it's important that we give stakeholders the opportunity to put forward their positions on this through the committee process. As I talk to people in the sector, that's something that they would like to see. How do we make the bill better? How do we make sure things work? How do we ensure that the feedback that's being given is being done in a way that's also public as well?

Around post-secondary—I'll leave the last two minutes to talk about that. Our post-secondary sector, in my view, is failing. It's underfunded. This is, again, a crisis that's being created by an overreliance on international tuition. And then, we've seen the minister blame institutions for the fallout instead of the government taking responsibility and fixing a system that, at the college level especially, isn't working, and at the university level, isn't focused nearly enough on creating new innovations and new jobs and opportunities in all parts of the province.

Around ancillary fees: Students approve those ancillary fees through referendum. You can rescind those ancillary fees as well through referendum. And we see, for some student associations, they provide resources; they provide support to students on top of the institution. I know earlier, I think one of the members spoke about CFS. I think both OUSA and the CFS are opposing this change.

I'll give you a good example about ancillary fees. At York University, there's the Second Student Centre building. That building got built, was funded, by students—the First Student Centre building as well. Students said, "Yes, we want to pay. We will actually, in this case, pay the same amount of money that we were paying before to get a new building." It's providing a lot of support for students, and space for students, on that campus—and it's student owned, student run and student operated. I'm very proud to have had an opportunity to be a part of that process in negotiating that deal on behalf of students, way back when I was a student. These things can work.

Universities have levies around mental health and well-being. They're providing supports outside of the health care system, on campus, where students are, so that they can get the support and the help that they need, because this has been a conversation that has grown quite a bit over the last 15 years. Speaker, 15 years ago, we didn't hear very much about this. We didn't talk very much about this on university campuses. We are today. That's a good thing, and we need to be able to be doing more around it.

So what I would say is, universities were designed to be autonomous and not to act just at the whims. Universities can be great tools for better outcomes, driving jobs and opportunities in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I enjoyed the member's speech. To be honest with you, I'm a little bit shocked and disappointed that he thinks that somehow I'm trying to consolidate power for myself. I'm somewhat disappointed also that the Liberals can only manage to do 10 things at one time, because that's the amount of fingers they have.

But I would ask the member this—just very specifically, because we hear this: In instances like Thames Valley, in instances like we're seeing in Brant Haldimand Catholic—these are boards that the minister currently does not have the authority to step into and to put back on track. Both of those boards at one point—and in Brant Catholic still—were in a surplus position, and because they were in a surplus, I did not have the ability to step in and make changes. The act does not allow me to do that.

1540

So I had to wait until they went into deficit and started cutting before I could make changes to put them back on track. Does he think that's the right approach or should we modernize the system to allow the minister to step in quicker?

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I would say that with great power comes great responsibility. We've seen with actions of this government—and I'm not even necessarily saying this minister; it could be a future minister as well. We've got to be really careful around this situation, because we see some of the issues—a lot of the issues—really do result in the underfunding and lack of support for our school boards.

Around the issue of Thames Valley: If I remember correctly, that was an issue that originally primarily involved staff, and there are some criminal charges being levied against one of the associate directors there, and that's progress. We've got to ensure that our school boards are staying within their mandate, and that's why I'm saying we need to put a box around them.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'm sure that if this government had allowed this bill to go to committee, parents would have come and said that what they would like to see is some action on lead in the drinking water in our schools. It needs to be said that there is no safe level of exposure to lead, especially when it comes to our kids.

In Hamilton, 18 schools have recently tested positive. They exceeded the provincial safety standard for lead in drinking water. In fact, half of all Ontario's public schools have had a positive test, showing excessive levels of water in our public schools where kids go to school.

My question to the member is: You said, "How could this bill be made better?" Do you think that a bill that purports to be talking about supporting children would've taken as a priority the fact that they're being exposed to lead in the drinking water in public schools all across Ontario?

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I didn't mention it in my remarks, but I think it goes down to the capital funding, especially for renovations of new schools. We don't see that in the budget. We see that backlog. It continues to grow. It continues to be there.

I talk quite a bit about how in Durham region, we're an area of growth where we need to build new schools, which is why I spoke that we've got to build schools faster. But areas of Toronto and Hamilton and other parts of this province—no kid should have to have water in that school that has lead. You can't drink out of the taps—just like in this building, actually, as well; you can't drink out of the taps in this building.

We should not be here, in this day and age, in any public facility, any facility in this province, where there is lead in the water and there's a sign there that says you can't drink the water.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Question?

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Thank you to the member from Ajax, my seatmate here in the Legislature, for your remarks. I think you offered, actually, some good solutions here in your remarks.

I guess my question would be—we've heard from the minister that there are some examples of rogue behaviour, but what's been publicly said is that this bill is going to allow the full dismissal of the full system of governance. Maybe you could just talk a little bit more about what might be the best, most appropriate way to be responding to these situations, and what more we could be doing for our schools if you were able to have these cross-cutting approaches to the boards.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I thank my colleague from Etobicoke-Lakeshore for the question. I think, at the end of the day, it comes to what is the structure that we need to create for school boards, and I don't think that that is going to happen in this individual bill.

When we talk about public education, it's our system that's existed, with school boards, since 1867. It went through some changes—big changes—in 1997. I think we're at the time where we do need to look at how do we ensure our public school system is going to be effective, but we can't do this by playing whack-a-mole: "Oh, there's an issue here, there's an issue here and there's an issue here." Let's involve everybody as part of that conversation and truly create a system that's going to be effective and that's going to deliver results for students and their families.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Question?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the member's answer just now, Madam Speaker, because he's talking about centralizing, really, in that answer right there. He's talking about centralizing. Again, we have to drill down on his comments, right, and I haven't heard an answer from any of the opposition on this. Under the current rules, if a board is running at a surplus, no matter what is happening in that board, the minister does not have the authority to step in and make things right. So when they went on a vacation to Italy and spent \$200,000 as opposed to fixing lead pipes in a school, I could not step in and do anything about it.

When Thames Valley was at a surplus and then hid what their expenses were, so that now they're at a multi-million-dollar deficit, I could not step in. This bill allows me to step in in boards that have fallen off the rails, where we know things are happening, as opposed to waiting for their circumstances to change to a point where it is so bad for teachers, parents and students.

So if he doesn't like that—if the members don't like that, what is their alternative to dealing with boards that are rogue and not hurting students in the classroom?

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I would say, working in school boards before, most school boards were generally, in some ways, quite afraid of the Ministry of Education already. We saw that throughout COVID. There were directives upon directives upon directives that the ministry expected school boards to comply with, and school boards by and large did comply with those directives.

I'm saying, let's stop this whack-a-mole approach. Let's stop this. Let's stop saying, "Oh, we've got all these issues," when really the real issue here is the underfunding of our public education system where kids with special needs are not getting the support in the classroom. Being able to step in and put a board under supervision is not going to fix that issue, and that is the issue that's impacting student learning and well-being in the classroom.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Question?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I have a question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to continue to debate on this again. Let's drill down exactly to what the member is talking about, yet again. We'll try again. We've been trying with the NDP and we'll try again with the Liberals.

Again, when a school is in surplus, I'm not talking—whack-a-mole, yeah; I want to whack the boards that aren't doing the things that they're supposed to do—when you're in a surplus and you're diverting money from students, parents and teachers, but you are protected by a surplus so the minister can't do anything about it, should the minister have the ability to whack them, put them back on track and redirect resources back into the classroom, or do I need to wait until they go into a deficit, have cut funding from students, have cut funding from teachers, have taken away money from capital projects, because that

is how you think the system should work. I think the opposite, but give me the solution to that problem and why you don't support the bill when it is fundamentally about putting boards back on track no matter where they are in their fiscal situation, putting them back on track and putting more resources back into the class.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I would say simply the criteria is way too broad in order to do that and just give the minister carte blanche to be able to go in there and take over a board. As I said during my remarks, I think there are situations where it makes sense that a board should be taken over. Financial mismanagement is absolutely one of those situations. What happened in Brant Haldimand Norfolk, what happened in Thames Valley, frankly, should never have happened in our system.

But if we don't actually deal with the structure of the system. Instead of just saying we're going to go in and you're saying some of these boards—well, what about other boards that are actually, maybe, doing some good things, but there's a piece of property that the Premier or folks lobbying the Premier want? Well, create a false pretext, go into that board and do that. That's what I'm saying we need to try and avoid in this situation. Let's create the system so that it works—so that it works for students, so that it works for families.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): There isn't enough time.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Oh, I think there is.

Laughter.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): And as the Acting Speaker, it is up to me.

Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise to debate Bill 33, and I think this is an especially important time to have a debate around our education system, our support systems for children and youth and our post-secondary education, because our public schools, colleges and universities are facing a financial crisis that is having a negative impact on students and the quality of education they deserve. And the support systems for children and youth services are quite frankly—I said this a couple of weeks of ago for purple shirt day—being held together with love and duct tape due to underfunding of the systems of support and care for our most vulnerable children. As a result, our kids are not okay, our students are not okay, and I don't think Bill 33 is going to solve those problems. As a matter of fact, it will likely make them worse.

1550

I especially want to thank my colleague from Kitchener Centre who, as a long-time school social worker before being elected as an MPP, was working on the front lines on many of these issues in our schools and in our communities and has been a passionate and strong advocate on these issues.

Speaker, I just want to quickly start on schedule 1 to point out—and I know the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services has a big heart. I've told him that many times, but it's hard to make your ministry work when, according to the Financial Accountability Officer,

MCSS currently has a \$1.5-billion funding shortfall just to meet their basic services, and that's going to grow to \$3.1 billion over the next three years. And it's our most vulnerable children who are paying the price for that. So, while we can clean up some language about oversight in children and youth services, it's not going to solve the problem that there's insufficient funding to have the capacity needed to care for children, especially those in care.

I want to move to schedule 2. Again, we hear over and over that funding for schools has gone up—when population goes up, when inflation goes up, aggregate funding goes up—but per-student funding has actually been going down by \$1,500 per student since this government was elected. When that happens, it becomes incredibly challenging for school boards and school districts to meet the basic education needs of our students, especially those with special needs. So, a lack of ECEs, a lack of special education, a lack of having manageable class sizes in our schools is the real problem that our education system is facing.

I know the minister seems to want to use this bill as a way to set up the elimination, sometime in the future, of our school boards, but I want to remind members here that our school boards play a vital role in local democracy, hearing from parents, acting on the needs of the community, and oftentimes, Queen's Park-imposed solutions don't work for every community. I think the school resource officer issue contained in this bill is an example of that. Some school boards in some communities want resource officers, and it makes sense for those schools, and others don't, because it doesn't make sense for those schools, especially those with higher populations of students who may be Indigenous, people of colour. So I'm just wondering why the government wants to impose one-size-fits-all solutions and not allow our local school boards to have some local decision-making that makes sense for their communities and their schools. I'm concerned about what seems to be the increasing centralization of power into the minister's hands at the expense of local school boards.

Speaker, I want to close with schedule 3, affecting post-secondary education. I can tell, as somebody who represents a community that has the University of Guelph in it—I've been meeting with so many students, did a town hall with students from the University of Guelph, and what I heard from each and every one of those students was they are deeply concerned about the loss of student fees and the important role that student fees play in enhancing the educational experience and the quality of life for students. Those fees pay for a number of things, like student-run food banks. You would be shocked at the number of university and college students experiencing hunger. They pay for things like mental health and health and wellness programs that support students. They pay for student clubs that enhance the educational experience and the résumés that students have when they seek jobs after graduation. They support important campus events.

I know the government has gone after student fees in the past—they lost in the courts—and now they're taking

another approach to go after student fees. I think that's going to deteriorate the experience of students—the democratic experience of running their own governments and quality of life on our campuses.

I also want to just briefly talk about—in the few minutes I have remaining—how our universities and colleges have done a great job of making sure that equity-deserving people have access to post-secondary education. I don't want to see that undermined by the changes in this bill. Why not leave universities and colleges to have the autonomy they need to make the decisions that make sense for them?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate that the member brought up the school resource officers because I think that's an important part of what this bill is. But I wonder if the member—he talks about the ability of boards to make decisions, and let me be clear: I've never said that I would eliminate school boards. It's never come out of my mouth. It's not on the agenda, not going to happen. School boards will still exist.

But I wonder if he would agree with me that our police forces across the province have the ability and are smart enough to know how to work with school boards in order to make this program a success in each of the boards and that, by working with our police officers and with our school boards and with principals and teachers, we can make the program a better success than it was before and that the answer isn't always just saying no to the very same people who we ask to come in and help us when things go awry in a school.

Does he agree with me that we can do this in a fashion that works better than it did back in 2017?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I just want to put on the record right now, today, that the minister said school boards will not be eliminated. I'm actually pleased to hear that today.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I said that all the time.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Okay. So that is on the record. I'm glad we have that on the record because I can't tell you how—I'm a regular on Newstalk 1010, and I can't tell you how many political panels I've been on where Conservative commentators are talking about the fact that they're going to get rid of school boards. So I'm glad we have it on the record today.

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Oh, the trustees. Oh, okay—maybe it's the trustees then.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Anyway, I just want to be clear on that. I want to be really clear on that.

On school resource officers, I think the point you're making is the point I'm making: Why not allow local school boards to make these decisions and to work with our police services at a local level to have the program work the way it should in schools, in a way that benefits schools? It can be different in different schools rather than saying every school has to have the program. The bill says every school—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Questions?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: We know—and you mentioned this—that \$1,500 per student in public schools has been cut. So boards, teachers, everybody is really struggling to meet the needs of students, especially special-needs students.

We also know that the colleges are down at least \$13,000 per student relative to the average in the province, and university students are also way below the national average.

My question is, when you see in this bill—we see a tax on democracy through the potential loss of locally elected trustees; we see a tax on student organizations and their democratic processes. Do you see this bill as a distraction from the persistent underfunding of our public education system?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Well, I certainly see that the underfunding of our public education system, K-to-12 and post-secondary, is a huge problem that is negatively affecting our students and children in the province—no doubt about it.

Let's take post-secondary as an example. We have the lowest-funded college system of any province in the country. We have the second-lowest-funded university system of any province in the country. It would take a \$2-billion-to-\$3-billion-a-year increase in funding just to get us to the Canadian average—just to get us to the average.

The next great companies come out of the research, both applied and theoretical, out of our post-secondary sector—future workers. The under-investment in our colleges and universities is going to have real, negative impacts on our economy and jobs moving forward, and the ability to have innovation and research develop great companies.

Same thing at K-to-12. I was just meeting with the miners. They tell me it's safer to work in a mine now than in a school because the underfunding in our schools is leading to an increase in violence.

1600

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Thank you, Speaker, and good afternoon. Before getting started, I'd like to just share that I'll be sharing my time with the MPP for Essex.

I'm pleased to be here today to speak in support of Bill 33, the Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025. This bill, if passed, would amend the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, more commonly known or referred to as the CYFSA, and other related acts, to improve accountability and transparency in children's aid societies and expand and clarify Ombudsman oversight to better support children and youth receiving services under the CYFSA.

Since first being elected, our government has taken action to improve the child welfare system in the province of Ontario. Bill 33 builds on this important work and will help improve the child welfare system so that the focus is on services that prioritize safety and protection; are high-

quality; and are responsive to the cultural and social needs of children, youth and families.

Throughout this process, we've consulted with community partners about how we can better support children and youth, and I sincerely thank everyone who took the time to share their thoughts and experiences with us. The measures we're proposing in Bill 33 build on much of that feedback, as well as recommendations from Ontario's Ombudsman who, by the way, has been doing this incredibly important work in the province for 50 years now.

But not only that, Bill 33, the Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025, was also informed by public consultation on Bill 188, the Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024, and extensive public engagement as part of the CYFSA legislative review.

Speaker, we will never stop working to better protect children and youth. Ongoing engagement with community partners is an important element of the changes we're making to improve the safety and well-being of children and youth receiving services from a children's aid society.

That's why the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is building on the work of Bill 33 and is consulting with children's aid societies and out-of-home care licensees on proposed regulatory amendments. These proposed regulatory changes would require societies and out-of-home care licensees to display age-appropriate information about the rights of children and youth and the complaints procedures in child-friendly language and in areas that are accessible to youth.

Through engagements, as well through the CYFSA legislative review, we heard that children and young people don't always remember or understand their rights. We want children and youth to feel more supported and heard by having an increased awareness of their rights and understand how to make a complaint because every child and youth in this province deserves to be protected. These proposed requirements would help ensure all children and youth in care better understand and exercise their rights by having information more accessible and available to them.

This change would align with existing requirements for societies and out-of-home care licensees to post information about the Ombudsman and similarly aligns with requirements in other care settings.

These proposed regulatory requirements build on our work, including the release of Ontario's Quality Standards Framework. This important framework was developed in response to a recommendation from the Office of the Chief Coroner expert panel. The quality standards framework provides an overview of what high-quality out-of-home care looks like across all sectors and settings that make up licensed out-of-home care for children and young people in the province of Ontario. These sectors include child welfare, youth justice, child and youth mental health and special needs.

The quality standards framework is an educational tool that provides guidance on the many aspects of high-quality care that are necessary to support vulnerable children and youth in out-of-home care and help to meet their needs, supporting them to thrive and achieve better outcomes.

To help ensure the success of the quality standards framework, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services released free training to help the sector better understand and apply the framework. The ministry also released a child-friendly website and poster called "The Care You Deserve" to help children and young persons understand the quality standards.

As you can see, Speaker, Bill 33 and the regulatory amendments that we are proposing are part of our continued commitment to people across Ontario who depend on our services. We're working to help ensure that all children and youth have access to the resources and supports they need to thrive and succeed.

This work builds on our government's introduction of the children and youth—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm sorry to interrupt the member.

Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, please adjourn the debate.
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

FIGHTING DELAYS, BUILDING FASTER ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 VISANT À LUTTER CONTRE LES RETARDS ET À CONSTRUIRE PLUS RAPIDEMENT

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 27, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 60, An Act to amend various Acts and to enact the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2025 /
Projet de loi 60, Loi modifiant diverses lois et édictant la Loi de 2025 sur les sociétés publiques de gestion de l'eau et des eaux usées.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Adil Shamji: It gives me great pleasure to rise in this august chamber to discuss the latest government omnibus bill that has been presented before us, Bill 60, an Act to amend various Acts and to enact the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2025. The short title is a more inspiring, at least in words, though not in proposed action: Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025.

This is a government that has been elected for seven years, has introduced over 10 pieces of housing legislation and is still talking about trying to build faster, despite the fact that they have an abysmal housing record that trails every other province in our great Confederation.

As I commence my remarks, I want to reflect on a few things by first acknowledging the fact that the reason that we are debating this today, instead of tomorrow or next week, is because this government pushed through the time allocation of three bills very precipitously. It's not lost

upon me that those three bills were time-allocated. We don't actually know the reason why; presumably because, in the remainder of our legislative session, I believe the argument would be that there isn't enough time for us to adequately debate all of those—which, if true, is difficult to believe and understand, especially considering the fact that we are returning from a five-month extended vacation of this government's own creation. They had no problem asking for that and yet now are stymieing reasonable debates in an affront to democracy by time allocating three bills and bringing this forward.

Now, on any given day in my office, we are inundated with the series of concerns: rampant unaffordability; people can't find jobs, they can't put food on the table, they can't afford their groceries—all phenomena that are distinct to this government and its last seven years of mismanagement. I encounter issues related to health care, specifically lack of access to primary care. We've heard lots from this government about actions that they propose to take on addressing that crisis, but I've yet to see any of those things materialize.

And then of course, on a regular basis, we hear about challenges that people are facing being able to get access to housing—access to housing in the form of being able to afford a home that they can purchase or being able to pay the rent so that they can at least have a lease in a home.

Even when we look at the issues that are impacting the rental sector in our province, on a regular basis in my office, I am confronted by tenants in tears who in some cases have been illegally evicted, locked out, are being confronted with renovictions, demovictions, are being confronted with repeated above-guideline increases that aren't justified. And at the same time, my office is also confronted by good-faith landlords who are being taken advantage of by bad-faith tenants. The reality is that we face a housing sector and specifically a rental sector that is struggling because of bad actors on both sides.

1610

The legislation that has been introduced before us presented an opportunity to put forward good, strong solutions that could help good-faith landlords and good-faith tenants. It was an opportunity to actually be able to build faster, to create a robust home building sector. As I will outline over the remaining hour, I think that we have missed this opportunity.

In our province, we have the worst home building performance in our entire Confederation. Every other province from coast to coast is building more homes this year than they did last year. Ontario alone is the sole province that is building fewer homes this year than last—as of the last CMHC numbers, if my memory serves me correctly, an 18% decline in home building starts. This decline is causing prices to remain entirely out of reach for Ontario residents. I myself live in a very modest home that's almost 100 years old, semi-detached, quite small. We moved into it approximately seven years ago, my wife and I. And we wouldn't be able to afford the home that we live in if we were forced to have to try to purchase it today.

This legislation is an opportunity to address that and unfortunately is an opportunity that has been missed.

Because we are seeing all of these things, the crisis that we face, that we are witnessing in our housing sector is manifesting in a number of ways. We're seeing rampant suffering. People are sleeping in the streets. Homelessness is on the rise. On any given night in Ontario, it's estimated that at least 80,000 people are sleeping on the streets. Temperatures are lowering. The weather is about to get worse. It's about to turn to winter, and my heart breaks to think what is going to happen to those 80,000 people. But the crisis that we face in our housing sector doesn't just manifest in homelessness; it manifests in growing encampments—encampments that this government seeks to eradicate through undignified and inhumane ways, by criminalizing, for example, mental health and addictions, rather than addressing the root causes for why we're seeing such homelessness and desperation.

But if it's not homelessness and encampments, the crisis then manifests itself in a loss of productivity, because if people, especially young people, cannot afford homes in Ontario either because they cannot afford the rent or they cannot afford to purchase a home, then they're just leaving the province. And other provinces—British Columbia, Alberta, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland—they are the beneficiaries of our talent, of our intelligent, industrious, inspiring young people.

And if that's not one of the ways that people are suffering because of this housing crisis, some people persist and instead live in precarious and unsafe conditions. I myself have witnessed, having worked for many years in Toronto shelters, PSWs, personal support workers, who provide such incredible care and support to our health care system to some of our most vulnerable individuals, having no choice, because they can't make ends meet, they're not paid enough and they can't afford rent, but to work in long-term-care homes by day and then retire to shelters by night.

And the crisis further manifests itself by people having to delay major milestones in life. They can't get into a home, or they can't move up the housing ladder. As a result, people are reconsidering whether they will have kids, whether they will move out from their parents. And seniors are asking themselves, "How can we downsize?" And they're realizing that they can't.

Home prices are out of control. Rent is out of control. And, as I alluded to, with the unending lineup of both tenants and landlords coming to my office in desperation, the Landlord and Tenant Board has become virtually inaccessible. So people sleep on the street, they leave the province, they persist in unsafe and precarious conditions, and we are the ones—the people of Ontario—to suffer.

As I mentioned, we are the worst-performing province in the country and the only province that had fewer housing starts this year than last—18% lower. Canada, as a whole, is building 4% more housing than in 2024. But if Ontario went from negative 18% to 0%, the Canadian growth would be three times as high, bringing the Canadian number of new homes up to 12% higher than in 2024.

We are dragging down the rest of the country. This legislation could have taken a meaningful step to address that, but it doesn't.

Some of Ontario's biggest cities are the ones that are taking the brunt of Ontario's failure. Across Canada, of the bottom seven cities for home building that have above 10,000 residents, six of them are in Ontario: Guelph, Peterborough, London, Oshawa, Windsor and Toronto. And of the 15 cities nationwide that had negative growth, eight of them are in Ontario. That is an indictment of this Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and this Premier.

"In the first nine months of the year, Ontario had just over 28,000 condo and freehold housing starts—the lowest level since 1995. And with new/pre-construction sales falling, things are going to get worse before they get better." That is a direct quote from the esteemed Dr. Mike Moffatt.

Let's talk about this bill. This government promised that they would deliver 1.5 million homes by 2031, and there is nothing in this bill that shows the government is planning for 1.5 million homes. We barely hear anyone even talk about that number anymore because the government is embarrassed to raise the issue. It may or may not be the case that this government is hoping for 1.5 million homes. I suspect that they are praying for 1.5 million homes, but I can assure you that there is nothing in this legislation that will require municipalities to plan for or build 1.5 million homes.

It's worth reflecting on why we're in the situation that we're in. I'll begin by addressing what the government side will tell you. They will say that it's someone else's fault. They'll point their fingers to the federal government. They will say, for example, that interest rates are too high, very conveniently ignoring the fact that, since about June 2024, there have been nine successive interest rate cuts. The current interest rate, if my memory serves me correctly, is 2.5%.

Not only have we seen nine successive interest rate cuts, it just so happens that Ontario does not exist in this Confederation in isolation. There are a number of other provinces from coast to coast that experience the same interest rate and are successfully able to navigate an interest rate of 2.5% to show quite impressive levels of growth in our home building sector.

So the government said, "We're going to build 1.5 million homes by 2031." It is a target that they set and is a target that this bill abandons.

Now, of course, this bill is not only about housing. I'd like to take a moment just to review a number of its provisions before I dive into some of the details and some of the more concerning schedules and elements of this bill.

1620

The Fighting Delays, Building Fact Faster Act proposes to do really three things: Build homes and communities, fight delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board, and keep people moving. At face value, these certainly come across as noble goals. They sound like things that we could all agree on—in fact, we all do agree on—and they are all

things that we aspire to. It is the ways in which this legislation actually seeks to achieve these ends that really is so concerning to so many of us.

It proposes to build on previous legislation, and as I mentioned, we have now seen before this House since 2018, 10 successive pieces of housing legislation, and each one usually reverses something that was in the last one. In other cases, successive bills promise to continue consulting on the same things that previous bills said. So, for example, we're still consulting on single-stair egress in multi-story residences despite the fact that that has been brought up again and again and again. When are we actually going to do it?

In any case, as it relates to building homes and communities, the bill sets out to do a few things:

- to reduce building code regulatory burdens;
- to streamline municipal application processes;
- to streamline official plans—even though, again, there's nothing here to get official plans to reflect 1.5 million homes by 2031;
- to make modifications to the development charges framework—definitely more on that to come; and
- to do away with things like green roofs and green development standards because, of course, only in this government would they be able to make the argument that a provision for green roofs is the reason that we're not able to hit 1.5 million homes by 2031.

There are some things that relate to transit-oriented communities, protected major transit station areas, as-of-right variations—don't get me started on as-of-right, but I'll get there anyways—ministerial zoning orders and some infrastructure changes.

The bill also goes on to address delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board. I think all of us in this House can agree that there are endless delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board, and we've all heard from landlords and tenants who are struggling to seek justice against bad-faith actors on both sides.

The challenge, however, is the way in which this legislation seeks to amend the Residential Tenancies Act and the way in which it exclusively focuses on challenges facing landlords without any consideration towards the unique challenges and the various manners in which renters, in good faith, may have been mistreated or have faced injustice at the hands of bad-faith landlord actors.

It has a number of provisions such as reducing the time that parties have to request an eviction review from 30 days to 15 days. It allows the government to prescribe contents of notices of termination, including the N4 form. It sets out to shorten the rent arrears eviction notice period. It says some things about the postponement of eviction orders. It increases enforcement resources to reduce wait times to enforce LTB eviction orders once they are filed—more on that to come.

Additionally, there are measures here to ostensibly keep people moving, in many cases by heavy-handed provincial government interference. For example, it has provisions to prohibit vehicle lane reductions for new bicycle lanes, as well as for public transit. It purports to strengthen require-

ments for drivers from non-reciprocal jurisdictions. It has requirements to require additional identification for the issuance of driver's licence and photo ID cards, and so on and so forth.

So what I would like to do is take a moment to take us on a journey through some of these schedules and address what I believe are some of the concerns. When this legislation was initially tabled last week—as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will know—it rapidly led to an incredible amount of outcry and concern amongst renters and tenants, because it proposed to consult on a provision known as security of tenure.

Security of tenure is the condition by which renters in good faith can count on being able to remain in their homes and have the option to extend their lease without being evicted. Obviously, it depends on renters acting in good faith and being in compliance and adherence with the Residential Tenancies Act. When this first came out, it very rapidly led many renters and tenants, who had been acting in good faith, to appropriately worry that this government sought to unilaterally and heavy-handedly side with landlords.

We've been down this path before. On the east coast, when security of tenure was abolished, we saw evictions go up by 400%. This would have almost guaranteed a dramatic increase in the number of evictions that we saw in our province. It would have been a cruel, mean-spirited and lazy approach to addressing the challenges that we face in our Landlord and Tenant Board, and the injustices that landlords and tenants are facing in the current system.

I thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for realizing the lack of wisdom in proposing to move forward on this policy. I commend him for coming out this weekend and saying that the government would no longer be proceeding with those consultations. However, what worries me, in the discourse that followed that, is the government has not committed to not pursuing consultations on security of tenure indefinitely. In fact, they have said that they will not pursue those consultations for now.

Given the scale of the crisis that we face, given the challenges that so many people are facing, given the precarity in our housing sector, given the rampant homelessness and the evictions, the proposal to reintroduce consultations on security of tenure would be catastrophic—even worse, if it were to proceed to be implemented.

I can certainly hope that we will never see a return of this dangerous proposal to bring back fixed-term leases that would effectively abolish rent control. I will say on the issue of rent control—I would remind all members on the opposite side and the Premier that in 2018, a commitment was made not to touch rent control. Of course, what happened almost immediately, rent control was abolished for properties that have been built after 2018.

It is alarming to me that someone on the opposite side is now contemplating—instead of bringing back a fair and phased-in form of rent control—there is someone on the other side, perhaps Kory Teneycke, who is interested in expanding the abolition of rent control, so that even people who occupy units prior to 2018 no longer have that digni-

fied protection in the midst of a housing and affordability crisis.

There are, of course, additional concerns that are raised under the amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act. For example, there is a provision to redefine what are considered to be late payments, a provision that opens the door for landlords to start the eviction process, even if a tenant is just one day late on rent. We are in an affordability crisis, and for people who are living paycheque to paycheque, that could mean eviction for being late by only hours.

There are provisions in this legislation to silence tenants in nonpayment-of-rent cases. Of course, if there is an issue with nonpayment of rent, that needs to be addressed, and it should be addressed at the Landlord and Tenant Board. We are seeing bad-faith tenants who are taking advantage of the system, and the Landlord and Tenant Board must be there to hold them to account. But under these provisions, even well-intentioned tenants would no longer be able to raise new issues, like serious disrepair that impacts tenants' health and safety; or issues with landlord harassment or repeated, inappropriate, above-guideline increases. These would no longer be allowed to be brought up during nonpayment-of-rent cases, especially if strict LTB deadlines are missed. It's very hard to keep track of these things, especially if you're facing eviction; especially if you're struggling to put food on the table; especially if you're living hand to mouth, month to month.

1630

Furthermore, there are provisions here that would cut tenant notice periods in half. As it stands currently, tenants have 14 days to pay their rent before a landlord can apply to the LTB for eviction for nonpayment; reducing this to just seven days would push countless tenants over the edge. Again, I want to be clear: There are bad-faith actors here, and we do need to make sure that evictions, if and when appropriate, can happen. Reducing delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board can allow that to happen in a fair and equitable, transparent and accountable way. But not allowing people sufficient time, especially in an affordability crisis, only makes things worse and runs an extreme risk of worsening our housing crisis, and specifically, our homelessness crisis.

I next want to turn to some amendments that have been introduced in the Highway Traffic Act which, if passed, would override municipalities' ability to make their own decisions. These provisions in the Highway Traffic Act would allow the province to interfere in municipalities' decisions for the implementation of bike lanes and bus rapid transit and bus lanes, representing, yet again, another way in which this Premier is actually more interested in being the mayor of Toronto and the mayor of all other municipalities. In doing so, this legislation drastically limits the ability of municipalities to make their own decisions about things like bike lanes. Furthermore, it would take away from the ability of municipalities to capitalize on their investments in public transit. For example, if they wanted to institute bus rapid transit lanes, this would interfere with their ability to do so.

We have an obligation here, as provincial legislators, to establish the foundation and the framework for municipalities to be able to succeed, without going in and micromanaging everything that they do. For a provincial Legislature to introduce legislation that would allow them to interfere in a municipality's public transit decisions strikes me and so many of us as provincial overreach.

The amendments to the Highway Traffic Act, additionally, have provisions that would allow the minister to require evidence of residency, legal work and visa status for the issuance or renewal of any licence, permit or certificate under the Highway Traffic Act. There's a further provision that allows something similar as it relates to the Photo Card Act.

Of course, on this side of the House and the other, we want to make sure that we stand up against crime, that we work to prevent fraud and ensure that we—that we take measures to protect that. But at the same time, I must reflect on some of my clinical work prior to being elected. I worked in very many shelters across the city of Toronto, and one of the challenges that we faced is that people couldn't get access to health care because they didn't have a health card. It wasn't because they weren't citizens. It wasn't because they were illegal aliens or they were misrepresenting themselves as someone else. It wasn't because they were engaging in any sort of fraudulent behaviour. It was because they were struggling with their own health care challenges because they were itinerant. They didn't spend a night in the same location. They were moving from shelter to shelter. It was because they may have struggled with mental health challenges such as schizophrenia, where the hallmark diagnostic criterion is profound disorganization, which makes it difficult to keep track of your wallet, which makes it difficult—virtually impossible to plan out your day, to be able to go to a ServiceOntario to get to get your photo ID. It makes it virtually impossible to be able to remember or find or ask for a passport that you could use to prove your citizenship.

While this amendment is being brought under the auspices of being able to fight crime and fraud and being able to verify individuals, essentially what it will do is it will continue on a long path that this government has taken to discriminate and make life difficult for some of the most vulnerable and marginalized people in our province.

There's a part of my riding, the south part of my riding in Don Valley East, Flemingdon Park. It has a disproportionately larger number of people who come from other countries. They're immigrants, they're refugees, and they need help getting sorted out with their paperwork and their residency status and those kinds of things. Many of those things—not all—are dealt with at the provincial level. We once had a ServiceOntario that was perfectly and appropriately situated in the heart of Flemingdon Park. Just a short while ago, that was taken from us, and because it was taken from us, we have vulnerable, marginalized people, people who may not speak English, people who are struggling to make ends meet—who may not have their first car yet, may struggle to use public transit—and now they face additional barriers because they don't have their

ServiceOntario in a nearby location to be able to get their photo cards, to be able to get their driver's licence. And even then, even after having gone through all of that, even if they do find a way to get to a ServiceOntario, now they have additional steps that they will have to go through, additional barriers that will only make it more difficult for them to access a health card or for them to be able to get a driver's licence so that they can go out and they can find a job. So this is deeply problematic and, frankly, borders on discriminatory.

I also want to spend a little bit of time talking about schedule 6, which looks at the Local Roads Boards Act. Under the current system, the amount of a payment to a local road board qualifies that board to twice as much money from our government, from the Legislature. The amendments in this legislation would allow approval by the minister for voluntary contributions from non-taxed land to allow the minister to fund road construction with provincial funds to the benefit of private non-taxed land. The reason that I want to highlight that is that may have the potential to be a Skills Development Fund 2.0 or a greenbelt 3.0—because green belt 2.0 is the Skills Development Fund. Essentially, what it could allow is mining lands, for example, that are being managed by private companies—of course, there are many great actors out there, but it could allow for a bad actor to be able to pay their way into getting multiples of their investment in funds back from the provincial government. So there is the potential for misuse if it were to proceed as passed.

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I also want to turn to schedule 10, where there are provisions in the Planning Act to make adjustments to ministerial zoning orders. Specifically, a provision in schedule 10 would exempt ministerial zoning orders from the Legislation Act, which would remove requirements for public comment and length of filing. This would exempt MZOs from being consistent with ministry policy statements, including regarding the greenbelt.

I don't think that anyone here, at least on this side of the House, ever thought, when it relates to ministerial zoning orders, that we need to make them easier to go through. I don't intend to sound obstructionist about that.

I would like to refer to the Auditor General report which, of all the very many recommendations—I believe that there were 19—there were none that argued that the MZO process should be streamlined. In fact, those 19 recommendations offered suggestions for how the process to develop and implement and execute ministerial zoning orders should be strengthened and subjected to more, not less, oversight.

I'll quote from the Auditor General: "Our audit concluded that the ministry does not consistently provide the minister with timely and complete information relating to the projects proposed for an MZO." The AG said there is "no protocol and no apparent rationale for prioritizing some MZO requests over others...."

"The ministry did not consistently assess whether rezoning by MZO, as opposed to the municipal planning process, was needed...."

“Some projects on the sites rezoned with an MZO will not have access to servicing (for example, water and waste water) for years and sometimes decades. They now face foreseeable and significant delays. These delays beg the question why an MZO was used instead of the municipal planning process.”

In other words, according to the Auditor General, the implementation of ministerial zoning orders has been haphazard, poorly overseen, poorly implemented and, in many cases, simply the wrong thing to do. Consequently, implementing measures that would, in fact, only make the MZO process subject to less oversight and rushed through even more than it already is only invites the possibility that we will see more MZOs used inappropriately, more MZOs leading to actually greater delays than intended even though they were implemented to try and speed things up and, potentially, as we have seen in a number of circumstances, create the possibility that MZOs could be exchanged for favours, funds or donations.

Instead, if this government was actually serious about fixing the MZO process, they could have implemented any one of the 19 recommendations that the Auditor General put forward. For example, they said that for each MZO request, MMAH should “perform due diligence to assess ... and document whether the project’s expected outcomes and benefits are feasible and plausible.” It didn’t say, “Rush it through,” and certainly did not say, “Limit the public consultation.”

If they were serious, they could have taken the recommendation that MMAH “inform all municipalities”—not stop municipalities from being informed; not stop the public consultation process—“about what options and parameters are possible for MZOs ... and what additional tools may be available to achieve municipal objectives.”

They could have implemented the recommendation that MMAH “document the ministry’s priorities in processing MZO requests and instances where requests for MZOs are not prioritized in accordance with those priorities”—again, consultation, not secrecy, not lack of accountability, not a lack of transparency, as we have seen also with the Skills Development Fund.

I could go on and on and on about MZOs, but I will spare you that. I’m not going to read all 19 of the recommendations.

I’ve always maintained that Ontario Liberals, we will be the voice of the people, we will be the people’s opposition, but we will never just be a party of opposition. We will be a party of proposition. And I see my role here, we see our role, on this side of the House, as appropriately pointing out when the government is doing something wrong but also taking the opportunity to explain to the government when they can do things in a better way.

Allow me to share some of the things I wish I saw in this legislation, which I am not. If we are truly and genuinely committed to solving the housing crisis that we face right now, there are a number of things that we could have and should have seen.

The first is this government could have eliminated the provincial land transfer tax for first-time home buyers, for

seniors who are downsizing and for non-profit home builders. Implementing a policy such as this could have saved families and seniors, on average, \$13,500 off the cost of a new home. Rather than doing that, this government has engaged in stunts like giving \$200 cheques right before an election in the hope that they can distract Ontario voters from the affordability crisis of their own creation. And \$200 may well have been great at the time, but it can barely buy the boots for the children in a family. It certainly cannot pay anyone’s rent. It might put food on the table for a week or two but does nothing after that.

But getting people into a home by, for example, eliminating the land transfer tax and reducing the cost of a home by \$13,500 would transform someone’s life. It would also help people climb the housing ladder. For example, get seniors who may live in a three- or four-bedroom house, but their children have moved out—it would make it possible for them to be able to downsize, therefore unlocking a new home for a new family on their way up.

Another thing that could have appeared in this legislation, but which does not, is this government could have scrapped development charges on new middle-class housing. As we know, punitive and excessive costs, such as the land transfer tax for certain populations and development charges, can add dramatic costs to the price of a home. In the case of development charges, they can add up to \$170,000 to the price of a new home.

But municipalities, under this government, because of a lack of funding for infrastructure, because of the persistent and progressive downloading of provincial responsibilities onto municipalities, feel backed into a corner, and have, in growing numbers in recent years, felt as though they have no choice but to implement increasing and growing development charges.

Additionally, in this legislation, rather than showing their hand at this government’s intention to eliminate rent control, they could have taken a different tack altogether. They could have proceeded to actually introduce a fair, phased-in rent control, similar to what we’ve seen in Manitoba under Wab Kinew. This would have made housing and rent more affordable, rather than making people fearful about whether they’re going to get evicted next week or next month.

Now, many people might say, “Okay, but what do we do if we hadn’t implemented development charges—how are municipalities going to pay for their infrastructure?” Well, of course, that is the province’s responsibility, to support municipalities with that. There should have been an infrastructure fund that would go along with that. And of course, that is not the case.

Another important solution that I would have liked to have seen relates again to the cost of housing. We saw yesterday that this government made an announcement to great fanfare. For all that they say that they will do to protect Ontario, they have done little to protect the housing sector. I’ve already spoken at length to the scale and scope of our housing crisis and some of the reasons that we got here. Yesterday, this government put forward a feeble,

weak-kneed, half-hearted proposal to eliminate the HST on new primary residences for first-time homebuyers only. That may work for other provinces, but it doesn't work for Ontario. Seven years of this Premier's bad housing policies have only brought our home building sector to a near standstill.

1650

Limiting HST relief to only first-time homebuyers doesn't unlock housing for seniors who want to downsize or young families trying to move up. The program, which caps the HST rebate at \$1 million, barely unlocks housing in Toronto—the most expensive and populated housing market in the province. It also excludes 83% of buyers hoping to move up the housing ladder which, in turn, unlocks new opportunities for first-time homebuyers.

So the announcement yesterday excluded the vast majority of Ontarians, didn't do anywhere near enough to spur home building, to provide security to our construction and home building sectors, or to drive the supply that we need. So I want to reiterate that this anemic response could have been met with a bold solution that meets the depth of the crisis that we face.

Every other province is doing better in their home building sectors, so we can't just do what other provinces are doing. What we should have done, and what I would still encourage this government to do is, to rebate the provincial component of HST for new homes—primary residences, not investment properties—for all homebuyers, not just first-time homebuyers, effectively ending HST on new homes in Ontario.

This would unlock 45,000 homes in the next year alone and it would get the province back on track to building 1.5 million by 2031. It would save up to \$80,000 on the cost of a new home and reduce mortgage payments by \$240 a month. It would apply on a sliding scale on homes up to \$1.5 million, so that it could actually make a dent on housing markets, like here in the greater Toronto area.

The reality is that our Premier is satisfied with a housing spark, when what we want and need is a housing boom. A policy like this would help everyone. It would help Ontarians get their starter home, the home they want to raise their family in, and the home that they can grow old in.

Along the way, it would actually allow this government to protect Ontario. It would boost the demand for Ontario's steel and softwood lumber, create tens of thousands of construction jobs and increase housing supply. I want to remind the government: Doing nothing will certainly cost more than that. It will cost us in lost jobs, in fewer homes and a shrinking middle class. I urge the government members to remove the provincial HST on all new homes as an urgent economic necessity.

If members on the opposite side are disappointed that I can't offer a glowing endorsement of this legislation, I would say I'm not the only one. Tenants' associations and renters' associations are decrying this legislation. I was inundated when this bill was introduced by members in my riding, by constituents in Don Valley East and, frankly, people across the province who feared what this would

mean for the stability of their housing, for their ability to have somewhere warm with a roof over their head, to be able to put food on the table.

Additionally, there have been people who have pointed to some things that are incremental, beneficial steps. It is helpful that this government is at least beginning to talk about addressing challenges at the Landlord and Tenant Board, but it's missing any of the fundamental changes that need to happen.

For example, a very simple solution: We could move towards having the Landlord and Tenant Board finally again in person. The reality is that not every case needs to be seen and heard before an adjudicator. Prior to this government switching to exclusively virtual LTB hearings, many cases, a large number of disputes were managed in the hallways outside the tribunal room. This allowed a fair, reasonable, rational conversation to take place between multiple parties without having to implement unilateral or drastic measures. And frankly, many cases were resolved before anyone had to go into the courtroom. The abolition of such practice is one of the drivers for why we've seen such an increase in the backlog and the timelines to seek justice at the Landlord and Tenant Board.

There are other things that could be done. Modernizing outdated tax rules—I've spoken at length about the need to be able to change what's going on with the HST rebates and exemptions. We could see further cost-cutting for homebuyers. In terms of accelerating homebuilding, there are opportunities to implement new kinds of innovative technology and even artificial intelligence to help us build faster. I wish that we'd seen evidence in this legislation that this government is willing to take leadership and action on freeing up land and ending exclusionary zoning.

And we do need to find ways to galvanize, motivate and attract all elements of the homebuilding sector. That could involve private capital but also mobilize and empower our not-for-profit sector as well. Some of these recommendations have been put forward by members of BILD, and I know there are many other organizations who are watching with deep concern that this bill is a half measure. It is, at best, an incremental step when what we needed was a dramatic and revolutionary course of action.

My fellow colleagues will have more to say on all of these things, but if there are any points that I can underscore, it is this: Our housing sector is in crisis, and that demands that we respond with solutions, with ambition that match the gravity of the crisis. We've seen 10 pieces of legislation. They're almost always pretty incremental, almost always committed only to consultation, usually tip the hand at some pretty scary proposals such as the outright elimination of rent control.

I want to make, in my final moments, a very personal appeal that, while we take steps to increase the opportunities to seek justice for landlords and tenants—because both sides are suffering and both sides visit my office with grave concerns. My big appeal right now is to point out that this legislation entirely ignores the injustices that renters are facing right now. It villainizes them and ignores their very real and very significant concerns. I don't see

anything here that helps increase protections against above-guideline increases. I don't see anything here to protect tenants against renovictions. I don't see anything to protect my tenants against demovictions. And in my community of Don Valley East, particularly in Flemingdon Park, we are seeing that happen to an epidemic proportion.

Consequently, this bill becomes very difficult to support when it barely has anything of any great seriousness to address our housing crisis, and when it gives me nothing to go back and offer to my constituents in Don Valley East, especially the ones who are struggling with rent, struggling to put food on the table and struggling to figure out how they going to make, how they are going to pay, how they are going to submit the next rent cheque next month.

With that, I thank you for your thoughts, your attention and your consideration, and I welcome any questions.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I listened intently to the member from Don Valley East and his commentary on Bill 60.

1700

I think we all had the shared experience of the panic that set in once renters in this province realized that the government was contemplating removing the security of tenured leases. One actually had to really shake your head, because this obviously would destabilize the economy even further. Housing is the very anchor of a strong economy. People can't find work; people's health is compromised if they don't have safe and reliable housing.

The damage done in 2018, which he mentioned, to further destabilize renters in Ontario—the effects of that policy are heartbreaking, actually, and have compounded the housing issue.

I just want to ask the member: When the minister says that he won't move forward on consulting on removing the security of tenured leases, do you believe him and do you think the people of Ontario believe him?

Mr. Adil Shamji: I know that the people of Ontario certainly don't believe that.

I believe the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to be a good man. I believe that he means that. However, I believe the people who give him his marching orders, in the Premier's office and in Kory Teneycke's lobbying firm, don't believe that.

I don't doubt for a second that this government has tipped its hand and that we are not out of the woods yet, and that under this Premier and under this government, we may well be going down a path where, perhaps not in this legislation—I don't think it will be in this legislation, at this point, because I take the minister at his word. But perhaps in the next bill or the bill after that, we will indeed see an effort to end rent control and to remove security of tenure. This would be a grave, grave injustice to the people of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Thank you to my colleague the MPP for Don Valley East for your leadoff on this important bill. I appreciated the section where you reminded

us of the Auditor General's findings on the MZOs and, if I recollect, just the vast increase in the numbers that were issued.

I wondered if you wanted to just highlight again some of the concerns that you've got, especially related to schedule 10.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for that really thoughtful question.

I don't think the challenges that we have witnessed with ministerial zoning orders—and I would say that “challenge” is a bit of a euphemism. I don't believe those challenges can be underscored enough.

Essentially, what we have learned through the Auditor General and in the news is that in many cases MZOs have been traded like favours, have been made accessible to only those who have preferential access to Kory Teneycke or the Premier's office, and consequently have been utilized in an improper way. As I mentioned, in a number of cases, they have actually resulted in delays to the development process, delays to construction, because the normal processes to ensure infrastructure is in place have been skipped altogether.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Question?

MPP Paul Vickers: Speaker, the dream of home ownership is slipping away for too many young Ontarians. We know that every dollar wasted in delay or overregulation drives up the prices.

Bill 60 makes it easier to build and reduce costs for builders and families alike. It's a practical approach that focuses on outcomes and homes, not holdups.

Why does the opposition continue to defend the old, broken system that made housing less affordable for an entire generation?

Mr. Adil Shamji: I would encourage my friend and the member beside me to heed the words that I've spoken as opposed to the words that have been provided to him, because I made it very clear: The status quo, under this government, is not working.

I have proposed a number of innovative and bold proposals: eliminating HST for new primary residences for all homebuyers, essentially ending HST on new homes in our province. I proposed eliminating development charges, eliminating the land transfer tax, and I hope that I successfully made the case that the system of ministerial zoning orders, in many cases—according to the Auditor General, not according to me—has actually slowed down the process of building and development, not sped things up.

The point that I'm trying to make here is that this was an opportunity to fix those things, and it is a missed opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Question?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: We know that Ontario is in the middle of a jobs disaster thanks to this government, and people are relying more and more on keeping the housing that they've managed to find. We know that Ontario is dead last when it comes to building homes in this province,

and almost 40% of Ontarians are renters, and that number is growing faster than home ownership.

Can you explain why you think that this government would be making it easier for people to lose their housing, and that this government is focusing not on building homes but on trampling the rights of tenants? Why do you think that this is a priority for this government?

Mr. Adil Shamji: Thank you for that question. I want to say—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Say what you need to say. Say it.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'll say what I need to say. If the greenbelt, the Skills Development Fund or ministerial zoning orders have taught us anything, it's that this government and this Premier have friends in very powerful places who are facing the opportunity to make a lot of money by implementing various kinds of legislation and various kinds of schemes. Unfortunately, the opportunity to make large amounts of money off of the backs of tenants and renters is likely very enticing to the Premier and to some of his powerful friends. I'll leave it at that.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Ms. Laura Smith: I appreciate the member's statement. I know he talked about some of the changes that he thought were positive, and today we actually had a pretty significant announcement. As part of our plan, through the fall economic statement, we're proposing a rebate of a full 8% portion of the HST for first-time homebuyers on new homes valued up to \$1 million.

This is good news for me because I've got kids at home, and I don't want them staying in my house any time longer than they have to. So, I'm happy about them being first-time homeowners and having the possibility of moving not only within an economical but closer distance to their mother.

What do you think about the proposition or that measure that we're proposing in the economic statement?

Mr. Adil Shamji: It's a half measure. It's a step in the right direction, but as I mentioned in my remarks, it doesn't go far enough.

I might think that perhaps you would like them to stay close to you in the greater Toronto area. A million dollars doesn't get you very much in the greater Toronto area. It might drive them actually to be farther; it might get them into a home, but one that's farther away than you would like them to be.

The proposal that I put forward would have allowed an HST rebate up to \$1.5 million, which might make that more accessible. Additionally, it would unlock more homes because what it would allow by not only restricting it to first-time homebuyers is it would get people to move up from their starter homes to homes that they can grow their families in. That would unlock more housing for first-time homebuyers and allow your children to have more options at a more accessible price.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): We have time for a very quick question and answer.

Mr. Chris Glover: A very quick question: Under this government, rents have gone up by 40%. The cost of

housing has gone up by 40%. We've got 80,000 people homeless. We've got 1,400 encampments. And they're talking about if we just removed a little bit more red tape, they would be able to build housing. Why has this government failed so miserably at building housing?

Mr. Adil Shamji: Because talk is cheap. Actually being able to deliver on the promises is very difficult. Whether it's been in health care, whether it's been in affordability, and certainly whether it's been in housing, this government is really good at delivering novelty cheques for very small amounts of money, very good at making promises, but not very good at and, frankly, not very interested in actually delivering on the things that every—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

1710

Ms. Laura Smith: It's an honour to rise in the House today in strong support of Bill 60, Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025. This is the next step forward in our government's plan to protect Ontario by building faster and for less cost.

This bill carries forward the momentum we set last session through Bill 17, the Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act. Bill 17 laid the groundwork. If built, this foundation—and today, we are building on it—will make an impact in our communities, strengthening that foundation with practical, common-sense measures that reduce costs, remove delays and keep our province moving forward.

Speaker, we all know this is not business as usual. Across Ontario, uncertainty is shaping every sector in our economy, and the housing market is no exception. The cost of construction has gone up, approval times have stretched longer and for far too many families, the dream of home ownership feels out of their reach, more so than ever before.

That's why our government continues to act, because standing still is simply not an option. Bill 17 was a crucial step, and Bill 60 takes that work further. It strengthens the foundations we've built and moves us closer to a housing system that is efficient, fair and focuses on results. This bill is about protecting Ontario's future by ensuring we can build the homes, infrastructure and communities that our growing population needs. And it's about protecting opportunity to make sure workers stay on the job, families can find homes they can afford where they want to live and builders have a clear path to get those projects done. It's about a clear path.

Speaker, one of the driving facts behind this legislation is quite simple: It takes too long and costs too much to build. We are changing that. This bill is built around a single principle: make it easier to build—easier for builders, easier for families. We're cutting costs, we're cutting those timelines and we're cutting through the layers of red tape that stand between good projects and the people who need them. Because every day, every delay on that day adds so much more cost, and added cost prices some of the people out of the market.

The member opposite was talking earlier about children and our communities, and we don't want to price our kids out of the market. Every unnecessary barrier slows that progress Ontario needs, and this is simply not acceptable—not for this government and not for this province.

Housing affordability is one of the defining challenges of our time. We know this. It's a challenge, and we're not shirking on it. Families feel it. Young people saving for their first home feel it. Seniors who want to downsize feel it. And builders trying to respond to demand feel it. That's why this legislation continues our government's mission to lower the cost of building homes. We're tackling the policies and practices that inflate prices and slow down construction. And we're doing whatever makes sense—what is fair, practical and results-driven.

Let's talk about municipal development charges. For years, these charges have crept higher and higher, adding tens of thousands of dollars to the price of every new home. They were meant to fund real infrastructure such as roads, sewers and water, but far too often, they're a catch-all for inflated costs.

Bill 60 brings this back to reality. We're ensuring homebuyers pay only for the true cost of the infrastructure they are using—nothing more, nothing hidden. This is common sense, it's fair and it's how we protect Ontario homebuyers while ensuring municipalities can still fund the essential infrastructure their communities rely upon.

This government believes in partnerships. We have stepped it up, but it's time for others to do the same. The federal government made a promise to help reduce development charges during their previous campaign, and it's time they kept it. Ontario cannot shoulder this burden alone, and families cannot wait. We're doing what we must, but we must have a partner on this. While we call on Ottawa to deliver, Ontario will continue leading by example, taking real, practical action to reduce costs, streamline processes and get homes built faster.

Of course, Speaker, cost is only half the story. The other half of that story is the time. To quote the minister, "Time is money," and every month of delay keeps families waiting. Every layer of approval keeps workers idle. Every unnecessary requirement slows down growth. That's why Bill 60 attacks red tape head-on, simplifying, streamlining and clearing the way for construction to move forward. Take, for example, the communal water and waste water system. In many smaller and rural communities—I've spoken to so many of you who exist in these communities—new housing has been held back by overlapping provincial and municipal approvals, and we're fixing that. By aligning and simplifying these processes, we're empowering municipalities to unlock new development faster, expanding services, capacity and cutting months off the time it takes to bring projects to life. That's how you build smarter, and that's how you protect Ontario.

I was thinking about what the member opposite was talking about when he was talking about building for the next generation, and I'm very cognizant of that every day. I know the minister talks about his first home. I believe he

quoted the amount of \$55,000 many years ago, with very high interest rates. I, too—not that long ago—remember my first purchase of a home, which is actually the same home that I'm in right now, where I spent, I think, just under \$300,000, but I felt every penny of it. We need to provide these opportunities for the next generation. I have kids. I've said this in the House many times: I know that they're going to leave someday, and I want to make sure that they are in the best position to purchase a home. These are the kinds of changes that make real differences.

I'm going to talk about some of the reforms to standardizing development charges across Ontario. This includes setting rules for the treatment of land costs, improving transparency through accessible treasury statements and requiring municipalities to establish clear local service policies where charges were levied.

Additionally, this act will provide mechanisms to defer certain charges until occupancy. So they're deferring the charges until occupancy. This allows people to keep more money in their pockets, and, specifically, this allows the developers to create the homes without having those upfront DC fees. Once again, we're going back to talking about the next generation and providing them the best opportunity so that they too can purchase a home. These are the kinds of changes that make a real difference in communities across our province. It's not abstract policy shifts but practical improvements that get shovels in the ground and homes built faster.

Speaker, one of the most innovative measures in this bill focuses on Peel region. We're establishing a new publicly owned corporation to deliver water and waste water services across Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. This model reflects exactly what Bill 60 is about: smarter governance, clearer accountability and more efficient service delivery.

This is a new approach, and it protects public ownership while improving performance, saving money and helping get more homes built. This is innovation with a purpose. It strengthens local decision-making, improves financial sustainability and ensures growth can continue without placing excessive costs on builders or homebuyers, all while keeping public services public.

1720

And, Speaker, Peel is just the start. These reforms can serve as a model for other regions where smart collaboration and public ownership can work hand in hand to deliver results faster and more affordably.

I live in York region, and I've discussed this with the mayor of Vaughan on many occasions. This model could be taken to other areas, and we could deliver more results for these regions and provide more reductions in development charges.

Another key measure builds on the success of Bill 17's zoning reforms, such as expanding as-of-right approvals for minor variances. For far too long, builders who seek simple, small adjustments—a slight height change, a setback modification or a small addition—have been caught up in a tangle of local approvals and hearings and

a waste of time and money. Remember: Time is money. And under Bill 60, those days are over. We're creating a clear, streamlined process for low-impact variances so that builders can move forward faster, municipalities can focus on priorities and families can get into homes sooner. This is just simply common sense. It's practical, effective reform that reflects our government's commitment to action over inaction.

Another issue that we're tackling is the growing use of municipal site plan controls to require boutique—"Cadillac," as the minister says—design requirements that go far beyond what's necessary for safety. Too often, municipalities have layered on excessive demands, adding on burdens and costs to home builders. Let's be clear: Ontario families are already facing high interest rates and record construction costs. Now is not the time to pile on extra costs that serve no true purpose. Through Bill 60, these burdens are coming to an end, and we are bringing fairness and consistency back to the planning process.

We'll continue to enforce one clear provincial standard that ensures safety and quality while removing unnecessary and expensive design mandates. That's how we restore balance, protecting Ontario's families from inflated housing costs and protecting builders' ability to deliver the homes that people need.

One of the things that this bill does—and I talked about the as of right—was streamlining the minor changes that have minimal impact on surrounding properties. I think we've all been in the situation where they want to make that one change—a tweak. They shouldn't have to line up at an office somewhere and wait for hours to make those modifications—pay fees. The work that we're doing, and this approach, is designed to preserve municipal oversight where it matters most but remove redundant barriers that slow development and increase costs for everyone involved.

Speaker, this is what protecting Ontario looks like: standing up for fairness, for efficiency and for opportunity. We continue to ensure a modern system and to ensure it works for the people it's supposed to serve. And that's why our government is launching a full section-by-section review of the Ontario building code: to identify outdated, redundant or confusing provisions that drive up costs without improving safety. We're keeping what works, fixing what doesn't, and maintaining Ontario's high standard for safety and quality. This modernization will ensure that every regulation in our building code serves as a real purpose and not a process—purpose over process—because every day that we save in approvals is a day that a family moves in sooner. Every dollar we save in unnecessary costs is a dollar that stays in an Ontarian's pocket. That's how you protect Ontario's economy. You keep workers on the job and ensure that prosperity reaches every corner of our province.

This legislation represents more than a set of policy changes; it represents a culture shift. It's dynamic. For far too long, our province has been hampered by a mindset that equates process with progress. That era is over.

Changes take time, Speaker. However, we are committed to building a new culture of growth, one of accountability, transparency, but most importantly, results; a culture where municipalities, home builders and the province work together, not at cross purposes; where clear rules exist, approvals are efficient and everyone is pulling in the same direction. This is not easy work, but it's necessary because Ontario can no longer afford to wait. Every delay costs jobs, costs homes and costs opportunities.

Through Bill 60, we are changing the way Ontario plans, the way Ontario builds and the way government delivers. We're making these changes not for the sake of change itself, but for the people, for families, for workers, for communities and for the next generation who deserve the same opportunity to own a home that their parents had. Ontario faces real challenges, from high costs and supply shortages to aging infrastructure and growing demand, but these challenges are not insurmountable. The Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025, is part of our plan to meet them head-on to protect Ontario's economy, protect Ontario's workers and protect Ontario's communities. It builds directly on the foundation set out in Bill 17. It reduces costs, it streamlines approvals, it modernizes our building rules and it ensures that every dollar and every day saved goes towards getting homes built faster.

Under the Premier's leadership, our government is delivering true results and simplifying these approvals and grant processes in municipalities by providing these financial incentives more efficiently to support redevelopment. These changes can remove barriers, allowing municipalities to respond more quickly, to accelerate the creation of housing. It ensures that we're remaining a practical and accessible source and that there's a tool for communities while maintaining oversight and accountability to ensure public funds are used efficiently.

This is a plan rooted in common sense. It's practical, it's responsible and it's built to deliver. So much of this bill is looking at the code and removing outdated, unnecessary or duplicative processes that slow down construction. By modernizing these areas, we're ensuring that builders can focus on what they do best, which is building homes.

Part of the bill includes a review that does not take away from safety but adds to the construction process, thereby making homes so much more affordable for so many, including my children, who I hope, as I've mentioned, leave my home at some point in time in the near future—actually, not "near future." Maybe in the next decade or so, I'll be happy to be seeing them off at another location.

That's why I'm so proud to support Bill 60, the Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025: lowering costs, speeding up construction and helping protect Ontario for generations to come. I encourage every member of this chamber to do the same—to stand with Ontario's workers, builders and families to support this vital legislation.

1730

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):
Further questions?

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to thank the Conservative member for her comments today. I fully agree. We all agree that we need to build affordable housing in this province. This government has passed several pieces of legislation. They passed Bill 17, Protecting Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act. They passed the Bill 136, Greenbelt Statute Law Amendment Act. They passed three separate bills that strip Ontarians of the right to majority-vote decision-making using strong-mayor powers—all defined as building homes faster act. Now, they've got Bill 60, Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act.

Yet, in spite of all these acts that you've passed, there was an article that came out, an RBC report that came out in August, that said Canada isn't in a housing slump, Ontario is. It showed that Ontario has the worst record for building housing in this country. You're building a quarter of the houses per capita of any other province in the country, of the average province in the country.

So do you think that the reason that you're so unable to build housing is because all of these acts shovel our tax dollars into developers' pockets, but don't actually—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member for Thornhill.

Ms. Laura Smith: As mentioned in my remarks, our government knows that this is not business as usual, and this is why we're taking decisive action to position Ontario to seize opportunities the moment they arise. These changes allow government to move more nimbly, efficiently and effectively when the time is critical.

All decisions are made through a public framework that ensure transparency and meaningful public engagement in every decision. This is about taking action, because we have to be innovative in our approach to empower municipalities, including Peel.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Question?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to thank the member for Thornhill for her remarks. My question for her is based on a key part of the bill, which is community improvement plans. The city of Windsor, back in early 2011, introduced the economic revitalization community improvement plan—which is groundbreaking in many ways. It considered the entire city as a community improvement plan. It has been used to great success. But there have been some challenges with how various officials interpret those rules.

So those challenges have come up, even the town of Tecumseh has had some discussions about what's in and what's out, because there are these administrative hurdles about what a municipality can do with these incentives, I would like to ask the member how the proposed changes in the bill will enhance the effectiveness of the community improvement plans the municipalities introduced to help foster local growth.

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank the member for his question. Respectfully, I understand where he's coming from. This act introduces reforms that streamline the administration of community improvement plans by simplifying the approval and grant processes. Municipalities can

deploy financial incentives for more effective and efficient support redevelopment, rehabilitation and economic revitalization.

This legislation ensures that CIPs remain a practical and accessible tool for communities, while maintaining oversight and accountability to ensure public funds are used efficiently. By removing administrative steps and clarifying the rules governing grants and loans under the community improvement plan, this act empowers municipalities to act more decisively in promoting redevelopment and investment.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: There are several fabulous things about living in Thunder Bay. We own our own telecommunication company, and all those profits come back to the people of the city. We own our own sewage, we own our own water treatment plans, and they are state of the art; they're fantastic. But I have to say I was shocked—I'm really, really shocked at schedule 16, that suggests privatizing water and waste water and having for-profit corporations looking after these things, as if we have learned nothing from Walkerton. Why, for such core public services of water and waste water, do they now—they're going to be generating profits that will be taken away from those communities.

So can you explain to me why on earth, instead of supporting these lower-tier municipalities to have their own systems, where they can actually manage the costs—why is it going into a for-profit context?

Ms. Laura Smith: This act introduces changes that streamline the approvals and oversight processes for communal water and waste water systems in areas where full municipal servicing is not available. These communal systems are designed to safely provide drinking water and treat wastewater on site or near where it's produced, which replaces the need for multiple wells or septic systems in small rural developments.

It's positive work. I know there are a few members in this room that have talked to me specifically about how this advancement is going to make meaningful impact to their communities. This bill will clarify requirements and reduce the unnecessary duplication in that specific approval process, allowing communities to grow more efficiently and effectively, while still adhering to the health and environmental standards.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Question?

Mr. Steve Pinsonneault: Thank you, Speaker, and through you to the member: Rising developmental charges in municipalities have slowed housing starts and created uncertainty for builders. How do the changes proposed in the Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025, balance the need for affordable development with the financial needs of the municipalities?

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank the member for his question. This act modernizes the development charge framework by providing clarity, predictability and flex-

ibility. Builders need to know what the costs are going to be, and those costs and savings when that price tag is provided is reflected to the purchaser.

By streamlining this calculation of charges, establishing rules for land costs and improving reporting requirements, municipalities can continue to fund necessary infrastructure, while builders face lower, more manageable costs. The ability—this is key—to defer payments and spread them over time reduces the initial financial burden on new projects. This is something that's specifically exciting to me, especially in the area of Vaughan. This reform aims to unlock stalled developments and accelerate home construction and enhance housing affordability, while maintaining the ability of municipalities to fund essential services for growing communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Question?

Mr. Chris Glover: I appreciate the answer that I got to the last question. This government keeps doing things. They gave, for example, a billion-dollar tax break to developers—the development charge. They downloaded the development charges on new units to municipal taxpayers, so our municipal taxes went up. The total cost across the province, according to the association of municipalities, was \$1 billion per year. Just in the city of Toronto, it was \$200 million a year.

So our municipal taxes went up, and the idea was that, okay, developers are getting a cost break on building new housing; they're going to build new housing and we're going to have lots of housing. But as I just mentioned before, we are building in Ontario 60 new housing starts per 100,000 people in Ontario; the Canadian average is 200. So we're somewhere around 70% of what the rest of the country is.

Why is it that this government, this Conservative government that's been in power for eight years—you keep giving money to developers, but you can't actually build the housing that we need.

Ms. Laura Smith: Earlier this year, our government was elected on a promise to protect Ontario. The voters chose us because we offered optimistic visions for the future, rooted in common-sense government and building on a record of success. Due to the actions of our government since that day, Ontario saw the highest housing starts in more than three decades.

However, we are facing real uncertainty, I think we can all agree, because of the US tariffs and high interest rates and global economic headwinds. They're driving up the costs of materials and creating instability around the world. This bill solidifies the work that we're doing to streamline accountability and understand the costs so that we can produce these houses for the next generation.

1740

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I will be sharing my time with the member from London North Centre. This afternoon, we will be talking about Bill 60, An Act to amend various

Acts and to enact the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2025. The title is rather misleading. Although there is one section of the bill, schedule 16, that talks about water and wastewater public corporations, the rest of the bill has, frankly, nothing to do with it. As you can tell, Speaker, it's quite a big bill. It has 33 pages on the French side, 32 on the English side. Yet, this is its name.

The first schedule that I would like to talk about is schedule 12. Schedule 12 basically takes away protections from tenants. The Ford government, I would say, broke the Landlord and Tenant Board, and it is now using the fact that it's dysfunctional, because it broke it, to justify weakening tenants' rights. This is an unjust attack on security of tenure and rent control that will lead to more evictions and more homelessness. This is really hard to take.

With schedule 12, the Residential Tenancies Act, an eviction notice may be given seven days after nonpayment of rent, rather than what is currently 14 days. Tenants may no longer raise issues at an eviction hearing for nonpayment of rent unless the tenant has paid at least 50% of the rent arrears or an additional prescribed amount. The payment must be made prior to the hearing, in accordance with prescribed timelines. The Landlord and Tenant Board will no longer be able to set aside the timeline requirement for giving advance notice of an issue where the tenant provides a satisfactory explanation.

Schedule 12 repeals a provision allowing the board to set aside an eviction order if, having regard to all the circumstances, it would not be unfair to do so. Instead, the board would only be allowed to set aside an eviction order if the prescribed circumstances, conditions or tests have been satisfied. The board's power to postpone the enforcement of an eviction will now be subject to prescribed limitations or conditions.

The Landlord and Tenant Board currently has the power to review a decision or order, if its rules allow—and explicit—if a party to a proceeding was not reasonably able to participate in the proceeding, either due to language barriers or technology issues during a digital eviction hearing. Now the board's power to review shall be subject to prescribed limitations or conditions. A review request must be received within 15 days of the decision or order.

You know, Speaker, that I represent 33 small communities in northeastern Ontario. I'm not sure if I'm allowed to use this word, but I will—and let me know. The cellphone connection in Nickel Belt sucks, and the WiFi is worse. So—

Une voix: Merde?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Oui. I could use some French words, I suppose. That may help the situation.

Although everybody has been told that they have to come to work in person—and I will give an example where it makes absolutely no sense—the landlords and tenants did not. All of the landlords and tenants—and there are over 22,000 in the queue, many of them from my

riding—waiting for their day in court, it happens over an Internet connection. But when you live in Nickel Belt, the chance that the Internet connection will stay there for the time of the hearing is—well, in my house it's zero. And if you go to the cell service, in my house it's also zero. I have the money to buy good cell service and I have the money to purchase an Internet connection, but many of the tenants who are having to go in front of the Landlord and Tenant Board because they are being evicted don't have any of this.

So why is it that the government is mandating everybody to come back to work in person, but the people at the Landlord and Tenant Board will continue to send you notices over a cell connection that doesn't work or over an Internet connection that works just as poorly?

The hearing will take place—I would like any of the northern members on the side of the government to ask how it's going with your Landlord and Tenant Board, because mine, tell the truth, in many cases lost connectivity with the tenant, and the hearing went on without them and it always ends up the same way: They get evicted.

The homelessness crisis in my community is through the roof—through the roof with the number of people losing the place where they live, losing their tenancy.

I would like to give an example of 21 Balsam Street in Coniston in my riding. Coniston is a beautiful little community on the outskirts of Sudbury. It is in the riding of Nickel Belt. So 21 Balsam Street is a very nice building, close to the grocery store, close to the park in Coniston, and the building has mainly seniors who live there. Many of them have been long-long-term tenants. On February 1, a new landlord—a numbered company—purchased the building. On March 1, all of the tenants at 21 Balsam Street in Coniston received a letter from a lawyer telling them to vacate their apartment because they were going to do extensive renovations. In the meantime, one of the apartments became vacant, and the tenant was paying \$800 a month. The new landlord put the rent at \$1,675 a month.

The people in the building called me. I organized a meeting. I will always remember. I walked in and there was this 88-year-old woman who started to cry in my arms because she was so afraid that she was being evicted. She does not have the money to pay \$1,675 a month and they just didn't know what to do. The room was full of seniors in the same position as this 88-year-old who couldn't stop crying because she was so, so afraid of what was coming.

We won. We managed to keep them housed and keep them in their apartments, but it took a lot of time, effort and energy to get there. Not every apartment building will have the same outcome, but I know that people will continue to be hurt.

This cannot go as planned by the government. It will hurt people. It will increase the number of seniors who will find themselves homeless, and I cannot stand for that.

The bill also has a part on local roads boards. I have many local roads boards in my riding that will be able to take advantage of some of the changes that are being made, and this is in schedule—oh, I forgot now—in schedule 6.

1750

The last thing I want to say before I let my seatmate go on is please remember what happened in Walkerton. Before you move ahead with schedule 16, remember that seven people died, 2,300 people got sick, many of them still have consequences. Pure water is life. Thank you, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank my friend from Nickel Belt for an excellent presentation.

This weekend, MPP emails, phones and voice mails blew up with what this government was proposing, which was a direct attack, a direct affront on renters' rights. All we need to do is look at Maslow's hierarchy and realize that housing is the basis for everything else in life. You cannot apply for a job, you cannot get healthy, you cannot raise a family—you can do very little without that safe, stable housing. It is health care, and it is a human right, and it's something that this government ignores time and time again.

But it's also a key economic driver, Speaker. Without it, as I said, people cannot apply for jobs. The tourism industry is suffering greatly because this government has failed when it comes to the creation of housing. Their workers, often in tourist locations, have to be bused in to that location because they can't afford to live and work in the same place.

I think back to times, not too long ago, when people used to be able to work hard; used to be able to rent; used to be able to save their money and live affordably. That could've given them the lifestyle that they chose. Maybe they enjoy travelling; maybe they have hobbies which are expensive; or maybe they were choosing to save up to buy a house. That world no longer exists and that's because of changes made under the previous Liberal government and continued under this Conservative government. They opened up the hole into renters' rights with vacancy decontrol. That was the Liberal government allowing—as soon as a unit would become vacant, you would allow the owner to charge whatever the market could stand. Now, on paper, that seems logical and reasonable, but it is an unwritten incentive for unethical people to evict good long-term tenants because they realize there's financial gain to be made. These are no longer people, Speaker; these are numbers on a ledger sheet.

With Bill 60, it is an absolute disgrace what has been put forward in schedule 12. This schedule, and the consultation that had been threatened, was one that caused everyone to have enormous grief. I think about seniors who've been living in their buildings for decades, who have effectively paid for the building in which they live, who are suddenly worried about living in their cars. I worry about people living with disabilities who are on a fixed income, like seniors, and simply could not afford to possibly be displaced and then have to pay yet more in rent. I think about all the young people who are just

starting out. There are so many people that this bill threatens to harm.

One of the conditions in schedule 12 which is deeply concerning is that a landlord can have an own-use eviction and they would only have to give a tenant 120 days' notice, and there is nothing payable. So, Speaker, I have to ask you: There's a power imbalance here. Do you think it's reasonable or logical to expect that a tenant would go back to their previous unit and find out whether or not the landlord is actually inhabiting the unit? Of course not. People's lives are too busy. Oftentimes people who are on fixed incomes or who are having to work multiple jobs simply aren't able to do so.

But I wanted to point out that this legislation is really quite ironically titled. I mean, it's called Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act. Recently in my riding, the provincial government had announced that there would be funding for 60 residential treatment beds in a brilliant collaboration between CMHA Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services within the Salvation Army Centre of Hope and there were many other community organizations who were partnering in this. The funding was supposed to flow on April 1, but delay after delay after delay happened.

I was approached by the media in July and said, quite frankly, that this government was sitting on their wallets. Any time that the government was questioned about the funding delay, they referred people to a non-statement, something very bland and very broad about what they were doing across the province, not addressing the question—much like question period, when we hear questions but certainly not answers. So I was really pleased when finally—and I do want to thank the government for their funding that finally came through.

It didn't come through on April 1, as I said. It came through in October—October 23, I believe. It was set to open on that Monday. There's no explanation for the delay. There's no apology for the delay. But what is really strange, Speaker, is that those 60 beds? They were ready. They were sitting there. People had been hired. They were ready to start work. They were ready to start helping those people who were wanting to get their lives back on track, but they were empty. Why is that? People were being effectively ignored.

I wanted to add the voices of some people who have reached out. I know all MPPs, on either side of this chamber, their email boxes have absolutely blown up, and with good reason. People are deeply concerned about this highly objectionable piece of legislation, which will strip away tenants' rights and leave them vulnerable to so much economic and housing instability.

Sebastian writes, "In this time of housing insecurity and economic instability, the proposed changes would create even greater strife and suffering for the people of Ontario and for the economy....

"The amendments to sections 48.1 and 59(1) of the Residential Tenancies Act introduce further housing se-

curity for an already vulnerable sector, and do not provide enough notice or alternatives to allow for a stable transition to an alternate living arrangement."

Sebastian goes on to say, "Regardless of the purpose behind these proposed amendments, the effects would uniformly hinder the housing security of renters, and cause greater stress and financial strain at a time when we, the citizens of Ontario, look to our government for greater stability and future prospects."

This Bill 60 does not meet the moment. It is one of the worst things I've seen during a time when we have people living unhoused, people living on the streets, people living in encampments. This will cause yet more. It's speeding up the process. It's putting gasoline on a fire.

I wanted to also add the voice of Ann, who wrote that, in the place in which she lives, "newer tenants pay over \$2,000 a month whereas I pay a little over \$1,300 monthly and sometimes struggle to pay that in full on time....

"I'm 59 years young and I've used up everything I had stashed away. I rent a three-bed townhouse.... A family of four, all adults, all working—my two adult boys live with us because they can't afford rents. We are one of two families that have been residing here this length of time. My family and I fear this bill will only ... end up putting us out on the street. We are good tenants.

"Can someone justify this outrageous recommendation to pass this bill?"

Karen goes on to say, "As a renter for the last six years, I have a new understanding of the uncertainty of the rental market. I previously owned a house for 30 years.

"Rental properties need to have some security for both parties. Eliminating rent controls is not the way to be beneficial to the renters. I already will not even consider a build after 2017 as there is no security. Who wants to move into a home at a manageable cost-of-living, only to have to move the next year because of a greedy rent increase....

"I have previously emailed our Premier about this topic of rent control and received nothing from him or his office other than they would forward the message ahead.

"At a time of a housing crisis, this is not the way to go."

Speaker, as I see the clock ticking down, the developments from this government—including Bill 60, including removing rent control from all new builds first occupied after November 2018—have harmed renters. They have put renters in an incredibly precarious position.

I have to ask this government: Why are they not listening to the voices of people who are struggling to make ends meet, who are just barely getting by? Why are they risking putting more people out onto the streets, when we already have an unmanageable housing crisis, a homelessness crisis, a crisis this government refuses to address, refuses to meet head-on and refuses to meet the moment?

Withdraw Bill 60. Withdraw schedule 12. Protect tenants and make sure that they remain housed safely.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

Report continues in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, OOnt

Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Donna Skelly

Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,

Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Allsopp, Tyler (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Cerjanec, Rob (LIB)	Ajax	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Jeux
Ciriello, Monica (PC)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Cooper, Michelle (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	Oakville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises et de l'Approvisionnement
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Darouze, George (PC)	Carleton	
Denault, Billy (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence
Fairclough, Lee (LIB)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
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
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
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	
Hamid, Hon. / L'hon. Zee (PC)	Milton	Associate Solicitor General for Auto Theft and Bail Reform / Solliciteur général associé responsable de la Lutte contre le vol d'automobiles et de la Réforme relative aux mises en liberté sous caution
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé des Forêts et des Produits forestiers
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
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
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
McKenney, Catherine (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
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
Racinsky, Joseph (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	
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	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Chris (IND)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. 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
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
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	