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of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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(Hansard)**

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Wednesday  
5 November 2025

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44<sup>e</sup> législature

Mercredi  
5 novembre 2025

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Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly  
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly  
Greffier : Trevor Day

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 5 November 2025

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 5 novembre 2025

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Good morning, everyone. Let us pray.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 50 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 60, An Act to amend various Acts and to enact the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2025; Bill 33, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to child, youth and family services, education, and colleges and universities; and Bill 40, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to energy, the electrical sector and public utilities;

That when the orders for Bills 60 and 33 are next called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of each bill without further debate or amendment; and

That upon receiving second reading, Bills 60 and 33 shall be ordered for third reading, which orders may be called the same day; and

That when the order for third reading of Bill 60 is called, two hours shall be allotted to debate, with 36 minutes for the members of His Majesty's government, 36 minutes for the members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, 36 minutes for the members of the third party, and 12 minutes for the independent members as a group; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill 60 without further debate or amendment; and

That when the order for third reading of Bill 33 is called, two hours shall be allotted to debate, with 36 minutes for the members of His Majesty's government, 36 minutes for the members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, 36 minutes for the members of the third party, and 12 minutes for the independent members as a group; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill 33 without further debate or amendment; and

That when the order for Bill 40 is next called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That upon receiving second reading, Bill 40 shall be referred to the Standing Committee on the Interior; and

That the Standing Committee on the Interior be authorized to meet for public hearings on Bill 40 on the following dates:

Tuesday, November 18, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m., and from 3:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.; and

Tuesday, November 25, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m., and from 3:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.; and

That the deadline for requests to appear for hearings on Bill 40 be 12 noon on Thursday, November 13, 2025; and

That the Clerk of the Committee shall provide a list of all interested presenters to each member of the subcommittee on committee business and their designate as soon as possible following the deadline for requests to appear; and

That if all requests to appear cannot be accommodated, each member of the subcommittee or their designate may provide the Clerk of the Committee with a prioritized list of presenters to be scheduled, chosen from the list of all interested presenters for those respective hearings by 12 noon on Friday, November 14, 2025; and

That the Minister of Energy and Mines be invited to appear as the sponsor of Bill 40 at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, and that the minister shall have 20 minutes to make an opening statement followed by 39 minutes of questions and answers divided into two rounds of 6.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 6.5 minutes for the official opposition members and two rounds of 6.5 minutes for the third party; and

That witnesses shall be scheduled in groups of three for each one-hour time slot, with each presenter allotted seven minutes to make an opening statement followed by 39 minutes of questioning for all three witnesses, divided into two rounds of 6.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 6.5 minutes for the official opposition members and two rounds of 6.5 minutes for the third party; and

That the deadline for written submissions on Bill 40 be 7 p.m. on Tuesday, November 25, 2025; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to Bill 40 be 12 noon on Thursday, November 27, 2025; and

That the committee meet for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 40 on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, from 9 a.m. until 10:15 a.m., and from 3 p.m. until 6 p.m., and from 6:30 p.m. until midnight; and

That on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 4 p.m., those amendments to Bill 40 which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, with-

out further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto; and

At this time, the Chair shall allow one waiting period, if requested by a member of the committee, pursuant to standing order 131(a); and

That the committee shall report Bill 40 to the House no later than Wednesday, December 3, 2025, and if the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed passed by the committee and shall be deemed reported to and received by the House; and

That upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on the Interior on Bill 40, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith; and

That upon adoption of the report, Bill 40 shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called the same day; and

That when the order for third reading of Bill 40 is called, two hours shall be allotted to debate with 36 minutes for the members of His Majesty's government, 36 minutes for the members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, 36 minutes for the members of the third party, and 12 minutes for the independent members as a group; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill 40 without further debate or amendment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The government House leader has moved government notice of motion number 9.

Back to the government House leader.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion today.

As I said in the motion, we're dealing with three government bills today: Bill 60, Bill 33 and Bill 40. We're time allocating for the scheduling purposes of these three very important priorities for the government. I've gone on at great length in other debates on the use of time allocation by all three parties, and I'm not going to do that today. Instead, I'm going to talk about the importance of the three bills before the House.

Obviously, on Bill 60, our Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in his opening remarks very eloquently talked about the importance of the government delivering on our plan to protect Ontario, to keep workers on the job by cutting red tape, by getting shovels in the ground faster and supporting the construction of new homes, new roads and infrastructure.

The minister also very eloquently outlined the fact that this bill builds upon the foundation that he laid with the building faster and smarter act by continuing to reduce costs in the time it takes to build; continuing to work with municipal leaders, as the minister has done very well with the stakeholders in every corner of the province and also other stakeholders, like home builders; and fighting delays and regulatory burdens. He was responsive to some of the concerns that Ontarians expressed, did the right thing and changed course, but really has a foundational bill that, as

he's said and as others on the government side have said, is an important priority for us.

**0910**

The Minister of Education has done a tremendous job with Bill 33, and has really articulated the priorities of having more accountability in school boards. He said it many times: Parents deserve confidence that school boards are making decisions that are in the best interests of our children's education. That's why he's strengthening accountability and transparency right across Ontario's education system: to ensure that every dollar invested delivers real results for students.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Steve Clark:** There you go; there's your applause line—see, he won't even applaud now. You applauded before.

The government, through Bill 33, is making it very clear that school boards must put students first—not politics, not bureaucracy—and they need to act decisively when they fall short of that responsibility. The minister demonstrated that in the Bill 33 over and over again.

The bill that the government is proposing goes to committee is Bill 40, an Act to amend various statutes with respect to energy, the electrical sector and public utilities. Again, my seatmate, the minister, has articulated very well during debate the importance of this bill to our government. As global competition intensifies, energy demand surges and affordability becomes more important than ever, our province isn't standing still; we're stepping up. I think the minister has, over the time that we've debated Bill 33—and the associate minister, and the parliamentary assistants—talked about the decisive action to build a more competitive, a more resilient and a self-reliant economy by introducing the Protect Ontario by Securing Affordable Energy for Generations Act.

Again, the minister was very clear: He wanted this bill to go to committee. I've talked about this both in the House and outside of the House, that the ministers have done a great job with these bills, piloting them through, but there are some cases where the government has decided that we need some committee hearings.

With that, I'll allow the opposition to get their points forward, and in a couple hours we'll see how this motion does on the floor.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to speak in the House, and today on behalf of the official opposition, regarding another time-allocation motion. I don't think it's going to be a surprise to anyone that we're going to be voting against this.

But I listened very closely to the House leader. I usually quote a few illustrious quotes from the government House leader when he was opposition House leader, and I'm just going to use one today. It's actually dateline November 28, 2017. This is when the opposition House leader, who had the position that I hold now, was talking about a time-allocation motion which, at that point, the Liberal government of the day was putting forward. Actually, it's very

appropriate because it could be word for word what I would say. The only difference is, I actually believe it. I'm not sure that he did, because he's doing exactly the same thing: "You know what? That's right. The Facebook ads are running now, the government ads are running now, to promote this bill, yet this government is silent. They don't want to debate it. They don't want it in committee. They don't want to hear from people."

"You know what, Speaker? My party loves to hear from people. We've been talking to people for months. We've had hundreds of volunteers, thousands of ideas. And you know what? If this government doesn't want to listen to people, I'll give them a guarantee. I'll give them, actually," and remember this, people—that was my interjection, sorry. "I'll give them, actually, the People's Guarantee, because we will listen to them, and we will ensure that those Ontarians are being listened to."

My question is, what happened to the People's Guarantee? And now we know what happened to it, because it's in this quote: "We will ensure that those Ontarians are being listened to." And that's important: "those." It didn't say all Ontarians; it said "those." This government likes to pick and choose who they listen to. I think that's becoming very obvious, and now it's even gotten to the point with committees.

They take three bills. Bill 33: As much as I respect the Minister of Education—I actually enjoy spending some time occasionally with the Minister of Education—we don't always agree, right?

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I have a feeling he doesn't agree with this.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I don't agree with his bill.

But the government House leader said they had done such a good job that they were confident that this bill didn't need to go to committee. I think the fact that this bill is not going to committee is actually a lack of confidence, because the government only wants to listen to people who agree with them. But the government should listen to—they don't have to take the advice of the people they disagree with, but they should listen to everyone.

What this government is really afraid of—really, it's not overconfidence. What they don't want to hear is, "I told you so." This government is really afraid of, "I told you so," because no one likes to hear, "I told you so." They've had a lot of failures over the years, and it really hurts when we say, "Well, if you only had listened to the opposition or actually listened to experts or listened to people at committee."

Bill 33: Take it to committee and have teachers—have a few trustees, I don't know, but have teachers, have students come to committee and say, "Have you thought about this?" And then, if the government didn't listen and someone brought something forward that was actually relevant, they could have said, "I told you so." But if you don't allow the people to speak, your ego doesn't get hurt, because no one can say, "I told you so," because no one got the chance to say anything.

That is not how democracy is supposed to work. You are going to get your bills through; I don't think that's a

surprise. But you do have the duty to get as much information as possible. So to make that legislation, even though I disagree with it, or we disagree, that's not the—the point is that you owe it to the people of Ontario to give them as much opportunity as possible to discuss those bills. And maybe change one or two things, or maybe not, but at least understand what their views are.

I don't think it's overconfidence; let's make this really clear. It's not overconfidence; it's lack of confidence. The People's Guarantee was—and we all missed that. At least, many of the people who voted missed that, because when I saw all those plaques, "the People's Guarantee," you were already telegraphing that you were only going to listen to some people, not all people. I think a lot of the members on the other side didn't actually run for that, because you know that you need to listen to all views. You might not agree with them. One of the things I like about committee is that sometimes I hear views, I hear things that I had never thought of, and they change my viewpoint. That's the strength of committee.

The fact is that on very important bills, like education bills, changing the complete education system—that you have all the answers, that you don't need to listen to anybody in the committee process.

**0920**

Come on. You're only fooling yourselves. And the "I told you so" will get a lot uglier—will get a lot, lot uglier, because the mark of a long-lasting government is actually taking everybody's views into account. As this government progresses, it's becoming more and more obvious that that is not the case.

And it's not only the education bill. Bill 60—a housing bill, right? This government is great at blaming the previous government for all the housing problems in Ontario. They forget the fact that they are the previous government. Then they blame the previous, previous government. Who is the previous, previous government? Them.

You've been in government for almost a decade. Housing starts in Ontario are crashing. Food bank lines, homeless people—we have homeless encampments all across the province. When I was first elected, homeless encampments weren't a thing. You've had almost a decade—a decade—to address this issue, successive housing ministers, successive housing bills, and your solution is, "You know what? We're so smart, we're just not going to listen to anybody anymore because we don't want to hear 'I told you so.'"

Are there good things in Bill 60? Yes. Are there some terrible things in Bill 60? Absolutely. Should tenants have the ability to come to committee and put those on the record? That's a pretty big thing here, putting things on the record so that we can learn from our mistakes—and we all make mistakes. And believe you me, Speaker, this government also has their share of mistakes.

If you remember the greenbelt act, one of their first housing acts that was going to give everybody a house in Ontario, it wasn't even about housing. The government House leader knows that very well. It was also one of their

suites of fantastic housing bills. And they're not learning. They're not learning. They need to listen to people.

Now they do. Bill 40—they want to listen to people because there will be more people that agree with them. And again, I get that. But why not listen to opposing views so you can form a more balanced view yourself? That is the most egregious—that's a big word for me. "Egregious" is a big word for me.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Yes. Where did you rent that?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I know. I've been here a long time. I'm working up.

But it is one of the saddest things about motions like this, and it happens more and more often. And yes, all parties have used time allocation, and all parties have been wrong, including mine.

But we stand in this place. We are the voices of the people. We work really hard to get elected. And the way this system has been built over decades is to debate opposing views, is to bring bills before committee so people can talk about them. This government is choosing not to do that. They choose to sit limited days. They choose not to do committee on certain bills. Any bill where someone might say, "You know, Minister, have you thought about this?"—that's what they don't want. They don't want to have to admit that they haven't thought about that, or that they have thought about that and, quite frankly, they don't care. That's what they don't want to admit. It's very egregious.

We all love our system. We love Ontario; we love Canada. We are all willing to stand to fight to protect the freedoms that—we're wearing a poppy to commemorate the people who stood and fought for our freedom. I'm very proud of that. It drives me crazy—crazy—when I hear people say that Canada is broken. Canada is not broken. It's one of the greatest countries in the world—one of the greatest countries in the world. I'm so proud to be a Canadian.

But I'm not proud that I have to stand here and make a reasoned argument about why a bill from a majority government should go to committee. You're going to get the bill passed. There is nothing stopping you from getting the bill passed. So you are choosing to ignore the opinion, the intelligence of people who may not agree with your path. You're choosing to do that. You don't want to hear, "I told you so." And do you know who's going to pay the price for that? Ontarians are going to pay the price for that, not you; the people you represent, the people who put their faith in you to do the right thing.

We may disagree philosophically—I 100% get that, I respect that. But I don't believe that any of us got elected here to basically force our views on other people. We got elected here because we believe in the system; we believe in debate; we believe in bringing bills to committee.

Yet for some reason—that's why I started with the quote from the then opposition House leader—it seems that when you cross the floor, your beliefs disappear. And with this government, I think it's even worse because I don't think that the Premier's office respects this place one bit. This place is a hindrance to the Premier's office.

That's why we end up in scandals. It's a hindrance; it's not a tool to them. It should be a tool to make better legislation.

You won an election. You have the power to put your legislation through. This Parliament is a tool to make sure that legislation is as good as it can be, and the fact that you're ignoring that is proof that you just see this as a hindrance—the strength of our parliamentary democracy.

We all proudly wear that poppy, but I'm not sure that we all understand what we're fighting for here and why we're standing here and why we wear it.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member from Ottawa—Vanier.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's very nice to see you in the chair.

Here we go again. Wasn't it just last week that we had to defend why time allocation motions are not good for democracy? It seems rhetorical—it keeps coming up. This morning, I don't really want to say that much about this practice that has become business as usual, because I think that time-allocating everything has become something quite ridiculous.

I'll agree with my colleague from Timiskaming—Cochrane; everything he said is on point, and he has had the occasion to repeat those things over and over again. So we understand—we're all coming from this place.

I'll say this: My position that this is not a good idea has not changed. What I said last week about why it's not a good idea, why it's not good for democracy, was probably something that was more or less what was expected.

So today, maybe I'll surprise you, but I'm going to give it to you straight. I think that time allocation motions can actually be good in certain cases, under certain circumstances, and for certain bills; for example, when all parties agree that we have a really good bill where it's worth accelerating the implementation. It happens—not very often, but it does from time to time. However, the time allocation motion for Bills 33, 40 and 60 does not fall into that category—not by far. But the government has a majority and will get its way anyway. So what we say might be meaningless to them. I hope that the public is listening.

**0930**

I also have to admit that sometimes six and a half hours of debate or more can be too much. And having sat in the Speaker's chair—like you are today, Madam Speaker—for some debates that were repeating the same thing over and over again, I'll admit that I may have contemplated the value to limit debates. When everything has been said and the positions are clear, why continue to use airtime that no one is listening to? That works for certain more simple bills. But Bills 33, 40 and 60 do not fall in that category either. If we want or if the government wants to pass good legislation, we need to hear from the public. And that's why committee work, with public hearings for the people to express their support or their concerns, is so important.

And to the comment that the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane said about the government wanting to only speak or hear from people that agree with them: It's true,



but actually, I wish the government would understand and learn what I've learned with my job, that you actually learn the most when you have conversations with people that disagree with you. It allows you to see another perspective and learn things that will entice you or convince you to make your bill better. But forget it; we're not doing that.

Unfortunately, a time allocation motion not only cuts time to debate—which could be acceptable in certain cases, like I mentioned—but it cuts out the most important part, which is the committee process, which is effectively the public voice that we've been elected to listen to. And they are being told to shut up: "We don't want to hear about you. We know everything, and we're just going to get this bill, and you'll just have to live with the consequences, and if you don't agree, well, too bad, so sad." That's not democracy, Madam Speaker. That's not responsible government. That is, indeed, government arrogance in all its splendour. And it is, frankly, revolting.

So go ahead, have your way. But be assured that people, electors, are paying attention.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It's an honour for me to rise today, although, this motion that we are discussing this morning, motion number 9, is really quite concerning to the people of the province. I've heard so much from my office, so much concern and so much fear and so much angst and anger about Bills 33 and 60. And I'm quite sure the government's own email boxes have blown up. And yet, they still seem to want to rush these through.

We have to ask ourselves the question, Speaker: Why are we rushing so quickly with these bills? What is the government hurrying for? What is their purpose for trying to get this through as quickly as possible? This motion is what I would call authoritarianism covered in grease.

You know, I found it also quite interesting that as my friend the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane was quoting the words of this government when they had been in opposition, many of them were smiling. Many of them were remembering. Many of them acknowledged and recognized their words and their upset and their anger over time allocation. And yet, now that they are on the government side, that has seemingly disappeared. Those concerns are utterly obliterated.

From a very early age, from the age of kindergarten, we get basic, fundamental life lessons that it seems that many people have forgotten in their older years. We learn how to listen. We learn how to share. We learn how to take turns.

And yet this government, through this motion number 9, is refusing to listen. It's not as though they're even pretending to listen. They're not even having these committee hearings on these very disturbing pieces of legislation. And yet, they are not even bothering to pretend. That is hubris; that is pride. And that they should be very concerned about.

But it also begs the question: If the government does not want to open up committee hearings, if the government does not want to hear from the people of Ontario, if they do not want to listen to the public, then who, Speaker, are

they actually listening to? It begs the question of what voices matter to this government.

I can tell you that with schedule 12 and Bill 60, they're clearly not listening to seniors. They're not listening to people living with disabilities. They're not listening to folks on social assistance or folks on fixed incomes. They're not listening to young people just trying to start out in life, and they're not listening to people who are living paycheque to paycheque and are deeply concerned about falling into homelessness.

No, Speaker; they're listening to wealthy corporations. They're listening to real estate investment trusts. They're listening to corporate landlords who don't look at human beings; they look at people as an item on a ledger, a number on an Excel spreadsheet.

With motion number 9—I'm making this go by as quickly as possible—it does make us ask, what is this government also trying to hide from the public? What are their priorities? Why are they doing this?

We often hear the government use the words—and yet they're completely devoid of meaning; they're absolutely destroyed, quite frankly, from their original intention. We hear words like "accountability," words that should make one think of being responsible, of being forthright, of being open or being able to explain or to justify, being able to defend their positions. But this motion, motion number 9, is a lack of accountability. It's unwillingness to explain, it's unwillingness to defend, it's unwillingness to justify and it's unwillingness to be transparent, open and forthright with the people of Ontario.

Abandoning committee and speeding through debate is really an ethical problem, a huge ethical problem. I did want to before—because debate is being so completely truncated with this government—point out to the government that government members have been heard indicating that in Thames Valley there were trustees who went on the Toronto trip, and I can tell you unequivocally that 18 senior administrative officials went on the Toronto trip; not a single trustee went, not one. They did not vote on that trip to Toronto; they did not participate in that trip to Toronto. And it's just really quite dubious that this government is choosing to reveal facts in such a way as to cast doubt on those trustees when they had no part in that trip whatsoever.

The deficit as well that this government keeps mentioning with Thames Valley has ballooned under supervision. It has gone up astronomically. This government is not paying its responsibility when it comes to statutory benefit increases of CPP and EI. But I did want to shout out a very good, stable, strong, honourable—someone this government could learn a lesson or two from, and that is Bill Tucker. He has currently stepped back into the role with Thames Valley District School Board, and he is a wonderful person. He has been an excellent administrator. He is widely loved and respected by educators, families and the broader public in the Thames Valley District School Board. In fact, I had the opportunity, Speaker, to take piano lessons from his father, who is also Bill Tucker, who is an amazing human being and the definition of a

Renaissance man. In fact, he was an accomplished concert pianist. My brother told me the story that when he first had his grade 12 English class, what Mr. Tucker did was take all of the students down to the auditorium and he played a song for them. And he was so moved by the song that he was moved to tears. The kids were moved to tears because he made a piano sing.

I think Bill Tucker Sr. could also teach this government about being honourable, about being forthright, about being accountable and about being responsible. It's a shame that the government has closed their ears.

**0940**

Through these bills, it does other disturbing things like undermining local control of CAS budgets. They're destroying the ability of parents to advocate for their children with trustees. They're a true, authentic local voice, and they're trying to replace that with an unelected Toronto bureaucrat. It does make us ask the question: How is it possible that someone in downtown Toronto knows the needs of your local school? Will they pick up the phone? Will they answer emails? I highly doubt it. It's yet another opportunity for this government to install one of their failed candidates, one of their donors, one of their cronies, one of their backroom insiders, into a position, all while pretending this is about accountability. Again, this is authoritarianism covered in grease.

If we were time-allocating a bill to restore the \$6.35 billion that this government has stripped from education, I could see a reason to time allocate that, Speaker. If this time allocation was concerning a bill that put more caring adults in classrooms, we could certainly vote for that.

If this was ensuring the government fixed the flawed 1998 funding model, which treats all children the same and does not ensure that kids with special education needs or mental health needs get the funding that they deserve—if this bill made sure that each child was funded based upon their need—that would be absolutely something to time allocate. Getting kids the right supports at the right time will change their life, yet this bill is not about that. This time allocation motion certainly is not about that.

If this bill was to make up for the funding shortfall that the government has created by not funding CPP and EI, those statutory benefit increases, then that would be something that would be easy to vote for and to time allocate, yet it is not.

This bill and this motion are setting the stage for a takeover of public education, and it also is an attack on post-secondary education. It's a distraction to the underfunding of post-secondary education, quite frankly. This government wants to do it quickly and do it fast, and they hope that people blink and don't pay attention. This is a false choice that is being offered through Bill 33, allowing students—who are already financially beleaguered by the cost of everything in life, especially university tuition—the opportunity to opt out of fees that benefit them and benefit the broader school community, such as food banks, mental health supports, sexual violence supports and so many other things that are critically important and vitally

important for them and for the student experience. Yet this government, through motion 9, doesn't want people to open their eyes and to notice.

And I haven't even begun to touch upon the disturbing issues that are within Bill 60. The government, in their—hmm—wisdom, decided to remove rent control from buildings first occupied after November 2018. They also did not force landlords to report that people were moving into buildings without rent control, so people, after having lived in a building for 12 months, would be handed an increase that could be any number that that landlord picked, because this government drilled a massive hole in the boat of renter's rights.

It was the exact same that happened under the previous government, which was to bring in vacancy decontrol to allow landlords to charge whatever the market could withstand as soon as a unit became vacant. That was a situation which allowed unethical corporate landlords to kick good, long-term tenants out because they knew they could jack up the rent. It might have looked okay on paper, but I can tell you this is something that deeply concerns seniors, people living with disabilities, new Canadians, young families, all people living on a fixed income, all the people who are working multiple part-time jobs just trying to survive. And this government—who are they listening to with this legislation?

Further, while the government did backpedal on their consultation to remove the month-by-month tenancy, they also still have things within Bill 60 that are deeply concerning for tenants: Eviction notices can be given seven days after non-payment of rent rather than 14 days. It also allows landlords to declare their own use with 120 days' notice, and then there's nothing that that tenant can do. I want to say, Speaker—we've said this before and we will say it again—what tenant, after being evicted by a landlord based on the landlord's own use, is going to come and check with the new resident to make sure it is indeed the landlord?

Speaker, this government makes a lot of noise about being for the people and listening to the people. This is a clear example: Their ears are shut, their back is turned and they're not listening to the people who are most deeply affected by this time allocation motion.

I urge the government to listen to their conscience and do not vote for this time allocation motion.

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

**Mr. Rob Cerjanec:** Good morning to all of my colleagues, and, again, it's nice to see you in the chair, Speaker.

We're talking about time allocation. And I find it a little bit ironic because we were on a bit of an extended summer break, and I know we were doing work in our communities, in our ridings—at least, I know I was. The federal Parliament resumed a lot sooner than our Legislature did, and that really could have been important time for us to debate and discuss these pieces of legislation, debate and discuss these at the committee level so that we can have an informed conversation. We can do that amongst

ourselves, but we can also do that with different stakeholders and interest groups that are going to be impacted by this legislation or have good pieces of feedback and advice for us to improve legislation. Unfortunately, here we are again, and it feels as though this is a government that really doesn't care about the committee process. That's how it feels. I think that's really unfortunate because I came here to represent my constituents, work on their behalf, connect with them and listen to their feedback.

We've had a lot of conversation about the education bill, Bill 33, in here, for example, and had other conversations at the regional level, for example, about Bill 60, even before that bill was introduced, talking about different ideas or thoughts that now we actually do see within the bill. So it's really unfortunate that we're not going to be able to debate this and discuss both Bill 33 and Bill 60 at the committee level, because I think it's a really great opportunity to listen to our constituents and be able to have more opportunity to bring those voices into this chamber.

Around Bill 60, the committee process, I think, is integral, because this was a bill that was just introduced two weeks ago, on October 23. There was a lot of controversy, I think, when this bill was introduced. We saw the government backtrack a little bit on consultations around changing rent control. I think that was really to the testament of the public and people who were very loud and very clear that we should not be ending rent control in this province. But to see that floated as a trial balloon, to see that in the stakeholder or the briefing materials that were provided, I think, to me, was very, very concerning. While the government right now has said, "No, we're not going to touch that. We're not going to make changes there"—we would have had a good opportunity to discuss elements of Bill 60 at the committee level.

I'll just say this, colleagues, Speaker: to touch rent control in the way that was floated is very concerning. I grew up in an apartment building. I grew up in a one-bedroom apartment, with my mom and I. Frankly, having rent control on our unit—and it can increase year after year, and I think that's important, because expenses go up, property taxes go up, cost of water and electricity and operating the building and needing to do repairs, those costs go up. So it's fair that there are increases to rent year after year, but it needs to be done in a way that's responsible.

**0950**

Having rent control on our unit, frankly, I think was a lifeline for us. I fear what could have happened if that unit was not under rent control.

I'm very, very concerned about that and very concerned that this was floated in the first place.

The housing bill was introduced two weeks ago. I'm not even sure everyone has had the opportunity to digest elements within that bill, and I think that is really unfortunate. I'm not even sure all of us in this chamber have had the opportunity to digest and understand different portions within that bill. To be able to talk about the bill at commit-

tee, to hear from groups, I think would help make this bill a better bill.

The bill proposes landlord and tenant changes. And do you know what? I want us to be able to hear from landlords. I want to hear from large landlords on this. I want to hear from small landlords on this. I want to hear from folks who own a home who might want to rent out their basement apartment, for example—a basement suite—or add a suite within their unit, or add a granny flat, a garden suite, in their backyard, or, if they're in places with laneways in Toronto, add a laneway suite, and be able to talk about that and what that means and how we help create more rental availability.

As seniors consider downsizing—I know a lot of seniors want to stay in their home because they like their home. It's where they raised their kids. It's where they raised their family. But maybe that home is a bit too big. So to be able to add a rental unit in there, I know, for a lot of folks—and maybe some supplemental income to help their kids with, frankly, the high cost of living. I think that is a good thing, and we could be discussing that at committee. We can be discussing ways in which we're able to add more rental stock and do it in a way that's fair. If you're a small landlord—if it's a unit in your basement, for example, that's a lot different than a 200-unit apartment building. So we could actually get into that and have those conversations and be able to hear from tenants as well.

A friend of mine has the ability to have a second suite within his home, but he doesn't rent it out on the long-term market. My friend doesn't rent out that suite on the long-term market because the HVAC system is shared within that building and his daughter has a lung condition. So he doesn't rent out that unit because the HVAC system is connected. I know of other friends of mine and other folks as well who have allergies to pets.

So we can be talking about that at the committee level. We can be saying, "How do we make the current system work better? How do we add rental supply into the market?" We could be doing that, but, unfortunately, we're not doing that with a bill that has been rushed through, and I don't think that is really giving the public an opportunity to be able to participate in this process.

We know that there are changes at the Landlord and Tenant Board, and we know that, frankly, for the last seven years, the Landlord and Tenant Board has been a disaster in its inability to process applications and give a fair hearing to both landlords and tenants.

When I talk to landlords, when I talk to tenants, everybody tells me they want the system to work, they want it to be fair, they want it to be effective, and they want to be able to have their due process without delays. That's what I hear when I talk to folks.

So it's unfortunate that we're not going to be able to have that debate at committee, should the time allocation motion pass, which I suspect it will in the majority government that we have.

Rental starts are doing okay, thanks to some changes through CMHC and federal support and reducing develop-

ment charges on some pieces. But if we want to look at housing starts overall, they're terrible; they're in the garbage. That's not good. It means our skilled trades workers aren't going to be able to work on—whether it's greenfield development, whether it's infill, we need to be able to ensure our skilled trades folks are able to be out there and working.

This is a government that talks quite a bit about the skilled trades and how much they care about the skilled trades. Well, I care about the skilled trades too, and I want to see them work on job sites. I want to see housing construction go up. I want to see housing construction continue. Because right now, if we look at recent stats around this—we're talking about condo starts, new home starts. In Toronto, for example, you can almost count them on my fingers and my toes and maybe a little bit more and that's about it. That's not a good thing. We could be having those folks there, but we don't.

Yesterday at committee, we were talking with the Minister of Northern Development, and we were talking about the forestry sector. Here in Ontario, the forestry sector is an important part in many communities where we have lumber to build homes. But if we're not building homes, how are we going to support the forestry sector? Not being able to talk about this bill at the committee and ways that the government can actually increase housing starts, increase housing supply, continue to try and bring down the cost of new housing—but we're not really going to be able to talk about that at the committee level. We won't be able to listen to some of those ideas.

So I'll give some of those ideas here in the Legislature. The government could cut the HST off new builds—and not just for first-time home buyers, because I know that's what some of my honourable colleagues will be thinking about: "Oh, well we're going to take the provincial portion of the HST off for first-time homebuyers." That is a very, very small segment of folks that are purchasing new construction homes. I think we want to be able to have folks purchasing a new construction home, if it's going to be your principal residence. I think we want that in this province. And again, we know the taxes and fees on this are so high.

So what the government could be doing is going a lot further and cutting the HST. Maybe it's on the first million, and then a sliding scale to a million and a half, doing it for five years. That's what the government can be doing if we're serious about building housing, if we're serious about ensuring our skilled trades members are able to go and work and not be out of work.

We could—hell, I'll put a different proposal up here. They can remove the provincial land transfer tax on a new build for a period of time. That's something that this government could be doing. Well, the property has never been transferred before, so why are we charging a land transfer tax on that? And I know some folks, maybe the Ministry of Finance, might be saying, "Well, it's going to impact revenue." Well, you're not going to get that revenue if no homes are being built.

These are, I think, common-sense ideas that this government can take and do to ensure that our skilled trades

members are working, to ensure that we are building the housing that we need for our changing demographics, for our changing population. They could cut development charges and make municipalities whole. There are a lot of choices, I think, that the government has, and I don't think they're making those choices. We have fancy titles of bills that sound really great. It sounds like we're doing things, but, frankly, nothing is getting done except for, you know, we've got a long bill title that says the government is doing something when the government is not doing something.

Around Bill 60, it would have been really great to be able to discuss, at the committee level, public utilities for water and waste water, to get some public feedback on that. I've had conversations in Durham region about that. I think it's really important that we get people to the committee table to talk about that, to talk about what it means to set up and create a public corporation for water and waste water.

Also, how do we ensure that we have safeguards as part of that to ensure that we don't see the privatization of water or waste water services? There's an underlying theme, I would say, with this government. There is a privatization theme. It's just not out in the open. It's being done quietly and slowly, creating crises and underfunding systems and wrecking them in some ways. We've seen this movie before, folks. We've seen this movie before.

It would be really good to be able to put in safeguards and have additional safeguards around that so that public corporations—the public interest is served in all of us. At the end of the day, there's only one taxpayer. There's only one taxpayer. If you're paying waste water fees, well, it's a fee. It's a tax. It's the same thing at the end of the day. How do we ensure that we keep those low? How do we ensure that we have public benefit for the public good? That's something that we can be talking about at the committee level when we look at Bill 60.

#### 1000

On Bill 33, I look at the post-secondary sector—I didn't have the opportunity to talk very much about it. I know that there are different groups: student groups; groups representing universities, representing colleges; people who've done research in this sector; folks who know a thing or two about our post-secondary institutions and maybe what is also happening around the world and how we strengthen our post-secondary institutions. But we see a big underfunding for our colleges and universities, creating a crisis. There was an overreliance on international tuition—110%. That's right.

Instead of saying, "How do we fix that?" all I hear from the government side is, "We're going to point a finger at the federal government." That's about it, when the business model itself was broken in the first place. Instead of, "Let's fix the business model," it's, "We're going to point fingers." I don't think that's a good thing. So it would be good to be able to talk about some of the post-secondary changes that are proposed in Bill 33 at the committee level.

Around ancillary fees, for example: These are fees that students approved by referendum. It'd be really great if we had some student voices at committee talking about student

fees, whether pro or against or anything. I think that's healthy in a democracy. On campuses, students have that debate. They have that debate when a fee is being put in. They can actually change fees as well. That is something that students have the ability to do. If they don't like the fees, okay, initiate a referendum and change that. That's a democratic right. I think that's a good thing at the college and university level.

I'd love to hear from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance at committee on this. I'd love to hear from the Canadian Federation of Students at the committee level talking about ancillary fees—folks who are voices of students, who are elected on their college and university campuses to represent students and advocate on their behalf. They're going to be shut out of this committee process, out of even talking on this bill at committee. Yes, there have been some submissions, but there also needs to be changes and consideration, I would say, on the government side.

It would be great to be able to talk at committee about merit-based admissions and what's being proposed and understand how that is going to work. The feedback and the input and the debate that we could have at the committee level on that I think is a really good thing. Are we just looking at grades? Is that all we're going to do around merit-based?

I can tell you, I went and did an MBA. The admission process for an MBA, for example, looks at your GMAT score, your GRE score. But it looks at other aspects of what you can add into the classroom so that there's a diversity of opinion, there's a diversity of thought within the classroom. So I'm not sure what's being suggested here around a merit-based admission process. It would be really great to be able to have that conversation, again, at the committee level.

Around research security: This is a government that wants to reduce red tape. They're adding red tape around research security when there are already federal requirements that our universities strictly adhere to. Universities are important tools to fuel innovation, playing an important part with community. So we shouldn't be diverting resources away from commercializing research and technology to talk about research security when there are already strong provisions in place with the federal level as well.

We're at a global battle. The Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade sometimes says, "We're in a war with the United States." I think we really are, around research and intellectual property and commercializing research and creating new businesses and jobs and opportunity. We are in a global battle around that for the best talent, for the best ideas. We need our universities to be able to be focused on that instead of adding red tape to what they're doing. It's a bit ironic.

On public education: When Bill 33 was introduced, the Minister of Education had many conversations, I know, over the summer, I think meeting in private. I think there were some non-disclosure forms that were signed as well with different stakeholders. The bill was introduced and then the minister has conversations with the sector, with unions, with principals, with directors of education, with

everyone in the publicly funded education sector—to have those conversations after the bill is introduced.

I wonder, does, then, the minister think this bill is perfect, that we don't need to make any changes to it after all of those intensive discussions? Because when I talk to those folks, they think there should be changes in the bill. But we're not going to be able to talk about that at the committee level. I think that's really unfortunate. I think the government, in some ways—and this is, I guess, a warning to the government: Be careful what you wish for, because the changes that you would like to make, that it appears that you'd like to make, to public education, for example, may end up hurting you in the long run. That's why I think it's so important to be able to have this conversation at the committee level.

I'll give one example within Bill 33: There's a public interest provision, essentially, that would allow the Minister of Education to be able to take over a school board. The minister and I had a good debate around that when I spoke about Bill 33 in this House not too long ago. The provision here—and I'll read it out—could give the minister the ability on any of these reasons to be able to take over a board: the delivery of education programs; student achievement and well-being; the financial affairs of a board and its use of resources; the construction, maintenance, management, acquisition and disposition of capital assets; local governance; the day-to-day management of a board; and the engagement of parents and other entities that may have an interest in the activities of a board.

I think the public as a whole has a really big interest in that. This seems very, very broad. Essentially, the minister would be able to take over a board for any reason at any time, even if the board was doing all the right things. And I know in this House we spoke about the issues at Thames Valley, for example, where it was the senior administration team that went to the Blue Jays game, not trustees. I know we spoke about the issues at Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic, where it was trustees that changed policy to essentially be able to go on first-class travel to Italy, and that's egregious. That is ridiculous. So I agree, and there are situations where the minister, I think, does need to go in and deal with issues at a school board, but this is really broad.

There are a couple of things that talk about the acquisition or disposition of capital assets, for example. I fear where this government might be wanting to go on that, depending on which insider is able to get the ear of the Premier's office to say, "Hey, there's this parcel of land in this area. We really want that." So then what happens? Well, I guess the minister can just come in and do that and make that happen without local consultation, without involving the community. When school boards make these decisions, especially around the disposition of assets and land, they do that in a way that considers those communities and looks for options. I'd love to see things where we can have better creative thoughts and ideas around how to better utilize our school lands and school facilities to benefit the local communities, because when you build a neighbourhood, the school is put in that neighbourhood. And the park land, which is really the school land in there,

is in the neighbourhood for a reason. That is really, really good and really important. Once you get rid of that land, especially that green space, it is gone forever.

So I think there are some really important pieces that we can be discussing at committee here, and it's really unfortunate, with this time allocation motion, that we're not going to be able to do that so that we can enhance the public good, so that we can ensure that all of us in this chamber as the voices of our communities can have that ability to do that.

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

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I've listened to some of the remarks here today, and I want to start out by saying just how disappointed I am that the government is afraid to have the content of their bills looked at in detail during the committee stage. So Bills 33 and 60 will completely skip committee.

But I want to speak to the part of the motion with regard to Bill 40, because it looks like the government is going to bring Bill 40 to committee, but I would call this the illusion of committee. If you look at the motion that we're debating now, government motion 9, there are only two hours and 15 minutes allowed for the detailed consideration of amendments either to correct the bill or to respond to what witnesses tell us about this bill. This motion schedules witness hearings. I think it's really important if you want to respect the public and the experts who come in to talk about Bill 40 and to point out how it can be improved—it's an insult to them to restrict in advance the amount of time that we will take to implement their recommendations. Because it's not only about listening to witnesses—there's time for that—but we have to digest what they say, and we have to propose amendments to implement good points that are brought up, and then we have to debate them to make sure we get it right. I believe in taking the time to make sure that laws, which are supposed to be permanent, get done in as good a way as possible. That's our job, as legislators: to write good laws. I find it especially insulting to any witness who comes, to say that we're only going to talk about their amendments for two hours and 15 minutes, and then we're going to deem every amendment moved and all we're going to do is we're going to vote on the amendments without discussing them—forever, basically.

1010

Because I think we should be respecting witnesses who make the journey to the Ontario Legislature, I move that the motion be amended by striking everything after "until midnight."

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** The member for Kingston and the Islands moves that the motion be amended by striking everything after "until midnight."

Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I'd like to elaborate a bit on this amendment.

Part of the motion that we're debating here was inspired by what happened on Bill 5 back in June. So I have to remind everybody about Bill 5 and why it's such a dangerous bill. One of the reasons why it's dangerous is

that it gives this government immense executive discretionary powers—the ability to ignore any Ontario law. That has a lot of people worried. It had a lot of Indigenous communities worried. It had people across Ontario worried. We were considering Bill 5, and it was in committee stage when people were gathered outside here at Queen's Park and gathered at rallies across Ontario to protest Bill 5. Bill 5 also allows the government to ignore protections for endangered species. It also singles out a particular landfill in southwestern Ontario for reopening. So Bill 5 is a dangerous bill.

The government tried to push Bill 5 through committee with its majority. We had a lot of things to talk about in committee because Bill 5 was so dangerous. In fact, the Ontario Liberal caucus had, initially, the largest number of amendments, 20 or 30 amendments—I don't remember the exact number, but we had a good number of amendments to discuss. It took some time. Why? Because Bill 5 was such a dangerous bill. We talked about it until midnight that day. Then the government tried to have an overnight sitting because, for some reason, they wanted to push the bill through committee, even though we could have taken a few extra days of sitting.

The government has had us sit only 28 days in the fall of 2024, only 28 days in the spring of 2025, and now only about 28 days in the fall of 2025. So the government doesn't care how long the Ontario Legislature sits. It doesn't take advantage of the fact that we could come back and consider the legislation the government is proposing and take the time to do it right.

Instead, this government wants to hide from elected MPPs, to hide from the scrutiny that elected MPPs can have on this government because of the tools that we have when the Legislature is sitting. We have question period. We have debates. We have opposition day motions. We have committees. There are many tools that our parliamentary democracy—

*Interjections.*

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

## WEARING OF PINS

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Point of order.

**Mr. Brian Saunderson:** Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for members of the House to wear pins in support of the Moose Hide Campaign.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### SEASONAL EVENTS IN THORNHILL

**Ms. Laura Smith:** To celebrate the fall season, my team and I recently hosted our first pumpkins and popcorn party at the North Thornhill Community Centre playground.

It was a great day. We had perfect weather, sunny, warm and full of laughter. We had so many visitors—families, parents, grandparents, children—who came out to take part in the fun. Even our ward city councillor, Chris Ainsworth, joined in, which was a great surprise, and it was so nice to see his support.

The kids had a fantastic time, as I did, and we painted pumpkins to take home. We used a lot of glitter glue—some still in my nails right now—and bright colours. I have to say, every pumpkin turned out to be amazingly creative and unique. We handed out goody bags and treats. The popcorn and cotton candy vendor was a huge hit, big hit. We even had some impromptu Zumba dancing. Between the music and the dancing and the smiles all around, we had a really great day and a fantastic experience. It was a great sense of community, and I know how lucky I am to live in the great riding of Thornhill.

I want to thank my team and everybody who helped join in and everybody who participated. All the residents of Thornhill really made that day perfect, and it was a great way to celebrate the fall season.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Speaker, my statement today is a call to action.

Lately it is getting harder and harder to keep track of all the ways this government is undermining democracy in Ontario. The latest example: ramming through legislation that bans speed cameras in the province with zero public consultations, no committee hearings, no opportunity for municipalities or road safety advocates or police or parents to have their say. Just another “we know best; just trust us” moment from a government that seems incapable of transparency and accountability—not to mention yesterday’s article revealing that this government is funding a numbered company that is exploiting women.

Speaker, this is becoming a dangerous pattern. We should not silence the voices of the people that we’re elected to serve. Democracy does not end at the ballot box. It lives in open debate, in public participation and in the willingness to listen. Democracy is messy. It’s participatory and it’s rooted in listening, not in backroom deals and bulldozing legislation through this House.

People in Ontario deserve a government that works with them, not one that governs over them. Our province is fairer when all voices are heard, not just those that pay to access the Premier. People think that what is happening in the US cannot happen here, but it can and it is.

We wear poppies to remember the fight for democracy, but they also are a reminder to stay vigilant and protect the privileges that came with great sacrifice.

## FOOD INSECURITY

### REMEMBRANCE WEEK

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** Last month, the Daily Bread Food Bank in Etobicoke–Lakeshore released its Who’s Hungry report. They reported a record-breaking 4.1 million food

bank visits in Toronto, with 88% of clients living in unaffordable housing.

Some 35% of food bank clients are employed, many holding more than one job. After paying for their housing, households are left with an average of just \$8.33 per person per day. And when the price of a dozen eggs is nearly \$5, which has doubled since 2022, it is nowhere near enough for anyone to cover the daily costs of meals, medication or transportation.

This province’s affordability crisis is not an individual failure but a systemic one, and we need to work across party lines to build a province where one in four children no longer rely on food banks.

I want to say thank you to the Daily Bread Food Bank and the many volunteers that work in our community every day to ensure people have access to food.

This week is also Remembrance Week, a time to honour those that have served our country. I want to recognize the dedicated members of local Royal Canadian Legions for their leadership and service. Thank you to Zone D1 commander, Shelley Sing; Branch 101 Long Branch president, Alan Roy; Branch 643 Flight Lieutenant David Hornell; and president, Donna Sampson. Thank you and all veterans for your service to our country.

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## SKILLED TRADES WEEK

### REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mr. David Smith:** This week, I’m proud to host Skilled Trades Week in my riding of Scarborough Centre, a time to celebrate the hard-working men and women who build our homes, power our community and keep Ontario moving. We welcomed students, job seekers, new Canadians and residents to explore rewarding careers in the trades. It was inspiring to see many young people connecting with electricians, carpenters, plumbers, welders and HVAC technicians—people who make a real difference every day. Organizations were on site to offer jobs, apprenticeships and co-op placements.

The message was clear: Skilled trades offer good jobs, stability and a bright future with a bigger paycheque. To everyone who mentored, hired or inspired, thank you for helping shape Ontario.

Next week, we pause to honour those who served, those who never returned and families who carried the burden at home. Across Ontario, we gather at cenotaphs, in schools, workplaces and at home to remember their courage and sacrifice. Let us commit ourselves to peace, to service and to care for veterans and their families.

I encourage everyone to wear a poppy and join in two minutes of silence at the eleventh hour—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I want to remind members that members’ statements are one minute and 30 seconds.

I recognize the member for Oshawa.

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** November is Woman Abuse Prevention Month. It is a time dedicated to raising awareness about gender-based violence and supporting survivors. I was proud to join the second annual community walk to end intimate partner violence. The walk was hosted at the region of Durham headquarters and organized by Victim Services of Durham Region, YWCA Durham, Luke's Place, the Denise House, Herizon House, Bethesda House, Safety Network Durham, the Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre and all of the advocates and supporters from across Durham region who know that intimate partner violence is an epidemic and we have to work to stop it.

I was honoured to join other elected leaders at the walk in solidarity with survivors and the services. Hopefully next year some elected men will stand with us. I was quite disappointed to have been the only MPP from the seven ridings of Durham region who decided to show up for women at the walk.

Our province has to do better. I have stood in this chamber when Lydia's Law was voted down by this government while galleries of survivors who will never get justice watched and cried. I was in this room when the motion to call IPV an epidemic in this province was defeated by this government.

We are in the midst of an intimate partner violence epidemic. Each year, Victim Services of Durham Region sees a drastic rise in referrals, showing a 75% increase already this year compared to last year. Far too many individuals in our community are living in fear and danger. Growing demand for services underscores the urgent need for collective action, sustainable resources and community-wide commitment to ending violence in all its forms.

I was honoured to walk, and I will continue to fight to end IPV.

## MOOSE HIDE CAMPAIGN

**Mr. Brian Saunderson:** November is Woman Abuse Prevention Month in Ontario, and during the last session of this Legislature, the Standing Committee on Justice Policy conducted extensive hearings on intimate partner violence in Ontario. During those hearings, we heard from Raven Lacerte who, with her father, Paul, started an Indigenous-led, grassroots movement to engage men and boys in ending violence against women and children. It has grown into a nationwide movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians from local communities and First Nations committed to ending this violence.

I'm talking about the Moose Hide Campaign, a movement that is grounded in Indigenous ceremony and traditional ways of learning and healing. A cornerstone of the Moose Hide Campaign is the moose hide pin that signifies the wearer's commitment to respect, honour and protect the women and children in their lives, and to speak out against gender-based violence. To date, over 10 million moose hide pins have been distributed free of charge to

communities, schools and workplaces across Canada, and in this House today.

Speaker, the Moose Hide Campaign is here today at Queen's Park for its inaugural 10 men at Queen's Park day of fasting, and I was proud to join several of my colleagues this morning to participate in this important event and join the fast.

I want to thank Raven and Paul Lacerte for their vision, commitment and dedication to starting the Moose Hide Campaign and welcome them to Queen's Park.

This program educates and heals, but, most importantly, Madam Speaker, it breaks the vicious cycle and saves lives. Meegwetch.

## BURDETT SISLER

**MPP Wayne Gates:** I want to share a special congratulations today to one of my favourite constituents. Recently, after the sad news of the passing of Margaret Romans, one of my constituents, Mr. Burdett Sisler of Fort Erie, became the oldest living person in Canada. Burdett, or Burd, as we call him, is truly an incredible and special person. Burd is 110 years old, is a veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces and, having served this country during the Second World War, he's the oldest living Canadian veteran of the Second World War and, I believe, is the sixth-oldest living veteran of the war in the world.

Burd spent 30 years working for the Canadian Border Services Agency and raised a family in Fort Erie. And listen to this: He now lives at Garrison Place and has five children, 11 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren and 14 great-great-grandchildren.

I've been extremely privileged to call Burd a friend. In fact, Burd nominated me for re-election as MPP in the last three elections, the first time when he was 102 years old.

I was also proud to recently attend Burd's 110th birthday party in Fort Erie in April of this year at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 71. At Burd's birthday, I had the honour of awarding Burd with the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

Congratulations, Burd. Thank you for your incredible service to our country, for all you have given to our community in Niagara and for your friendship. Thank you very much.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** This weekend, I visited the Filipino-Canadian Professionals Convention. This was a great event with nurses, health care leaders and professionals who contribute so much to the Ontario health care system and economy.

It is great to see the success of foreign-accredited immigrants integrated into Ontario's economy. Our government is opening up careers to professionals and new Canadians with foreign credentials by cutting red tape that prevents experienced immigrants from working in their profession. For example, we removed the two years'



Canadian experience from the Ontario credential system for 37 professions.

Likewise, I have had the opportunity in recent months to meet with a number of professional associations, business networks and international friendship associations. There are those like the Fiji Ontario Business Association, the Mississauga Chinese Business Association, the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce and the Canada-Arab Business Council, just to name a few.

In times of uncertainty, when our international trading relationships are changing, Ontario needs to diversify economic ties and build our international partnerships.

Speaker, as Ontarians from diverse backgrounds, our domestic business associations are in a better position to partner with international communities, nations and businesses.

Thank you to all the business partners for your—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Algoma-Manitoulin.

#### REMEMBRANCE DAY

**MPP Bill Rosenberg:** As Remembrance Day approaches, we pause to honour the brave men and women who have served and continue to serve our country in defence of our democracy and freedoms.

Across Ontario, the familiar poppy reminds us of their sacrifice. The poppy campaign, a long-standing tradition, has evolved, now allowing Ontarians to also make contributions virtually to support the veterans and their families.

Ontario is proud to be the first province in Canada to recognize veterans through the Ontario Veterans Award for Community Service Excellence. This award honours those who continue to serve beyond their military careers by helping fellow veterans reintegrate into civilian life, support those living with injuries and strengthen communities through volunteerism.

1030

As time moves forward, it is ever more important that we continue to remember—and to teach future generations—about the sacrifices that have secured our peace. I encourage all Ontarians, especially our youth, to visit their local cenotaphs on November 11 to take part in remembrance ceremonies and show their support.

Our Royal Canadian Legions are pillars of our communities, preserving our history, and ensure that the stories of service and sacrifice are never forgotten. Their members volunteer countless hours to support veterans. They deserve not only our respect but our ongoing support throughout the year.

Let us always remember. Let us always be grateful. Lest we forget.

#### YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** I stand today with deep concern for the future of our children. We are failing them.

Young people are facing unprecedented challenges. Mental health struggles are rising, driven by rapid changes

in technology, the isolation of government-mandated lockdowns during the pandemic and the overwhelming pressures of growing up in an uncertain world. Instead of addressing these issues, this government is simply walking away, leaving gaps in mental health support and failing to provide resources all of our kids need to thrive.

For children and youth in care, things are bleak. Children and youth do not have access to timely treatment services. If we invested early, we could avoid crises. Families are not able to access services they need: mental health treatment, children's developmental services and respite.

Then there is, of course, the Ontario Autism Program wait-list that now sits at around 65,000. Sadly, parents are relinquishing custody to children's aid societies when they can no longer cope. This is an unimaginable decision for any parent to have to make. This government points the finger at our agencies; however, the data tells the true story that increased costs are related to the high cost of care for children with high needs and high-risk behaviours.

What are agencies to do when this government fails to acknowledge the truth and there's no financial assistance to provide the proper intervention? It's imperative we be fiscally responsible, but at the same time, we need to fix the cracks in child welfare.

#### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Parkdale-High Park on a point of order.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** I seek unanimous consent of the House to observe a moment of silence for survivors and victims of gender-based violence in recognition of Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Parkdale-High Park is seeking unanimous consent of the House to observe a moment of silence for survivors and victims of gender-based violence in recognition of Woman Abuse Prevention Month. Agreed? Agreed.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

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

#### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity.

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** I seek unanimous consent that, in the opinion of the House, the government of Ontario recognizes the endemic nature of intimate partner violence in Ontario and its significant and continuing impact on individuals, families and communities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity is seeking unanimous consent that, in the opinion of the House, the government of Ontario recognizes the endemic nature of intimate partner violence in Ontario and its significant and continuing impact on individuals, families and communities. Agreed? Agreed.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Point of order? I recognize the member for Windsor West.

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** I seek unanimous consent of the House that the government of Ontario recognize and declare intimate partner violence an epidemic.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Windsor West is seeking unanimous consent of the House that the government of Ontario recognize and declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. Agreed? I heard a no.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** Good morning, Speaker. I have the great honour today of introducing some distinguished guests on a trade mission from Saudi Arabia to Canada. I'd like to introduce the honourable Mohammed Al-Duleim Al-Qahtany, Khalid Al-Sharief, Abdulrahman Al-Nahdi, Shazaad Mohammed, Sacha Singh, Abdullah Alyami, Abdullah Alshalan and Ali Al-Otabi. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It's my honour to welcome the consulate general of the Republic of Angola in Toronto to the Legislature today to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Angola. Please join us later as we celebrate the raising of the flag on the south lawn at 12:15.

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I'd like to welcome my friend Eve-Lynn Stein and her husband Allen Flaming. We worked together at TDSB. She's one of the best social workers we had. I'm grateful that you can call this place your House and come visit.

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** I'd like to welcome my constituency office manager, Kamrana Qureshi, and her son, Azaan Rajan, who is here for Take Our Kids to Work Day.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** On behalf of the Minister of Energy, I'd like to welcome the family of one of our wonderful pages, Ava Di Donato. She is joined by Anthony, Annamaria, Angela and Anthony Di Donato, and her grandparents Grace and Francesco, as well as aunt Nina. Welcome to the House. You're doing a remarkable job.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** I want to welcome all of the lawyers with the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association who are here all day with over 40 meetings.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to extend a warm welcome to all the faculty and academic librarians from OCUFA who have joined us today—in particular, Rob Kristofferson, who is the president of OCUFA, and Shawn Hendrikx, who is the president of Western University's faculty association. Welcome.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I, too, would like to welcome members of OCUFA, with a special shout-out to Helen Booker from the University of Guelph Faculty Association.

I would also like to welcome members of the Moose Hide Campaign, including co-founder Paul Lacerte, director of training Chelsea Taylor and consultant Heena Kapoor. Thank you for being at Queen's Park.

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** Good morning. Today, I'd like to introduce Armando Sifuentes. He is the son of one of my staff members and a bright grade 9 student from William Lyon Mackenzie collegiate. He is also an excellent soccer player. One day he will play for Canada at the World Cup. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Speaker, I'd like to commend page captain Oliver Prang on his great work here and welcome his family, Sara Marcella, Frank Resendes and Emery Prang. Welcome to your House.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** It's a privilege to welcome members of the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association to the Legislative Assembly. They have a delegation here today, and I'd like to introduce some of their members: Mary-Anne Strong, president; president-elect Jay Ralston; Joanna Sweet, who is the vice-president; Christine Allenby, who is the CEO.

The Ontario Trial Lawyers Association is having their own reception this evening from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. in committee rooms 228 and 230. All MPPs are welcome.

Welcome to your House.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** I'm happy to introduce guests with the Moose Hide Campaign, a First-Nations-led grassroots movement to stand up against violence towards women and children. Members from all parties are participating in today's 10 men fasting ceremony. Welcome to Paul Lacerte, co-founder for the Moose Hide Campaign; Elder Jimmy Dick; Chelsea Taylor; and also Heena Kapoor.

**1040**

It was good to see you today, and also this evening when we have the fast-breaking ceremony. Meegwetch.

**Mrs. Michelle Cooper:** I'm pleased to welcome Amanda McFarlane, who is here with her daughter Selena Saunders. She is from my constituency office and she is here for take your child to work day.

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** Today, I'm delighted to welcome Jack McKay to the Legislature as part of take your kid to work day. Jack is the son of Edyta McKay, my director of communications.

And on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, as we commemorate Veterans' Week, I'm honoured to welcome members from Coding for Veterans: Jeff Musson, the executive director; Eiffee Cahill, director of events and marketing; and Apoorva Rana, business and tech management analyst. Later today, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., we will be hosting a reception in room 340 and invite all members to attend.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** We are out of time for introduction of visitors, but that was an interesting way of getting that one in.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Good morning. This Premier and this government have been a jobs disaster. Again, yesterday,

we learned of a rather distasteful, I think, example of this government handing out taxpayer dollars—Ontarians' hard-earned money—to their friends, to insiders. People have a right, at the very least, I think, to expect that their government is going to deliver jobs and opportunities, and not favours to political insiders, to friends of the Premier and his government. They deserve to know that every single one of their hard-earned taxpayer dollars are going to produce real jobs.

I'd like to ask the Premier: Why do you continue to prioritize a friends-and-family special over an actual jobs plan?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** To the Leader of the Opposition: If they were ever in charge, we'd be bankrupt, which they did for 15 years with the Liberals and NDP—highest debt ever, highest electricity costs anywhere. We saw 600,000 jobs leave.

Let's talk about when we got elected in 2018. It was like walking into a bankrupt company. I know you don't understand me, because you've never run a lemonade stand. In saying that, there's a million more people working today than there was seven years ago. There's \$70 billion of investment that came to our province because we created the climate and the conditions by reducing the costs of doing business by \$12 billion every single year, until companies could come here and hire more people.

It's economics 101. We cut taxes for people. We cut taxes for business, creating more opportunities. They voted against every single bill that we've done. They just believe in taxing and spending and gouging the taxpayers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Well, Speaker, at least my lemonade stand was legal. Not only is this government bankrupt; they are morally bankrupt.

Speaker, this is a big week in Ontario. We have a Premier who has been a jobs disaster. Youth unemployment is through the roof. Just in the last three weeks alone, 4,000 more Ontarians have learned they are losing their jobs. Thousands of workers are waking up every morning not sure if they're going to have a job to go to.

And now we have a federal budget that I'm going to just say I do not think delivered on what we needed at this moment; a budget that is not what regular people were looking for right now. What Ontarians need right now is a government that is going to stand with workers, not on the side of well-connected insiders.

Premier, when are you going to stop this pay-to-play scheme and deliver a jobs plan for Ontario?

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

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Thank you, Madam Speaker—*Interjection.*

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Thank you to the member from Whitby.

Let's look at some of the facts for the 15 years that the NDP had the Liberals had the levers of government. Madam Speaker, do you know how many nurses they saw being cut? Some 1,600 nurses being cut; 600 schools

closed; seven jails closed; in my riding, zero long-term-care beds built over—zero beds.

Under this government, we're creating jobs—almost a million jobs. We're retraining and reskilling—almost a million jobs. Do you know why? People want to work in Ontario. They want to have a great-paying job. This government is putting together the vision and the plan to get that done.

Tomorrow, I will be tabling the fall economic statement. And this is what my ask is: Will you support Ontario? Will you back Ontario? Will you support the—

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, I'm getting pretty tired of this, and I think Ontarians are getting very tired of this. Every day not only is there a new headline with more job losses, but there's a new scandal of this government's making. Every day, another headline, another story about some Conservative insider—maybe he's a strip club owner, maybe not. But they've cashed in on this government's pay-to-play scheme.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Maybe not. It's false.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Oh, yeah—no. But there was a strip club owner there. I think you know it, because he was delivering the hot dogs at your barbecue, Premier.

*Interjection.*

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

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Withdraw that she's a liar.

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

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Withdraw.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Did he withdraw? All right. Great.

This government, once again—and the Premier has to keep calm here for a minute. This government only helps those who help them.

Premier, when are you going to put an end to this pay-to-play scheme and restore trust in government?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Let's just talk about jobs. Last year, 409 companies from around the world came to invest in Ontario. They invested \$40 billion and created 25,000 jobs. We have 825,000 manufacturing jobs. That's more than Florida, which is a much bigger state, and New York, which is a bigger state, combined. We have more manufacturing jobs here. And we're going to continue to grow.

We're going to continue to grow in our nuclear growth and energy sector that you vote against. You're voting against the Ring of Fire. You vote against mining. You vote against everything that creates an opportunity and jobs, not just for now, but for the future.

For the students who are going to be out in the work world, just pray to God we're still here because you'll have a job. If we aren't, you'll be in the unemployment line under these guys.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** When layoffs outpace hiring, then that is a jobs loss, and that is a jobs disaster. Do the math—my goodness.

I've got to say, Speaker, as I look out—and this is to the Premier again—across this chamber, each of the government members are going to have to explain all of this to their communities.

You're going to go back next week—it's constituency week—and you're going to have to explain why taxpayer dollars are going to your friends, to well-connected insiders, to donors to your party, and not to measures that are making life more affordable for people.

I want to ask the Premier again: Is this how you and your government do business?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Let's look at the job numbers. The September job numbers came out: 44,700 new jobs. August: 22,100 jobs. Again, what we're doing—we're competing against the entire world.

Your philosophy is tax, tax, tax. You raised taxes 43 times when you were in office, along with the Liberals—

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

**Hon. Doug Ford:** —propped up by the Liberals. You ended up getting rid of 600—

*Interjections.*

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

Through the Speaker.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Sorry. Through you, Madam Speaker: We created \$22 billion—with the construction in schools.

They fired 1,600 nurses. We've hired 100,000 more nurses, 16,000 more doctors. We're putting medical schools up every single year to attract more health care workers.

You know something, Madam Speaker? You have two choices: Tax and spend, gouge the people, drive businesses out, or have a prosperous Ontario where we can compete against anyone in the world. I'll take the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Supplementary.  
1050

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Let's talk about numbers, shall we? Numbered companies that exploit women and vulnerable people and get taxpayer dollars from this government—shame on you. The second-highest unemployment rate in Canada—that's a fact. Ontarians are struggling to make ends meet. People are pinching pennies while this government thinks that the government coffers are their personal piggy bank.

A record number of people are visiting food banks in this province. Families in Ontario are doing everything right, but they can't seem to get ahead under this government. Can the Premier explain why, while Ontarians are lined up at food banks, his government is handing out Skills Development Fund dollars to his friends and his donors?

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

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** It's so ironic that the party opposite supported the increase in the carbon tax year after

year after year, which raised the price of food every year. It was this government—while they were increasing taxes, we were cutting taxes. And which way did you vote? You voted for increasing taxes, not cutting taxes, which puts more money back in the pockets of people—just in the budget, \$13 billion of taxpayer support for the many hard-working women and men of this province.

Let me ask you, when the jobs in the north for Algoma were challenged and we were there to support them so they could keep 2,800 workers in the north going, which way did you vote? Did you vote for workers or did you vote against workers? I submit, they voted against them. Every chance they had, they voted against supporting workers and joining this side.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Every time this government says that they're going to deliver for Ontarians, whether it's housing or it's jobs, they get caught up in a scandal. They used the housing crisis—remember that? It's still going on—to help their donors and their lobbyists cash in. We are no closer to reaching our housing targets today, while this government is being investigated by the RCMP for the greenbelt scandal.

Now they have the gall to use the jobs disaster of their own creation to help those same donors and those same lobbyists cash in again. I've got to tell you, Speaker, I don't think the people across from us expected—most of them—when they were elected, that they would be propping up scandals like this by this Premier and his government.

What is it going to take for this government to start paying attention to the needs of working people in Ontario?

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** This fund has strict financial controls, monthly reporting and on-site monitoring, and we've committed to further improving. During my time as minister, we've added financial controls, financial audits, and integrated our employment service database to track long-term employment outcomes.

But when we want to talk about that, to actually getting the jobs—as the Premier said, a million net new jobs—they voted against every measure to bring those jobs to miners in the north, to men and women in the energy sector, to the boilermakers.

I quote Victoria Mancinelli. Not once did the members opposite reach out to learn about these jobs in training: “Not a phone call, not an email. Nothing. Because truth doesn't seem to fit their agenda here.”

That's the quote, Speaker. That's the facts—

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Question.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. John Fraser:** I've said this many times in here—I know the Premier has heard me say this; you've all heard me say this: We're like one big family. I know to people watching on TV and in the galleries, it doesn't look like it, but we are. We're all connected together, and it's a special place. I come here and that's what I feel. But we don't replace each other's families. You don't replace my family; I don't replace yours. They're important to us.

We all go back at the end of the week, and we're so glad to go home. I'm happy to go home. I miss my family. Then I talk about what's going on here. I talk to friends and neighbours, my daughter, my wife, my sons. I want to know from the Premier: How do I explain to them that the government gave \$10.8 million to the owners of a strip club?

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** The member doesn't have to because it's incorrect.

Speaker, through successive rounds, as I said, in this program, we have strict financial controls and monthly spot audits. Through rounds two to four, this program trained over 700 workers, meeting over 110% of its KPIs. The Auditor General herself acknowledged KPIs are strong in this program. We've committed to continuing to strengthen the integrity of this program through integrating it through things like our employment management service to track outcomes at six, nine and 12 months. And we accepted the Auditor General's recommendations to publicly post programmatic indicators, KPIs, attaching them to the programs publicly for the public to see.

We'll keep fighting for those workers. If the member, when he goes home, wants to visit it, I'd encourage him to visit SMART, the local union we're investing in through the Skills Development Fund, bringing in French-language training for sheet metal workers for the first time in that union's history.

Building the Ottawa Hospital: Again, investments in the budget by this Premier that that member voted—

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** That answer would be easier to believe if they actually collected data and that it mattered to them—if they actually collected data.

Let's not put our families into it. There are young men and women in the galleries here. Speaker, respectfully, how do we explain to the young people in the gallery, the young women, that this government gave \$10.8 million to the owner of a strip club? I want that answer. They want that answer. Can the minister do that?

**Hon. David Piccini:** It's simple: No, that's incorrect. The only member talking about that is that member.

Speaker, as I mentioned, we do collect data. We have monthly reporting, and we've taken measures to strengthen the integrity.

If that member is looking for wonderful activities to do in the constituency week, again, if it's not sheet metal

workers, they could go and visit local ironworkers. They could go and visit local boilermakers, who are working on the front lines of net new nuclear that we're building. That's the same net nuclear that they wanted to shut down at Pickering, that they wanted to shut down all over Ontario.

We're supporting those workers. We're investing in their training, Speaker. And those workers know that when it comes to their best interests, this government has their backs. They vote against every measure to invest in those workers every time they have a chance.

They have a chance on Thursday with the fall economic statement. I hope they'll support us.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** That non-answer is ironic given it's take-your-kid-to-work day. That's all I want to say.

Look, we know that in places like strip clubs bad things can happen, and we all know what they are. I'm not going to repeat the article—I hope you've all read it and read the comments of the people who are working there. We all know, every one of us, everybody here knows you can become trapped in a job you don't like, a job you don't trust, around people you don't want to be around. We know that. I don't know how the mister can justify this.

My question is really simple: Can we just get the \$10.8 million back?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, as I mentioned, this program has strict financial controls, monthly spot audits and visits by bureaucrats to make sure that every dollar is being spent on training.

That's what we saw here: over 700 workers trained. These are hospitality workers. These are front- and back-office management. These are the men and women who are serving us, who are serving tables, who are making beds in hotels in our hospitality sector—a \$15-billion sector ravaged by the global pandemic. We're going to support those workers.

As I mentioned, I'd encourage that member to visit some of the worthwhile projects in his own region that I referenced. Visit those workers who are building our hospitals, who are building our new highways, roads and bridges. And, yes, support those projects when you have a chance, in the budget.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** Speaker, the SDF is just one more example of this government's disrespect for taxpayer money. The Auditor General's report told us that the minister's office chose to fund poor-, low- and medium-ranked applications 54% of the time instead of high-scoring applications. They told us they dolled out \$742 million to applications that scored medium, low or poor. Millions of dollars in taxpayer money went to applicants who basically got a failing grade because they were insider friends.

1100

Speaker, this Premier talks a lot about running the government like a business, but in what world would the CEO of a business not be held to account for such a failure?

My question, through you to the Premier: When will he stand up and take accountability for his government's failure on the SDF?

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** In the depths of a global pandemic, when restaurants were shuttered, when people were working from home, when employers were reaching out, seeking support, driving what they do best, wanting to open their businesses etc., this Premier invested in workers, rapid training for workers to help upskill those workers for better jobs with bigger paycheques.

Through successive rounds, as I mentioned, of monthly spot visits, spot audits, we've now integrated improvements in that programming, linking it to our employment database service, ensuring audited financial statements and, yes, accepting the recommendations of the Auditor General as well. This government recognizes that when it comes to protecting our economy and our workers, you can't just stand back and do nothing. You have to invest in worker training.

We've seen the support of organized labour, who know that their members get paycheques when you make investments in historic infrastructure—investments this government is making. We're going to keep supporting those workers and giving them a job to go to—

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

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** Tomorrow we'll see the fall economic statement, this government's latest attempt to show taxpayers how they'll spend their money. This government spent over \$1 billion on the Skills Development Fund, a program that got a big fat F from the Auditor General. She said it was not fair, transparent or accountable. Basically, the Auditor General told us that this government spent over \$1 billion of taxpayer money in a way that is not fair to taxpayers. Surely, if you got that message and you really had respect for taxpayer money, you would make a course correction.

My question to the Premier: Will he fix the Skills Development Fund, or will he continue to waste hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars?

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

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** I'm happy to answer this question, Madam Speaker. Let's take a look at how much of a benefit retraining and reskilling 700,000 people, on our way to a million people that will be retrained and reskilled—I think it would be good if the members opposite took a look at what we're doing in Darlington: building four small modular reactors. You know what? That's going to create 18,000—the member from Ajax is very supportive; there's a seat over here for you. There are 18,000 construction jobs that we'll need and already we've started to build those four small modular reactors. They

are good jobs; they are construction jobs; they are long-term jobs.

This is why it's so incredibly important to retrain, to reskill, to give our youth opportunities for the jobs of tomorrow and to help build Ontario.

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** The Premier talks a lot about running a business, so let's consider this: Suppose you're a businessman who owns a company. Let's say it's a labels company, and one of your senior executives runs a procurement process for new equipment, and you find out that he chose a friend's company instead of the most qualified bidder. Basically, your company got ripped off. You got inferior equipment at a bad price. So you have an auditor investigate. They conclude the employee did indeed not act fairly. The senior employee and his friends got rich while you got a bad deal. What would any competent businessman do? It's very clear: They'd fire that employee.

My question to the Premier, through you, Speaker: When will he act like the competent businessman he claims to be and fire his Minister of Labour?

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, as you heard, 700,000 workers are receiving meaningful training for better jobs with bigger paycheques.

We talk about key sectors of our economy that are benefiting from this training—training that has been improved through each successive round. We acknowledge that we can always continue to make more improvements, which is why we accepted the recommendations of the Auditor General; which is why, before that AG report, we implemented financial audits. We integrated this into our employment database system to track outcomes at six, nine and 12 months.

Who are these workers we're supporting through this tracking? Our men and women in our nuclear sector—18,000 jobs. It bears repeating: 18,000 jobs through small modular reactors. We have 12,000 to 14,000 men and women at Hinkley in the UK on their new nuclear.

Do you know who else is talking about new nuclear, larger nuclear? This government, this Premier—to be energy independent; to stand on our own two feet as a country. We're supporting those workers, like the millwrights, the boilermakers. We're getting it done.

## HIGHWAY SAFETY

**Mr. John Vanthof:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Highway 11, particularly north of North Bay—it's the Trans-Canada Highway: 2,000 trucks a day. It's the backbone of Canada. Not only that—school buses, medical appointments.

In 2020, Highway 11 between North Bay and Cochrane was closed 107 times. That's awful. But in the first nine months of 2025, it was closed 213 times.

Can the minister report on what is actually going on there?

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** As the member knows, we work with the OPP and other law enforcement officials when making decisions to close highways down. We've

invested, just last year, over \$600 million into the north through the MTO transportation budget to make those improvements, which that member voted against every single time.

Our commitment has been to build on Highway 11 and Highway 17 to ensure that we're making the investments, whether it be on commercial safety, increasing transportation enforcement officers. We've conducted over 90,000 inspections to date to keep our roads safe. That's 35% higher than last year. And guess what? Those members voted against every single one of those transportation officer increases through the budget in the fall economic statement.

We're going to continue to build Highways 11 and 17, improve investments and continue to deliver safe highways and roads across the province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Well, in ours, in the first nine months of 2025, Highway 11, with no detour from New Liskeard to Cochrane, was closed 31 days—a month out of nine. Now, they've got lots of ads about how northern Ontario is going to drive this province, and it does, but they can't even keep the road open. What is going on?

You talk about road improvements. Why don't we, instead of promising them in election campaigns, actually do them? The Minister of Northern Development knows very well—and he controls a lot of that money—but Highway 11 hasn't had any significant improvement in years.

You want to develop the Ring of Fire? How about you keep the roads open?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** A reminder: We ask our questions through the Speaker.

Back to the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Madam Speaker, let's talk about Highway 11, the same highway that the Premier committed to getting a 2+1 pilot project started on. Some \$28 billion over the next 10 years is being invested into highways, including 11 and 17. And guess what? That member voted against those investments in Highway 11 and Highway 17.

He has another opportunity. When the fall economic statement gets tabled this Thursday, he will once again have the ability to commit to funding on Highway 11 and Highway 17. I'm looking forward to seeing how that member votes when it comes down to supporting his own community and supporting Highway 11 and 17 improvements. Two-laning Highway 11, including the four-laning of Highway 17, is something that we've committed to and something that we are going to do.

It also includes investments into our commercial enforcement division, which is the transportation enforcement officers. I hope that member also supports—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Don Valley East.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Premier. Across the province, public education is in crisis, particularly in colleges and universities. A few weeks ago, the FAO projected an annual funding decline of 3.3% over the next three years, amounting to at least \$1.3 billion.

Look, we've already seen thousands of job cuts under this government—program cuts, institutional deficits—because this Premier and these ministers are more interested in private friends and well-paying donors.

**1110**

We now know that the Minister of Labour paid out over \$10 million to a strip club owner that could have been better spent supporting students, faculty and universities. Why is the Premier more preoccupied with adult entertainment instead of adult education?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Minister of Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** I always enjoy the opportunity to highlight the investments into the publicly assisted post-secondary system. We invested \$1 billion dollars this year: \$750 million into 20,000 new STEM seats, on top of the 70,000 grads we are graduating every year—another \$56,000 for nursing seats, another \$55 million for teaching seats. We're investing into the post-secondary sector.

I really wish the member opposite would speak to the federal counterparts in Ottawa and let them know their announcement yesterday—cutting our international students again, another hit to our post-secondary sector—was really missing the mark on labour market needs. We hear from everyone across the province that the federal government's unilateral decisions when it comes to our international students have caused chaos right across the whole province and country.

But we'll continue to be there for the sector. That is why we have a funding formula review currently taking place, and I just met with the Council of Ontario Universities yesterday. We'll continue meeting with all the stakeholders, Speaker.

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** It's the same answer from yesterday, mirroring the same underinvestment for the last seven years.

Let's get something straight: Colleges and universities, under this government, have been brought to their knees. Meanwhile, Ontario taxpayers are paying for a high-end, sophisticated burlesque experience from a friend of the Premier, where scantily dressed performers hang from their teeth, patrons enjoy lap dances and private rooms can be accessed for a \$400 fee.

It's already well-known that this government trades in preferential access and special favours; just ask Kory Teneycke. But this is a new low. All of this, all \$10.8 million, is going to support a long-time friend and donor of the Premier's family and his party.

Will the Premier try again to explain how lust and lap dances matter more than excellence in education?

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, it's concerning how much that member knows about this, but what I can say is, over a billion additional dollars, a billion additional dollars to colleges and universities—let's talk about additional Skills Development Fund dollars for colleges and universities, partnering with Loyalist College, Base31. I just received a note from the school about some of the graduates that have gone through that programming, supporting our construction sector.

As you heard from the Minister of Finance, incredible investments are being made in our fall economic statement, which I hope they will support: investments in new nuclear that are going to create up to 18,000 jobs with small modular reactors; investments in construction and training for new hospitals, new roads, new bridges; supporting labour organizations that are supporting this government. When that member has an opportunity to support those investments, to support those workers who will receive bigger paycheques thanks to those investments, I hope he will support us.

#### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. The Gardiner Expressway is a vital link connecting downtown Toronto to the GTHA, including my own community of Oakville North-Burlington. But the Liberals and the NDP showed how out of touch they are by calling for the Gardiner to be torn down. Some opposition members have even proposed tolling the Gardiner. For years, the Liberals talked about fixing our highways but never delivered. Projects were delayed, costs went up and drivers paid the price.

Our government knows that action matters far more than words. Under the Premier's leadership, we are delivering results and protecting Ontario's future. Speaker, can the minister outline what steps our government took to get this project over the finish line?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Brampton East.

**Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal:** Speaker, our government is focused on common-sense solutions and common-sense results. Three years to repair Ontario's most important highways is too long. That's why we worked in partnership with the city of Toronto and we invested \$73 million to speed up construction and enable work on a 24/7 basis.

Speaker, as a result of our approach, we cut the project timeline from three years to just a year and a half. The 140,000 drivers who rely on the Gardiner every day will now save up to 22 minutes each day, each way, on their trip. I can't imagine how long this project would have taken under the Liberals. Under our Premier's leadership, we're getting it done and protecting Ontario.

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** Thank you to the parliamentary assistant for this response. As the greater Toronto and Hamilton area continues to grow, we need our infrastructure to keep pace. That means investing in roads,

highways and transit that support our economy and help people get where they need to go faster.

For far too long, under the Liberals, these projects were delayed, cancelled or left to crumble. This cost drivers a lot of time, which they could otherwise be spending with their families, and cost our economy billions in lost revenue. Ontarians support our plan to build faster and smarter. They want a government that works with our municipal partners and our industry partners to get results.

Speaker, can the parliamentary assistant share how our investments in major projects like the Gardiner and the QEW are helping protect Ontario's economy?

**Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal:** As the greater Toronto horseshoe's population grows, so must our economy. That requires both long-term investment in our infrastructure and long-term partnerships between all governments and all our stakeholders.

That's why we worked with the city of Toronto to cut the Gardiner construction timeline in half. We invested in the Gardiner to speed up construction, and now we're widening the QEW and adding capacity to keep traffic moving.

Ontarians support our plan. A recent survey by the Toronto Region Board of Trade found that 73% of respondents support 24-hour construction and 74% support 24-hour public transit construction. By delivering this project almost a year and a half sooner, we have saved over \$273 million in gridlock impact.

Our investment in the Gardiner supported approximately 500 good-paying jobs and will deliver long-term benefits for commuters across the GTA.

#### UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE FUNDING

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question is to the Premier. Speaker, for years, this government has allowed international student tuition to subsidize our post-secondary system so they could cut public funding to the bone. This is not ethical and it's not sustainable.

Yesterday, we saw the federal Liberal budget announce a 65% reduction to international study permits, which is another huge hit to the international student tuition revenues that have been keeping this sector afloat.

Speaker, when will our colleges and universities finally receive the increased public operating funding they urgently need?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Minister of Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** We invest \$5 billion into the public operating of our post-secondary system every year. Next year, that will go up to \$5.8 billion, which is a 12% increase over 2023-24.

We'll continue making strategic investments, like our \$750 million into 20,000 STEM seats, while the member opposite votes against that. We'll continue to be there for the sector. We'll continue to ensure that the sector stands on its own, even with the challenges that the federal government has created. That's on top of the \$1.3 billion that we invested into the sector last year. Almost \$2.5 billion



has gone into our post-secondary sector in the last 18 months.

We'll continue being there for the sector, and this is why we are doing a funding formula review. Unfortunately, the federal government has made many unilateral decisions—too many to count on two hands at this point. But we'll continue being there for the sector, making sure the sector is there for decades to come.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Minister, I hope that tomorrow's fall economic statement includes a reversal of the \$1.2-billion cut in the 2025 budget. Without a firm commitment to increased per-student funding, a funding formula review will do nothing to stop the layoffs, to maintain vital programs and keep campuses open.

1120

There are already 28,000 unfunded students attending Ontario universities—no funding whatsoever attached to those students. There are an estimated 80,000 Ontario students who may not be able to get into the programs they dream of and our economy needs because the government is not funding those seats.

Why is this government denying students the opportunity to get the careers so critical to the future of our province and our communities?

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** We all know, with the NDP or Liberals in power, they'd put it on the backs of the students. They would raise tuition. It went up 23% under the NDP government, under those Bob Rae days that were very short, and 48% under the Liberal government.

We are the party and we are the government that cares about affordability for students; you do not. We've invested over \$2.3 billion in the last 18 months. You may not acknowledge it, but we're going to continue making those strategic investments, like the two new medical schools that we brought on board. We've invested into 100,000 new seats in the last year for our students across STEM, across construction, across teaching, across nursing. We'll continue to be there for the sector while you continue to vote down every investment we do for our post-secondary system.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** While youth unemployment hits record highs, this government has handed millions from the Skills Development Fund to a man running a so-called "training program" alongside a licensed strip club.

Now picture this: bartenders and bottle servers told to wear red corsets, high-cut black thongs and fishnets; performers in even less clothing dancing on stage, swinging between bars and hoops, even some suspended in the air from their hair and by their teeth; strippers working the room, offering lap dances.

I know the Premier is a proud girl dad. He knows of no father—and neither do I—that would dream of this kind of work for their daughter. So how can the Premier look Ontario fathers in the eye and defend a minister who used their hard-earned tax dollars to fund this kind of job creation for their little girls?

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** That's categorically incorrect, Speaker. What this program has done is support over 700 workers for training, achieving over 110% of their key programmatic indicators.

When we talk about this fund—I've mentioned monthly visits. I've mentioned spot audits. I've mentioned the steps we've taken to improve the integrity of the program through implementing financial audits, through implementing integration to our centralized employment management system which tracks outcomes at six, nine, 12 months. That's what we're continuing to do to support workers of this province.

As we head into constituency week, I'd encourage that member to visit those sheet metal workers who are benefiting from a new training centre—a new French-language curriculum for the first time that's ever been implemented for sheet metal workers—or the Ottawa Hospital, who are dealing with a local utility being constructed, a brand new hospital. These are men and women collecting a bigger paycheque thanks to historic investments from this Premier, this government.

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

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** The Skills Development Fund was meant to expand opportunity, not subsidize nightclub owners with private \$400 champagne rooms—a nightclub owner who told women to report to work in corsets, thongs and fishnets inside a building tied to millions in public money; a club offering lap dances and the Miami experience.

If this is what counts as skills training in Ontario, then every parent in this province should be outraged. As a caring father, a father of daughters, the Premier knows this is wrong. It is blatantly wrong because no father dreams of that kind of future for their child.

Will the Premier finally admit that this fund has been compromised by bad actors, cut them loose and clean it up so that Ontario can get the real training they need and deserve?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, again: No, it's incorrect.

Let's talk about why the fund was brought in place. In a global pandemic, when restaurants were closed down and when our tourism sector, which is a \$15-billion sector, was hurt hard and these employers were shuttered—many of whom didn't open again—we launched a fund to help train hospitality workers, among a myriad of other critical sectors of our economy. These are training front-of-house, back-of-house employees, 700 hospitality workers that that member is denigrating, Speaker—110% of their employment outcomes.

Yes, we've acknowledged the Auditor General's recommendations to strengthen the integrity of the program.

But that member denigrates hospitality workers—workers like the men and women of Unite Here Local 75, who we've supported through Skills Development Fund training; who are working in the hallways of the Sheraton, of the Holiday Inn; who are working hard, with the World Cup coming to Toronto. They're going to show the very

best of what this country and what this province offers. And we're proud to support those hospitality workers with better training.

## EDUCATION

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** My question is for the Premier.

In my rural riding of Haldimand–Norfolk, over the past week: reports of a student packing heat; a female student holding her urine all day because a male student is allowed to use the girls' bathroom; a call from a dad who says his grade 1 student has twice been hurt by another student since September.

Staff walk around schools in Ontario with walkie-talkies in case another colleague needs help. It's constant noise, a teacher tells me: "I'm crowd control first, a teacher second." A principal tells me his toughest job is balancing the rights of one versus the rights of many.

All of us in this house are hearing these same stories, and it's a matter of time, I fear, before a student in this province is going to be seriously injured.

Public education is failing. No kid is thriving. The system must be reimagined.

Speaker, through you to the Premier: Will he commit to reimagining a system that ensures every single student can access a safe education in this province?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I'm not really sure where the member has been, frankly. We started, actually, with my colleagues back in 2018—Minister Thompson, at the time, put a stop to many of the programs that were pending from the previous Liberal government. It accelerated under Minister Lecce and, of course, under Minister Dunlop.

Before the House, right now, we have Bill 33, which will reassert the province's expectations across the education sector.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** The Liberal leader is catcalling across, "Why aren't you doing anything?"

Well, under the Liberals, let's not forget that students were continuously—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Do you remember discovery math? All of our kids—EQAO results tumbling through the floor. We had a province that was bankrupt. Our students couldn't even read. Our teachers were miserable. That's the record of the Liberals.

To the member: We're fixing—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The leader of the third party will come to order.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** We're reasserting our responsibility, and we're getting it done for teachers, parents—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** I'm glad the minister agrees with me. However, teachers are still miserable.

A teacher told me last night that in her school all of the teachers have a calendar marking down their day until retirement.

What this minister refuses to acknowledge is that we cannot continue to stretch limited numbers of EAs, OTs and speech pathologists across every single school in this province. It's failing every student.

Along with physical dangers, there are now psychological obstacles—heightened anxiety in our school environments, not from academic pressures, but from navigating a growing number of social expectations. Classrooms are a place of tension rather than learning and discovery. Students begin to fear making mistakes instead of feeling free to grow and question. Classrooms have shifted from being safe spaces to being places of caution and fear. And the minister should restore the balance.

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results—and classrooms in this province are insane.

Speaker, through you to the Premier: Will he be the guy to stop the insanity, to save public education, or will history remember him as the guy who destroyed it?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Wow. Madam Speaker, that's quite the damning indictment of the previous Liberal government from this member. Everything she talks about was brought in by the previous Liberal government.

I agree with her. The politicizing of the classroom is not good for teachers. It's not good for students. It's not what parents want. That's why we are depoliticizing the school system—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The leader of the third party will come to order.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Specifically, to this member: This member has the opportunity to vote in favour of Bill 33, which restores accountability back to the Minister of Education, back to the province, depoliticizes the system, puts resources back into the classroom. And that member is voting against that again. She really falls in line with the Liberals: say one thing in public, but do another thing when it comes to voting.

1130

We're going to vote for students. We're going to vote for parents. We're going to vote for teachers. We're going to build the best education system in the world and restore the balance in the system so that our kids can prosper and they can succeed like they never have done before.

It takes a while to reverse 15 years of Liberal mismanagement, but we're going to get it done. It started in 2018, and we're going to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Question.

## ELECTRONIC SERVICE DELIVERY

**MPP Billy Denault:** My question is for the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery. Ontario's economy depends on secure and stable technology infrastructure.

From hospitals and schools to power grids and transit, our critical sectors rely on strong digital defences.

Around the world, we've seen foreign countries try to break into government IT systems, steal information and disrupt essential services. Cyber threats are growing fast, and they don't stop at borders. Ontario families expect their government to be ready to protect their data and to keep essential services safe.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is protecting Ontario from foreign threats and strengthening our defences against online attacks?

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** Thank you to the great member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I appreciate the question.

The Ontario government recognizes that cyber threats are growing in scale and sophistication, and we are taking decisive action to take care of this and our province's critical infrastructure and public services.

In January, our government brought about the Strengthening Cyber Security and Building Trust in the Public Sector Act, 2024, which established the new Enhancing Digital Security and Trust Act. This legislation sets clear requirements for cyber security across the broader public sector, including hospitals, schools, children's aid societies and municipalities.

We've implemented a comprehensive, government-wide security program that includes 24/7 monitoring of our networks, rapid incident response and ongoing collaboration with trusted industry partners. Our cyber security operations centre operates around the clock to detect, respond to and recover from cyber threats that are attacking Ontario's public sector.

**MPP Billy Denault:** Thank you to the minister for his response. Cyber attacks are not just lines of code. They are real threats that can shut down hospitals, disrupt power grids and steal personal data. Foreign actors are targeting governments around the world, trying to weaken economies and spread fear. We've seen what happens when those systems fail and we know Ontario cannot take that risk.

That's why our government is investing in stronger cyber protection, better staff training and faster response systems when attacks occur. We're taking action to protect what matters most.

Speaker, can the minister share how these new measures will keep Ontario's public systems and critical infrastructure safe from foreign cyber threats?

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** Our government understands that cyber attacks are not just lines of code. They are real threats that can disrupt hospitals, power grids and personal data. That's why we're investing in stronger cyber protection, better staff training and faster response systems. Under the new legislation we have set clear direction for the responsible use of artificial intelligence and extended cyber security protections across the broader public sector. We're actively working with our public sector partners to build a strong culture of cyber awareness and resilience, backed by the dedicated funding and resources for innovative cyber security initiatives.

Our government is also fostering unprecedented collaboration between public and private sectors, encouraging information-sharing and joint cyber security exercises to ensure coordinated and efficient responses.

Speaker, Ontarians can rest assured that this government will never stop working with our partners to protect the data and integrity of the people of the province of Ontario.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** To the Premier: His Minister of Labour claims to have paid for his own 100-level rinkside hockey tickets. But in 2023, the minister was photographed right behind the glass watching the Leafs in the pricey season ticket seats that are owned by the Zakarow family. Those tickets were reportedly worth over \$1,000 each, yet the minister reported that he had received no gifts on his disclosure form to the Integrity Commissioner. But the owner of those seats was beside him in that photo. Coincidentally, Mr. Zakarow's company was then awarded \$2.7 million subsequently through the Skills Development Fund in the following year.

My question to the Premier is, who really scored that night?

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, I've already addressed this. I'll stand up here to talk about what we're focused on on this side of the House: supporting workers with meaningful opportunities to land a better job with a bigger paycheque—and this is across sectors of this economy that have been deeply affected by President Trump's tariffs.

But notwithstanding that, we created a low-tax environment that attracted manufacturing into this province, that has helped create over a million net new jobs. After that party helped drive out hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs, we're supporting those workers with rapid training opportunities to upskill them.

As digitization and AI integrate into workplaces, we're again supporting those employers and those workers with meaningful training, and we're doing it all while not raising taxes on anyone—in fact, putting more money back in people's pockets. We've lowered the cost to take on a trade. We've lowered the cost to join a trade. And the net result: We've seen an increase in men and women signing up for apprenticeships.

We're going to keep building a stronger Ontario, a stronger Canada, and this member has an opportunity to support it with the fall economic statement. I hope she does just that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Toronto Centre.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Note that the Minister of Labour did not answer my question.

Speaker, to the Premier: In 2023, during the greenbelt scandal, the Premier promised to clean up lobbying laws and even threatened lobbyists who break the rules with jail time. But his government is now mired in a whole new scandal: a jobs program that has turned into a runaway gravy train for PC-connected lobbyists.

When will the Premier finally give Ontarians a date? When will he fix Ontario's broken lobbying and integrity laws? Or is his government's job plan only to make jobs for the Premier's lobbyist friends and not for everyday Ontarians?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Attorney General.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** This is classic NDP and Liberal, Madam Speaker. We start down the road of something and then they say, "You're going too fast." And then, when we say we're going anyway and we start to build roads and bridges and all sorts of transit, when we start to get things done, they say, "When are we going to get there? When are we going to get there?"

It's very unclear whether they want us to go forward or whether they want us to stop or whether they want us to go faster. It's very hard to predict. But we're going to go forward and we're going to go faster, in every sense, to keep the expectations of Ontarians met. And for that, we will not apologize.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Kingston is working hard to get people access to family medicine. Dr. Ammar Rashid was awarded the College of Family Physicians of Canada 2022 annual award of excellence for creating the division of hospital medicine within the department of family medicine at Queen's University. Dr. Rashid would never have wanted to come to Ontario if he had no chance to be matched in the first round to a family medicine residency position back in 2014. But he did come, worked and paid fees to prepare because he was confident that he'd have a fair chance.

It's great to welcome back Ontario students who got their medical education outside of Canada, but now the Ontario Medical Association is warning that international medical graduates who didn't do two years of Ontario high school will not bother trying to come. Why did this Premier try to shut out potential physicians like Dr. Ammar Rashid?

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

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I'm very pleased that the member opposite has highlighted some of the excellent work that we've been able to do, expanding primary care multidisciplinary teams in the province of Ontario. In fact, under the leadership of Premier Ford, \$2.1 billion that we are committing—and we've already started rolling out expanding multidisciplinary teams, including, of course, in Kingston.

You know, when we talk about expanding the opportunity for primary care, we also have to talk about the expansion of our education system. Under the leadership of the Minister of Colleges and Universities, we are doing that. We have every single medical school in the province of Ontario accepting new medical and expanded seats in our medical schools. Of course, I have to highlight that Brampton has started their first medical school: 96 students—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** We need to recruit family doctors to staff the planned expansion of primary care teams, which I'm proud to say was piloted in Kingston, and I'm glad the government is adopting something that we developed. This is especially true for remote areas. For example, the honourable member for Algoma-Manitoulin—I think he should be summoning the big goose to honk at the health minister. When I visited Wawa a couple of years ago, where the big goose lives, they were down to two doctors out of a full complement of seven.

International medical graduates serve in remote communities as part of something called "return of service." Why is this Premier from Etobicoke again taking rural and northern Ontario for granted?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Every time I speak to physicians who want to practise in the province of Ontario, I hear them talking about the opportunities that we have, the expansions that are happening.

I'm going to highlight the residency seats: We've added an additional 551 residency seats in the province of Ontario. Those are brand new opportunities that, as a result of CaRMS matching, mean that we will bring those young people back to Ontario, train them in their final years of medical school and make sure that they're part of our solution.

But I have to say, in the last week, I have spoken to literally hundreds of people who are interested in what it means to practise in the province of Ontario. And when they hear about a \$2.1-billion expansion in multidisciplinary teams, when they hear about new medical schools and expanded medical schools, when they hear about almost \$60 billion in capital that we are investing in our hospitals, they want to come to Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1141 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** I'm delighted to introduce our legislative page from the beautiful riding of Markham-Thornhill, Ishaan Patil, from Parkland Public School. Welcome to Queen's Park. He's standing over here. Thank you for being here.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

1000401927 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2025

Ms. Bell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr22, An Act to revive 1000401927 Ontario Inc.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

## 1000401924 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2025

Ms. Bell moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr21, An Act to revive 1000401924 Ontario Inc.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF ST. CATHARINES IN ONTARIO  
ACT, 2025

Mr. Dowie moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr34, An Act to incorporate the Roman Catholic Bishop of St. Catharines as a corporation sole.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

## 668986 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2025

Mr. Vanthof moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr28, An Act to revive 668986 Ontario Inc.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

## PETITIONS

## FOREIGN-TRAINED DOCTORS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have people from all over Ontario that have signed this petition. It's called "Ontario Needs Doctors—Not Discriminatory Rules."

These people have signed the petition because the government has changed the rules, halfway through the application process, so that international medical graduates are not allowed to apply or be considered for the first round of selections if they have not done two years of high school in Ontario.

The people that signed the petition are really worried that the pool of top-notch candidates has to include everyone who is qualified, and nobody knows anybody who's ever asked their doctor, "Did you do two years of high school in Ontario?", before deciding if they were qualified to practise medicine or not.

Close to 1,000 people have signed this petition. They want the Ontario government to reverse the high school attendance requirement and sit down and talk with people who do the selection as to who will get a residency placement. That will happen on November 28.

The time they put that in place was after international medical graduates had already paid to be considered in this round, but they won't be, although they've already put in the time, the effort and the money to be. So we have to find a fairer pathway forward, and this is what all these people have signed the petitions for.

I fully agree with them, will affix my name to it and ask page Aayush to bring it to the Clerk.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This is a petition called "Stop the TDSB Takeover." It's been signed mostly by parents who are very concerned by the move by the Ontario government to appoint a supervisor to take over the Toronto District School Board.

They're concerned that the supervisor has no formal education experience. He's a former Metrolinx adviser and could bill school boards up to \$350,000 for his work. And then, at the same time, they're concerned about the cut to per-student funding that the TDSB has seen, where we've lost nearly \$1,500 per student since 2018, which has resulted in larger class sizes, a massive repair backlog, especially for aging schools and, very concerningly, cuts to special education.

I support this petition, and I'll be giving it to page Ollie.

## POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Chris Glover:** This petition is called "Hands off Our Education," and it's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

It acknowledges that education is a fundamental human right that should be accessible to all, including our colleges and universities, and it talks about the gross underfunding of our public colleges and universities by both this current Conservative government and the last Liberal government. We are the last in per-student funding of both our colleges and universities. In fact, we are 50% below what the average is in the other provinces. The government would have to invest \$6,500 per student just to bring us up to the average of the other provinces.

It talks about this gross underfunding, and then it talks about Bill 33, and that is the meat of this petition. It's saying that Bill 33 is designed to undermine the student unions that are democratically elected by the students to represent them, to be their voices—to be their voices, when necessary, in conflict, to fight back against government cuts to education and to the privatization agenda of this government.

So the petition is asking the government to ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject Bill 33 and cease unnecessary government oversight and the attack on student unions, to defend and legislate these students' right to organize and safeguard the autonomy of their campuses, and to provide immediate and dedicated public funding into the post-secondary system.

1510

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I have almost 700 signatures here on a petition to stop Bill 5 and protect Ontario's future.

People are raising concerns that Bill 5 is an attack on Indigenous rights, environmental protections, labour laws and democratic oversight. And the signatures of this petition are calling on the Legislative Assembly to repeal Bill 5.

## TENANT PROTECTION

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition that calls upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop its attack on tenant rights. The petition notes that the government's changes to the Landlord and Tenant Board will strip away key tenant protections, lead to easier evictions and also possibly open the door to ending rent control as we know it in this province.

And the petitioners are very concerned about this attack on tenant rights that could end up with many Londoners losing their homes at a time when we are already in a jobs crisis and a housing crisis, and far too many Ontarians already living unhoused. The petitioners call on the Legislative Assembly to withdraw their attacks on tenant rights and to move forward with solutions that protect renters and will end the housing and affordability crisis we see in Ontario.

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Ollie.

## ENDANGERED SPECIES

**Ms. Doly Begum:** I have a petition here that has been signed by folks across the province who are very concerned about Bill 5, and specifically folks who are concerned about the environment are calling on the government to withdraw Bill 5 and maintain the Endangered Species Act, 2007.

The Endangered Species Act, 2007, has been an instrumental tool in protecting Ontario's biodiversity by providing science-based assessments, automatic species listings and comprehensive habitat protections.

However, Bill 5 actually repeals the ESA and replaces it with a new act which introduces discretionary species listing, narrows the habitat definition—which actually puts so many wildlife at risk—and removes mandatory recovery strategies, thereby weakening protections for at-risk species, specifically.

This proposed legislation also concentrates excessive decision-making power on the minister, which reduces transparency and accountability in species protection decisions.

We acknowledge that we have to have good economic policies, especially during this time, but they should not be made at the risk of irreversible decisions, at the risk of the most vulnerable wildlife, as well as the natural ecosystem.

So this petition actually calls on the government to withdraw Bill 5, maintain the Endangered Species Act, 2007, while ensuring that economic growth does not come at the expense of biodiversity and ecological integrity.

I fully support this petition, Speaker, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Taylor James to take to the Clerk.

## SOINS DE LA VUE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais remercier Réal Audet de Hanmer dans mon comté pour cette pétition qui s'assure—« Assurer une vision claire pour tous les aîné(e)s. »

Comme vous le savez, la vision est une partie fondamentale de notre qualité de vie et une bonne vision est essentielle pour que les personnes âgées maintiennent leur indépendance.

Par contre, un nombre élevé de personnes âgées, particulièrement celles à faible revenu, ne peuvent se permettre des lunettes, même si c'est essentiel à leur bien-être. La plupart des personnes de 65 ans et plus nécessitent des lunettes correctives pour maintenir une bonne qualité de vie, prévenir les blessures et d'autres complications.

Malheureusement, le système de santé de l'Ontario ne fournit actuellement aucun soutien financier pour les aider à payer pour leurs lunettes. Ils demandent au gouvernement de l'Ontario d'établir un programme de remboursement et de rabais gouvernemental pour permettre aux aînés à faible revenu d'acheter des lunettes de prescription.

Je suis en accord avec la pétition. Je vais la signer et je demande à Ava de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I would like to thank Dr. Sally Palmer for being a tireless advocate for people who have been marginalized—people who are not vulnerable, but people who have been pushed to the margins of society based on the neglect of governments past and present.

This petition is to raise social assistance rates. It points out that, unfortunately, Ontario's social assistance rates are well below the poverty line. The fact that people are indexed to this rate means that they are kept well below the poverty line now and for years to come. It also points out how CERB was identified as a basic income of \$2,000, and yet, somehow, people on social assistance are earning far less.

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and deliver it with page Finley to the Clerks.

## SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Mr. Dan Lebrun from my riding for these petitions. They're called "Supportive Housing."

Basically, there are 2.6 million Ontarians that live with a disability, requiring different degrees of support. Ontarians with disabilities face an increased risk of institutionalization due to the lack of supportive housing. Unfortu-

nately, new housing starts are neither accessible nor inclusive to people living with disabilities. Accessible supportive housing allows adults living with disabilities more autonomy to direct their own lives and live independently, like we all want to do.

They petition the Legislative Assembly to invest and expand the Ontario supportive housing sector, with the goal of encouraging and respecting residents' autonomy.

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

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Chris Glover:** This petition is entitled "Repeal Bill 5 and Do Development Right." It's criticizing the Legislative Assembly's bill, Bill 5, that was passed by the Conservatives last spring. Bill 5 allows the government to declare any part of the province—or the entire province—a special economic zone, where they can break any provincial or municipal law.

We do elect governments to change laws, but they have to do it here, through the Parliament. They have to introduce a bill; they have to have three levels of debate, three votes; then it goes for royal assent by the Lieutenant Governor. That's the democratic way of changing a law. This bill allows the government, by fiat, to override any existing law that interferes with whatever goals that they have. It's an incredibly dangerous law, because it allows them to override environmental laws, allows them to override labour laws, allows them to override other laws that—for example, I asked the Integrity Commissioner: Would it allow them to override the Members' Integrity Act, because that is an act of this province? It would allow them to override the Members' Integrity Act.

Right now, we are in the midst of a massive scandal with the Skills Development Fund, and the minister may be—the Integrity Commissioner is investigating. If the Minister of Labour is found to have violated the integrity act, the government could use the special economic zones and say, "You know what? The Legislature is a special economic zone. We're overriding the Members' Integrity Act. The members, the cabinet members, don't have to abide by the Members' Integrity Act."

It's an incredibly dangerous and undemocratic act, and the people who have signed this petition are asking the Legislative Assembly to repeal Bill 5 and start over with consultation, including—and I didn't mention this: First Nations rights are another set of rights that this government would be able to override. This is an egregious attack on our democratic rights.

I fully support this petition asking the government to repeal Bill 5. I will affix my signature and pass it to page Ollie to take to the table.

#### CHILD CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Gisele Fortin from Hanmer in my riding for these petitions. They're called "A Future for Child Care in Ontario."

Child care centres are forced to limit enrolment due to staffing shortages, aggravating the growing disparity between demand and the availability of child care spaces. Experts estimate that Ontario needs as many as 65,000 new child care workers to meet the demand for \$10-a-day child care. But without proper funding and a strategy to recruit and retain a stable workforce with a better salary scale, increasing wages and implementing decent work, parents will have a hard time accessing affordable child care.

1520

And the important work of early years and child care workers has been historically undervalued with low pay, poor working conditions and high turnover.

So they ask the Legislative Assembly to immediately establish an early years and child care worker advisory commission to develop recommendations on how to support the early years and child care workforce and address staffing shortages, including through a set salary scale, increased compensation—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Orders of the day?

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** I move that, upon receipt by the Standing Committee on Justice Policy of a draft report on intimate partner violence provided by the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler, the committee meet for the purpose of report writing on the following days in closed session:

—Wednesday, November 19, 2025, from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m.; Thursday, November 20, 2025, from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m.; Wednesday, November 26, 2025, from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m.; and Thursday, November 27, 2025, from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m.; and

That, prior to adjourning on the final day of report writing, the Chair shall put the question on the adoption of the report; and

That the English-only version of the committee's report, as agreed to by the committee at the end of the final day of report writing, be presented to the House no later than Wednesday, December 10, 2025, with the French version to follow as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** The Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity has moved government notice of motion number 8.

Back to the minister.

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** I want to start by saying that I will be splitting my time with the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler, who has done incredible work preparing this report on intimate partner violence that deserves to be considered by committee.

Madam Speaker, it's really a shame that we need to be here to even debate this today. I think we have been clear

from the beginning that we intended to study the issue of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence at committee and produce a report with recommendations that match the seriousness of these problems.

Now that the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler has written the report based on information coming out of the three-phased committee and the members opposite—we’re offering to work with the members opposite—we’ve decided that they don’t want to participate and continue moving forward.

This process is one that the member from Toronto Centre also agreed to.

Madam Speaker, the women of Ontario don’t need delays anymore. We need to take action. November is Woman Abuse Prevention Month. It was established in 2006. While our government is ready with a report and recommendations to actually make life safer for women and girls, we are encouraging the opposition to come back to the table so that we can close this chapter and continue to do the work.

One of the recommendations in the report is for the government to recognize the endemic nature of intimate partner violence, which I am so proud that the whole House unanimously supported today. As a government, we have the responsibility to Ontarians to talk about the issues responsibly and to choose our words with care. Intimate partner violence is extremely serious, which is why it is so important for us to take the time to get this right. “Endemic” was chosen for the sole reason that it is the most accurate and appropriate way to describe the nature of intimate partner and gender-based violence.

Endemic problems are persistent, predictable, and have deep roots in systems and structures. Epidemics, as we all know from COVID, are sudden, unexpected and marked by significant increases. The truth, Speaker, is that it does not accurately depict the reality of violence against women, and so declaring it an epidemic does not go far enough to acknowledge how deep-rooted and consistently present violence against women is. I’ve worked in the sector for almost 20 years. I’ve seen the rise and fall of rates, and this issue is so deep-rooted. It was as serious as it was back in 2006, 2004, 2005—all those times then—as it is now.

Also, the director of the World Health Organization made that exact point in 2021 when he said, “Violence against women is ... causing harm to millions of women and their families.... But unlike COVID-19, violence against women cannot be stopped with a vaccine.” He made that comment about a WHO report that also stated that violence against women has been endemic in every country and culture. That is the reality, Madam Speaker. This violence has plagued every human society and has deep historical and social and cultural roots.

It isn’t just the WHO that recognizes these problems as endemic. Renowned academic publications like the *Lancet* and leading scholars from around the world have all published articles acknowledging this reality. It should be pointed out that the NDP have also supported this definition previously, in a bill introduced by the member

from St. Catharines. The opening line of the preamble reads, “Gender-based violence is an endemic and entrenched social issue in all communities in Ontario.”

I also have a letter from Sharon Mayne-Devine, the executive director of Catholic Family Services, who has also been leading the charge for safe centres in Peel. She also says that by naming violence against women as endemic, our government “has taken an important next step: acknowledging that this violence is woven into the fabric of our communities, our institutions, and our histories, and to that to end it, we must change the very systems that sustain it.”

I want to be clear that it has never been our purpose to seek out an argument in the House with the members opposite over these words, but they have forced us to have one, because they don’t want to sit down at committee and hear out the work with the Chair, the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler and all of the other PC members who participated consistently in committee.

How we identify and describe issues matters, and how we show up, participate and be present matters. What we’re describing has serious implications for the health and safety of vulnerable people in our province, and how you approach an epidemic versus how you approach an endemic problem are fundamentally different. If we do not accurately identify the problem we are facing, we risk not only not finding solutions, but possibly making the situation worse through lost time and misallocated resources.

As we all saw during COVID, you respond to an epidemic with urgent, short-term measures to contain an excessive spread. But when we talk about intimate partner violence and gender-based violence, we are talking about problems that have been with us for generations; problems that are rooted in structural inequities like gender inequality and economic instability.

The key characteristics of intimate partner violence are that it is chronic and intergenerational, and has always been resistant to reactive solutions, and it has social and structural roots. Because of those characteristics, we have to take an approach that is long-term and systemic and focused on uprooting the many deep causes of this violence.

We want to move beyond symbolic gestures and actually work together on the reforms that are required to protect women and girls of Ontario, and that is what we’re trying to do with this report, and that is what we want to do when we bring this report to committee.

**1530**

This is a simple motion to give the elected representatives of this province an opportunity to speak with one voice and say clearly that we are united on this issue and that violence has no home in our province.

I am extremely proud that all members supported the motion this morning. And it says to me that we do have the ability to come together to reach a common goal. Now we need to do that again and come back to committee to review this report.

I’m going to finish on this subject of words and to say the use of the word “endemic” is not about watering down



the harms of intimate partner violence at all. If the members opposite would actually read the report and participate, they would see the clear rationale behind our decisions. And they would see a good-faith discussion of the question of “endemic” versus “epidemic” that isn’t about political point-scoring but about getting to the truth so that we can move on to the important work ahead of us.

While the report will help us determine the next steps, we haven’t been idle in the meantime. I want to turn to the important work that we already have been doing and highlight how it’s making an impact across the province.

In 2022, we signed an agreement to receive \$160 million from the federal government to partner with them on the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. This national action plan was the framework for all provinces to take back and create our own strategy. We know that these issues are non-partisan and impact every province in the country. So we were working together with all provinces to work and create this national action plan—and to be working with the federal government, we are able to advance our shared priorities of prevention; supporting victims and families; building a responsive justice system; implementing Indigenous-led approaches; and expanding important social infrastructure like wraparound supports, culturally appropriate supports.

We moved quickly, because in 2023 we launched Ontario-STANDS—I’m telling you we moved quickly because in Alberta, they just released their strategy this year—our action plan to end gender-based violence. By standing together against gender-based violence now through decisive actions, prevention, empowerment and supports, we are making systemic change by connecting services like child protection, policing, health care, and justice and education supports so that they work together to identify risks early and support survivors effectively. Our plan has focused on, and always will be focused on, preventing violence before it starts and supporting survivors to reclaim their lives. Through Ontario-STANDS, we are investing a historic \$1.4 billion in programs to better respond to gender-based violence, build safer communities, and support women’s health and economic opportunity. I know my colleague the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services has been a huge champion, to make sure that we are putting funds into community to close the gap that we saw over the years—the gap that I experienced when I used to work on the front lines, when I had large, large caseloads, helping women flee violence and rebuild their lives. There were serious issues back then with funding gaps under the Liberal government—serious, serious gaps. Now we’re seeing funding flow, and many organizations are saying, “This is the first time we’ve seen funding like this come to our services in years.”

**Interjection:** Decades.

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** In decades. You’re right.

Last year, we expanded the action plan with an investment of nearly \$100 million to fund 85—actually, I think it was more than that—100 innovative community-based projects. These projects are focused specifically on

targeting the root causes of violence against women. They include education and awareness, prevention and early intervention, community planning and service integration, and economic security and financial independence. Speaker, Ontario-STANDS is a commitment to long-term, proactive change.

We’ve heard from municipalities, especially at AMO, saying that we are now encouraged to start connecting with community organizations and figuring out how we can work together because the biggest issue we had is that many organizations did not know what the others were doing. There wasn’t collaboration. But we’re seeing massive work being done in programs like the Safe Centre of Peel, Luke’s Place, where they are incorporating and making collaborative plans with organizations together, so that they can close the gaps. You know, Madam Speaker, it’s about building a future where women and girls aren’t forced to just survive violence, but they are able to live free from it.

I have seen first-hand how we’re making an impact with Ontario-STANDS. My ministry was able to fund women who are rebuilding their lives. Programs like George Brown’s textile program—women are entering this program, everything they need to be successful is funded through our government and they are taking this program. I’ve been able to meet with some women who have now been able to graduate and gain full-time employment—because that’s how you truly break the cycle of violence: You ensure that women have financial stability.

Madam Speaker, in response to the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, we launched Pathways to Safety. That is our strategy for combatting the unique challenges faced by Indigenous women and girls. The inquiry made it clear that the solutions for those challenges must be led by Indigenous women, which is why our government established the Indigenous Women’s Advisory Council. This council has helped guide our approach at every step along the way towards making Ontario a safer and freer place to live for Indigenous women and girls.

It is so impactful to sit in those meetings quarterly and listen first-hand to Indigenous women talk about what is happening in their community and help us come up with good plans to flow the important dollars that they need to close the gaps.

We’ve also taken dramatic action to fight the horrific crime of human trafficking, which has enabled and exacerbated the abuse of women and girls for far too long. In 2020, we released our anti-human trafficking strategy, backed by an investment of over \$300 million. Through that investment, we helped tens of thousands of survivors and children at risk of being trafficked. This year, we’ve renewed the strategy for another five years and boosted our investment to nearly \$350 million. That means that by 2030, we will have invested over \$650 million in trafficking prevention and victim supports, which is the single largest dedicated anti-human trafficking investment in the country.

I go to FPT every year. I talk about the things Ontario is doing. FPT, for those who don't know—all ministers who have the status of women meet, and we talk about what we're doing. I hear it around the table. They are amazed at what Ontario is doing and how much Ontario has invested, and the programs that we are supporting. We are leading the country, here in our province, and I'm proud of that.

We also know that to protect women from violence we have to raise them up economically. If you've read Ontario-STANDS, you will see the whole fifth pillar focuses on economic prosperity. That's why we've significantly expanded the women's economic opportunity program, which delivers employment, pre-employment, pre-apprenticeship and entrepreneurship training to low-income women. Since its launch in 2018, we've helped almost 6,000 women benefit from this program, with thousands more in training or education.

**1540**

It's also why we launched and have expanded the Investing in Women's Futures Program, which provides employment-readiness supports as well as counselling for gender-based-violence prevention. Through that program alone, we've helped over 10,000 women get the training and supports they needed to pursue further education, job training or start a business.

I had the opportunity to go visit Achēv in Mississauga a few weeks ago. I met with a group of women who were starting the program for the first time—it was their first day. There were tears. These women were still broken. Some of them were still in the abusive relationship, trying to figure out how to escape. But they were there. They even had to lie and say, "I'm here for job training" in order to get permission to participate in this group. Of course, their abuser doesn't know that they are actually getting valuable, in-depth supports to help them rebuild their lives.

These women, when they were able to speak to the women who were at the end of the cohort and at the end of their weeks of participating, were so empowered. They felt, "I can see a way out." The women at the end—some of them had started businesses, were earning an income in their home. Even though they knew they couldn't get out, they were able to earn income in their home, and they were able to put money away to save for that day when they can finally leave. These are the changes that we're making through these investments.

Through our skilled trades and STEM strategies, we're also ensuring that there are unique opportunities for women and girls to get the education and training they need to live healthy and fulfilled lives. Through our Working for Workers legislation, we're making women feel safer and more comfortable at job sites across the province.

I got to attend Dreamer Day—4,000 girls learning about the skilled trades at Dreamer Day from Build a Dream, a great organization in Windsor. These girls were picking up power tools and seeing a future for themselves that they didn't imagine that they could have, and we're

making sure that girls can see themselves in these careers, because it is life-changing.

I also want to highlight an investment that we just made this week. On Monday, the Minister of CCSS, Minister Parsa, and I were really, really proud to announce an investment of \$26.7 million to protect survivors of gender-based violence by expanding access to emergency shelters and strengthening the Family Court Support Worker Program. This investment will increase the capacity for more than 65 emergency shelters across the province by supporting over 300 new shelter spaces—300.

We know that this investment will make a real impact in the lives of survivors who are fleeing abuse. We're proud to have the support of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, who said, "It is investments like this one that will open doors to safety, well-being and futures free from violence. When services like shelter spaces and wraparound support services are offered, better outcomes are realized bringing hope and possibility to those who need it most." That is moving, to hear shelter support services say that this is going to change lives. And we know that, because when a woman needs to escape, they need a bed to go to, and 300 new shelter spaces are going to help 300 new women and families get access to immediate shelter support.

Since 2018, our government has never stopped working to raise up the women and girls of Ontario, and we want them to know that they can be anyone, do anything and that we will always have their backs.

Before I turn it over to my colleague, I want to reiterate that this is what this motion and report is all about. This is what we're going to be doing. Because we all want to empower women and girls, and that starts with being clear-eyed about the dangers and the challenges they face and the steps we need to take to ensure that they can live their lives to the fullest, free from fear.

As the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler will tell us about her report, I hope the members opposite will listen and agree to come back to the committee with us to help chart a path forward in Ontario that is free of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence. Because—and I always say this—when women succeed, Ontario succeeds.

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

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** I rise today to speak about the work of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and about why this motion matters, not as a procedural step but as a commitment to finish the work that so many people have invested in over the past year. The minister has spoken about why our government recognizes intimate partner violence as endemic in Ontario—not a temporary surge, not a passing crisis, but a pattern rooted in our systems and sustained across generations.

I want to begin there because I believe that that framing matters. Calling it endemic is not about softening the issue or about dismissing it. Ultimately, it's about accuracy, it's about honesty and it's about telling the public that we see this for what it is: a persistent, structural problem that will

only change through an equally persistent and structured response. That understanding shaped everything the committee did. It guided our questions, our decisions and our sense of responsibility, because once you name something as systemic, you commit to acting systemically.

When the House created this committee, the task was not simply to hear from experts or summarize testimony. The task was to translate years of experience and evidence into something lasting, something that could stand up to the weight of implementation. We weren't creating awareness; we were building the architecture of change.

This study was an unusual exercise for government—one of the few times that elected members have led such an incredibly broad cross-sector review. This was government-led and government-driven: elected officials, not external consultants, taking responsibility for a problem that cuts across multiple ministries and touches the lives of countless Ontarians.

But it was also informed and enriched by the people who live this work every single day—the experts, the advocates, the survivors, the front-line workers, the researchers, the police, the lawyers, the educators, the health care staff, the shelter directors. That partnership was the foundation of this process. It showed that government can lead and listen at the same time, that the discipline of governance and the expertise of those on the ground are not opposing forces, they are complementary ones. And that, I think, is what people expect of us, not slogans but structure.

The committee's work began in the spring of 2024. Over months of hearings, we heard from more than 150 people—around 90 expert witnesses and 60 survivors—representing many regions of this province and every part of the system. We received detailed written submissions. We reviewed national and provincial frameworks. We studied the full transcript and recommendations of the Renfrew county inquest, which examined the tragic murders of Nathalie Warmerdam, Carol Culleton, and Anastasia Kuzyk. These tragedies and the evidence gathered from them reminded us why this work matters so deeply, because ultimately, the cost of system failure is measured in lives.

That is why, as I built this report, I organized it not by ministry but by issue area—by the real conditions that drive risk and shape prevention. Because ultimately, violence doesn't fit neatly within administrative boundaries, and neither should our response. When the same patterns of risk appear in police files, in courtrooms, in hospitals and in classrooms, it tells us that the system isn't fragmented by chance; it's fragmented by design. If the problem crosses jurisdictions, then so too must the solution. That approach wasn't about novelty; it was about responsibility. It was about taking the discipline that we apply to fiscal planning or to health care or to infrastructure planning and applying it to intimate partner violence and sexual violence with the same seriousness and the same expectation that what we build must endure.

#### 1550

The report I prepared and which we must now review is structured for use. It is meant to be worked with by this House, by ministries, by partners across Ontario who have asked for clarity, coordination and a plan that is stable enough to last.

This brings me to the step before us today: the motion that allows this committee's work to move from evidence to adoption. This motion is the next stage in that work. It allows the committee to meet on scheduled days to review and adopt the draft I prepared on behalf of the committee and to table it before the Legislature in advance of the winter recess. It ensures that every member of the committee has the opportunity to engage with the document, to reflect on it, to add perspective to it, and to bring the work to a formal conclusion. It doesn't reopen the evidence or relitigate the testimony. It formalizes what has already been done. It turns months of listening into something concrete and public, and that matters because every person who appeared before the committee—every survivor, every professional, every advocate—did so in the hope and the belief that their time and their courage would lead to something. Finishing this process is how we honour that belief. It's how we show that when Ontarians engage with their government in good faith, their contributions are not absorbed and forgotten but are translated into action. That is ultimately what credibility in government looks like—evidence turned into results.

People will ask, "Why now? Why this step, and why this timing?" The answer is simple: This is where the process leads. The evidence has been gathered, tested and synthesized. The findings are clear. What this motion does is move that evidence from the committee room into the legislative and public space, where it can be acted upon. That is not delay. It is due diligence. It's how we show respect for the seriousness of the issue and for the lives affected by it. We would never ask a coroner to rush an inquest or ask a court to skip deliberation. We owe the same care to this process, grounded in evidence.

Speaker, there's another reason that this motion matters: continuity. It tells victims, advocates and the public that this Legislature values completion as much as initiation and that we finish what we start.

This is also about making knowledge usable. This work has never been about discovering something that no one knew; it has been about connecting what we already know in ways that support action. Ontario does not suffer from a lack of awareness about intimate partner violence; it suffers from fragmentation. Every sector sees a different part of the problem. The point of this motion is to review the report that brings those parts together and makes the knowledge we already have usable across systems—to translate converging evidence into a single, durable foundation that ministries and partners can actually build on. And that's not abstract. It means aligning prevention in schools and in sports and in what front-line services are seeing every day. It means making sure that the justice system's modernization efforts are fed by consistent information and shared definitions. It means building

common indicators across ministries, so that when we talk about risk or throughput or victim stability, we are talking about the same things and measuring them in the same way. That is the practical value of this motion. It pulls the threads together and sets the table for implementation.

Some may hear all of this and say, “Why doesn’t the House simply declare and be done?” Because declarations do not repair systems. Declarations do not coordinate calendars. They do not align training. They don’t define data fields or stabilize base funding. They are expressions; they are not architecture.

This motion and this report are about architecture, about taking the record before us and turning it into a structure that can hold the next phase of work.

It also says something about trust. Public confidence in institutions is built on two things: transparency and consistency—transparency in making the work visible and consistency in finishing what we start. This motion commits to both. It says to the people who came before us that, no, we will not abandon their testimony at the last mile. It says to ministries and to partners that the Legislature will deliver a record that they can plan against, and it says to victims that their courage was not a one-day headline; it is the foundation for change that will endure.

I want to be clear about something else: This is not about casting blame or about pretending that the work began today. It doesn’t and didn’t. This motion recognizes the work already done by front-line partners, by public servants and by the many communities that on their own have been building pieces of this response for years. This motion creates the conditions for those pieces to connect, to move from excellent initiatives to a system that functions as one. That is how government demonstrates respect for the people doing the work: by giving them something stable to work within.

There’s a practical rhythm to this. We listened, we analyzed, we structured, and now we must review, adopt and table so that ministries can align what they are doing with what this House and this committee has heard. It is a disciplined process, and discipline is what the public expects from us. The scale of this issue demands it, and frankly, the people doing this work on the ground day in and day out deserve it.

For those following this debate who might worry that formality will slow momentum, let me say this: Formality is what keeps momentum from scattering and becoming lost. A formal adoption and tabling is not the end of urgency; it is the beginning of accountability. It gives us dates and deliverables and a common text to work against. It allows the government to respond in a structured way, and it allows partners to see where they fit. It replaces improvisation with a plan, and for an issue this serious, improvisation is simply not good enough.

I also want to acknowledge what this motion is not. It is not an attempt to relitigate testimony or to trade headlines over language. The conversation about words has happened in public for years. What the people who came before us at committee asked for was not better adjectives;

they asked for better systems. This motion is how the Legislature does its part to deliver those systems, by completing the committee’s mandate and placing a coherent record before the House.

We are not starting over; we are finishing the phase that makes the next one possible—and finishing matters. As legislators, we all know how many good intentions end in drafts and working groups and pilot projects that never quite become policy. This motion is the opposite of that. It is the Legislature choosing follow-through, choosing to turn testimony into something that can be evaluated, implemented and improved over time.

So when people ask, “Why now?”, the answer is: because the work brought us here; because the report is ready for review; because this is the point in the process when the committee’s work moves from review to report, when evidence becomes part of the public foundation for whatever will come next; and because, in government, courage is in consistency and in seeing the work through to the end.

To understand why this motion matters, it’s worth covering what the committee heard and how consistent those messages were. Across every sector, one truth repeated itself: The challenges of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and violence against women are not random; they are systemic, and because they are systemic, the solutions must be as well.

#### 1600

After months of testimony, certain truths emerged—clear, consistent and impossible to ignore: first, that violence is not a series of isolated incidents. It is the outcome of social and institutional conditions that interact with each other. Poverty, untreated trauma, addiction, housing insecurity, and outdated systems of accountability all contribute to risk. These are not “root causes” in the abstract; they are daily realities that cross generations. And when we understand those realities, one thing becomes obvious: Prevention works. Reaching people early, engaging boys and men, providing education and community supports—these interventions are measurable, effective, humane and essential.

Several witnesses emphasized that the first signs of risk appear long before adulthood—in schools, in sports, in families under stress, and in communities where isolation becomes a pressure point.

Intervening early isn’t theoretical; it’s practical prevention. It also means meeting people where they are.

That’s why this report highlights the importance of community-based programs that teach healthy relationships, conflict management and respect—in classrooms, on sports fields and in workplaces. Coaches explained that the conversations that start in sports can change how young people think about leadership and responsibility. Educators spoke about students who, after learning how to identify controlling behaviour, recognized it in their own peer groups. Workplace representatives described how training on psychological safety and harassment prevention translates into earlier reporting and fewer escalations.

These aren't abstract cultural goals. They are tangible early-intervention tools.

Prevention is not something separate from public safety; it is public safety in its earliest and most effective form.

The second truth was about structure. Even the best prevention efforts require systems that can respond quickly and consistently when risk becomes immediate.

That brought us to the justice system. The committee heard clearly that modernization—not overhaul, but modernization—is essential to improving outcomes across Ontario's justice system. Witnesses spoke about how case flow, information-sharing and court scheduling all intersect with victim safety. What the committee saw was not a lack of dedication; it was a system working at full capacity within structures designed for another era.

Police, crowns, defence and victim service partners are already adapting. Across the province, integrated bail teams and specialized intimate partner violence courts are helping ensure that high-risk cases are identified earlier, managed efficiently and resolved safely. Those models work because they link data and human judgment and because they treat information as prevention.

What modernization means in this context is clarity and coordination—consistent risk assessment tools, standardized information flow and technology that allows all justice partners to see the same facts at the same time. It also means supporting the crown function—ensuring that prosecutors have the resources, the digital tools and the interdisciplinary connections that they need to make informed decisions about bail, plea negotiations and case progression.

Witnesses told us that when prosecutors have access to complete histories—risk flags and assessments, prior breaches, community supervision notes—they can craft safer release plans and more appropriate resolutions. When those histories aren't visible, opportunities for prevention are lost. Modernization is about closing that visibility gap.

The report recommends a coordinated data environment for justice partners, emphasizing that consistent information-sharing protects both fairness and safety. It also highlights the importance of specialized training for crowns and police alike—not as a criticism, but as reinforcement. Ultimately, the system's strength lies in its people, and modernization supports them by giving them the tools and the clarity that they need to do their jobs well.

In short, the justice modernization agenda is not just about rewriting laws; it's about making the machinery that enforces them work better. It's about efficiency as safety, communication as prevention and technology as support for judgment. That's what the committee heard and that's what this motion helps to advance: the translation of those recommendations into policy and practice.

From justice, we turn to those who catch what the system misses: the front-line service providers who support victims, operate shelters, provide counselling and manage crisis lines. Their testimony was some of the most compelling that we heard. They described exhaustion that

goes beyond workload. Many spoke about the emotional fatigue that comes from operating in permanent crisis mode: the constant triage; the relentless scarcity of time and funding; the feeling that even success is temporary, because the program that worked might not exist next year.

Front-line workers told us that stable funding is not about comfort; it's about safety. Predictable budgets mean predictable staff, which means continuity for victims. Every time a shelter closes a bed because of staffing shortages or a counsellor leaves because the program funding term ended, the system loses capacity that takes years to rebuild. The sector's greatest strength is in its people, and retaining them requires stability. The committee's record highlights how predictability in funding and planning improved safety and outcomes. When agencies can plan beyond a single fiscal cycle, they retain experience and provide steadier support. That stability for workers becomes continuity for victims, and continuity is what protects people and improves outcomes.

We also heard that collaboration among service providers improves both efficiency and morale. When agencies know what their counterparts are doing, when shelter staff can coordinate directly with police, when counsellors can connect seamlessly with housing officers, duplication decreases and trust increases. That trust is the unseen infrastructure of prevention. It allows every dollar, every hour and every act of care to reach further.

And so, Speaker, when this motion calls for the adoption and tabling of the committee's report, what it really calls for is respect: respect for the professionals who keep these systems standing, respect for the survivors who have asked us to do better and respect for the public, who expect a government that plans as carefully for safety as it does for finances and infrastructure. Completion of this report is a visible sign of that respect.

The committee also devoted significant time to prevention beyond government to the spaces where culture and habit are shaped: schools, sports, workplaces. These are the everyday arenas where attitudes towards respect, equality and consent are learned long before the justice system ever becomes involved. In education, we heard about the value of consistent, age-appropriate curricula on healthy relationships and digital citizenship. Experts told us that when those lessons are standardized and reinforced year over year, the students carry them forward into adulthood. That is prevention that compounds: small interventions today producing safer communities tomorrow.

In sport, coaches and administrators describe programs that pair mentorship with accountability. Initiatives like bystander training or safe sport certification don't just protect athletes; they model how leadership and empathy coexist. Sport reaches audiences that policy alone cannot. It changes behaviour through participation. When we invest in safe sport frameworks, we are investing in a generation that will see strength and respect as inseparable from one another.

And in workplaces, employers emphasized the need for awareness and flexibility, and policies that recognize signs

of abuse and ensure that economic dependence is never a barrier to safety. Employment is prevention too. Financial stability is one of the strongest predictors of long-term safety, particularly for women leaving abusive situations.

**1610**

These community-level efforts reinforce everything that the committee heard about systems. Prevention is not a department; it is a culture. It exists wherever people learn how to treat one another. Government can support it by aligning programs, by funding evidence-based education and by ensuring that the ministries responsible for education, for sport, for labour coordinate continually with those responsible for justice and for community safety.

The report emphasizes that prevention is most effective when it is measurable and repeatable, when it can be taught, evaluated and scaled. That's how we move from promising pilots to lasting policy, and that's how we make sure that the lessons learned in classrooms, on the sports fields and in boardrooms add up to a safer province overall.

When you combine all of these strands—prevention, modernization, workforce stability, community engagement—what emerges is a framework for permanence. Each strengthens the others. Prevention reduces case loads. Modernization accelerates response. Workforce stability sustains quality. And community engagement shifts culture. That is the architecture this motion will help us build upon, and it is architecture built to last.

There is one more layer to this discussion: the way that we measure what works and how we hold ourselves accountable for results. Every witness, every ministry, every partner organization reminded us that you can't manage what you don't measure. Ontario collects a vast amount of information, but until it's coordinated, we can't see progress clearly. This is about accountability, not bureaucracy.

A shared data framework lets us see where prevention succeeds and where response falls short. It allows policy-makers to identify which programs genuinely change behaviour, which approaches reduce repeat offences and which investments yield stability for victims and communities alike. Data is not about counting cases. It's about counting change.

The committee heard strong support for a provincial data standard, one that connects justice, health, education and social services through common definitions and indicators. When those indicators are public, they give the sector and the government the same view of progress. That transparency builds trust. It allows us to celebrate our successes honestly and to correct course quickly.

Evaluation also matters for prevention. If an early-intervention program in a school district shows measurable reductions in youth violence or improved conflict resolution skills, that success should inform the next curriculum review. If a pilot project in a northern community reduces recidivism through culturally grounded supports, that model should be adapted, expanded, not reinvented elsewhere. Evidence is what allows innovation to scale.

The committee's report highlights the need for regular public reporting on outcomes precisely so that success becomes self-sustaining and failure becomes visible early enough to fix. To be clear, this is not about auditing compassion. It is about protecting it. Good data keeps good programs alive. It gives taxpayers confidence, and it gives front-line workers the proof that their labour is making a difference. It transforms stories into statistics that guide policy and then back again into stories of people whose lives are safer because we paid attention.

Finishing this report is not only a moral obligation; it is stewardship. Every incident of violence triggers a response across multiple systems: police, health care, housing, child welfare, courts. Those responses are heavy, not only in financial terms but in human capacity and in time. The committee heard that coordination and prevention lighten that load. They reduce duplication, shorten crisis cycles and free skilled professionals to focus where they're needed most.

When we plan carefully, compassion and efficiency reinforce each other. Each successful early intervention prevents countless hours of emergency work later. Each stable program reduces turnover and preserves expertise. Each act of planning is an act of care. That is what stewardship looks like in practice: compassion organized well. And compassion organized well is how we honour both the people we serve and the people who serve them. That, Speaker, is what this motion represents. It's not a gesture; it's a mechanism. It's the way that we convert analysis into policy and policy into practice. It's how what was learned could become what is done.

Throughout this process, members from every party contributed. We asked hard questions and we listened to some extremely difficult answers, and I believe that we shared the same goal: safer communities, better coordination and fewer victims. This has been, I think, a rare space in politics, one that felt defined more by shared resolve than by competition. Every member brought the realities of their own communities and often their own experiences into the room, and that diversity made the work stronger.

Recognizing the endemic nature of this violence, again, is not about avoiding blame; it is about accepting responsibility. It means the work doesn't belong to one government or to one party; it belongs to all of us. And that shared ownership is what will carry this work forward beyond today's vote, beyond this Parliament, beyond any single mandate—because ending violence isn't the project of a year or a report; it is the work of a generation.

This motion ensures that the groundwork endures. It outlines a possible road map that any government can follow, that ministries can coordinate around and that communities can hold to account. That continuity is the opposite of complacency; it is the structure that will keep urgency alive long after the headlines fade.

Speaker, this has been some of the most demanding work I personally have ever done. I've spent thousands of hours on it, and I think at times pushed my own brain and capacity to what sometimes felt like well beyond the breaking point. But it has also been by far the most mean-

ingful, the most rewarding and the most personally impactful.

I want to speak for a moment to those that may be watching now or later—those that work in this space, those that have been hurt by this insidious social problem—and say that, as somebody standing in this House, as somebody that served on this committee, involved in its design, involved in the testimony, involved in this report: The people in this House care so deeply for you and for this issue.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** Thank you.

I have lost count of the number of members on all sides of the aisle who have come up to me and done the equivalent of a clap on the shoulder to say, “Thank you. We’re doing really important work here.” And we are.

I said before that this was an unusual committee. I think that the breadth and depth and fiery passion of care that went into it from all of the members in this Legislature is what made it such. It’s what made it persist across election cycles, across Trump presidencies, across everything because of the amount of care that we have.

What it really reminded me of, which—it was interesting. I say often that I came to politics in a bit of a diving-in-head-first perspective, where I had never followed politics before. But doing this work, it reminded me—and I think it has reminded all of us—that good intentions aren’t enough, slogans aren’t enough, headlines for a day aren’t enough and performance for the sake of performance alone is not enough. Structure matters; process matters; follow-through matters. Together, we’ve seen that serious issues deserve serious processes and that government—our government and this chamber—can meet that standard when we come together.

1620

To every person who appeared before the committee—every survivor, every advocate, every professional—thank you. You trusted this Legislature with your experience, and that trust is what compels us to see this through.

To my colleagues across the aisle, thank you for the passion that you brought to this work. We may not agree on every policy detail, but I do believe, and I want to believe, that we are united in purpose.

Now it falls to us to finish the process: to pass this motion; to review and table the report; and to begin the next phase, turning evidence into implementation.

Recognizing that intimate partner violence is endemic means committing to endurance. It means understanding that prevention and response are not projects with end dates; they are core responsibilities of government. This motion is one way that we affirm that. It’s how we show Ontarians of every background and every belief that the Legislature they elected is capable of disciplined, collaborative work on an issue that touches every community in this province. It’s how we ensure that what we heard doesn’t stay in transcripts but becomes part of how Ontario governs itself.

Speaker, we and so many, many more that came before us have mapped the terrain of this issue with care over

years. We know where the barriers are and where the pathways begin. But ultimately, the time for mapping is over. We’ve built a road, and now is the time to travel it.

Let’s pass this motion, finish the work, adopt the report and take the next step together toward the safe and flourishing Ontario that every survivor and every citizen deserves.

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

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** I’ll be sharing my time with my colleagues from Toronto Centre and Parkdale–High Park today.

I don’t know how to sum up how I’m feeling right now other than sadness, Speaker, to listen to a minister, nonetheless, throw around statements that are not accurate and turn this into a political football instead of focusing on what it is. We’re talking about violence against women, and of all the times for the government to pull a stunt like that, during Woman Abuse Prevention Month is astounding to me.

Speaker, when I first got elected back in 2014, I was often asked, “What is the hardest part about being elected?” And being newly elected and being away from home with young kids, I used to say being away from family, and that’s still tough. Being out of community and being away from family is tough. But in the last few years, since this government has come into power, I say the politics: The politics is the hardest part. The partisanship from the government side of the House is the hardest part. Because when we see and hear what we have in this House this afternoon, when we are talking about violence against women and femicide, I don’t know how anybody could not find that deeply disturbing and incredibly sad, that that’s what this place has come to.

The government side of the House has talked a lot about their reasoning for saying “endemic.” We’ve raised this. I tabled a bill and debated it April 10, 2024. And at least we’ve got the government side to call it something, but they’re spending a great deal of time trying to justify and explain that when that’s not even the motion that’s before us, like they’re trying to sell it to the public.

During the debate and them talking about “endemic,” there were phrases used and words used to try and discredit—not us on this side of the House. Speaker, I’m not going to be an elected official for the rest of my life. Nobody here is likely going to be an elected official for all their days. Everybody here has an expiry date, I’m going to say, where they’re no longer elected representatives, whether that’s by their own choosing or by their constituents saying, “We’re ready for somebody else.”

So what the government says about those of us on this side of the House or me specifically is irrelevant—absolutely irrelevant. Because my life is going to go on, now and post-politics. It’s not about me and it’s not about my colleagues. It’s not about my colleagues to the left of me here. It’s not about the government members individually. It’s about our constituents. It’s about the safety and well-being of every one of our constituents. But in this case, when we’re talking about intimate partner violence

and gender-based violence, it's about the women and children in our communities.

I would like to talk about process. April 10, 2024, I brought forward a bill echoing the calls of the Renfrew county coroner's inquest into the murders of three women. From that inquest, the number one recommendation was to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. Since then, 106 municipalities have declared IPV an epidemic. Numerous police services are calling it an epidemic. Service providers are calling it an epidemic. Two provinces since then—Conservative-led provinces—have declared IPV an epidemic.

This is not about those of us in this House saying that we arbitrarily have decided that intimate partner violence is an epidemic. This is not just symbolic, as we've heard from some members on the government side. This is meaningful. It's meaningful for the victims and the survivors of IPV and GBV. It is meaningful, as they heard over and over again during those committee hearings. It's meaningful to the service providers. It's obviously meaningful to other provinces. It's meaningful to police services.

Speaker, since that bill came forward, there are now conversations happening that have never happened before. I'm very proud of that. I'm very proud of myself and my colleagues and all the stakeholders and, more importantly, of the survivors that have led those conversations. We talk about how gender-based violence and IPV are often kept behind closed doors. In previous years, it was largely seen as a personal matter not to be talked about, and now we're talking about it.

On April 10, 2024, during second reading of the bill, the government side stood up and said, "We support it." They haven't made the declaration. In fact, and I want to be clear, the discussion we're having on the committee and the study has no bearing on that bill being sent to committee. But the government has never—and they control committee—called that bill to committee. The actual bill—never called it to committee.

The government House leader at the time, talking about the committee, said, "We are going to afford every resource to the committee to be able to travel that bill," to be able to go to northern communities, to be able to go into Indigenous communities, to go to Renfrew county where this conversation started. That didn't happen. The government shut it down. That phase did not happen. They did not travel the bill.

Then, there was an election called, so we have since re-tabled the bill. It's now under a different number, but we have re-tabled the bill, still calling on the government to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. I brought forward a motion this morning that the government once again voted against.

Again, we didn't just arbitrarily say, "This seems like a good idea." This is what community wanted. This is what experts want. This is what service providers want. This is what survivors want. This is what the families of victims want.

1630

So, Speaker, if we actually talk about the motion that's before us—and not just all the other political stuff that has come up over the afternoon—the role of the committee, as is every committee the way things have worked here, is that committees meet. They have members from representatives from every party. We have non-partisan legislative staff. There's a lawyer, there's a researcher, there's Clerks. Then they bring forward deputations, so members of the public are welcome to come in and provide a deputation on whatever the particular subject is. In this case, it was IPV.

Then, those non-partisan staff of the Legislature—not political staff, non-partisan staff—compile all of the information that was shared during those committee meetings and they bring it back in a report. A totally non-partisan, non-political report: "This is what we heard during hearings." They bring that report forward, and then MPPs from all parties get to sit and look at the report and say, "Yes, I agree with this." "No, I think that language needs to be changed a little bit"—whatever the case may be. But it is non-partisan, non-political legislative staff that bring that report forward based on everything they've heard in that committee.

What we have before us is a motion that is excluding the voices of any opposition members that took part in those committee hearings. It's excluding the voices and the work of the non-partisan, non-political legislative staff from providing a report. What the government side is asking us to do is to accept—blindly accept, nonetheless, because we don't know what's in the report; nobody knows—a report that was prepared by a government member, which may indeed be a fantastic report; we don't know. But it also opens it up to the potential for, maybe the member brought something forward and the government says, "That doesn't align with where we're going, so we're going to take that piece out." Or: "That might make us look bad, so we're going to take that piece out." We don't know.

That's what this government is asking us to do in this motion. They're asking us to say, "It's fine. It's fine that we turn this process into a very political process, a highly partisan process." To try and spin it as though this is normal or that, somehow, we don't take this seriously—because we have questions about that—is just not accurate, Speaker.

I want to talk about something that was said—a quote from a lawyer that was actually involved in the Renfrew county coroner's inquest, Kirstin Mercer, and she's got a focus on gender justice and strategic public policy. I want to quote something that she had said: "There is a cost to that time"—so she's talking about instead of immediately passing Bill 173 or making the epidemic declaration and unequivocally declaring IPV an epidemic and catalyzing action, when the government sent the bill to committee for further research. We also heard from many of these deputations that were saying, "We put submissions in all the time." They're crying for help all the time. So many of these service providers were saying, "You should have



been listening to us already. Why do we need to come?" It's not that they refused to come, but: "Why are we needing to come?" Kirsten Mercer said, "There is a cost to that time ... the inaction is measured in people's lives."

And so I would like to read some of the names of the women who have been killed—femicides—since April 10, 2024, when we brought that bill forward to have IPV declared an epidemic: 21-year-old Serenity Brown; 54-year-old Rachelle Desrochers—and Speaker, I want to clarify, these are femicides that are reported as femicides. Not all femicides are actually accurately reflected and recorded. These are not all IPV or gender-based violence cases. These are women who were killed and it's recognized that they were killed by their partner:

- 21-year-old Serenity Brown;
- 54-year-old Rachelle Desrochers;
- 82-year-old Virginia Theoret;
- 83-year-old Eleanor Doney;
- 49-year-old Charlene Shellard;
- 41-year-old Carly Stannard-Walsh, and her children, Hunter and Madison Walsh, from my area;
- 27-year-old Louise Thomson;
- 38-year-old Tanya Wiebe;
- 48-year-old Parween Adel;
- 29-year-old Savannah Rose Kulla-Davies, just a few weeks ago;
- 23-year-old Julia Brady;
- 17-year-old Breanna Broadfoot;
- 77-year-old Barbara Church;
- 40-year-old Victoria Dill;
- 47-year-old Jennifer Edmonds;
- 26-year-old Shannan Leigh Hickey.

And those are just a few of the names and a few of the femicides.

I think of Sahra Bulle, in Windsor, whose ex-partner was just sentenced for her murder, and her mother, Fartumo Kusow, who stood in this place talking about the importance of the government recognizing intimate partner violence as an epidemic.

I think of the women in this room. I think of the women who work in this building. I think of our children, our grandchildren, our sisters, our mothers, our grandmothers, our neighbours who have been impacted by intimate partner or gender-based violence. I think of the women who have children, who can't leave.

A lot of what the government was saying kind of leaned to women who have financial barriers. And that is true: Absolutely, lower-income women are impacted differently than those who have better incomes—I'm not going to argue that. But there are women who have financial means but don't leave because they know that they are at greater risk of being killed by their partner when they do leave. They don't leave or they don't report because the justice system fails them, and oftentimes they're revictimized and retraumatized. Those are the people I think of.

This motion before us, to take what should have been, what was being said to be a non-political, non-partisan issue—when I see the motion before us, it does the exact opposite of that. And who does that serve? It certainly isn't

stopping the deaths. It certainly is not stopping the violence. Some quick points for the government side—maybe? But does that matter? Should it matter?

Do you know how many women are counting on what we do in this place—not just to say we're working together; not to stand on either side of the House and take cheap shots at each other and say, "We're doing this, but they're voting against it every time." Do you know how many women and children are counting on us to actually do something, to actually care about their well-being, about their future, to actually stop the killing and the violence in this province—not just to talk amongst ourselves, but to actually do something?

**1640**

I'm deeply disappointed and really sad. Again, I would say likely every woman in this House, or a majority of women in the House, could say that they are a survivor. And as a survivor, I'm incredibly disappointed and hurt by what the government is trying to do here today and the way that they are spinning it, because the women and children in this province deserve a heck of a lot better than what is happening here today—a heck of a lot better. So I ask the government members to support an amendment.

Speaker, I move that the motion be amended by removing everything after the words "provided by" and replacing it with the following:

"Legislative research summarizing oral presentations and written submissions received during the committee's hearing as soon as possible, the subcommittee on committee business schedule committee meetings for report writing."

I will give a copy to the page.

Speaker, I don't know if I have to wait for that to be read out.

**Interjection:** Yes.

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** Okay.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** MPP Gretzky has moved an amendment to move that the motion be amended by removing everything after the words "provided by" and replacing it with the following:

"Legislative research summarizing oral presentations and written submissions received during the committee's hearing as soon as possible, the subcommittee on committee business schedule committee meetings for report writing."

I recognize the member from Windsor West.

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** Just to wrap up, the one last thing that I want to point out in the motion is the fact that they're saying that this report would then come forward in English only, with a French version—so in December; I believe it was December 10. This report would then, after being discussed in camera, not open to the public, come forward to the public on December 10, or back to the House, and that the French-language version would be available eventually. There is no timeline, there is no date, and I would like to remind the government members that French is an official language here in Canada and there are many communities where French is their first and only language. So it is a great disservice and a great disappointment that

this government would leave that open to French translation whenever they happen to get around to it.

And with that, I'll pass it over to my colleague from Parkdale–High Park.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member from Parkdale–High Park.

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** I rise today to speak to this motion tabled by the government and in support of my colleague's amendment, the motion regarding the Standing Committee on Justice Policy's report on intimate partner violence.

This motion asks us to adopt a process that is frankly highly irregular; a process that runs the risk of undermining the integrity of this House, the work of our committees and the trust of Ontarians whose lives depend on us getting these issues right.

I want to start by thanking and lifting up the care and concern that the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity shows to this file. I applaud some of the work that is being done, and while I don't think it goes far enough, I can hear the passion in the minister's voice when she speaks of the work done on Indigenous Advisory Council, on STANDS, on the entrepreneurial programs that lift women out of poverty through jobs.

But today I am not here to debate the ministry's program or funding formulas. My concern is quite specifically with the motion before us. In fact, I'm quite concerned that a lot of the good work that is being done in this Parliament will be undermined by a process that is highly irregular at best and could be seen as intensely partisan and unbalanced at worst.

When we are talking about victims and survivors of intimate partner violence, we must honour the survivors. I haven't seen this report; no one in the opposition has seen it. Once we do, we will be able to speak to whether these findings honour the victims who gave their time, their stories, and who shared their tears and their traumas.

Today we are debating the seriousness with which this government approaches violence against women and gender-diverse people. My colleague spoke of the committee's action, or lack of action: the tour that did not travel to all the areas affected or speak to all the stakeholders. Today we are debating whether or not survivors can trust that their stories will be heard and honoured without political bias. Frankly, we should not have to discuss this. There was a very simple way, a process already in place to ensure that this would be non-partisan.

The motion proposes that a single government member, the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler, provide the draft report on intimate partner violence and that this report then be adopted in camera by a government-dominated committee. This is not how we do things in the Legislature. Traditionally, reports were written by non-partisan legislative researchers: professionals trained to synthesize the testimony of all the witnesses; to reflect the evidence, not any biases or ideology of any one party. And, Speaker, we all have our biases; that is why we have the process we have in place.

Allowing a government member to write a report that will then be edited and adopted behind closed doors does not only speak of an unprecedented process; it feels like the beginning of something dangerous. It risks tainting the findings with partisanship at a time when the province can least afford it. The minister for women spoke this morning of uniting us, and this irregular path does not bring us closer.

Speaker, I would be more generous of heart and less suspicious if we weren't in the middle of another moment of government overreach and direct intervention. We have just spent weeks discussing the Minister of Labour's direct intervention in the Skills Development Fund, another example of a flawed and integrity-compromised process—a process that the Auditor General called “not fair, transparent, or accountable.” And now here we are again.

This motion sets a precedent where government members can draft reports that shape policies, programs and funding all behind closed doors. That is not transparency; that is government control, and we are headed into uncharted territory with this overreach. In fact, if I were the member for Kitchener South–Hespeler drafting this report, I wouldn't want that responsibility, because no matter how well intentioned, the result will always carry a taint of bias.

I also want to address another concern: the language included in this report. According to this motion, the English version will be tabled in the House while the French translation will follow as soon as possible.

We can't accept this. Francophone Ontarians deserve equal and timely access to the findings in this report. Violence happens in every language, and the survivors and victims deserve to have their language rights honoured in a timely manner. If we are serious about protecting women and families in every part of the province, then this report should be available in both official languages simultaneously. If that is really an impossibility, then a clear date should be given. This is a matter of respect and inclusion.

I want to speak for a moment to what's at stake. Intimate partner violence is not an abstract issue. It's pervasive. It's deadly. It lives in all of our families: 44% of Canadian women will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime. For women with disabilities, that number is 55%; for Indigenous women, it's 61%; for 2SLGBTQ, 67%—and of course, those are the reported numbers; we know that intimate partner violence levels are much higher. These are our neighbours. These are our mothers, our daughters, our friends, our colleagues. They are not just statistics.

#### 1650

We know that 80% of these cases go unreported. Among teenagers, that number rises to 98%. And I can attest, in my own teenage years, to not understanding or being able to speak to the violence that happened to me.

The impacts are lifelong: mental health struggles, addictions, homelessness, chronic pain, traumatic brain injuries.

When we talk about intimate partner violence, Speaker, we talk about life and death. Every six days in Ontario, a woman or child is killed, most often by a current or former

partner. And while Indigenous women make up only 5% of Canada's population, they account for 22% of women killed by intimate partner violence. It is unconscionable.

It is also, for me, so troubling to be standing here this afternoon after an experience I had this morning. I want to contrast the process for this report with something that happened in MPP Mamakwa's office this morning. This morning, I was invited by the Moose Hide organization to witness a ceremony that honoured missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. It honoured victims and survivors of intimate partner violence. Speaker, I have to tell you, I have been in rooms that honoured victims and survivors before, but they've always been women-led and women-dominated. This was Indigenous-led, and this was a ceremony led by men for men.

In my lifetime, I have been scared and hurt by men. That's why it felt so moving to be in a room of men, of MPPs taking ownership for the role that they play in countering the pervasive violence. It was moving, it was healing and it reminded me of how crucial it is for our governments to also name what they see, which is what the men did this morning and which is what we did not do today in this Parliament when the government refused to call intimate partner violence an epidemic, despite 150 organizations, 106 municipalities and multiple police chiefs urging them to do so.

It felt very much, Speaker, like a moment in my life. When I was 17, I was working on a film set. I was grabbed by the hair by a director, pulled up onto my toes and kissed in front of 25 adults who said nothing, who did nothing. And because they said and did nothing, I did not know how to name that moment. When this government refuses to say something, to do what needs to be done, I am taken back to that moment and so are the many, many, many of us who have survived.

Speaker, the Renfrew county inquest, held after the horrific murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam, made 86 recommendations for us. The very first recommendation—the very first—was to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. Why? Because, as I just pointed in my story, only when we can name it, only when we can call it out can we marshal the full weight of public health, of justice, of social services to end it.

That report came out in 2015, and the problem is still growing. It's rising across the province. Compared to last year, Sault Ste. Marie police have seen roughly a 6% increase in calls from January to August of this year. Greater Sudbury police responded to almost 3,000 calls for services related to intimate partner violence in 2024, marking a near 40% increase. Police have also reported an alarmingly high volume of domestic abuse cases in rural and eastern Ontario.

Erin Lee, the executive director of Lanark County Interval House, told the CBC, "We're seeing an increase in our crisis calls, and so what we're finding is that people are calling about acts of violence. They are not calling to say, 'I'm a little bit concerned.' They are calling when they're in it." This is someone who has worked for more

than three decades in shelters for women, and she says that, last year, the crisis line received 3,000 calls.

Intimate partner violence is increasing in our nation's capital. The statistics released by Ottawa police show a 9% increase.

Organizations across the province, from shelters to advocacy groups, have been sounding the alarm. As one advocate remarked, is there a reality that there are more incidents? Yes, of course there's a reality that the incidents are more volatile than we are seeing in the reports. The statistics are clear. This is an emergency, and yet the government still won't call it what it is: an epidemic.

Every moment without that declaration is a moment when lives remain at risk. That's why 150 organizations signed on and sent a letter just shy of a year ago urging this government to declare IPV an epidemic: organizations like the Barbara Schlifer Commemorative Clinic, Black Women in Motion, the Canadian Women's Foundation, the Coalition of Muslim Women of K-W, Community Family Services of Ontario, Jewish Family and Child Service, the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, and WomanACT. So many have testified to the daily devastating impacts of intimate partner violence that they witness as advocates, front-line workers and leaders in community-based organizations. That is why it is so important that we get this report right and that the way that this process for this report is done is done well.

I want to read their letter, Speaker. It underlines the deadly seriousness of the issue and why it's so critical that we follow a regular, non-partisan process in drafting this report:

"The ongoing trend of increasing rates of femicide underscores the immediate necessity for comprehensive reforms aimed at prevention, safety and support for both survivors and their families, and those causing the harm....

"Every moment that passes" without the declaration, "without the passage of this bill is a moment in which lives remain at risk, and families ... continue to bear the agonizing weight...."

That bill "represents an acknowledgement of the crisis before us" and "the deep investments needed to accelerate solutions, and it sends a clear message that the lives and well-being of women, gender-diverse people and their families matter."

They matter, Speaker, and that's why the process of this report matters. How it is drafted and who is brought into the process is critical. During the consultations, for example, on Bill 173, dozens of experts and organizations travelled to give in-person testimony at Queen's Park and virtual testimonies. Dozens more submitted written recommendations on how the government should invest in support for survivors and prevention measures to support the government's understanding of this epidemic. We need that same kind of transparency, that same kind of collaboration and way forward here.

Speaker, the solution is not complicated. If this government wants to rebuild trust, it should start by ensuring that reports like this one are written by legislative staff, not political appointees. That would ensure transparency, in-

tegrity and a true reflection of the testimony heard by all the committee members. It would show survivors that their stories are not being filtered through any partisan lens.

We need a process and a government that is survivor-centred, trauma-informed and accountable. We need to act on what every expert, every shelter, every survivor has already told us: that intimate partner violence is an epidemic; that prevention requires stable funding, affordable housing, accessible mental health supports; that healing requires justice, not delay.

**1700**

Speaker, in my riding of Parkdale–High Park, many organizations are doing this work every day. The Evangeline Residence, Working for Change, Sistering, shelters—they are saving lives, often on a shoestring budget. Community public services have experienced a 20.5% funding cut since 2017. We know that the community agencies doing this work are suffering, and we don't do them any service by a report that is not transparent and survivor-centred.

They, and the women and gender-diverse people that they serve, deserve better. They deserve better than this irregular motion, than this partisan process. We are in the month of the prevention of abuse against women. What better time to affirm our collective responsibility to do better?

So I urge the government to reconsider their approach, and I move that the amendment be amended by adding “the purpose of” before the word “report.”

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** MPP Gilmour moved that the amendment be amended by adding “the purpose of” before the word “report.”

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Speaker, every Ontarian's safety matters. The survivors and their families deserve so much more. The integrity of our democracy is at stake with this process.

And with that, I would like to hand it over to the MPP for Toronto Centre.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member from Toronto Centre.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I'm always proud to rise in this House to speak on behalf of the good people of Toronto Centre.

I want to just bring all members in this House back to 2015, when Ontario lost three women to preventable gender-based violence. They were murdered in Renfrew county. Their names, we should never forget. I will speak them into the chamber's record: Anastasia Kuzyk, Nathalie Warmerdam and Carol Culleton were victims of intimate partner violence, a partner—a man—with a demonstrated history of abuse and violence.

And after seven long years, in 2022, the jury at the historic Renfrew inquest issued 86 recommendations. Those recommendations were targeting the systemic roots of intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, family violence, sexual violence and human trafficking all in its definitions.

While the recommendations were aimed at various public bodies, 68 out of 86 of those recommendations fall directly onto the feet and on the desks of the provincial

government. Although the government had the opportunity to take action in 2022 after receiving the report, they chose not to. The number one recommendation that has been asked of this citizen inquest, that has been mentioned many times, is to call on this government to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic; a call that has now been echoed by 106 municipalities, 150 Ontario-based organizations, multiple police chiefs as well as police organizations in our province. That's something that should have happened very quickly and yet it took so long, Speaker. Tragically, now we've seen other provinces move into the positions of leadership where Ontario should have been, because they are commenting on something that happened in Ontario, even though the provincial government was slow to act.

I moved a motion on behalf of the official opposition. I tabled a bill, Bill 173, to specifically draw out the first recommendation of the Renfrew inquest, to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. I didn't table all 86 at that point in time; I tabled just the first one. I thought it was simple enough and elegant enough that we could bring this House together so that we could demonstrate to Ontarians and to Ontarian women and girls that we were listening, that we were leaning in. But instead, the government sent that bill to committee, where it languished until the House rose and we had the snap winter election. Instead, the government called for a review and a study of IPV, something that no one in Ontario was calling for, because there have been numerous studies, research papers, as well as commissions and white papers done before.

Those reports languished on the desks of all government members. I know, certainly, the people who participate in the development of those reports are dismayed and disappointed that action hasn't been taken, because as we know, when action is delayed, something as predictable as intimate partner violence can happen again.

I'm thinking about what then transpired this morning in this House, where the government had an opportunity to, once again, show Ontarians that they were listening to all the various stakeholders that were calling for intimate partner violence to be declared an epidemic. Instead, the government chose to not listen and to call it something else.

I want to just highlight, Speaker, that words do matter, and the declaration that could have been agreed upon this morning was the fifth opportunity—that the government refused—on behalf of the opposition, to make that declaration on behalf of the people and the survivors that brought this work forward.

The word “endemic” that the government is now using is not what the stakeholders and the survivors have been calling for. They are calling for this government to call it as an epidemic, to track the information, to recognize that it is preventable and understand that resources need to be put forward to it.

I had asked government members, at the time when the committee was asked to study IPV, once again, “Why are you folks not declaring intimate partner violence an

epidemic, a simple and elegant gesture to so many in Ontario?" I was told by government members—in private conversation, to be quite honest—that the government didn't want to give the opposition a win. I was also told that they felt that if they declared it an epidemic, then they would have to spend money to address the systemic and structural issues—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** The member has the floor. I cannot hear the member present.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** They would have to spend the money and the resources to address the structural and systemic failures in the system, when we know that intimate partner violence is preventable. So, Speaker, of course it makes sense that the government, for the fifth time, would refuse the declaration, because they've been consistent every single time.

I want to be clear that it is a carefully chosen word on behalf of the Renfrew inquest. It's a carefully chosen word by legal scholars. It's a carefully chosen word by survivors and stakeholders, and it's a carefully chosen word and phrase that was repeatedly asked upon the committee to adopt as soon as possible.

Should the report come out without that simple declaration, you're telling us that you're not serious—despite good intentions from the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler, who I have a lot of respect for.

I have been working so hard at this committee because I knew that we had to do something. So we called upon witnesses. Over 90 witnesses appeared at our committee. We spent the entire summer—I want to thank those committee members at the Standing Committee on Justice Policy for spending that summer with us, with me. I learned a lot as survivors came forward to talk about what really mattered to them. They will be able to confirm—and I know that the submissions are there, because they're a matter of public record—that they were calling on this government to do more and to do urgently. They were also saying that the government didn't need to study the issue once again.

I want to be able to highlight that this government needs to explain to survivors a couple of things—and I say this with all the sincerity in my heart. Why would you not, to this day, on the eve that you're calling for the report to be drafted by a single government member as opposed to the non-partisan professional legislative staff—why, on the eve of this, would you not declare intimate partner violence once again?

But instead, we hear the government doing something that they want and not something that the community wants, or the police chiefs wanted, or the association of municipalities wanted.

1710

This has been very difficult, Speaker, because the issue is very personal, and I think that the members who sat through the committee will recognize that many of the participants who came forward to tell us their stories did so with an element of trust. I want to be clear, Speaker, that what is now happening is probably something that we

need to explain for them—for those who don't follow the parliamentary procedures. They need to understand that what has been tabled by the government is highly irregular. Some may even describe it as a process that's compromised. When I asked a Clerk, just any Clerk who works in this House, "How often is it that the government would table a draft report on behalf of a committee that sat through 90 witness depositions, where we had received over 100 submissions?"—I can't find a single person who works in this House who is part of our professional, non-partisan staff who can tell me that this has been done before.

So, with all the best intentions, it is so irregular that we need to be able to explain to Ontarians that what is happening is not normal business, and that's why this motion is so perplexing. Not only did the government not give the deputants what they had asked for, they're now drawing upon a different conclusion.

This is not to take away from the work that the committee did. It's not. It's not to take away from the government member who is tasked with writing a report. It's really to talk about how what happens in this chamber matters and how we conduct ourselves matters to Ontarians. They expect us, as parliamentarians, to actually follow protocol. Because we know that committees are comprised of government members, opposition members and independent members, and it's the committee's work—where oftentimes we've talked about the committee's work—to be a non-partisan space. We are supposed to do the people's work at committee, and so that is what the citizens of Ontario would expect. So, Speaker, what is happening is so bizarre and compromised that we have to name it for what it is.

I want to just say that it's incumbent on all of us to think this through. How is it that a government member is being directed, here, to write a report on behalf of a committee? Then that report will be tabled in camera. Then we are all going to go into this room, back again, for the next four days to go through a line-by-line review. And then we are going to come out on the other side, as a committee, to say this is our committee's report—in a government-dominated committee where the government has submitted a report. It's not the committee's report. It would be the government's report. Anybody who has sat on this side of the aisle will know it's very hard to get any amendments passed in a government-controlled committee. Everybody knows this. You've all worked so hard to draft these motions and these amendments. Every single one of us goes in there wanting to do the work to improve the outcome, and every single time the government votes it down, even when they're really good ideas, because it didn't come from their side of the aisle.

Speaker, I don't think that that is going to serve those survivors, those advocates, those legal advocates, those gender-based violence groups—everybody who came before us and said that this is what we need to address the problem.

And it is so critically important, and I want to highlight this point, that even as a committee member—because I

think that there were some remarks made that everybody on the committee agreed to everything that happened on the committee—I will say that that is categorically not true. On multiple occasions I questioned things that happened in the committee and on multiple occasions I was outvoted. This is not in camera, so don't worry. But it's true—asking things of the committee and then being told it doesn't work that way.

There is the perception that we all were there working together, but, clearly, as this outcome is unfolding before Ontarians today, it's not that true. I want to be absolutely truthful because we owe it to Ontarians. They expect this Parliament to behave in a way that is parliamentarian. I am so concerned that this now sets a precedent for how committees will operate and the type of reports that will come out of it. What is to stop this government from directing itself to write every single committee report, moving forward? I would like to know. How can we be assured that this is not going to set a whole new standard?

We know that the government has amended the standing orders dozens of times since I've been here. Every single year, there are new changes. The government has been bypassing committee for very important legislation and bills that everybody really cares about—whether it's Bill 60 or perhaps Bill 33. This constantly keeps happening.

As the rules change, I think it's incumbent on us to flag it. This is why we are standing up here to talk about the motion that this government has tabled—because nothing that has been tabled is regular. This is the only avenue I have to be able to talk about what has transpired. When we leave this chamber, we're going to go back to this committee, and a report is going to be tabled by the government, and those who don't watch the proceedings of this House very carefully, or the committee proceedings, will think that that's normal.

So, to anyone and everyone who's watching: Please know that nothing that the government has done today is conventional—it's absolutely not.

While we move forward to address an issue that requires a whole-of-government approach, this report is going to set forward some architecture; it's going to set forward a foundation that will then influence government programs, services, policies and funding. And we would not have the professional staff hired and employed by the Legislature to carry out their research, to write this report—recognizing that the recommendations that came from the individuals who came before us are going to be properly vetted.

This is the problem. If the government doesn't want to be embarrassed by what might be things that were said by witnesses who came before us—and things were said. Things were said that would be embarrassing to the government. Things were said by witnesses about government failure and the systems that needed to be changed. Things were said by witnesses about the chronic underfunding when it comes to victim services, around the failures around the courts, around what happens when we don't have adequate housing, transit, counselling. Things

were said and they were not showing the government in a positive light.

What happens if the report is perhaps written in a way that protects the government? When the government is in charge of the entire process, how are we going to get to structural change and systemic change? After all, they're the ones in charge, and if they tell you that there's nothing to see and to just keep on going—they do that. The report can be set up in a way that they fund who they want to fund. We've seen that in the social development fund—who they want to fund, not based on the evaluation criteria or perhaps needs. And this is, again, not taking anything away from the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler. But this is about setting the foundation for what happens next.

And if you aren't concerned, Speaker, then we don't have any hope left. This is why we work in committee. This is why we have a relationship in committee, where we really have sidebar conversations and talk about, “How do we fix the problem?”

I've heard from members who have sat through different committees and members who are far more experienced than I in this House, who have said to me, “Kristyn, committee work is some of the most important work that you will do”—not question period, but committee work—“and it's committee work that will produce the changes in the policies and the direction of the government that can actually improve people's lives.”

1720

I've heard government members tell me, “Pay attention to committee. It's where the real work gets done.” To my surprise—absolute flabbergast—why would we do something so different?

Why would we compromise a process that has worked for this House for over a hundred years? Why on earth would we agree to having French-language speakers receive a report months—months—later than English speakers in Ontario? Why on earth are we going in camera to deliberate over a government-produced report that is probably designed to protect the reputation of the government, that is going to reinforce the vision and the values of a government that has already refused intimate partner violence at least five times in this House, that has been chronically underfunding services in Ontario, that has left women and girls absolutely crying for justice? We cannot accept this—we cannot.

I have a little boy who's six years old. I think about the man that he's going to grow up to be, and I think about what it means for us to change the education system to ensure that he is going to understand what consent is, how he's going to have healthy relationships as he matures and grows. If we're not looking at a whole-of-government change to the health care system, the justice system and all the other systems and services that government is expected to produce and provide for the citizens, I wonder whether my little boy is going to be helped by this report, because it matters, because we know that violence takes place in homes and we know that little boys, little girls, women, gender-diverse people are affected by violence. We owe it

to them to get this right, and we owe it to them to make sure that this motion does not pass. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Further debate? I recognize the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** Thank you, Speaker. I will be splitting my time today with the member from Kanata–Carleton. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this government motion.

I understand that during the previous session, the sub-committee that we're talking about today interviewed over 150 witnesses, including 60 victims of intimate partner violence, in good faith and at risk of reliving their own trauma. People came to tell their stories in the hopes that there would be change and protection for them, their families and towards the goal of eradicating intimate partner violence. I want to extend my thanks to them for taking the time to do that. I see this whole discussion today primarily about honouring the fact that they spent that time to come and contribute their perspectives on this very, very important issue.

I look forward to seeing the draft report that the member of Kitchener South–Hespeler has written, which was designed to capture the sentiments, advice and the stories of the witnesses. While we do not have a copy of the report and hearing all of the discussion of the processes described today, I hope that by sending it back to the committee, now that we will be part of it, as all of this happened prior to the February election, our members can make contributions that will be received in good faith to produce a final report and discuss the bill that initiated all of it. It will be a report—I agree with all members here that have spoken so passionately: It cannot sit on the shelf, but it will be acted upon by this government to help bring an end to intimate partner violence.

I think it's also important to remind that this work was actually interrupted because of the call of an early election. So I see again this motion about ensuring—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** No, but it was. The report-writing committee met until January, the election was called and then it was interrupted. I actually really appreciate that this is being brought back, because it cannot wait. All of those efforts, because of that interruption, could have been lost, and we're going to make sure that that does not happen.

The reason why I think that that's important is that there is no doubt that intimate partner violence in this province needs to be addressed urgently, to prevent the devastating harm and loss of life that it causes. That, we all agree on.

In a 2021 report of the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, they cited that one in four Canadian women have experienced domestic violence. They also concluded that this number is likely closer to one in three women. They considered that many incidents of domestic violence are not reported to authorities, and the same report found that only 36% of domestic violence incidents are reported to the police, and probably only 5% of sexual assaults are reported.

Among victims who are racialized, Indigenous, the aging population, children and those from precarious-status

communities all face disproportionately higher rates and risks, and an injustice that is compounded by the intersecting barriers that inhibit victims from getting protection and support.

In my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, I recently attended an event in support of Women's Habitat. This is an incredible organization that provides shelter and a range of support services to women and families that have been impacted by violence, including intimate partner violence, and I say thank you to the executive director, Carla Neto, and her team for the work that they are doing in our community.

At the event, one of the speakers shared her experience as a young child. Her mother arrived at their public school to pick her and her sibling up. They picked them up after school, and they had all of their possessions—as many as she could fit—in the car. She packed up their lives and she took her family out of the violence that they were experiencing at home, and they went to a shelter and they received services and the care that they needed. Now that she has grown up, she has ensured that she has stayed involved, as she has seen the rates continue to rise and she's seen the suffering of families.

But this is a story of escaping violence before the worst becomes a possible outcome. Too often, we hear that people cannot escape and the violence ends in death. Since November 26, 2024—the day after last year's international intimate violence awareness day, which is marked on November 25—there have been an additional 35 femicides in Ontario. Of those, 10 were an intimate partner, 16 were family-related or somebody that knew them, and the remainder of their relationships were not reported.

Intimate partner violence is gravely unjust, and yet it is one of the most pervasive forms of violence. It is a form of violence where the victim is often blamed for not doing enough, not doing something sooner, or not doing something correctly. At its core, intimate partner violence is a fundamental human rights violation that predominantly impacts women. It denies victims a basic human right to live free from fear, coercion and life-threatening abuse. The myriad of consequences on the victims' physical and emotional health, support network and financial independence all compound in a horrific way to the victims.

So the damage of intimate partner violence extends beyond the victim, and when children grow up in homes of domestic violence, that problem continues to ripple across generations. Children become vulnerable to internalizing this violence and later perpetuating or experiencing this violence in their adulthood. And beyond the household, entire communities bear the cost of domestic violence through pressure on our health care system and social services and supports.

It's been mentioned today already: On September 15 of 2015, three women—Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam—were murdered by the same man in a case of intimate partner violence. He was known for his history of violence. This formed the basis of the Renfrew inquest report, which had 30 recommendations for over three years. We had the evidence and experts, and

we've had the Renfrew inquest report recommendations since June 2022.

**1730**

I agree with the member that put this motion forward: It is time for action. It's time for a plan with measurable outcomes and resources to end intimate partner violence. We must continue to amplify the voices of survivors and groups of women most likely to be victimized, and we must also create an intersection that addresses the root causes of violence against women and ensure sustained funding so that civil society organizations on the front lines don't bear the burden of the crisis.

I also know there's new information available to us, Speaker—new information that can continue to inform the discussions, continue to inform this report and the actions that are being proposed by this cross-party committee. It was recently released; the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee put out their report—it's from the Office of the Chief Coroner of the province of Ontario—just this November. As we return to this important work, that committee does also reflect the perspective of experts, health professionals, first responders and others, and it can be part of the discussions over the next month that are being planned with this motion.

It also appears from the discussion over the last years in this Legislature of Bill 173, acknowledging this as an epidemic, like so many countries, provinces and municipalities in Ontario, or through the motion this morning raising the endemic nature of the challenge—what is very, very clear is that we must make a decision to prioritize this issue and act. I think everybody is in agreement on that.

As a new member in this Legislature, I and our caucus will now have the opportunity, through this committee, to give input to the report, add recommendations—because it's a draft report—collaborate on what the final report will be and the actions stemming from this important piece of work.

Again, I want to say thank you to the more than 150 experts and victims of violence who participated in the consultation. This work does require us to work across parties. It must. And our goal should be to address this issue, starting with the finalization of the report, with the urgency that it deserves.

I support this motion moving forward to ensure that we see the report and, most importantly, that we actually take steps to address, in a very significant way, gender-based and domestic violence. I will also trust that this is being done in the spirit of ensuring, because the work was interrupted with the election, that we weren't going to let that fall off. I'm going to trust that this isn't a precedent-setting exercise. This is about getting back to the work and making sure that we push that through.

I will now pass it to my colleague the MPP from Kanata–Carleton, who is the member of the justice committee from our caucus and who will be participating from this point forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Saunderson):** The member from Kanata–Carleton

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** Yes, I joined the justice committee earlier this year. I just wanted to thank my honourable colleague for actually sharing all of that information. I also know that there's new information available, and I think that's really important that, whatever comes our way, we take advantage of everything.

I think she quite clearly identified the horrors and the realities of intimate partner violence in this province and right around the world, and the work done to actually interview so many witnesses and so many people with actual lived experience, and the trauma that that would have caused those people to come forward and tell their stories once again.

Being a member of the military, I saw it there too. I realized I know how hard it is to come forward when you are the victim of this kind of violence. So I think it's time. It's time that we turn this tide.

When I looked at this motion, it made me uncomfortable, because I have such respect for the work done in committees. It's where this Legislature gets legitimacy for the work that it does, gathering input, gathering consultation and hearing from expert witnesses and people with lived experience. So I'm a little uncomfortable where, on one hand, committees are being cancelled, and on the other hand, we're having the committee being given a report from a government member.

I think if we want our committees to work the right way, really, what we want to do is encourage collaboration, so we don't end up with reports with dissenting opinions. But in order to do that, it means we have to share all the information that we have. It means we have to do so in good faith, and that we have to do it in a non-partisan manner.

Speaker, I heard the word “trust” kind of bandied around here quite a bit. I'll tell you something I learned a long time ago, and I think it served me well over the course of my life. I had a boss that said to me, “Trust is a bank account. It's a bank account that you make deposits into every single day. And you make deposits by doing what you say you're going to do, by being predictable, by being on time, by being there, by being a team player, by trying to make a difference. You're making deposits into that trust bank account. People learn to trust you because of your behaviour.” And then he said to me, “Make sure you make those deposits, because every one of us is going to eventually have to make a withdrawal, because we're going to make a mistake, and if you haven't made those deposits of being predictable, of doing what's right, following the rules, following the example, your bank account's going to be empty, and then there's not going to be anything for you to draw upon when you make that mistake.”

I'd like to suggest that as a way forward to think about building trust in this institution. Yes, it's partisan. It's difficult. But we have to learn to trust each other. If we don't, we're not going to get the kind of quality work that we want for the people of Ontario. We have to find a way to get there. What we need right now is action. We need



action. We need a plan. We need a practical, achievable, measurable plan.

As my honourable colleague mentioned about the Renfrew inquest report, there are 86 recommendations in that report—86 recommendations. I think that's a pretty good starting place that most of us could probably agree on. You need to be transparent. We need to be consistent. I was happy to hear the honourable member from Kitchener South—Hespeler say that about being transparent, being consistent. But the problem is this motion wants it to be a member's report that ends up going to committee instead of a committee report that's actually written by a non-partisan panel of experts that do this all the time. This is what they do. This is what they're paid to do.

Speaker, I do agree that this causes me some angst. I do worry that it could be precedent-setting, I do. I wish I was as trusting as my honourable colleague is. I want committee reports prepared by independent, non-partisan staff instead of a report that's prepared by a government member. You have to see where that would cause unease in people. You have to understand that.

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I think there are good reasons why non-partisan staff are used, because they're seen as always acting in good faith. They don't have a political axe to grind. They're going to take what they're given and they're going to present it in such a way that everybody could say, "Yes, that's what those witnesses said. That's what they asked for. That was real." And there's not a need to bend it one way politically or another.

I don't want to bring politics into this non-partisan issue. I grew up as a witness to violence. It was common. You know, we have to do something. We have to figure this out and we have to put the well-being of the people of Ontario, men and women and children, first instead of our own partisan interests. If I had a good report, and I wanted the committee to perhaps use some of it—actually, this is good stuff—I would have shared it with my honourable colleagues, and I would have gotten them on board, because it's not a committee report so it doesn't need to be embargoed. Committee reports have to be embargoed. This is not a committee report. This might be an awesome report prepared by the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler. It might be absolutely fabulous that every single one of us could buy into and march forward together with, but we're not going to know that. But we could. We could have known this. There was no reason to wait until after this motion passes to share that report. It could have been shared at any time.

I want this to move forward. I want us to do something. I want us to take action. I want to know that, at committee, a report can come out of that committee with the full support of that committee, where amendments and edits are accepted and used to strengthen that report. That's what I want. There is a sense of urgency. It needs to happen now.

I think there is a way forward. We all want this. We all want to make this happen. We're uncomfortable with what we're being asked to do right now because it doesn't

follow good parliamentary process, and there's a reason for it. So let's work together, share the report, ask for our comments, ask for our inputs and then we can move forward and actually make something happen for the people of Ontario.

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

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** I've been thinking, as I have listened to people, about the support and the response and what I have seen from my caucus colleagues throughout this entire process. In sort of no particular order, but going back to the very first day where we looked into the idea of having a committee on this—at the time, the government House leader was the member for Markham—Stouffville. I went to his office and, in probably a somewhat wild-eyed look, threw myself into his office and begged to be allowed to work on the committee. I begged to do whatever work I could possibly do on it, to assist on it. At that time, it was, I suppose in some ways, not terribly early into my time as a politician, but a little bit early, and trying to find your feet.

I had gone from being a crown attorney—which was a job with a huge amount of purpose, discipline and influence, where you regularly interacted with the best and worst of people—to this world. The reason that I had left that job to come to this one was because of what I saw in courts, because of what I saw as far as the type of trends, like transitory justice, that can happen in intimate partner violence cases and in sexual violence cases, but also because, again and again, the more time you serve in criminal courts, the more you realize that there really is no black and white. It's always just shades of grey.

I would see people and think that, if they had a stronger parental figure, a better role model in their life, even just one, they probably wouldn't be appearing in my court that day. Or I would see people that were charged and victims and think that the blunt instrument of the criminal law is not always the tool that we want for these types of cases. I left that job and, as I said, came to this one because I so desperately wanted to be part of the solution and part of what made the difference.

Back then, I talked about federal versus provincial. For me, it was always provincial because all of the things that really, really influenced crime and the people that I saw every day were under provincial control. It was education. It was health care. It was social services. It was court administration.

Then I came here, and then for a while, I struggled, I think, to find my feet. To bring us back to that day that that committee was created and me hurling myself into the government House leader's office, he told me in his way, "Well, you're going to lead it." At the time, I was incredibly excited. I left for a bit and went back, actually, to him to say, "I am so appreciative of this opportunity, but I have to let you know that, if you don't want something to happen with this, please don't give it to me, because I will not be able to deliver you anything other than my best." He said, "Yes, no, I know. You're still leading it."

That is the first—again, not chronologically, but the first of my caucus colleagues that made me feel not only could I bring something but that this issue mattered. I was starting to feel—not the beginnings, because it was there already, but starting to hear the voices of my colleagues coming up in support. I was terrified of the government House leader at the time, absolutely terrified of him, and for him to say that to me was very validating, and to say that he felt that I was competent enough to do it.

Then I also think about our current Minister of Energy. Again, several years ago, while still in this position, I was doing research on violence prevention and crime prevention, because I've always thought the best thing that you can do when you have a problem is look to see, has anyone else already solved it, and can you implement their solution?

I came across two really good programs who actually presented to us at the committee. One of them is called the Fourth R, which is out of western Ontario, and the other is called Coaching Boys Into Men, which is a program that is held by Interval House of Hamilton and delivered all across Ontario now.

I had this conversation with the director of Interval House of Hamilton about Coaching Boys Into Men and about why it couldn't be in all our schools. She said, "Ultimately, we just can't get the support for it." I sat down with her and I said, "Well, how much is this going to cost? What do we do?" We worked back and forth—and with the Fourth R as well—and I went to, as I said, our then Minister of Education, Minister Lecce, with this proposal, this idea. At the time—I think I've become slightly better in my advocacy and presentation skills. I'm still not known for using 10 words where 100 or 1,000 would do, and I find it very difficult to tell a story in a chronological fashion, as evidenced currently. But I went to him with this idea, and he heard me out and, basically, his response was, "We're going to make this happen"—and there went two or three months of back and forth about how we were going to do this. I had just been asking for, advocating for, just to advance it in a few more schools—and came back and the ministry had spent \$875,000 on Coaching Boys Into Men, which implemented that program in 400 more schools all across Ontario. We also got \$150,000 for the Fourth R.

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*Interjections.*

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** Thank you.

It's not just about the spending. It's about this feeling that—when you care about something so passionately, and you start realizing that the people around you, the people you work with care about it just as much as you do and want to make it happen.

I was actually looking through my phone—I knew it was there, but I wasn't sure I had still saved it. Quite some time ago, one of our former members, the esteemed John Yakabuski, had risen in this House to make—I'm not sure if it was a members' statement, but it was about Anastasia and Nathalie and Carol and the Renfrew county inquest, which, of course, was in his riding. He was so powerfully

moved by it—it had been several years since it happened—that he was moved to tears. I don't know if he requested the video of it, but I actually asked our recording services if I could have a copy of it. One of the things that was running through my head as I was listening to him was this idea that—I don't think that John would get mad at me if I described him as a grumpy old white man; I think he would probably say that's fairly accurate—we had a self-professed grumpy old white man pounding the desk over gender-based violence, over what had happened, over the fact that he wanted us to go farther. I just remember being so moved by it, because there are times, in this conversation about violence against women, about gender-based violence, when we do have to face the fact that it is almost entirely perpetuated by men against almost entirely women. Again, if you had asked me, I would not have thought that John was the type to be moved to tears by that, but there he was.

Our President of the Treasury Board, throughout this process—I've felt like I have walked through this process with somebody standing at my side who is quietly, confidently powerful, somebody I could go to, who told me, "Yes, this is a very big undertaking that we are embarking on, but I believe that you can do it." I feel slightly bad about some of the panicked text messages that Minister Mulroney may have received from me over the months, while I was struggling to get my mind around one thing or the other. I can't think of many people busier than she is—but the time that she has taken to sit with me and to coach me through this. It continues on and on.

Even, surprisingly enough, our Minister of Transportation, Minister Sarkaria, voluntarily put himself in the firing line by inviting me to come talk to him about my ideas about bail and, particularly, how they impacted victims of violence. There are not many people, once they've heard me get on a tirade about bail, who would ever volunteer to spend any time actually listening to me go on about bail, but he did. He has since joked that I am a soft-on-crime crown ever since, because of my love of prevention as a primary method. But it continues onwards.

Frankly, I look to our current Speaker as well. This committee was—by the time we were done, it was 13 straight days of testimony. We were absolutely determined to fit in as many witnesses as possible. Over, obviously, the course of time and the summer, we would have people sub in and out of committee, with two people that were there by my side the entire time, that being our Chair, Mr. Coe, and our current Acting Speaker, MPP Saunderson.

His obsession with the risk assessment side of things—it was wonderful to have somebody that was sitting there, listening to the same problems that I was hearing, and having the same experience that I was around them, about how this is utterly ridiculous. It is utterly ridiculous that we have this situation. Of course we can fix this; we're being told how we can fix this—and just providing so much steady counsel throughout as I would stay up far too late the night before writing out questions that people could use. He's another person who today stood up in support of the Moose Hide Campaign, who has worn his

moose hide pin for far longer than today, who engaged in a day of fasting—another person that I look to for their support.

I think about our member MPP Triantafilopoulos and all of her dogged work on Keira's Law. We all remember Keira Kagan, who was the delightful little girl whose mother tried over and over again to make her fears known to the judge in their family court custody case. Unfortunately, old stereotypes were relied on, one of those being that just because a man abuses his wife does not mean he will abuse his children, and Keira died. She was murdered by her father in a murder-suicide.

Her mother, Jennifer, has been just a constant advocate ever since then for Keira's Law, which requires judges and JPs and judges in family court to particularly learn about the elements of coercive control and how they appear in family violence situations. MPP Triantafilopoulos was one of the first to be approached about Keira's Law—and her dogged determination to see this through.

For so many of us, even those of us in government, it is not easy to take a new piece of legislation, particularly, I might add, a piece of legislation that treads into the sanctimonious halls of—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** See, the person that put up with me on bail—to have somebody that goes and advocates for something the way that she did.

It was particularly difficult because, I can tell you, as somebody that's been in the criminal justice system, as soon as you start trying to tell judges what to do in any capacity, that generally doesn't go over very well. It's especially difficult to create legislation that adds a training requirement for judges. But she continued to advocate for that, and here we are. Keira's Law was passed—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Saunderson):** It is now time for private members' public business.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

*Report continues in volume B.*



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Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
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Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Leader, Third Party / Chef du troisième parti
<b>French, Jennifer K. (NDP)</b>	Oshawa	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
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Gualtieri, Silvia (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
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<b>Hazell, Andrea (LIB)</b>	Scarborough—Guildwood	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)</b>	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé des Forêts et des Produits forestiers
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
<b>Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)</b>	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
<b>Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)</b>	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines
Lennox, Robin (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	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
<b>McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)</b>	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
<b>McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Deputy House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	Timmins	Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement et de la croissance économique du Nord
<b>Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister 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	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, 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	
<b>Skelly, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)</b>	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	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
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)</b>	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Attorney General / Procureur général associé
<b>Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	