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Jeudi
6 novembre 2025

Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly
Greffier : Trevor Day

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 6 November 2025

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 6 novembre 2025

The House met at 0900.

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

Prières / Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 5, 2025, on the amendment to the motion for time allocation of the following bills:

Bill 60, An Act to amend various Acts and to enact the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2025 / *Projet de loi 60, Loi modifiant diverses lois et édictant la Loi de 2025 sur les sociétés publiques de gestion de l'eau et des eaux usées;*

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

Bill 40, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to energy, the electrical sector and public utilities / *Projet de loi 40, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'énergie, le secteur de l'électricité et les services publics.*

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

Mr. John Fraser: I'd just like to begin by saying, if that was an automated speed enforcement camera, these guys would be charged with stunt driving—100%. The other piece is—and I hope the Clerks are listening—I think we need to consider adding in time allocation as a regular occurrence in the standing orders, because, hey, it's happening. Let's just do it. Let's just be open about it.

People talk about respect for Parliament and how important that is, and our democratic institutions, but you actually have to do the democracy to have respect. You have to listen to people. You have to take the time to get it right.

Bill 33 is an important bill. It affects one of the most important things that happens for families in this province—education; we've all benefited from it. It's not even going to committee. That message is, "Talk to the hand. I don't need to hear from you. I know what's right." That's what the government is saying. "I know what's best." For 200 years, schools have belonged to the families and the communities they serve, and it has been that way for 200 years because it works—because schools in Timiskaming are different than schools in downtown Toronto, which are

different than schools in Sudbury and the northwest and eastern Ontario. Communities are different.

What this government wants to do is, they want to run it all from Queen's Park, because on that side of the House they think their job is to represent Queen's Park in their ridings, not their ridings in Queen's Park—because if they were, they wouldn't be doing Bill 33. They wouldn't be trying to centralize everything into downtown Toronto.

The minister has spent a lot of time pointing the finger at trustees, and some of them needed some finger pointing. He has tried to make this about governance. If the minister wants to crack some eggs and make an omelette, have at her. Here are the ingredients: local, democratic, transparent, and effective. Make whatever omelette you want. I don't care if you have three trustees, or four, or 10, or 50, because the problem in our schools right now is not governance—because this place already does 80%. Trustees, right now, have this much decision-making power. We're making most of the decisions here, and the decisions that are being made here are adversely affecting our students and families.

The real problem right now is, our schools aren't safe places to work or to learn, and that's for three reasons. Class sizes: They've grown; they're too big. Special education: Kids aren't getting the help they need because the government is giving boards about \$850 million less than they need, so they have to go and get it somewhere else. The third thing is mental health. We hear a lot of talk about what we're doing for mental health, how we're supporting kids, how we're going to make—we've got a really big problem, and it's only reflective of what's going on right now in our broader society.

I can't remember, growing up, seeing a sign in the bank that says, "If you harass or use foul language, we won't take that." Phoning my insurance company, I get a message that says, "You've got to be nice."

We've got a broader problem, and we have a cohort of kids who have come through a pandemic.

I've been to half a dozen cities here in Ontario, talking to families and to teachers and to students about their schools, and these are some of the stories that I heard. I talked to a principal who actually lives around the corner from me. He has an elementary school of about 700 kids, K to 8. I was talking to him about safe schools. He said, "I had a chair thrown at me by a 12-year-old the other day." He's a great principal, a stand-up guy; not a complainer. He looked at me and he said, "It's just another day."

Every day in schools across Ontario, kids are being taken out of a classroom. Principals are being called. Sometimes you get a lockdown. It's just like the government is whistling in the graveyard. They're not noticing what's going on there. It's a really serious problem.

Those are the problems that we should be addressing—not trying to centralize everything into downtown Toronto, not being the representative of Queen's Park in your community, but representing your community in Queen's Park. That's what we need to do here. That's our job.

Just to go back: To respect the institution, you use the rules, to get democracy. That means maybe sometimes you have to listen to people you don't want to listen to, like some people are probably doing right now. That's the way it works, man. We've got to respect it. And if we don't respect it, it will be gone one day.

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

MPP Catherine McKenney: This government is once again waging a coordinated attack on the people who actually make Ontario work, and they're doing it in the shadows, ramming through legislation without consultation, without debate, without giving Ontarians a voice.

Let me be clear about what we're witnessing here: The Premier is simultaneously attacking renters, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders—four groups, one common thread. These are the people this Premier and this government have decided just don't matter.

On housing, Bill 60 guts tenant protections that have existed for over 50 years. The Premier wants to eliminate month-to-month leases, cut notice periods in half at the LTB, and make it easier than ever to evict individuals and families into homelessness. And he's doing this while over 80,000 Ontarians are already without housing; while no minimum wage earner in this province can afford a one-bedroom apartment in any city; while young people are giving up hope of ever having a stable place to call home.

0910
On our streets, this government is eliminating bike lanes that actually save lives, lanes that reduce congestion, lanes that give people affordable transportation options. The Premier claims this is about gridlock, but the data says otherwise. Bike lanes move more people in less space. They make our cities more livable. They give families and people real choices.

And on transit, we see a government here that would rather build fantasy tunnels than invest in and encourage rapid transit that cities desperately need. Transit riders—workers, students, seniors—are being abandoned again by this government.

And for pedestrians? Vision Zero sadly has become a cruel joke as pedestrian deaths climb year after year. While this government talks about cutting red tape, they continue to rip out the basic infrastructure that keeps people safe when they walk to school, when they walk to work, when they walk to their local grocery store.

Speaker, here is what ties all of this together: This Premier is attacking anyone who doesn't fit his vision of Ontario. His Ontario is one where you must be a wealthy friend to participate in society; where you must be a rich corporate friend to feel secure; where if you can't afford to purchase favours, you simply don't count. But that's not the Ontario we want to live in.

Over a third of Ontarians are renters. Millions rely on transit every single day. Many, many choose to cycle to

work, school, their grocery store. These aren't marginal groups. These are our neighbours. They are our family members, our friends. These are nurses, teachers, restaurant workers, and students. These are the people who make our communities function. And this government won't even consult them—no committee hearings; no listening to municipalities that will bear the costs of these decisions; no hearing from tenants who will lose their homes; no input from cyclists who will lose safe routes; no consultation with transit agencies struggling to meet demand. “Just ram it through; pass it fast, before people realize what is happening, before communities can organize, and before the facts can get in the way.”

This is not how democracy works. This is not how good policy gets made. This is arrogance. This is ideology over evidence. This is a government that has stopped listening, because it never really cared about what people had to say in the first place.

The Landlord and Tenant Board is broken. This government broke it. Their solution: Punish tenants.

Traffic is bad. Keeping pedestrians and cyclists safe with better infrastructure would help, and making transit move faster would help. Their solution: Rip out bike lanes, remove speed cameras, and strangle transit.

Do you see the pattern, Speaker? Every problem that this government has created they solve by punishing the people who are already struggling.

We know what Ontario needs. We need 300,000 units of deeply affordable housing. We need rent control that actually controls rents. We need protected bike lanes to keep people moving. We need frequent, reliable, affordable public transit. We need Vision Zero infrastructure that actually prevents deaths. We need a government that listens before it legislates.

Instead, we get Bill 60 and its companion attacks on sustainable transportation—legislation written in back rooms, passed without debate, imposed without consultation, all to serve an agenda that makes life harder for millions of Ontarians.

Premier Ford promised in 2018 that he wouldn't take away rent control. “Period,” he said. But that wasn't the case. He promised to listen to people. That wasn't the case. He promised to make life more affordable. Instead, he's making it impossible for millions of Ontarians.

So here is my message to the government: Stop. Listen. Consult. Give Ontarians a voice before you take away their rights. I urge this government to withdraw this motion, to hold real consultations, to listen to the people who will be affected, to build an Ontario that works for everyone, not just those at the top.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I rise today, yet again, to speak against this government's use of a time allocation motion—and for those of you who are tuning in and aren't exactly clear what this is, a time allocation motion is the government using their majority power to rush legislation through this House, limiting our ability to debate, limiting our ability to ask questions of the ministers who are pro-

posing this important legislation, and bypassing committee, which limits your ability as citizens of Ontario to bring your concerns and questions and suggestions to improve legislation to this House.

Make no mistake: Time allocation motions are the government's heavy hand squashing any democratic use of this place and squashing every individual resident of the province of Ontario—your ability to have your voice heard in this place. We have seen it many times before from this government and, unfortunately, I'm imagining we're going to see it many times going forward.

While people are in our communities struggling, doing the best that they can to support their communities in difficult times, this government is ramming through legislation on important issues that affect your everyday life.

Your children's education: This government is giving unprecedented power to a minister to make changes to the education system. I know that your children are going to school in crowded classrooms, where teachers are facing all kinds of incidents of violence, underfunding, understaffing. We have lead in the water in our schools all across the province. Our schools are surpassing lead limits all across the province. That's not a priority. Giving the minister power in education is a priority.

And housing: The current housing crisis cannot be overstated. Rather than taking the time for this government to hear the struggles that you are having at finding adequate, affordable housing—whether you are overpaying rent; whether you're being evicted; whether you are trying, as a young person, to have the dream of home ownership; or whether you are living rough on the street, without housing—this government doesn't want to hear from you.

I do have to say, I'm incredibly proud of what my community, Hamilton, is doing to support one another. This weekend, I had the opportunity to attend the Ancaster Lions craft sale. It's the 25th anniversary of this craft sale. The Lions Club in Ancaster has been around since 1945—80 years of working to support the community. That should be celebrated. And while these folks are busy making sure that all the proceeds from this incredible craft sale go to organizations supporting members in our community, we have a government that is not listening to the concerns of people and doesn't want to open the doors to this place for people to come and express how they are feeling.

Again, I want to congratulate the Ancaster Lions for their craft sale, and I want to commend them for the spirit of love and community and mutual support that they brought to that event. It was a phenomenal event. I know that they have been there for 80 years, and here is to 80 more years of them supporting our community, in the way that we all should be for our communities.

We have been talking about housing since this government took office almost eight years ago. One and a half million homes are needed to be built in this province. Our housing starts are lower than they've been since the 1950s.

This is a government that, instead of focusing on getting back to building affordable housing, homes where people can afford to live, where they want to live, or focusing on protecting renters who already have housing—instead of doing that, this government brings forward Bill 60, which will only exacerbate the housing insecurity of people all across this province.

0920

In Hamilton, city data shows that there has been a 25% increase in people experiencing homelessness. Tenant advocates condemn this bill as a housing horror show. I have to say, it is devastating to watch my community, my municipality, struggling to help people in housing need, when instead this government is focused on blaming the shortage on tenants, making it easier for tenants to be evicted, and not fixing the land tribunal mess that is their making.

I stand here, in this House, urging the government to withdraw this bill and take the time, as you should, to listen to the people—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):
Thank you. Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Hsu has moved an amendment to government notice of motion number 9, relating to allocation of time on the following bills: 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.

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

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

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

In my opinion, the nays have it. I declare the motion lost.

Further debate on the main motion? Further debate? Seeing none, pursuant to standing order 50(b), I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Clark has moved government notice of motion number 9, relating to allocation of time on the following bills: 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.

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

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Vote deferred.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS
SÉANCES DES COMITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 5, 2025, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion regarding report writing proceedings of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy on the study on intimate partner violence.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler.

Ms. Jess Dixon: In the few minutes that I have left to speak about this, I want to bring us back again to what this debate is actually about, which is finishing the incredible work that we started 18 months ago and have been pursuing doggedly since then.

Bringing this report to the committee for review and bringing it back to the House is a point of completion and of respect to the many professionals, advocates and survivors who came forward and testified over 13 days to this House. As I said yesterday, this is not about what is discovering what is new; it is about connecting what was already known and turning it into the architecture for change. It is about recognizing and treating intimate partner violence as the serious, persistent and structural issue that it is. It is not about a headline. It is not about the level of perceived outrage. It is not a slogan. It is about steadying a systemic problem that demands a systemic solution.

Referring this report to committee is not about delay; it is about discipline. It is ultimately how we turn countless hours of evidence, countless words into action and action into accountability. It's also about using language that helps us build solutions instead of chasing sound bites.

Calling IPV endemic and reviewing the report that was prepared doesn't downplay urgency or seriousness. It describes reality, and it deserves an opportunity to be reviewed by this committee and taken back to the House. It shows that this violence is persistent; it's widespread; it's baked into institutions and into our culture. When we call it endemic, we are saying out loud that this work is not ending, and every ministry, every government, every community, every one of us has a role in working to reduce and prevent it.

This is also about sustained accountability and sustained dedication, and I think that's really what the work of the committee, the report, the final review, the tabling is all about. It's about the fact that we heard about a problem; we came together to study that problem; we studied it in depth, in detail, but it was always with the idea that there was a goal, a target in mind, which was to come back with that architecture for change. As I said, we have spent decades mapping the terrain, the contours of this problem, looking at it from every angle, describing its damage, its pervasiveness. We know this geography inside and out. Ultimately, what had to be done was that we had to build a road through it, versus just standing there looking at the mountain. And that is what this is about. This is about having built that road and actually standing up to start taking the steps down that road, to handle and respond to this the way that we should—the way that

survivors, that professionals, that advocates deserve us to respond to.

Ultimately, this is serious work, and we owe survivors the process that is worthy of their courage, and one that measures results versus just applause.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It feels really weird to be standing here this morning to debate a topic that everybody on all sides of the House—we all agree: Intimate partner violence needs the government to take action; it needs us, as leaders in our community, to take action.

We have put forward, as the NDP, many motions asking the government to do what everybody is asking us to do: Declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. But we're not there.

We are at a point where the Standing Committee on Justice Policy did their work. They heard from dozens and dozens of survivors of intimate partner violence, domestic violence.

I can tell you that I've been here for 18 years. I've had the privilege of sitting on quite a few committees that travelled and were given a special mandate.

0930

I will always remember when Christine Elliott—she was a brand new MPP at the time—was in opposition. She was a member of the Conservative Party while the Liberals were in power, and she put forward a motion to look at mental health, and to everybody's surprise, the majority Liberal government agreed. We formed a special committee to travel all over the place. The present Minister of Health, Sylvia Jones, was also part of it, and so was Christine Elliott, and so was I. This work was really, really meaningful. It was done in a non-partisan way. We went all over the place. I remember flying to Kitchenuhmaykoosib, listening to what was going on in that community, with the lack of access to mental health supports. We went through I don't know how many boxes of Kleenex, listening to what people had to share with us.

Then, we looked at what the researcher had summarized, all of the oral presentations, all of the written submissions. We looked at the work that they had done, and we made it ours. We took what they had put. They are fabulous. The people who work for the Legislative Assembly in research and Hansard are really, really good. They put the report together. We worked on it as a group.

I will always remember—there were only three parties at the time; the Greens had not been elected—that all three parties stood in the media studio to tell the Minister of Health at the time that he had to act upon the recommendations that we had done on the special committee on mental health and addiction. And it worked. You look at some of the recommendations put forward—a centre of excellence. Ontario will now have a centre of excellence in mental health. It worked.

It has worked for hundreds of years. This is the way the Legislative Assembly works. But now we are asked to change this—change this without warning, without explanation as to why we aren't doing things the same way

we have done them for 100 years or more in this House. I wasn't here for 100 years, just to make it clear. I know I've been here a long time—but not 100. This is the way we have done things in this House. The process works. The expertise that exists, the knowledge, the skills of the people within research and Hansard make our work better. And we're asked to put all this aside on a topic as important as intimate partner violence, and without explanation.

I have deep respect for the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler. I have deep respect for her dedication, for putting all the work that she has put into this. It has nothing to do with her, with her goodwill, with her good intentions. It has to do with—there has to be an explanation as to why the systems that have worked, that are proven, need to be changed now and become behind closed doors.

This is another part of the change that I don't understand: Why is it that this report that the member has worked on—why doesn't she just share it with Hansard, share it with the researchers? Get the best of both worlds. The researchers—this is what they do. We pay them to do this, and they are excellent at doing it. They have never let me down, through all the years that I've been here, through all the committees that I've sat through, through all of the reports—and I have gone through hundreds of them.

Why are we changing this for this particular topic, which is so, so important? I don't get it.

I have been a politician long enough to know that if I don't understand, if the end goal is not clear, then it is my job to do the work to make it clear. There could be a very valid explanation as to why we're doing this. But none of this has been shared. All we know is that we're not going to benefit from all the researchers who travelled, who were there, who took notes, who did their job. Why not? We paid for that good work. It was done.

I will add some things that are even more puzzling.

The fact that the member who put in her time, her effort and energy to write this report has been taken off that committee—her party doesn't think that she is the right person to represent them on the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, although she obviously cares about this. She has spoken in the House. I believe what she said. She cares about this. She wants to do the right thing. But then her party said, "You're not going to be a representative on that committee anymore." Again, there are red flags going up. What is going on?

Why is it that of all the people who were on the committee when all of the hard work was done, only one member of the NDP, from Toronto Centre, is still on that committee? The rest of them have all been taken off. And new people who did not have a chance to listen to the survivors who shared their stories, because—and for very good reason; I don't blame them. All of the testimonies were made in camera to make sure that the survivors felt as protected as possible when they shared really, really difficult stories. I'm all for this. The process was fine. I'm not blaming the process. What I'm saying is that the people who are now on that committee won't gain access to all of the notes and things that the researchers have put

together. The researchers were there when all of those testimonies were being done behind closed doors. The researchers read all of the written submissions that have been done. They have done their work to put the report together. But none of the people who were there, who heard the testimonies, who lived through this experience, are there anymore.

What's going on with the Conservative government? When the members of their caucus stand up, it looks like their heart is in the right place, it looks like they understand how this important issue needs our attention, but then, when it comes time to act—and as an MPP, I act by voting, by putting motions forward, by putting bills forward. When they act, they put things like:

"Resuming the debate adjourned on November 5, 2025, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion regarding report writing proceedings of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy on the study on intimate partner violence, as follows ... :

"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"—it's like they say the right things, but when it comes time to act, when it comes time to put a motion forward, then it derails. I don't want it to derail. This is real. This is happening. This has to change.

And then—as everybody can tell by my accent, I care about francophones—the motion says that the English-only version of the committee's report will be presented to the House no later than Wednesday, December 10.

0940

Pourquoi est-ce qu'en 2025, ici à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, on a encore besoin d'expliquer aux membres du gouvernement conservateur qu'on existe, les francophones en Ontario, qu'on a des droits constitutionnels et que tous les documents de l'Assemblée législative, les rapports, doivent être disponibles en français et en anglais en même temps? Comment ça se fait qu'on se retrouve avec un travail aussi important que ça, puis que l'on doit encore leur expliquer que l'on a le droit de recevoir les informations en français en même temps que les informations en anglais? Mais, apparemment, ce n'est pas si important pour eux autres.

La violence contre les femmes francophones, elle est aussi réelle que celle contre les femmes anglophones et les gens LGBTQ2S qui parlent français. Pourquoi est-ce qu'on n'aura pas droit au rapport? Non seulement on n'y aura pas droit, mais ils ne mettent même pas de date pour quand le rapport en français va devenir disponible. Voyons donc. Comment ça se fait qu'on en est rendu là?

Donc, ils nous mettent une motion avec toutes sortes de changements quand même très importants : un changement à comment on fait le travail de comité, qui écrit les sommaires, comment on bénéficie des gens qui font la recherche, les gens qui font le Hansard—tout ça. Mais tout ça est en train de changer sans aucune explication de pourquoi tout ça.

Autant que je veuille penser qu'il y a de bonnes intentions en arrière de tout ça, moi, je suis politicienne depuis longtemps. Quand il y a des choses que je ne comprends pas, quand il y a des choses qu'on ne peut pas m'expliquer, il y a des drapeaux rouges qui se lèvent, puis j'essaie d'aller au fond des choses pour savoir ce qui se passe vraiment. En ce moment, bien, c'est pas mal difficile d'aller au fond des choses.

On a besoin de briser le silence. Quand tu regardes la réalité aussi sombre que douloureuse que malheureuse, la violence entre les partenaires intimes—en français, on dit souvent la violence conjugale. Ce fléau ne connaît pas de frontière, ni de frontière géographique que de frontières linguistiques. C'est à travers toutes les cultures, c'est à travers toutes les classes sociales, tous les âges, toutes les orientations sexuelles—ça ne fait pas de différence. C'est un problème de santé publique majeur. C'est reconnu par l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé.

Cela affecte des millions de vies, principalement des femmes. Au-delà des statistiques—on dit que près d'un tiers des femmes ayant eu des relations en couple signale avoir subi une forme de violence physique ou sexuelle de la part de leur partenaire intime au cours de leur vie. Ce sont des destins brisés, des familles déchirées, des vies vécues dans la peur, l'insécurité, qui se cache en arrière de chacun de ces chiffres-là. Les personnes—c'était surtout des femmes—qui sont venues témoigner devant le comité s'attendent à plus que ça. On s'attend à ce que le processus qui est là depuis plus de 100 ans soit là pour un sujet qui est tellement important.

Vous allez vous souvenir quand ma collègue présentait sa motion pour déclarer la violence intime une épidémie, les galeries étaient pleines. Elles étaient pleines surtout de femmes et de leurs alliés qui l'avaient vécu, qui étaient là pour dire au gouvernement : « On vit dans une démocratie, vous devez nous écouter, vous devez faire quelque chose. » Même avec tout le stigma qu'il y a autour de la violence conjugale, elles sont venues. Elles ont demandé au gouvernement de déclarer la violence conjugale une épidémie, et ils ont refusé de le faire.

On a eu le comité qui a fait du bon travail, qui a voyagé, qui a écouté, qui a mis en place la fondation pour faire des recommandations que tous les partis seraient capables d'appuyer, sur lesquelles tous les partis s'entendent.

Parce qu'on sait tous que la violence conjugale, c'est une réalité. C'est une réalité qui tombe sur les épaules des députées provinciales de faire quelque chose.

Et là qu'on est si proche de la fin, madame la Présidente—on est proche de la fin. Ils ont écouté. L'équipe de recherche, l'équipe de Hansard ont fait leur travail. Et là on nous dit : « Non, on va ignorer tout ça. On va prendre un rapport qui a été écrit par une députée »—qui veut faire un changement, je n'en doute absolument pas; une députée qui a mis beaucoup de temps, d'effort et d'énergie pour écrire quelque chose. Mais ce n'est pas comme ça que ça se passe, madame, dans l'Assemblée législative.

À l'Assemblée législative, ce sont des gens pour qui c'est leur travail—qui ont écouté tout ça—qui font une première ébauche, qui s'assurent que tous les points de

vue—il y en a qui sont acceptables; il y en a qui sont plus difficiles à accepter, dépendamment d'où est-ce que vous êtes sur l'échiquier politique. Les chercheurs, eux, ne s'occupent pas de la politique. Ils s'occupent des faits. Qu'est-ce qu'a été dit par qui, tout ça va être dans leur rapport. Et après ça, on donne la chance aux députés de s'entendre sur les recommandations principales qu'on veut que l'Assemblée législative passe.

Pourquoi avoir changé ce processus-là, je ne le comprends pas. Si vous voulez notre appui à ça, vous devez nous expliquer pourquoi. Ce n'est pas comme ça qu'on fait les choses. Tu ne peux pas assumer qu'une députée du Parti conservateur va regarder les faits de la même façon que les gens qui font de la recherche pour l'Assemblée législative. Ici, tout est toujours un peu biaisé ou teinté par les partis politiques. Moi, je vois les choses au travers de ce que je comprends, de mes valeurs. Les gens des autres partis politiques voient les choses au travers de leurs valeurs. Puis ça, c'est bien correct. C'est ça que c'est, une démocratie. Mais, c'est pour cela qu'on a des gens qui font partie des comités pour qui c'est leur travail d'écrire les recommandations, d'écrire ce que s'est passé. Après ça, on fait notre travail de faire des recommandations.

Je vois que le temps file.

The idea that we would go away from the way to write reports that has been used for the last hundred years in here has not been explained to any of us.

I do not doubt the good intentions of the member who put in the work.

We have to have independent researchers, who do not put political values on what has been said and what has been recommended, put the first committee report together, and then have the members of the committee decide on what recommendations they want to put forward.

What has been suggested has never been done before and is not acceptable.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I really think it's unfortunate that we are still here today to discuss the merit of bringing the report back to committee. I really hope that we can come to the decision and realize the importance of bringing the report back, to complete a process that needs to keep going. We need to continue to work on this issue because intimate partner violence and violence against women—it really does touch every single community, every background, every generation, and it does not discriminate by income, by geography, by political affiliation. It is a reality that far too many women and girls in Ontario still live today. All of us know someone who has been impacted by violence. We heard stories just yesterday of people who have been touched by a person whose life has been taken, who's lost to intimate partner violence.

0950

I've seen the courage it takes to leave. I've seen that courage in women I've worked with—the fear of the unknown, and the strength it takes to start again. I've seen

the faces of survivors, and I've seen the faces of those we've lost too soon.

Madam Speaker, from the very beginning our intention was clear: It was to study the issues of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence at committee. It was to listen to experts and survivors and front-line workers, to produce a report that reflects the scale and the urgency of the crisis. That work has to be done, and it has to be completed.

Let me just remind everybody: The bill that was moved by the member from Windsor West was one sentence. It was to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. That's it. What else? Why would we move something so monumental without having the work done behind it, without listening to the professionals and the people who have been victims and survivors, without having their voice woven into the report, into something that we can take back to help strengthen Ontario-STANDS, which is Ontario's strategy? We need to make sure that if we're going to move something so monumental that we have the voices of those impacted incorporated.

I do remember the member from Toronto Centre, yesterday, in her speech, saying, "Why don't we just move the bill? Why don't we just do this gesture for the community?" To us, this isn't a gesture; this is work that people have invested their careers and their lives in. They've held the hands of those whose have lost loved ones, who have been terrified on their doorstep, while police lights are flashing outside, trying to de-escalate a situation. These are people who have done this work. They have been saying for decades that this is serious and we need a strategy, something to move forward with. So, to me, moving a bill that's one sentence isn't enough. That is why, after all of the hours that were put in, all of the work that was done by the members at committee—we heard that this has been such a deep-rooted issue, that violence against women is endemic in our society. The people who have done this work deserve that time. They deserve that we are going to put in the time to address the issue responsibly, with care and, again, to strengthen our strategy—because we did release a strategy in 2023, in December. We did commit \$1.4 billion to that strategy. And that strategy did have the voices of those who are in the sector. They contributed to that strategy. That's why we were very confident in putting this forward.

I want to make sure that we honour the voices that participated in committee. That's what this is about—finishing the process that we started.

As we stand here in November—it's Woman Abuse Prevention Month—our government is ready with the report and a plan. We're ready to do the work. But right now, instead of doing the work and getting this going, we are here debating on whether we should come back and go back to committee.

Madam Speaker, I listened to what the member from Kanata-Carleton said yesterday about trust and having trust in government. That is so important, because if you don't have trust in government and trust in the people who won a majority, who've been chosen by the people of

Ontario to lead this province forward—when you start to erode that trust and put out information that isn't factual, you are really limiting the ability for people in our province to access the resources that our government is investing in. People aren't going to trust that programs that we've invested in are available to them. That is so harmful. To me, that is harmful to the women who are stuck in these abusive relationships, who need the resources to get out—those women who are listening to a narrative saying that our government doesn't believe in and doesn't want to invest in your programs.

I was really shocked to see a news release come out from the member from Windsor West saying, "The Ontario NDP continue to stand with victims, survivors, front-line workers, and advocates in demanding that the Ford government declare intimate partner violence an epidemic, and make real investments in prevention, shelter spaces, and survivor supports."

What did we talk about yesterday? The \$1.4 billion we invested in Ontario-STANDS. We had just announced on Monday \$27 million for 300 shelter spaces. We've invested millions to help women rebuild their lives and get training, supports and access to opportunities, so that they do not have to choose between staying in an abusive relationship or being on their own in putting food on their table and taking care of their kids.

If you keep pushing this message that our government does not care about women and our government does not care about the safety of women, you are reducing the opportunity for the women out there who need our help to access the help. That means you are actually a part of the problem, a problem that so many people who participated in committee have been talking about for decades—so many people who participated in committee, who shared their stories and their voices to say, "This is serious. This issue of violence is so deep-rooted that we need to make sure that we're moving forward and addressing the endemic that is violence against women."

I hope that we take a sober moment to really think about what our actions are doing.

I've worked with women who were—again, I've said it many times: almost 20 years. That was my career before I came into politics.

The member from Kitchener-Hespeler was a judge. She put people away who were abusive to others—

Hon. Laurie Scott: Crown attorney.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: She was a crown attorney. That's huge. She has seen first-hand the result of not providing investments and supporting the development of youth and children. She has seen first-hand what that leads to, just like I have. I've seen what happens to families when we don't provide them with the supports.

We know that in order to have a strong economy, we need all hands on deck. We need every person in our province to have the opportunities to be able to earn an income. It's the only way we're going to build the hospitals. The only way we're going to build the roads and all the things that we need is if we have a healthy society.

The member from Toronto Centre, who worked with the member from Kitchener–Hespeler—they’re lawyers. They’ve done this work. They’re smart individuals. They helped create the process that we agreed to, to review and listen to the voices of those who have been doing this work for decades. They agreed to that process, and we were following it.

I know the members of the NDP and the Liberals have experience as well. They have careers that are informing their decision-making—just like many of us who are Progressive Conservatives are lawyers, doctors, health practitioners, nurses, businessmen and businesswomen. We all are here because we’ve lived a life and we know we have something to contribute to our province.

We have to be so careful with what kind of information we’re putting out there—to say that we’re not making real investments, to keep pushing and saying that this government doesn’t care about the most vulnerable. What? What? That is so incredibly hurtful—hurtful to our society, hurtful to the people who rely on us to have their best interests at the core of every decision we make.

1000

I didn’t get involved in government to sit here, chill out, relax, and earn a paycheque—absolutely not. I got involved for the same reasons that the members opposite got involved: to make change; to do good work; to make sure that people have opportunities, have food on their tables, can take care of their kids, live a life that is free from violence. That is the reason why we all are here—to grow a strong province, to fight for our economy, to protect Ontario. That’s why we’re here.

So please be careful with the messages you’re putting out to your followers, your supporters. Please stop being a part of the problem that we are all here trying to solve. We owe that to every resident who lives in our province, every resident we represent.

When a person comes into your office saying, “I’m really struggling, and I need to get out of this home,” what are you saying to them? Are you saying, “Do you know what? There’s a program that is close by, through this Achēv or”—I’m going to talk about my neighbourhood, because I’m in Brampton Centre. “There’s a program at Achēv that the government just increased funding to. Let’s see if we can get you access to that program.” Are you saying that? Or are you saying, “Well, if the government had just invested, then maybe you wouldn’t be in this position”—because I guarantee you, I’ve heard people say that’s the message they’ve been told. I’ve heard people say, “Well, I was told that you guys aren’t doing anything. That’s why I didn’t know I could come to your office and find out information about housing and supports.” And I say, “No. Millions of dollars have been invested in your health care system. Millions of dollars have been invested in your education system, in the social service sector.”

I have organizations coming to me and saying, “Thank you for hearing us. Thank you for investing in our programs—programs that we haven’t had funded for many years.”

We all have stakeholders. We all have a duty to support our stakeholders and make sure that they’re getting the resources necessary. So I always encourage people—“If you are experiencing a challenge, come see me. We’re here, as civil servants. We’re here to help.”

I want to just go over some of the things we’ve done, because I want to make sure people who may be listening understand that we are making real investments. We are making real investments every day, like the \$27 million that we’ve put into 300 shelter beds—300. That’s the gap that was created over years. We need to close the gap. And then we invested more—300 shelter beds, so, hopefully, when women call and say, “I need to get out of this abusive home,” when they call and get 211, which is something we’ve also funded and expanded, they’ll be able to get access to a shelter bed immediately.

We also made sure that we expanded the Assaulted Women’s Helpline. We funded that; expanded it. I always say it—1-866-863-0511. Call that number—somebody will answer—to get connected to supports in your area.

We also funded a program with the police and social work—a program that was a pilot, but now we’ve made it permanent—where a social worker rides along on domestic violence or intimate partner violence calls, so that the police officer has the support of a social worker who is an expert in that field. We funded that. We’ve seen an increase in calls because people are now knowing who to call and where to call. That’s important.

We’re also seeing a decrease in the amount of serious violent acts. We’ve seen femicides in Peel drop from 2022 to 2025, to two. Two is way too many, because those have been extremely traumatic. But that’s why we are always pushing the phone numbers for people to call—so we can save more lives.

Also, holding offenders accountable—the changes we’ve made in our judicial system to make sure criminal court communicates with Family Court; also, the work that was done by the member from Oakville North–Burlington on Keira’s Law. We’re making some changes, and this is how you address the endemic that is violence against women—significant changes.

When we talk about holding offenders accountable; when we talk about bail reform, making sure our justice system is strong in keeping those abusive people in jail—we are making sure that we are getting this done, because we need to hold offenders accountable.

We funded, through victim services, the bail notification system, so that women who have a partner who is in jail or held on bail because of a violent act, abuse, are notified when the individual is getting let out, so that they can enact their safety plan.

If you don’t talk about and share this information with every woman who needs it, you are part of the problem. When news channels don’t broadcast the Assaulted Women’s Helpline after reporting on a femicide, you’re part of the problem. You need to get the information out.

What else have we funded? We’ve increased, actually, the base funding for organizations that serve women by 5%. We did that after we signed the National Action Plan

In 2022, my motion, Keira's Law, calling for mandatory education and training for judges and justices of the peace on IPV and coercive control, was unanimously passed by this House. It later became law when the Attorney General included it in Bill 102, the Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act.

More progress was made with Clare's Law, allowing individuals to seek disclosure from police about a partner's history of abuse.

And this week, an additional \$26.7 million was announced for shelter spaces and to strengthen the Family Court Support Worker Program.

It's progress, but more can be done.

In Ottawa, a bill was just introduced demanding changes to the Criminal Code to make the killing of an intimate partner automatically first-degree murder. I hope all federal parties move quickly to pass this law.

To survivors across Ontario: We see you, we support you, and we are committed to building a safer province.

Together, through compassion and action, we can turn hope into lasting change, one step at a time.

TREATIES RECOGNITION WEEK

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: This week is Treaties Recognition Week in Ontario. We know that Treaty 9 is here, actually, in the Lieutenant Governor's suite this week, where school groups have been able to learn about the shared history. Meegwetch to Sean Smith and his team from Archives of Ontario for their work in sharing the treaty.

The treaty being here reminds us that treaties are not simple, one-time transactions; they are living documents.

First Nations people see treaties as sacred agreements, establishing a relationship of mutual benefit—living together in peace and prosperity for everyone.

Speaker, chiefs across Treaty 9 territory met this week, and they are sending a clear message to Ontario and Canada: The government will not build Canada and Ontario on the backs of our communities. They will not reap profits off our lands while leaving our people without access to clean water, safe housing, or proper health care.

I want to quote Chief Sheri Taylor from Ginoogaming: "Canada cannot write its own future based on the erosion of our rights and our lands. We are constantly in states of emergencies and crisis, while the government is taking out television ads planning how they will profit off our lands."

This is not the promise of the treaties. Meegwetch.

GARRY POND

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: A year ago, I shared with you the story of a hero of mine: Roly Armitage, a World War II veteran and D-Day survivor, who passed away last year at 99 years old.

I rise today to speak to you about another hero of mine. Garry Pond served his country his entire adult life: first, as a member of the Canadian Forces, but then when he retired, he continued to serve by assuming leadership roles in the Royal Canadian Legion, reaching the position of president of the Ontario Command and vice-president of the Dominion Command—in other words, vice-president of the Canada-wide operation. He wanted the Legion to rededicate itself to the service of veterans and their families.

Garry passed away at the young age of 73 earlier this year, leaving behind his wife, Linda; grandchildren Parker

and Paislee; and a daughter, Rhonda, who I am so proud to have as my constituency office manager.

Linda, Rhonda, Parker, Paislee, thank you for sharing Garry with us all. You made sacrifices so Garry could serve.

The world needs heroes, and Garry Pond was one of them. I will always be grateful for his example of service and leadership. May he never be forgotten.

Lest we forget.

1020

EVENTS IN SCARBOROUGH— AGINCOURT

Mr. Aris Babikian: While the House was in its summer recess, I had a very busy season back in my constituency. I had the privilege of attending over 365 events, meetings and announcements in my riding. I also had the pleasure of hosting two community barbecues, each welcoming more than 1,000 residents.

One of the key announcements I attended was the groundbreaking of the Scarborough Centre station, the first of three new stations on the Scarborough subway extension. This marks a significant milestone in our government's commitment to build the Scarborough subway extension.

I also had the honour of welcoming the Minister of Long-Term Care to Mon Sheong Court in my riding, where we announced that we are increasing annual funding to a record \$1.92 billion to support the significant increase in staffing in the province's long-term-care homes over the past four years. Mon Sheong also recently opened a traditional Chinese medicine clinic to better serve residents in Scarborough.

Additionally, I was pleased to join my colleagues at Carefirst's annual AGM, where we announced over \$4.5 million as part of our government's primary care action plan.

Madam Speaker, it was truly a wonderful summer. I had the opportunity to continue working hard on the priorities—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members' statements?

THEY WALKED THESE STREETS

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Speaker, in a world once again treading at the edge of conflict, where divisive voices grow louder, remembering is an act of resistance.

In the halls of Humberside Collegiate is a plaque where I trace my fingers and I find Stewart Foster, a great-uncle I never met, who died in World War I, leaving an ache in the heart of my great-grandmother.

Today, stories like his live on through They Walked These Streets, a remarkable project started by Katy Whitfield and Ian Da Silva. Using military records, photographs and archives, they've restored the names and faces of our local soldiers, tying them to specific homes, streets, churches, schools right in our neighbourhood. Together with the veterans of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 344,

Maple Leaf/Swansea Branch 266/46, and Swansea Town Hall, this initiative reminds us that the call after all the wars was “never again.”

Speaker, I wish my grandfathers from World War II were still alive today, because they would remind us that peace is never permanent; it must be upheld with every decision we make.

This year, I want to thank all those participating: Runnymede United, St. Olave's Anglican, Annette library, St. Paul's, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Humbercrest United, Swansea Town Hall, Runnymede Presbyterian, Morningside-High Park Presbyterian, Dundas Roncesvalles Peace Garden.

May we always remember and never again forget.

PEEL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: In March, we broke ground on the early works for the new Peel Memorial Hospital in Brampton—a major step forward in delivering a second full-service hospital.

Speaker, this project is moving full speed ahead. A new development agreement is now in place to guide the next phase, finalizing the design, schedule, and construction planning. Each milestone brings us closer to bringing this new hospital to life.

When it's complete, the new Peel Memorial Hospital will add 350 beds, a 24/7 emergency department, modern operating rooms, and expanded mental health, rehabilitation and family care services. This means shorter wait times and better access to emergency care and world-class health services right here in our great city of Brampton.

This new hospital will relieve pressure on Brampton Civic, reduce wait times, create hundreds of new health care jobs, ensuring Brampton residents have access to care when they need it and close to home.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government is delivering the critical infrastructure Ontario families depend on. That includes hospitals, highways, housing, and so much more. Brampton is front and centre in that plan.

The expansion of Peel Memorial Hospital is building a healthier and stronger Brampton.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Chris Glover: I was delivering meals to people in encampments last week, and I came across two men. They'd been homeless for two years, and they're working with Streets to Homes. They would actually like to get jobs, but you can't get a job if you don't have an address to put on a job application. They're afraid, as the weather gets colder, that they're not even going to get a shelter space; that they're going to have to spend another winter riding back and forth on the subway.

They are just two of the thousands of people who are homeless in this province.

This Conservative government inherited a crisis, with 50,000 people homeless from the former Liberal govern-

ment—they've turned it into 80,000 homeless. There are 1,400 encampments across the province.

Under this government, rents have gone up by 40%. The cost of buying a house has gone up by 40%. Some 50,000 people leave this province each year, largely because they can never afford to buy a home or even rent a home in this province.

The Conservatives have donated a billion dollars to developers, but the developers aren't able to build housing. So this government, in spite of that billion-dollar donation, has the second-worst record of housing starts of any province in the country.

On the other hand, Olivia Chow has cut ribbons on 1,300 units of affording housing last month and another 1,300 units of rental housing—and they're doing this by exchanging city parking lots for affordable housing.

We in the NDP asked this government to do the same thing—the same thing that John Robarts, a former Conservative Premier had done—and they called it a communist plot.

Will this government please—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member from Richmond Hill.

PLANNING FOR YOUR SILVER YEARS AWARENESS WEEK

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Last Friday, I held a press conference in my riding of Richmond Hill, alongside city councillors, stakeholders and local media, to formally announce the first annual Planning for Your Silver Years Awareness Week, declared through my private member's bill which received royal assent on December 19, 2024.

Every Ontarian deserves to carefully consider their future living arrangements, caregiver options, and financial security. Yet too often, we have trouble having these difficult conversations with our loved ones.

Many residents in my riding of Richmond Hill only discuss their future goals and needs in times of crisis, such as after a medical emergency or hospital admission.

It is my hope that Planning for Your Silver Years Awareness Week will encourage meaningful conversation amongst family members across Ontario. Creating a comprehensive, personal road map with proper time and support means we can help support Ontarians through every stage of their life. With planning, we can encourage everyone to enjoy their silver years with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

MARK WOODFIELD

Ms. Jess Dixon: I rise today to honour the life and the death of Coach Mark Woodfield, a man whose quiet strength, humour and generosity helped define the spirit of community in Cambridge.

Coach Mark was known to so many through his years of coaching with the Cambridge Ice Hounds and the Buddy League—programs that made hockey and baseball accessible to players of all abilities. Through both, he

created spaces where everyone could belong, compete and be celebrated for exactly who they were. His encouragement and patience helped countless athletes discover confidence, teamwork and joy.

Even while facing a diagnosis that would have tested anyone's resolve, Coach Mark continued to show up for others. He spent his time, up until literally the last, doing what he loved: connecting, supporting and cheering people on, always with an easy smile and infectious energy that made everyone around him feel welcome.

Mark leaves behind a lasting legacy in his children, Chloe, Liam and Mick, and in the generations of young athletes whose lives he touched.

On behalf of the Legislature and the community of Cambridge, I extend sincere condolences to his family and his friends, his beloved athletes, and to everyone in the Ice Hounds and the Buddy League communities.

Coach Mark's kindness, strength and love of life will never be forgotten.

1030

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(h), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required. Therefore, the House shall commence at 9 a.m. on Monday, November 17, 2025, for the proceeding orders of the day.

I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(g), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required. Therefore, the afternoon routine on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, shall commence at 1 p.m.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Brantford—Brant on a point of order.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Speaker. I would just like to make mention to the House that it is the birthday of the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement.

Applause.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I'd like to welcome a good friend from Oxford: Michellene Beauchamp, with her son Eli; her daughter Eleanor; and her sister Keescha Wherry.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It's my pleasure to welcome the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario to Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Jamie West: I want to recognize, from the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, president-elect Kevin

Zizzo. I just learned this morning that we were both camp counsellors at Camp Brébeuf in Rockwood.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I'd also like to welcome the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, including the CEO, Dr. Michelle Acorn; the president, Marie Greer-King; the past president, Barbara Bailey; and all of them who are here today. Welcome.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I too would like to welcome the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario for being here today, with a special shout-out to Jodi Colwill, who is a nurse practitioner on the Guelph Wellington Ontario Health Team. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to wish a warm welcome to Garry Rossi, the president and CEO of ENWIN Utilities and the chair of the board of governors at St. Clair College. Welcome.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the privilege of welcoming today to the Legislature an excellent councillor from the beautiful township of West Lincoln: Bill Reilly. Welcome to the people's House.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to wish a warm welcome to Dr. Michelle Acorn—she's the CEO of the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario—and all of the nurse practitioners with us today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Today in the gallery we have Janice Jim, our absolutely amazing social media wizard, and her family visiting from New York: Charles, Shirley and Erica.

Welcome. It's lovely to see you.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I too would like to welcome Barbara Bailey, Sarah Schmidt and Charlene Welsh, also with the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you for an incredible meeting this morning.

Mr. David Smith: I'd like to recognize Alice Wu, who is our page captain from Scarborough Centre. Today she's serving in the House as the team captain.

Hon. Mike Harris: It's always a pleasure to welcome, via the television, Barbra Stevens today.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I'm honoured to introduce the following veterans' organizations: Coding for Veterans, ANAVETS, Commissionaires Great Lakes, Treble Victor, True Patriot Love Foundation, Wounded Warriors, and the Royal Canadian Military Institute.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Madam Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for two minutes to be allotted to the independent members as a group to respond to Minister Bethlenfalvy's fall economic statement during ministerial statements today.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Mr. Clark is seeking unanimous consent for two minutes to be allotted to the independent members as a group to respond to Minister

Bethlenfalvy's fall economic statement during ministerial statements today. Agreed? Agreed.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Steve Clark: If you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in recognition of Remembrance Day, with five minutes allotted to the government, five minutes allotted to the official opposition, five minutes allotted to the third party, and two minutes allotted to the independent members as a group, followed by a moment of silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in recognition of Remembrance Day, with five minutes allotted to the government, five minutes allotted to the official opposition, five minutes allotted to the third party, and two minutes allotted to the independent members as a group, followed by a moment of silence. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: I'm honoured to rise in this House, as Premier of Ontario, during Remembrance Week and share my gratitude to those who serve and have served in Canada's military, including one of our great colleagues across the aisle and including the many veterans' organizations represented here today in the gallery.

November 11 is a day when our nation comes together to express our collective appreciation to all the courageous men and women in uniform who gave their all to defend the values and freedoms we hold so dear.

This November 11, as we observe a moment of silence, I urge the people of Ontario to reflect on the bravery of our Canadian Armed Forces—these exceptional men and women who left the comforts of home and family to put their lives on the line to protect their country and answer the call in the hour of need.

At the same time, we think of the families and loved ones of those brave soldiers and the sacrifices they also made to serve their country.

I want to take a moment to mourn the more than 120,000 brave soldiers throughout our history who made the ultimate sacrifice defending our country. Their selfless courage has helped not only to define Canada but to shape our history and safeguard our future. We will always honour their memory.

This year marked 80 years since the end of World War II, when more than one million men and women returned home from military duty and began to rebuild their lives here in Ontario and across Canada.

The actions of our troops in the Second World War aren't just remembered here, but in the rows upon rows of graves across the battlefronts of the war. We can see nations like the Netherlands where soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice in defence of freedom and where our veterans and flag will always be welcomed with open arms.

Canadian soldiers have shown time and time again that they will never shy away from defending the principles that make Canada the best country in the world. Through two world wars, conflicts in South Africa, the Korean peninsula, the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan, Canadians answered the call of duty to stand with our friends and allies through thick and thin.

I also want to call special attention to National Indigenous Veterans Day, which is marked on November 8. It's a chance to honour the First Nations, Inuit and Métis service people who overcame obstacles to serve our country with bravery and dignity, and I thank them.

Most of us will never be able to imagine the sacrifices that veterans willingly make every day. It falls on us to make sure they know the people of Ontario will always stand with them.

So I encourage everyone to wear a poppy in honour of our soldiers, and, as wreaths are laid and we observe a moment of silence this November 11, to remember the individual acts of courage and bravery that these powerful symbols represent—to thank our veterans for the gift of freedom and security they have granted us, and to show our respect for the active service members who safeguard that gift every day.

1040

To every veteran, service person and military family in our province: We thank you. Ontario is proud of you. Canada is proud of you.

May God bless the men and women in uniform.

Lest we forget.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It's always an honour to rise on behalf of the official opposition as we approach Remembrance Day—a time to pause, a time to reflect, and a time to remember.

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, Canada will stop. For one sacred moment, the noise of our lives fades away, and in that stillness, we remember. We remember the brave. We remember the fallen. We remember those who stood between tyranny and freedom and chose freedom.

For me, this day carries a deeply personal meaning, as well as for other members in this House. Both of my grandfathers served in the Royal Canadian Air Force—ordinary men who answered an extraordinary call. They came home changed—quieter, humbler, yet proud to have served something greater than themselves.

That legacy continues in my family. My son, Petty Officer First Class Jonathan Lindal, proudly serves in the Royal Canadian Navy. As a mother, I carry mixed pride and worry that every parent of a service member feels. Their service reminds me daily that freedom is never free.

Across this country, from small towns to big cities, Canadians will gather at cenotaphs, schools and Legions to honour those who have given their lives so that we may live in peace and dignity. Each poppy worn is a reminder of personal connections, family legacies, and the sacrifices that built our nation.

We must also remember the First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who defended this land long before Canada was a country. From the Six Nations Confederacy at the Battle of Queenston Heights to Indigenous soldiers in both world wars and modern-day missions, their courage has shaped our history. Too often, their sacrifices have gone unrecognized.

Today, we say clearly: We see you, we thank you, and we will remember you.

Speaker, Canada's story is written in courage. At Vimy Ridge, Canadians achieved what others said was totally impossible. At Dieppe, they suffered loss that paved the way for victory. And at Juno Beach, they helped free a continent. In missions since—in Korea, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and peacekeeping around the world—Canadians have stood for compassion, justice and duty.

More than 118,000 Canadians have given their lives for this country. Countless others returned home, carrying wounds, both seen and unseen. We owe them more than words. We owe them understanding, care and action.

Speaker, we have right here in Ontario the oldest living Second World War veteran. I want to take a moment to thank Burd Sisler from Fort Erie, a Second World War veteran.

Thank you for your service.

Applause.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you.

Today's veterans are not just the faces of history; they are our neighbours, co-workers, friends and family. They are women and men balancing family and service. They are young. They are Indigenous. They are newcomers. They are the living guardians of our freedom, and their courage continues today.

Speaker, I want to acknowledge my colleague the member from Kanata–Carleton for her 31 years of military service—a trailblazer who broke barriers and led with courage.

Applause.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you.

Your example reminds us that service knows no boundaries of gender, background or generation.

Across Ontario, children will stand in silence this week for two quiet minutes in school. May they not simply pause but understand. May they know that remembrance is not about the past alone, but about the freedom they live in today. May they understand the weight of sacrifice, the value of peace, and the importance of honouring those who gave everything.

And when the bugle fades and the only sound is wind through the wreaths—lest we forget. Those three words carry the weight of generations. They are not just a reminder to remember; they are a promise—a promise to care for our veterans, to support their families, and to never take for granted the peace they secure for us. Freedom is not ours by right. It is ours by gift—a gift paid for by those who gave everything.

So this November 11, let us stand not as government or opposition, but as Canadians—stand grateful, humble and united. Let us honour the courage of those who served, the

wisdom of those who continue to serve, and those responsibilities we all share to protect freedom and dignity for generations to come.

Lest we forget. We will remember them.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Kanata–Carleton.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: In my life, I have had the tremendous privilege of serving the people of Canada and now the people of Ontario. It is a privilege and a responsibility that none of us should ever take for granted. And it is so important that none of us ever forget the sacrifices that were made that allow us to live the kind of lives we live today—lives based on democracy and freedom instead of authoritarian subservience.

In World War I, approximately 61,000 Canadian soldiers lost their lives, and 172,000 were wounded—such an enormous cost for a young nation.

In World War II, 45,000 Canadian soldiers lost their lives, and 54,000 were wounded.

In Afghanistan, 158 Canadian soldiers and seven civilians lost their lives.

The numbers, as striking as they are, can never tell the whole story about the lives that were lost, the lives that were shattered and the families and communities who were devastated. This is a debt we must work hard every day to repay.

Today, there are approximately 86,000 men and women who serve as regular and reserve force members of the Canadian Armed Forces. But I have always believed that when a member serves, so does the family—families who pack up and move and leave the familiar behind in order to support the ones that they love. Deployments, long absences, training—it's all part of the military family way of life.

Although at this time of year we make a special effort to thank the men and women in uniform, I think we should hold them in our hearts throughout the entire year and always remember to thank their families for their sacrifices so that their loved ones can serve our country.

1050

Speaker, throughout my lifetime, the struggles for democracy and freedom have always been in faraway lands—in Europe, in Asia, in Africa. But now the threat is manifesting itself much closer to home. As I previously said, Canadians who fought and died in conflicts were fighting to protect our freedoms, safeguard our rule of law, on the basic premise that everyone be treated equally and fairly. This freedom must be protected today, and it falls on all of us, the inheritors of this freedom, to defend the gifts that we have been given. We must never forget their sacrifice, but we must never forget what it was that made their sacrifices necessary.

History has shown us that threats to democracy and freedom begin when democratic processes and institutions are usurped and replaced with an authoritarian political system. They initially hide their authoritarian nature behind a veneer of legality, using the democratic system to make

the illegal legal and make things that were once outrageous seem normal.

We simply can't let authoritarianism creep in anywhere. We need strong democratic processes and institutions, an empowered and independent press, and all levels of government that serve the truth and that serve the people, not just corporate interests and the wealthiest among us. All must be defended, fought for and protected over and over again. If we truly honour the Canadians who fought and died for us and those who continue to serve us today, we must do everything we can to stand up against the abuse or degradation of our democratic systems.

I hope that if ever the time comes, if ever we are needed to stand up and fight for our freedom, our rights, our government based on the rule of law, that we have the courage and fortitude to follow the example of thousands of these proud Canadian veterans and earn the freedom they bequeathed to us. We must never forget their sacrifice, and we must never forget why that sacrifice became necessary. We owe them that much.

Lest we forget.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I'm honoured to rise today to pay tribute to our veterans, the first responders and their families who have sacrificed so much to defend democracy and keep us safe here in Canada and around the world.

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, we gather to remember the moment when the guns fell silent and to honour those who selflessly served our country.

In my riding, I was honoured to be part of a Remembrance Day celebration honouring Sikh soldiers. Many soldiers were injured and died for a nation that discriminated against them, all to pursue a future that is fair and equitable—a future that many of us take for granted.

Today, in honour of the first Sikh soldier who fought and died for Canada, Corporal Buckam Singh, I call on all of us to show respect to every human, no matter their race, creed, gender, ability or identity, so we may have a free and fair Canada.

Let us fight to uphold the principles of democracy, truth and human rights for all—in honour of their lives and sacrifice.

Lest we forget.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Remembrance Day is more than a moment of silence, more than poppies pinned to our lapels. It is a solemn promise—a collective act of gratitude and reflection.

To truly remember is to honour not just the fallen, but the lives they lived, the sacrifices they made and the freedoms they preserved.

Imagine the quiet moments on porches, on train platforms, in kitchens and in fields, when mothers, fathers, sisters and sweethearts stood tall and brave, even as their hearts broke. They folded letters into trembling hands,

packed rations and rosaries, and watched their sons, brothers and husbands disappear down the road.

To remember means carrying forward the stories of courage, of ordinary people who did extraordinary things in the face of unimaginable hardship. It means recognizing that the peace we enjoy today was hard won, and that it comes with a responsibility to be kind, to seek understanding, and to stand up for what is right. It also means looking around at our communities—at veterans, their families, and those who continue to serve—and saying with our actions as well as with our words, “We see you. We thank you. We will remember.”

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I would ask that you remain standing for a moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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

Before we move on to question period, I'd like to remind all members that phones must not be placed on or inside your desks when you are speaking, as the vibrations do interfere with the chamber's audio system. Please remove your phones from your desks before you are recognized to speak.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the Premier.

Let's recap where we are at with this government. Since we've been back at Queen's Park over the last few weeks, here's what we have learned: The government has handed over \$100 million that was flowed to clients of the Premier's campaign manager, Kory Teneycke—the same guy who is apparently actually running this government; \$17 million to clients of the Premier's favourite former staff person, Amin Massoudi; \$10 million to the government's favourite nightclub owner, Zlatko Starkovski, in a fiasco that is now being called “strippergate.”

How many more insiders are we going to see cashing in on the government's decisions in this next fall economic statement?

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

Hon. David Piccini: This government, this Premier, will continue to stand up to support the workers of this province.

We have an opportunity coming up, with the fall economic statement, to double down on the work we're doing through the protecting Ontario fund, to continue working with our tariff-impacted communities.

This Premier and our government will continue to support men and women in construction, men and women in the hospitality sector whom we've supported—hit hard by the pandemic. We'll continue to do that—to protect their jobs, to stand up for the work that they do each and every day, creating opportunities through creating a low-

tax environment, creating opportunities through building historic infrastructure that you will see enshrined in the fall economic statement. That's going to create rewarding opportunities for men and women to earn a better job with a bigger paycheque. We'll keep supporting them, keep investing in their training, and we will never turn our backs on them.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: We've got "strippergate," and boy, the emperor has got no clothes.

I imagine that none of the members opposite actually imagined themselves having to get up and answer questions about something like this. They didn't imagine themselves having to go back into their communities and explain why their government is giving money to companies like this.

The government plans are not working for the people of Ontario. That is a fact. It might be working for their friends, for insiders, but it is certainly not working for families who are struggling right now just to pay the bills, struggling to pay for groceries.

When is this Premier going to fire this minister and focus on Ontario's workers?

Hon. David Piccini: Let's talk about the facts. That is incorrect, and the articles have acknowledged that that is incorrect.

We know that this fund has strong accountability metrics built within: strict financial controls, monthly reporting, and on-site monitoring. Officials have done that.

In this hospitality support program, we're talking about employers, some of the largest venues in Toronto that host things like the multi-partisan CJPAC—or, this evening, the True Patriot Love Foundation. We value the men and women who work at the front of house, who work at the back of house of these venues. Hit hard during the pandemic, restaurants were shuttered. We'll continue to support their training, especially with programs through rounds two and four that met their KPIs, exceeded their KPIs, and received support from officials who've assessed them with monthly monitoring. We'll continue to support those workers.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Wow. Dig deeper, Minister—dig deeper.

I've got to tell you, there is no answer from the Premier to this because the rot starts at the top. That is the truth.

The government can brag about their record all they want to, but they should try telling that to the almost 800,000 people in Ontario who are currently out of work and looking for jobs.

This morning, I started my day at a food bank, talking to people who are waiting in line. I want to tell you that the people who are using food banks in this province these days, under this Premier's watch, are folks like the retired engineer I spoke with, nurses, seniors, young families, young working people.

There are a record number of people who are using food banks today in the province of Ontario under this govern-

ment. And let me tell you, these Ontarians cannot afford to pay to play.

What do these folks need to do to get the attention of your government?

Hon. David Piccini: I appreciate that the member opposite started her day doing that.

I started my day, as well, speaking with men and women in our building trade sectors—the employer bargaining agents that landed historic agreements in our industrial and commercial sector that avoided labour disruption, who are grateful that this Premier has stood up to protect their job sites, for progressive measures to ensure properly fitting personal protective equipment, progressive measures to bring defibrillators on job sites, progressive measures to train their members. Organized labour has supported this Premier because he's putting their men and women to work. When I spoke to them this morning, they were grateful for a fall economic statement that's going to invest in highways, roads and bridges, that's going to invest in hospitals, that's going to put their men and women to work.

That's why organized labour supports this Premier, supports this government—because we'll keep their members working.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Marit Stiles: Nurses going to food banks is nothing to be proud of.

I want to talk numbers, because yesterday the Premier called me a liar for sharing some numbers. I understand why he's feeling a little touchy and a little worked up. I would feel a little insecure too if I was responsible for a crisis of this scale.

Let's talk some facts: This government has led to the highest unemployment rate we have faced in decades. In September alone, we lost 12,500 retail jobs, 7,300 jobs in construction, 7,100 jobs in public administration. Some 3,800 people in education are currently out of work—3,200 in culture and rec, and 2,000 in the service sector.

Will the Premier face the truth and accept that he has created a jobs disaster in this province?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: One million new jobs. Remember that—to the Leader of the Opposition: one million new jobs since we've taken office.

Let's remind the people of Ontario what happened when the NDP and the Liberals were in charge: 600,000 people lost their jobs.

We've grown the population by two million people since we've been in office. And we continuously see investments of—\$70 billion of investment from around the world.

That would never exist under the NDP and the Liberals, because they were terrified—companies around the world—to come and invest in Ontario. It was the highest tax regime they've ever seen—red tape, regulations, highest electricity costs. They weren't coming to Ontario.

We came into office, and we changed it. We've seen tens of billions of dollars of investment. We're going to continue seeing tens—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Tell that to all the people lined up at the food banks, okay?

You cannot create enough jobs because you have no jobs plan. We are losing jobs in this province far faster than anyone here has created them, because you have no plan.

If the jobs disaster was not enough, let's look at another example of this Premier's mess: record-low housing starts. The government has missed every single one of their housing targets.

And let me tell you, folks working in residential construction right now are telling me they cannot find a job, and you know it. You lost Ontario 25,000 jobs in the first half of this year, and if you don't fix this mess, there will be 50,000 fewer jobs by the end of this year. It is a jobs disaster.

Will the Premier accept that his housing failure is creating a jobs—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Rob Flack: Let me begin by saying, as I always do—and the member opposite I don't think gets it—that it takes too long and it costs too much to build housing. We've changed that with Bill 17 and now Bill 60. If they would read Bill 60 in detail, they will understand it's going to help cut the delays.

Let's take a look specifically at the rental markets. In the last three years, we've seen 51,000 new starts in the GTHA. Why? That's a record—17,000 after three months this year, a 38% increase.

That being said, supply creates competition. Competition creates new rental starts. That's how it works. We've created the environment for this to take place, and that is exactly what we're going to continue to do.

We'll continue to look at the details of Bill 60; it's going to work. Bill 17 is working.

It takes too long, and it costs too much. We're lowering the cost, and we're getting more homes built.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: This government can't see the forest for the trees.

Every day, there is another headline. Every day, there is another scandal. The government's only jobs plan is their pay-to-play scheme. Ontarians deserve so much better than this from their government.

I don't know how the members across the way can go back to their communities and defend this government's scandals again and again and again. I know for sure that's not why you ran. That's not why I ran. We ran to fix things for people—for regular people, for working people.

Speaker, I hope that these members go back to their ridings next week and take an ethics check, a morality check, because this government has become morally bankrupt.

To the Premier: Are we finally going to see a real jobs plan in this fall economic statement? Is he going to undo this jobs disaster for Ontarians?

Hon. Doug Ford: Again, I'll just repeat—the million jobs. In just September, there were over 44,700 new jobs, and 22,000 in August. We've created the environment by reducing the cost of doing business by \$12 billion a year.

1110

I would like to put a little challenge to all the parties, including ourselves. Let's talk to every CEO of every major corporation, every small business, every medium business. Who would you want sitting on your board running your company? Would you want the NDP, the Liberals, or do you want the PC government? It's not 99%—100% of every corporation, small, medium or large, would pick the PC government, creating more jobs, more economic—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order.

Hon. Doug Ford: Do you know something? We went back to our ridings—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order.

Hon. Doug Ford: Madam Speaker, do I get to speak?

Interjections.

Hon. Doug Ford: Okay. Just calm down and let me speak. You will get your turn.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order.

We move on to the leader of the third party for questions.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: It's another day, and it's the same old story. We've been talking about the same thing for about three weeks now. I never thought I'd be talking about what I'm talking about for the last three weeks.

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: It's not funny. None of this is funny.

Our pages are going to go home after today. We've got to think about what the pages are going to say when they go home, when their friends ask, "What happened? What did you hear?" We've got to think about them—the ones in the gallery.

We know that the Premier and his party, or whoever, gave \$10 million to the owner of a strip club. It was part of \$27 million that they gave to bars and nightclubs in downtown Toronto. We know that \$17 million was given to another group. I will follow up in my supplementary about whether or not the Premier's office was involved.

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

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, when they go home, they'll see false and misleading statements made by that member. That's what they will—

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

Hon. David Piccini: Withdraw.

They'll see a government that stood up in the face of the pandemic for hospitality workers, front and back of house, to invest in their training at some of the largest centres in downtown Toronto—centres every member of this House has been in.

They'll see a Premier who's fighting for lower taxes, who's fighting to attract investments, who's the only one standing up to a bully south of the border. They'll see a Premier making record investments, who's putting unionized men and women to work, non-unionized men and women to work in the construction sector.

Those same unions invited those members—and I hope on constituency week they actually take up people like Victoria Mancinelli, who has invited you to her training centres. She has heard nothing back. She'll be in the House later today. I hope the members take her up on the opportunity to visit some of the—

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

Mr. John Fraser: We know that Scale Hospitality got \$17 million from the Premier and his government. And we know that Amin Massoudi—a familiar name; a familiar flyer, if you want to call him that—was the Premier's principal secretary at a time when this organization received a \$5-million grant that was close to the deadline, on the back of a napkin, and he intervened. The question is really easy. Amin Massoudi was the Premier's principal secretary. Did the Premier ask him to do exactly just that?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, I'll tell you what this Premier does. This Premier visits job sites all the time with members of this caucus, talking to workers, seeing how we can better create the conditions to create economic productivity, to drive productivity and economic opportunity in this province. We've supported workers of all different job sites.

When that member denigrates hospitality workers, he turns his back on men and women of Unite Here working hard to support opportunities for newcomers. He turns his back on construction workers.

Again, you've had the opportunity; you've been invited to see the training centres this Premier is investing in. But you actually have to commit to building roads, bridges and highways. You actually have to commit to building long-term care—something that member knows a lot about, because he built none of them when he had the opportunity. You have to commit to building hospitals, highways—all of those things this government is doing.

New nuclear in my community? Not a chance. They shut them down. They put those men and women out of work. Not this Premier; not this government—we're going to create those jobs.

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

Mr. John Fraser: All of this sounds pretty oddly familiar. If you remember the greenbelt, the Premier's director of housing policy had to resign because he was deeply involved in the rot that was there.

So we've seen this movie before. It's actually more like a series. I don't know if we're in season 2 or season 3.

What we found out in season 1 was that all roads lead directly to the Premier's office. And now, whatever season we're in, the same is true: All roads lead directly to the Premier's office.

So I just want to ask again: Did the Premier ask his principal secretary to intervene on behalf of the organization to get the \$5-million grant that was on the back of an envelope, at the last minute? Yes or no? Simple answer.

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, the only rot that exists is in that party, who've had three weeks to actually bring forward a plan for jobs, to actually bring forward a plan that's going to protect our tariff-impacted sectors. They've had opportunities; they've never done a thing.

They have an opportunity today to support a fall economic statement—a fall economic statement that's going to continue to invest in infrastructure and make historic investments in sectors of the economy that they abandoned; workers in the manufacturing sector who they turned their back on when they drove 300,000 jobs out of this province.

The only thing they're good at is smears and taxes—taxing the good people of this province. One hand in the right pocket, one hand in the left pocket—that's all they're good for.

This Premier and this government are making historic investments. You'll have the opportunity to support them—that's going to put men and women to work—later today. I hope you'll take that opportunity.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: I'm going to refer back to my question yesterday about the \$10 million that the Premier gave his friend who owns a strip club. The minister responded and said it's not a strip club. The fact is, it has the same licence as the Brass Rail—it's a few blocks away, Premier—and the same workers as the Brass Rail. Their tag line is “for those where discretion is a must.”

When I look across at folks over here, I see people who don't want to be any part of this. I know people don't want to be any part of this.

Will the Premier commit to opening the book on these grants so we can see why his minister gave the last two rounds of skills development funding to the owner of a strip club?

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

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, when that member makes statements like that that he knows are false, he denigrates the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Withdraw.

Hon. David Piccini: Withdraw—denigrates those men and women who work in those sectors; the men and women who've been supported through rounds two to four—over 700 workers, exceeding their KPIs.

We don't pit worker against worker on this side of the House. Whether you're a barber, a hospitality worker, whether you're working in the construction sector or

working in a corporation, working on Bay Street or working on Main Street, we don't care.

We see value in every worker of this province and have a fund to support them, and we're not going to apologize for that.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary.

Mr. John Fraser: Well, it's not an apology to us; it's an apology to the people of Ontario. It's an apology to the kids up here, the kids over there. It's an apology to families. That's what it is.

It's unbelievable. I never thought I would be saying in this place, "Why did the Premier and his party give \$10 million to the owner of a strip club?"—money that was supposed to lift people up, give them jobs, and lift women up. Instead, the Premier has let us all down.

All of this is just the tip of the iceberg. So will the Premier commit to himself having an independent forensic audit, or do we have to call the RCMP in again?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, it's a shame the young people here have to hear that member.

But what I'll tell those young people is, if you're looking for opportunity—these young people will know Level Up! It's a career fair. We've launched them in every corner of this province. Last night, in Hamilton, we had over a thousand people there to try to get hands-on experience to enter a trade—a trade that you'll actually have a job in. Why? Because this Premier is actually building public transit. A job you'll have, perhaps, working in our nuclear sector—small modular reactors. We're leading the world—new nuclear, nuclear that they would have shut down; jobs in the mining sector that they had over a decade to unlock, that they didn't. So these youth need to know—

Interjections.

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

Hon. David Piccini: —whether it's the additional nurses we've licensed, the new doctors we're going to need in our hospitals, the new boilermakers we're going to need in our new nuclear plants, you've got opportunity in Doug Ford's Ontario.

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

Mr. John Fraser: You've got Amin Massoudi and Kory Teneycke setting up toll booths in front of the Skills Development Fund and whatever else—it was in front of the greenbelt before. You have the minister's riding association going from \$50,000 to half a million dollars a year. You have donations that come after people got a grant. You've got \$10 million to a strip club, \$17 million or \$5 million for a last-minute application on the back of a napkin that the Premier's principal secretary intervenes on. What else do we need?

Somebody over there, tell me, what else do we need to get to the bottom of this? We need a forensic audit or we need to call in the cops, get the Mounties in.

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, I'm pleased to see that member leading that party—and he'll stay as interim

leader after they recycle through leaders—bringing ideas like this to this place, bringing ideas like that.

Interjections.

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

Hon. David Piccini: They've offered nothing, nothing for Ontario workers—

Interjections.

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

Hon. David Piccini: They've pitted worker against worker. They've denigrated men and women in our hospitality sector—men and women who serve us, men and women who make beds in hotels. We value them. We see them. We will support them. We value men and women on our job sites—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The leader of the third party has been warned.

Hon. David Piccini: —men and women he should actually come and visit.

When we're back, I'll be visiting job sites. And I will challenge that member: Join me on job sites to visit the men and women you turned your back on when you didn't build hospitals, when you didn't build roads and bridges, when you didn't build long-term-care homes and you didn't make investments—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Chandra Pasma: My question is to the Premier. This week, we learned that it's not just the Skills Development Fund that's handing out lucrative deals to Conservative donors and friends. The Minister of Education is giving his hand-picked, unqualified supervisors, all of whom have a close connection to the Conservatives, \$350,000 a year—\$350,000 to ignore phone calls from parents, skip meetings and hide from the public. That's quite the family-and-friends deal.

Is the Premier okay with his Minister of Education taking money out of classrooms to give sweet contracts to Conservative insiders?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I've been feeling like the Maytag Man. It's maybe my second question on education since we got back, which leads me to believe that the NDP are actually in favour of the things that I'm doing, Madam Speaker.

But it's actually funny to get a question on accountability from that member because that member, as you will know, and the entire opposition—the Liberals and NDP together—when they had an opportunity to fire a school trustee who went on an all-expenses-paid trip to Michelin restaurants in Italy, that member chose, along with the rest of that caucus, to sit on their hands and to do everything they possibly could to protect that trustee.

Now, that was an over \$200,000 bill to the taxpayer, money out of the classroom, but the NDP and the Liberals support that type of behaviour. I don't support that behaviour. That's why I was going to fire that trustee, and all of these caucus members here supported me in that decision—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I understand why the minister would rather talk about literally anything else; I wouldn't want to defend these contracts either.

Speaker, let's review the record of these Conservative donors, candidates, staffers and MPPs who have replaced our democratically elected trustees: They won't answer questions from parents. They've tried to hide their contact information. They refuse to attend committee meetings. They tell the media that they don't have to speak to them. No one knows what they are doing.

Is the Premier on board with the Minister of Education's project here to pay his friends \$350,000 a year to shut parents out of decisions affecting our kids?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Do you know who knows what they're doing? The parents, teachers and the students, in particular in her riding. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board—I've referred to it as an absolute hot mess. You could not keep trustees in office for more than five minutes because—you know what? They were retiring, resigning; they were fighting with each other. Now, they weren't just taking money out of the classroom at that board; they were spending millions of dollars fighting each other—fighting each other. And do you know what the parents have told us in Ottawa? "Thank God you put a supervisor in place to bring the board back on track."

I will say this, Madam Speaker: It's not just about restoring balance to the place. It's about restoring hope and opportunity, opportunity that comes when teachers have the resources that they need to allow our students to succeed and the peace that comes from parents who know that a board is focused on their kids' success and not on failed NDP fighting at the school board level. We'll take it over and we'll do the right thing by parents—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Don Valley North.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The other night I went to a neighbourhood association meeting in my riding of Don Valley North, and, unfortunately, Speaker, I gave an update on what this government has been doing:

(1) The Conservative government is ripping out speed cameras that keep their kids safe.

(2) They're making it easier for corporate landlords to throw families out on the street.

(3) The Minister of Labour is treating their tax dollars like a personal piggy bank, giving \$10 million to the owner of a downtown strip club.

Speaker, people are losing trust in this government, and it's easy to see why. Will the Premier do the right thing, restore trust and fire his Minister of Labour?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Here's a quick summary for that member of what this government is achieving, especially in his own backyard. The Ontario Line: shovels in the ground in every single one of those stations and tunnelling projects. That's 4,700 good-paying jobs that that project is supporting and that that member has voted against.

The Scarborough subway extension, Madam Speaker, is another project that we marked a huge milestone on: over 3,000 jobs we're supporting with that project that that member has voted against.

We're getting rid of the bike lanes, Madam Speaker, to improve how people can get to and from work, whether it's Avenue Road, whether it's Bloor Street or whether it's Yonge Street. We're getting the people of this city moving.

Highway 413, Bradford Bypass: two projects that we've marked significant milestones on over the past couple of weeks—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary?

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: The Oxford English Dictionary defines "honour" as "great respect or esteem for a person or a thing." This Minister of Labour has shown zero respect for taxpayer dollars and zero esteem for the people of Ontario.

People don't want these political games and this double-speak. They want a government that is accountable, and I can guarantee—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Withdraw.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Withdrawn.

I can guarantee you this, Speaker: They certainly do not want their hard-earned tax dollars ending up in the pockets of a downtown strip club owner.

Speaker, I'll ask once more: Will this Premier finally end this 50 shades of shame and restore honour to this House by firing this Minister of Labour?

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

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, we see honour in the everyday work of men and women in every sector of the economy. We launched a fund in the wake of a pandemic when we shuttered businesses to support and kickstart those key elements of the economy.

We get in this place every day to bring forward ideas to put men and women of this province to work, and we're proud of the work that we're doing to support expanding training centres in every corner of Ontario, to support getting men and women into meaningful careers—like our veterans, who are doing wonderful work with our Coding for Veterans program. Jeff Musson is here, doing a great job. Helmets to Hardhats: supporting them reintegrating in

employment. True Patriot Love: supporting veterans with wraparound supports.

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We will keep supporting men and women of Ontario with meaningful jobs, meaningful job opportunities and better—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. John Jordan: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Ontario's economy is stronger today because our government delivers real results and puts Ontario's interests first. We are protecting our workers, supporting our businesses and staying focused on building a strong future.

But the world is less stable today. Global tensions are rising. Supply chains are shifting. We have seen continued threats of tariffs from President Donald Trump. These economic threats don't just affect numbers on a page, they put Ontario jobs, families and communities at risk. We cannot afford to be passive. We must act to protect our province and our future.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how the fall economic statement is protecting Ontario's economy, supporting workers and businesses in the face of these global challenges?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: Our government acted early in the face of tariffs and the economic uncertainty. We've already announced nearly \$30 billion in relief and supports for tariff-impacted businesses to unleash our economy. The money is already flowing right now to workers and businesses through our \$5-billion Protect Ontario account to support our most impacted sectors, and also through our \$50-million Ontario Together Trade Fund to help small and medium enterprises across our communities and more.

Madam Speaker, we will continue to protect Ontario from the uncertainty and deliver a strong economy that creates jobs, attracts global investment and strengthens our position as Canada's economic engine.

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

Mr. John Jordan: Thank you to the member from Peterborough–Kawartha for his response.

Families and workers across Ontario want stability. They want a government that will stand strong when the world around us becomes uncertain. We know that Donald Trump's threats of new US tariffs can have real impacts on our communities. They are hurting our auto plants, manufacturers, small businesses and the families who rely on those paycheques. Ontario cannot be caught off guard. We must keep building a strong and competitive economy that protects jobs now and for years to come.

Speaker, can the parliamentary assistant please share how the fall economic statement will continue our plan to protect workers, support growth and secure Ontario's economic future?

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston for his question.

Even in the face of uncertainty and US tariffs, our government will not falter. The mission is clear: We must strengthen our economy, we must drive innovation, and we must protect the families, workers and businesses in this province.

Madam Speaker, later on this afternoon, the Minister of Finance will release the 2025 fall economic statement, A Plan to Protect Ontario. This is the next step in our plan for our province's prosperity today and for the next chapter in our vision for generations to come. Together, we will continue to protect jobs, unleash the economy and make Ontario the most competitive and attractive place in the G7 to invest, create jobs and do business.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

MPP Lise Vaugeois: In the last nine months, there have been 559 closures of northwestern Ontario highways, many caused by commercial trucking accidents. The Minister of Transportation has said that inspection stations should be staffed 24/7. Yet, our brand new \$30-million inspection station in Shuniah is almost never open.

Through you, Speaker, to the Premier: Why are you failing to staff our inspection stations?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Let me share some stats with that member. When we took over as government, there were only 19 TEOs—transportation enforcement officers—in the north. Today, there are over 50 transportation enforcement officers. And guess what? Every single time the NDP had an opportunity to vote for an increase in transportation enforcement officers, especially in Thunder Bay, where that member also resides, she voted against those investments into transportation enforcement officers.

We've conducted over 90,000 inspections to date since January, up over 35% from last year, because of the investments that we have made into safety and into commercial vehicle inspections. Unfortunately, every single time that we've put forward measures to support highway improvements in Thunder Bay, to increase safety measures in Thunder Bay on our roads, that member has voted against her own community and her own interests every single time.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: This government has been in power for almost 10 years, and the reason we vote against their measures is because they're not working.

Highway 11, from North Bay to Cochrane, in the first nine months of this year, was closed for 31 days, the Trans-Canada. The minister yesterday said, "Well, that's because the police closed them. The OPP closed them." The OPP doesn't just close them for fun. They close them because of accidents, because of people getting run off the roads by badly trained cross-country truck drivers. And

they close them because this highway hasn't been rebuilt in years.

The Premier actually agreed, because in February, he came to the riding and said that they were going to rebuild from North Bay to Cochrane, a 2+1. My question is: Is that going to be in the fall economic statement or is it simply a lip-service promise for northern Ontario?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Madam Speaker, that was in the budget that we tabled when we came back into this House. And guess what? That member voted against that budget. You'll have another opportunity to vote and support that measure in the fall economic statement, the 2+1 from North Bay to Cochrane. I wonder how that member will now vote.

If his record or his history says anything, he will likely vote against that, just like he has voted against the four-laning of Highway 17 and our investments into the Ring of Fire to build and develop the northern communities. Over \$600 million last year went into the north to support investments into infrastructure on our roads, highways and bridges, and that member voted against every single one of them.

Whether it's increasing the number of transportation enforcement officers in the north or whether it's investing in our roads, highways and our bridges in the north, that member has voted against it every single time. Shame.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: In Ajax, Durham region officials are dealing with an encampment that the region said represents a critical situation requiring urgent action. Durham now has had at least 180 more people experiencing homelessness than when this government was re-elected in February. I fear what's going to happen this winter.

Municipalities are doing what they can with the limited resources they have and need provincial support.

Time and time again, I hear from residents afraid to bring their kids to the local park and library. They're concerned about drug use and people in crisis.

Business owners in downtown Ajax are struggling, and librarians are dealing with this on the front line—something they didn't sign up to do.

When you build supportive housing, you get people out of shelters and off the streets. It's effective, and it works.

Does the Premier expect municipalities and property taxpayers to carry the burden to address the rising homelessness crisis, or does the Premier think the province should be doing more?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Rob Flack: Thank you for the question, to the member opposite.

Obviously, we have an obligation in this province to protect our most vulnerable.

He asked about the province and municipalities—good question. It's about teamwork. Together, everyone achieves more.

Speaker, let me tell you—today is the morning of stats, thanks to the Minister of Transportation. I'll share some more stats: \$1.7 billion for community and supportive housing and homelessness; \$529 million to open 27 more homelessness and addiction recovery treatment centres; \$76 million for encampments and homelessness supports; \$700 million for the Homelessness Prevention Program, up 40% since 2023; a new deal for Toronto—\$1.2 billion—and a new deal for Ottawa—\$120 million—with shelters and homelessness services included.

We have seriously invested in this tragic situation. We will continue to work, and housing will be the answer.

I'll answer more in the supplemental.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Member for Ajax. 1140

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: What I am seeing right now is, the government plans to continue a strategy that clearly isn't working. If we had true teamwork, the dream would work.

This is a government that has \$10 million to benefit the owners of a strip club but not to end homelessness. Band-Aids aren't going to cut it.

And homelessness isn't just a problem in Ajax. As the minister referenced, it is a problem that we're seeing all across Ontario.

In Belleville, their homelessness count has gone from 200 to 300. The state of emergency declared there almost two years ago is still in effect. The city dedicated \$1.2 million from speed cameras in school zones towards the HART hub. That funding option now is not there anymore.

Instead of truly partnering with municipalities, the province is continuing to download responsibility while cutting off local revenue and putting that burden on property taxpayers.

Will the Premier commit to supporting Ontario's municipalities and rapidly investing in new funding for supportive housing with wraparound services?

Hon. Rob Flack: I thank the member opposite for his question.

Again, we have an obligation and a duty to protect our most vulnerable.

I'm excited to be working with the federal Minister of Housing in the coming weeks, along with the CEO of Build Canada Homes, to look at different ways to deploy the investment that the federal government and this government have been investing. Obviously, we need more affordable, deeply affordable and homelessness strategies in this province—working with the minister and working with the provincial and territorial leaders will do that.

I want to give a shout-out to police services and give a shout-out to the not-for-profits that do so much in this sector in our province. We continue to look forward to working with them, investing with them, and investing with the municipalities.

I'll be meeting with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario this afternoon, and this issue will be on the table.

We continue to look for solutions, people. At the end of the day, we will continue to work with our municipal

partners and continue to work with all members to look for solutions. We need to protect our most vulnerable.

ENERGY POLICIES

MPP Paul Vickers: My question is for the Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries.

Our world is changing quickly, and the pressure on our energy system is growing. We are seeing new threats to our supply chains, our workers, and the industries that support families across our province. Donald Trump is once again making trade threats that could create real uncertainty for our energy grid and our economy.

Ontario cannot wait and hope for the best. Families need stable and affordable energy bills. Businesses need reliable power to invest, grow and hire. Our economy depends on a strong and secure grid that can meet rising demand.

Speaker, can the associate minister explain how our government is showing leadership and strengthening Ontario's energy system in the face of these global challenges?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: Speaker, I want to thank the excellent member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for his question and his leadership in representing his riding. He has done outstanding work since coming here.

The member is absolutely right; we are committed to ensuring that we're protecting our energy grid in order to support and protect the workers in the industries that rely on that. It's why we've launched the largest-ever competitive procurement for power in Ontario's history—some 7,500 megawatts of new power, enough to power 1.6 million homes.

In addition to that, we've also launched a procurement of 1,784 megawatts of new battery storage—something that I know is very important to the member in his riding—at rates that are 24% lower than previous rounds of procurement, driven by that competitive tension that we know the member opposite is helping to foster in his community and across this province.

As a result, we are building out our robust energy tool box to ensure that industries in this province are supported and that they're protected for many years to come.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

MPP Paul Vickers: Thank you to the associate minister for his response.

Ontario families and businesses expect a strong and stable energy system. They want to know that when they turn the lights on, the power will be there. They want to know that our government is planning ahead and investing in the tools needed to keep our grid reliable and secure.

We are facing new pressures on our energy system. Rising geopolitical tensions and new trade threats from Donald Trump are examples of what Ontario is up against.

That is why expanding energy storage is so important. It helps protect our energy grid and keeps power reliable when we need it most.

Can the associate minister please share more about how expanding Ontario's energy storage capacity will help protect our energy system for generations to come?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: Absolutely, I'd be happy to share more.

The member opposite has underlined the crucial importance of having a robust and diverse energy mix here in the province of Ontario. You look at the build-out of nuclear power we have, something we can be very proud of. You look at our integrated energy plan, with a robust build-out of new hydroelectric plants, new renewable procurement. And, of course, battery is an incredibly important part of that, so that we can deal with some of those peaks—bring down some of that peak capacity and ensure we're distributing it over the entire day. What that does is it saves money for ratepayers, but it also ensures that storage capacity we have in the grid is able to be responsive to some of those really, really hot days in the summer and some of those cold days in the winter.

It's really about ensuring that we're responding to the growing challenges, but also the opportunities that are created to support jobs in his riding. And I know, whether it's local projects in your community or across this province, these are coming together to ensure that we're building out a secure, reliable, affordable and robust energy system for many years to come.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My question is for the Premier.

If there's one thing, just one thing, this government loves more than speeding, beer and strip clubs, it's billionaires.

So let's talk about Enbridge. Thirty straight years of rate hikes, to hand out handsome profits to their shareholders—\$5 billion in profits last year alone—and all the while Ontarians are draining their savings and walking around their homes in winter jackets to desperately save their money on heating bills. And now, this year, again, Enbridge is back asking for more. Why is this government letting it happen?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: It was this Progressive Conservative government that launched the largest energy efficiency program in the history of Canada—\$12 billion back into pockets. The former Liberals constrained those savings to 30% of the province. We ensured every family has access. In fact, our government and Premier are going to extend those savings again this year, to put more money back in parents' pockets and families' pockets.

I will also recognize this: When it comes to natural gas, the opposition has a historic aversion to the very commodity they are concerned about the price of today. If it was up to them—they voted for a bill proposed by the Liberals that would strip natural gas from two thirds of the homes that rely on it. It is the triumph of ideology over pragmatism, when families of this province want energy to be affordable.

If the New Democrats and Liberals care about affordability, then explain in your supplemental why you supported an increase in the carbon tax that only makes natural gas prices more expensive for the families we serve.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Humber River–Black Creek.

Mr. Tom Rakocvic: Let's talk about the Ontario Energy Board. Two years ago, when the OEB's rubber stamp broke and the OEB said no to Enbridge raising the price of home heating, this government came crashing in like a bull to change the law and overturn their decision. And so, because of this government, the cost of home heating went up yet again.

This government always comes to the rescue of billionaires like Enbridge, but never for the people.

And as Enbridge raises the costs of home heating, they're also increasing their dividends to shareholders.

It's sick.

This government chose Enbridge over the people of Ontario in 2023. Will they act now and tell Enbridge that enough is enough and stop increasing the endless costs of home heating?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the associate minister.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: What I find absolutely sickening is the opposition to all of the natural gas that we have here in the province of Ontario—five million households in this province are supported through natural gas. When you go to rural communities, whether it's in Niagara West or in other corners of this province, you're going to find communities that want to ensure that they're able to heat their home, cook their food; maybe be able to produce some of the grain that we rely on from Ontario farmers.

The ideological opposition that we see from the members of the opposition to anything other than their particular flavour of the month is completely unbecoming to a parliamentarian.

At the end of the day, these are families, these are workers, these are industries who need to be supported. This is a government and a Premier who will have their back, project their jobs, keep their homes warm, and ensure that they're able to feed their families. Why won't the members opposite get up and make sure that they support likewise?

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PUBLIC TRANSIT

MPP Andrea Hazell: Madam Speaker, through you to the Premier: Ontario families, commuters and businesses are paying the price for this government's failure to bring these transportation projects to a close. Eglinton Cross-town? What a fat joke. Hazel McCallion Line, Hamilton LRT, Ontario Line, Yonge North extension, Finch West LRT and the Scarborough subway extension: all delayed, all billions over budget.

While these projects are years behind, the Premier still refuses to apologize, not to commuters and small busi-

nesses left in limbo, not to the residents stuck in replacement buses that vote all of us into this chamber and not even to the Blue Jays fans stranded after game seven because of Metrolinx's continued neglect.

Will the Premier finally do the right thing today and apologize for this government's failure, failure that has kept the people waiting, workers struggling and business paying the price for chronic delays?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you to that member for running off every single one of the projects that we're doing.

We're paying the price for 15 years of the previous Liberal government doing absolutely nothing. Every one of the projects that member has referenced were plans that the Premier put in place when he got elected in 2018: the Ontario Line, the Yonge North subway extension, the west extension on Eglinton, the Yonge North subway extension—every single one of these projects—the Scarborough Subway extension in that member's backyard. The people of Scarborough were denied transit under your government for 15 years. It was this Premier who came in and is delivering rapid transit for the people of Scarborough.

The Ontario Line will move 400,000 people a day. Guess what? Every single time you have the opportunity to get up and support transit and building transit across the province, what do you do? You get up and you vote against it, and not only that but our programs like One Fare that are saving people \$1,600 a year to ride transit, get into the city and transfer. The opposition, as Liberals, you have voted—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Scarborough–Guildwood.

MPP Andrea Hazell: I'm going to give a lesson today. They are the previous government, and they are the government now. This government refuses to apologize, continues to refuse to apologize and refuses to take accountability for its mistakes. These mistakes have become so common, they are starting to feel like government policy.

Time after time, this government has proven it's more focused on helping its friends, insiders and donors than helping the people of Ontario. Look at the Skills Development Fund—no surprise there. We have seen it in the transit projects that are years behind schedule and billions over budget, which is why I have called for a value-for-money audit by the Auditor General. Stay tuned.

Since the Premier refuses to apologize for his government's failure, he will go down in history as the Premier that could not get it right with fulfilling his transportation promises.

Through you, Madam Speaker, since the Premier won't apologize for the gridlock and congestion that Ontarians continue to endure every day, will he explain where—

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Madam Speaker, let's just take a look at the projects that this government has got under way: the Ontario Line, a project that will support over 4,700 new jobs in this province and continues to do so; the Scarborough subway extension, another over 3,000 jobs that that project will support.

In fact, when we talk about transportation, let's talk about our highways. Those members have launched a campaign against Highway 413, a project that will reduce travel times by over 30 minutes for the residents of York region, Peel region and Halton region, a project that ensured that we were elected for the third time this previous election because we believe in building. We believe in building for the future and ensuring—you were in government for 15 years. You don't have a single project to speak for.

We've got shovels in the ground. We've got shovels in the ground on the Ontario Line, Scarborough subway extension, the Yonge North subway extension, the west extension and LRTs in Hamilton, Brampton and Mississauga.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: My question is for the Solicitor General. Speaker, families across Ontario want to feel safe in their homes and on their streets. But we continue to hear stories of dangerous, repeat offenders being released on bail, only to commit new crimes. That is not right.

Our police officers, victims and communities have said the same thing loud and clear: The bail system is not working. It puts the rights of violent offenders ahead of the safety of the public. Ontario has called Ottawa to fix this, to make bail rules stronger and to protect our communities.

Speaker, can the Solicitor General explain how our government is leading the call for stronger bail reform to keep dangerous offenders off our streets?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: When the associate minister and I went to Kananaskis to the federal, provincial and territorial meetings on justice and public safety—and joined by our great Attorney General and his parliamentary assistant—we said to the federal ministers they must introduce meaningful bail reform, and the federal government took its first step. We will continue to press them to go further, but I said to the federal minister, “You have to make investments in public safety.”

I gave as an example our transformational investment we made in basic constable training at the Ontario Police College, where this year alone we will put 2,500 new police officers on our streets. If you do the math, Madam Speaker, it's \$17,000 per individual times 2,500. That's \$42 million. That's a commitment as to how we're protecting Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you to the Solicitor General for this response.

Speaker, while we are seeing some movement from Ottawa, we know the job is not finished. Too many offend-

ers with violent criminal records are still being released back into our neighbourhoods. Families are worried. Police are frustrated. Communities want change. Our government has been clear: Public safety must come first. One tragedy is one too many.

The Premier and the Solicitor General have stood with victims, supported law enforcement and called on Ottawa to take stronger action. We are pushing for real change that keeps dangerous, repeat offenders off our streets.

Speaker, can the Solicitor General share how Ontario will continue to press the federal government for stronger bail reform to protect our communities?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I said at the federal, provincial and territorial meetings in Kananaskis that there's no modern-day parallel of any government in Canada that is tougher on crime than our government led by Premier Ford. And we will never apologize for this.

That's why I also said that we came forward with Operation Deterrence, led by the OPP, because the federal government has to step it up at the borders. You can't just have 10 RCMP people from Cornwall to Fort Frances. You have to put real resources, and we're going to hope that they will fulfill their promise of putting a thousand new RCMP officers there.

Madam Speaker, we said we would put helicopters in the skies, and we made an investment of \$200 million for the GTHA, for Windsor, for Niagara and for Ottawa. When it comes to public safety, there is no equal: it's our government led by Premier Ford to protect Ontarians.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Ottawa South has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to the question given by the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development regarding the Skills Development Fund. This matter will be debated on November 18 following private members' public business.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): It is my sad duty now to ask our pages to assemble.

It's time to say a word of thanks to our legislative pages. Our pages are trustworthy and hard-working. They're indispensable to the effective functioning of this chamber, and we are indeed fortunate to have you all here.

To our pages: You depart having made many new friends, with a greater understanding of parliamentary democracy and memories that will last a lifetime. Each of you will now go home and continue your studies and no doubt contribute to your communities, to your province and to your country in very important ways. We expect great things from each and every one of you. Who knows? Maybe someday you'll be back here taking seats in this chamber or working here as staff. But no matter where your path leads you, we wish you well.

I ask the members to please join me in thanking this group of legislative pages.
Applause.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members, we have a deferred vote on government order number 7 relating to allocation of time on the following bills: 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.

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

The division bells rang from 1202 to 1207.

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

On November 5, 2025, Mr. Clark moved government notice of motion number 9, relating to allocation of time on Bills 60, 33 and 40.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Pirie, George
Anand, Deepak	Gualtieri, Silvia	Quinn, Nolan
Babikian, Aris	Hamid, Zee	Racinsky, Joseph
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Harris, Mike	Rosenberg, Bill
Bresee, Ric	Holland, Kevin	Sabawy, Sheref
Calandra, Paul	Jones, Sylvia	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Trevor	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Stan	Jordan, John	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Ciriello, Monica	Kanapathi, Logan	Saunderson, Brian
Clark, Steve	Kerzner, Michael S.	Scott, Laurie
Coe, Lorne	Khanjini, Andrea	Smith, Dave
Cooper, Michelle	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Laura
Denault, Billy	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dixon, Jess	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dunlop, Jill	Parsa, Michael	Vickers, Paul
Firin, Mohamed	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Flack, Rob	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.
Ford, Doug	Pinsonneault, Steve	

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gilmour, Alexa	Schreiner, Mike
Bourgouin, Guy	Glover, Chris	Shaw, Sandy
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Hazell, Andrea	Smyth, Stephanie
Cerjanec, Rob	Hsu, Ted	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Clancy, Aislinn	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Collard, Lucille	Mamakwa, Sol	Tsao, Jonathan

Fairclough, Lee	McCrimmon, Karen	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	McKenney, Catherine	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Watt, Tyler
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

Motion agreed to.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Point of order under standing order 59.

I'm not going to talk long because I appreciate that we're coming at 1 o'clock. I just want to wish everybody a great constituency week. I know members will be in their ridings going to Remembrance Day and Veterans' Week ceremonies. I know we'll all be encouraging our constituents to have a moment of silence on November 11 in recognition of those that paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms and those that are presently serving in our armed forces.

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

The House recessed from 1211 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I'm delighted to introduce my friend, a good businessman, Giuseppe Di Bratto from Woodbridge. It's his first time in Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Mon bon ami Alain Bouchard est venu. Nous sommes allés à l'université ensemble. Bienvenue, Alain.

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: I'd like to introduce my good friend and the president of the Canadian Polish Congress, Dominic Roszak, as well as Dee Tripp from the Ontario Association of Residents' Councils. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: We have two wonderful folks from Niagara who are here today. We have Lynn Guerriero, the CEO of Niagara Health, and Harpreet Bassi from Niagara Health. Thank you both for being here today.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I'd like to introduce some wonderful guests who are here from the Halton community: Oakville Mayor Rob Burton; the CEO of Halton Healthcare, Melissa Farrell; along with the director of communications from Halton Healthcare, Adrienne Spafford.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'd like to introduce in the chamber today the chief operating officer for Bruce Power, James Scongack.

Hon. David Piccini: I'd like to welcome a few people here. I'd like to welcome Victoria from LIUNA, Nadia with ResCon, Stephanie with Ontario sewer and water-main association, and I see Dereck and Alejandra with Unite Here. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to welcome, from the Charles H. Best Diabetes Centre, Lorrie Hagen and Marlene Grass. Welcome to Queen's Park.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated November 6, 2025, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

PLAN TO PROTECT ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2025 (NO. 2)

LOI DE 2025 SUR LE PLAN POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES) (NO 2)

Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 68, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 68, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I notice the emphasis on "briefly," Madam Speaker. I look forward to speaking to this bill during my ministerial statement.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

PERSPECTIVES ÉCONOMIQUES ET REVUE FINANCIÈRE

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to everyone at Queen's Park here. It's an honour to stand before you for my 10th time to deliver a fall economic statement or a budget.

Over the years, I've had the honour to introduce a number of budgets and fall economic statements, and as I am sure you have noticed over the years, I dedicate my speech to a loved one. I have often dedicated my speeches to my father or my mother. Sadly, my father passed away this past summer. His love of country, his role model as a father and his guidance will continue to shape who I am.

Applause.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you.

May the work that all of us do in this Legislative Assembly help leave this world in a better place than we found it, and may future generations learn the lessons from those who came before.

With that, Madam Speaker, au nom du premier ministre, Doug Ford, et de tout notre gouvernement de l'Ontario, j'ai l'honneur aujourd'hui de vous présenter l'exposé économique de l'automne de l'Ontario de 2025 : Un plan pour protéger l'Ontario. On behalf of Premier Doug Ford and our entire government of Ontario, it is my honour today to present to you the 2025 Ontario fall economic statement: A Plan to Protect Ontario.

Today, Ontario finds itself in a very different place than we did seven years ago. In many ways, things are much better. Since we were first elected in 2018, this government and this Premier have turned our province's course towards one of success, one of growth and one of prosperity. In fact, we've seen our economy climb to new heights with a GDP of \$1.2 trillion, over \$350 billion higher than it was in 2018.

We have provided confidence and certainty to markets, investors and job creators at untold speed, adding close to one million more jobs in Ontario and mobilizing the greatest workforce that Canada has to offer. So it's with sincere thanks that I say thank you, Premier, for your leadership.

Madam Speaker, you show me a map of Ontario, and I will show you a place where the future is already taking place. This growth came not just from success alone, but from prudent investments—and I say "prudent" because our government has worked hard to lay a strong fiscal foundation. In fact, Ontario closed the fiscal year with a deficit of \$1.1 billion and a debt-to-GDP ratio of 36.2%, the lowest in over a decade. As importantly, we've also seen the cost of servicing Ontario's debt come down \$1.3 billion dollars lower than expected, and the cost of servicing that debt hit a 40-year low of 5.5%, freeing up room

to reinvest in the priorities that drive long-term prosperity, like infrastructure, like tax relief and our world-class skilled workforce.

And for the first time in nearly two decades, Ontario received two credit rating upgrades: one from S&P and one from Morningstar DBRS. All four major rating agencies now affirm Ontario's strong AA rating, a clear signal that investors and markets have confidence in this province's fiscal and economic direction.

Now, with our finances in the best shape they've been in over a decade, we are in a strong position to act for Ontario, but we know the road ahead is not without challenges. As a province and as a country, we find ourselves in the midst of trade uncertainty that we did not ask to be part of, causing anxiety for workers and businesses alike.

Mais, madame la Présidente, ce qui nous distingue des autres nations aux prises avec ce défi, c'est que nous sommes Canadiens. Je n'ai jamais vu une Canadienne ou un Canadien qui n'était pas prêt à se battre pour se défendre.

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But what sets us apart from other nations facing this challenge is that we are Canadian. And I've never met a Canadian that wasn't ready to put up a fight to defend themselves, like this Premier.

It was with that spirit that our government decided to act, and act quickly, to protect our businesses, to protect our workers and families, to protect our economy and to protect our way of life. Thanks to the prudent fiscal management we've maintained over the years, we are in a strong position to act for Ontario.

We have already announced nearly \$30 billion in relief and supports for tariff-impacted businesses and workers to unleash our economy. That money is flowing right now to keep our economic engine going—flowing, for example, through our Ontario Together Trade Fund, which is currently leveraging \$50 million in support for small and medium-sized businesses by enabling them to pivot production, build new sales relationships and expand through greater interprovincial trade.

Today, I am proud to share that, to continue helping them diversify into new markets and boost their trade resiliency, our government is investing an additional \$100 million into the fund, for a grand total of \$150 million.

Madam Speaker, as we work together to build stronger communities, we must also work to build up the vital industries that sustain them. Our \$5-billion Protecting Ontario Account, which is providing up to \$1 billion in liquidity to tariff-affected sectors like steel, aluminum, copper and auto manufacturing, is helping them meet large operational challenges like payroll, lease and utility payments.

As a matter of fact, just a few weeks ago, the federal government joined us in announcing an historic \$500-million loan to support Algoma Steel and their workers. This will help Algoma maintain operations, reduce reliance on the US and support economic growth in northern Ontario.

We did so not only because we need to support northern Ontario, but we need to ask ourselves: Do we want to have

a steel industry in this country? A manufacturing base and industry including the north? An infrastructure industry that uses Ontario-produced steel? Madam Speaker, I boldly submit that the answer to those questions is an emphatic yes.

As the leading economic engine of our great nation, Ontario must continue to stand out amongst the provinces and territories and lead by example. We have accomplished already much to free up trade within Canada, becoming the first province to lift all barriers under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, empowering Ontario businesses impacted by tariffs to find new markets and find new supply chains within Canada.

We're doing this and more because it is the sensible thing to do for our future—a future where Canada's number one trading partner is Canada; a future where the single greatest place to invest, grow and succeed in the entire G7 is right here in Ontario, supporting all of Canada.

Our future is bright indeed, Madam Speaker. We must seize these changing times in order to deliver the projects that will reshape our standing in the global economy, not just for today but for generations to come. By working together, being bold and having a vision, we can get on with building a nation.

We've done it before. When former Premier John Robarts had a vision to build Canada's first nuclear plants right here in Ontario during the 1960s, almost 60 years ago, he forever changed our nation's energy landscape and our economic future. Now Premier Ford has the vision for the next 60 years, the vision for generations to come. We will do it again. Because, Madam Speaker, Ontario has a proud legacy of operating the safest and most reliable nuclear facilities in the world.

But with energy demands set to rise so significantly over the next 25 years, now is the time to leverage Ontario's proven nuclear advantage so that we can create more good-paying jobs, grow our economy and power our future.

Recently, I was fortunate to join Premier Ford and Prime Minister Carney to announce a historic joint investment with the federal government of \$3 billion to build the first small modular reactors anywhere in the G7 right here in Ontario, right in Darlington. That project alone will create 18,000 construction jobs and another 3,700 jobs to operate and generate enough energy to power the equivalent of 1.2 million homes. We're doing it all here in Ontario.

We're moving full steam ahead with refurbishment of Ontario's existing fleet of nuclear generating stations. And we're expanding new opportunities for large-scale nuclear energy at the Bruce nuclear plant, as well as the Ontario Power Generation's Wesleyville site in Port Hope, and that will power almost 16 million homes.

But we need the federal government to come to the table in support of large-scale nuclear in Ontario. I know Premier Ford has spoken to Prime Minister Carney about that, because that's what visionary leaders do. I spoke this morning and met with François-Philippe Champagne, who tabled his budget on Tuesday, to share that vision and get

support because the day will come that, working together, we will continue to be a global energy superpower.

And we're not stopping there. Last week, Premier Ford and Minister Rickford signed a historic agreement with Webequie First Nation that could see shovels in the ground on the road to the Ring of Fire by next June. This road will transform Indigenous and northern communities, support economic reconciliation and unlock critical minerals that could generate \$22 billion to grow Ontario's economy and protect every worker in every part of the province.

We're also speeding up the construction of projects that give us a critical advantage through a "one project, one process" system to streamline approvals and environmental assessments.

Just last week, Minister Lecce announced that Frontier Lithium's world-class PAK Lithium Project north of Red Lake will be the first to move forward under this framework, bringing us one step closer to unlocking the full potential of our metals and mining sector.

What's more, our \$500-million Critical Minerals Processing Fund will help us unleash Ontario's vast mineral reserves onto international markets with Ontario minerals, right here, mined in Ontario, refined in Ontario by Ontario workers. Madam Speaker, this is what being a critical minerals powerhouse looks like.

Madam Speaker, the future is at our doorstep, and when the future calls, Ontario answers that call. High-growth industries of tomorrow—like artificial intelligence, defence, and advanced manufacturing—are all part of Ontario's future. All we need to do, is reach for them.

And through the remaining streams of our \$4-billion Protecting Ontario Account, we will leverage the private capital necessary to fortify our economy, drive innovation and attract the best talent. Madam Speaker, this is what being a global AI and technology powerhouse looks like.

We are standing on the shoulders of those who built this nation before us, and history remembers those accomplishments. When history remembers the work that we've done here today together, future generations will look back and they will say, "This is what nation-building looks like," because nation-building is at the heart of Ontario's economic success, and protecting Ontario is at the heart of this government's plan.

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But at that heart of Ontario itself lie our communities, our families, our workers, our businesses, our students, our seniors and everyone who calls this beautiful province home. We work for them, Madam Speaker.

With tariffs making an already-uncertain world even more challenging and unpredictable, our government set out to keep costs down and put more money back in Ontario's pockets. Not only have we never raised a tax on the people and businesses of Ontario, but we've in fact cut taxes and we've cut fees. That's why I'm pleased to share that in this year alone, our government is enabling \$11.5 billion in financial relief for people and families and \$11.7 billion in cost savings for businesses, including \$5.6 billion of which that would go directly to helping small

businesses. And we're going to keep going, keep finding more ways to lower taxes and fees and drive our economy.

Just last week, I was with Minister Flack to announce an additional measure: that Ontario is removing the full 8% provincial portion of the HST for first-time home buyers, to keep the dream of home ownership alive for countless young families across the province. That's putting more money back into the pockets of Ontarians. It's just one part of our plan to build stronger communities.

Our plan tackles the health and well-being of people and families. People deserve the right care in the right place, and sometimes the right place is at home. Who doesn't want to age at home, comfortably and close to their family and loved ones? That's why I'm proud to say that our government, along with Minister Jones, is investing an additional \$1.1 billion over the next three years into home care, which will increase consistency in hours of care and reduce wait-lists. Thank you, Minister Jones.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with a message that I feel resonates strongly in our nation now, one which I hope serves as a reminder to all members of this Legislature: that no matter the cost, no matter the difficulty, no matter our differences, there's nothing worth fighting for more than our shared home, our shared way of life and our shared communities.

In fact, it was Prime Minister Brian Mulroney who once said, "Leaders must have vision and they must find the courage to fight for the policies that will give that vision life. Leaders must govern not for easy headlines in 10 days but for a better Canada in 10 years." Thank you, Prime Minister Mulroney; thank you, Minister Mulroney.

Let us place trust in one another to build a better Canada, not just for 10 years, but for generations to come. Let us never be kept from doing what it takes to do our job: protecting the more than 16 million people who call Ontario home. Let us keep working together.

And in that spirit, I once again wish to renew the call I made to our colleagues from the NDP, the Liberals, the Greens and the independent members earlier this year, when I introduced our historic 2025 budget: to set aside our differences and join us in support of this bill, regardless of political parties and stripes, doing what is necessary to protect the workers, the families, the businesses, the communities and economy of Ontario. Let's work together and build out our vision for a strong, reliant and growing Canada, not just for the next 10 years but for the next 100 years. Come and join us.

This fall economic statement is more than an update on our government's plan; it's a reminder that in the face of enormous challenges, our nation must stay the course. These trying times demand we maintain a steady fiscal hand and work to restore balance.

They demand that we protect our workers, businesses and national industries from uncertainty. They demand we build projects worthy of a nation whose economic strength is matched only by the strength of their people. They demand we welcome the world with open arms and say, "Come do business with us all." Most importantly, Madam Speaker, they demand we protect Ontario.

Now more than ever, we need to unleash our economy and make Ontario the most competitive place in the G7 to invest, create jobs and do business.

Thank you, and God bless the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Response?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Today we are debating the fall economic statement. We have just listened to the Conservatives present a very rose-tinted-glasses view of the government and their economy.

It is jarring to hear the Minister of Finance talk about prudent fiscal management when this government is on track to be half a trillion dollars in debt in the next few years. It says it in the same economic statement.

Over 700,000 people woke up today without a job: workers at Stellantis, Honda, in Espanola and Terrace Bay; the 10,000 workers at colleges and universities who have lost their job because of declining international enrolment and this government's cuts; the one in four young people who woke up today without a job.

This morning, 1.7 million Ontarians who rent are going to wonder, between now and the end of the month when their rent is due—they're going to look at their bank statement and they're going to wonder how they are going to make ends meet.

I think about the many Ontarians I talk to when I go to the supermarket who are shocked at the price of everything. This morning, I was at the Fort York Food Bank with my leader and the member for Spadina–Fort York. It's one of the busiest food banks in the country. When you go, the line tracks down the street, well before it's open. There are over a million visits to food banks in Ontario every single year, and when we asked the executive director of the food bank who it is that's now going to these food banks, her response is that it's people aged 18 to 49 who are workers, who are standing in the cold for hours to get basic staples like milk, eggs, produce, meat and cereal.

That is the truth about this economy today in Ontario. We have an affordability crisis. Our province is hemorrhaging jobs and the services that we rely upon—public transit, health care, education, our court system, the Landlord and Tenant Board—are all buckling under the strain of delivering good services when their funding is being cut year in and year out since 2018. That's the truth of it.

Now we have this fall economic statement that is being presented here today. Just to put this in context, we've been back in the Legislature for, how long, eight days? After a nice 137-day break, working hard. And we have got the Premier doing his usual blustering schtick of playing the blame game, where Ontario's troubles are everyone else's troubles. It's everyone else's fault. It's young people: They don't look hard enough for a job. It's the federal government. It's Trump. Real leaders stand up and develop plans to care for Ontario and invest in Ontario. They don't blame.

All this week, this government has been sitting in the stink of the Skills Development Fund scandal, wrestling with the uncomfortable truth that they have handed out

millions to adult entertainment nightclubs and companies who have made big donations to their party, when that money should be going to workers to help them retrain for jobs. It should be going to public colleges and universities to help young people get an education. That's where it should be going, and it's not.

When we look at the details of this fall economic statement, what we see is we see cuts. When you factor in population growth and need and inflation, we see cuts.

We see cuts to education. If parents thought that their kids' school is going to be improved as a result of what we see in the fall economic statement, then they're going to be very disappointed. What this fall economic statement shows us is that we are on track for larger class sizes, more violence in schools and lower education outcomes. That's what we see.

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If we're talking about health care, if you're a patient or if you're a loved one caring for a patient, you would hope that this government would invest more in health care, so you can get timely access to surgery, so you can see a family doctor. Well, what you're going to see with this fall economic statement and what the plan is is you're going to see cuts, emergency room closures, long wait times for surgeries, and burnt-out staff and declining health care quality. That is what this fall economic statement is telling us is in store for Ontarians this year and next year. That's what it shows.

I think this government could do a whole lot better, and on this side of the House, we are going to be pushing for real investment in the services that we care about, real investment in the sectors that matter, and a plan to create and keep jobs in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Response?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: It's an honour to rise today to respond to the fall economic statement. Like with the spring budget, we have the finance minister and government ads telling us that everything is rosy, when in fact even their own numbers tell a very different story.

Earlier this week, a transformational federal budget was delivered. Yet how did the Ontario finance minister describe it? He called it "tinkering." Well, Speaker, if that's tinkering, then we can only describe the Ontario fall economic statement one way: teeny, tiny tinkering.

So back to what really matters in a budget and a fall economic statement: It's the numbers and the numbers are very telling. They tell us that everything economic, everything to do with jobs and how this government spends taxpayer money, is getting worse. Unemployment, already at a 13-year high, is going to get worse. Housing starts, already one of the worst in the country, are going to get worse. What we need is more housing to make it more affordable for families, for people trying to buy their first homes and yet, housing starts are going down. That's not the solution we wanted.

With all of this in mind, and with the bluster that the government side comes to this House with each and every day, blaming US tariffs for all the woes in Ontario, when in fact, unemployment has been rising for nine quarters

under this government—that's about seven quarters before US tariffs. You would think that that kind of government, which campaigned in an early, unnecessary, expensive election to protect Ontario, would have made some changes in this document to meet the moment.

But what new spending do we see in the fall economic statement, Speaker? Look at page 152; it's right there. Contingency fund aside, there is a mere \$608 million in new spending. In a 200-page document about the state of our economy, about the challenges that we face, full of economic indicators that show a deteriorating job situation for the people of Ontario, which we read about every day; with unemployment among youth at 17.8%, the worst in the country; during a time of great economic uncertainty for auto workers, for manufacturing workers, for education workers and for hospital workers who are toiling under the poor policy decisions of this government; we see no new money for those programs. In fact, we see about as much as they spent on the scandalous Skills Development Fund.

To the minister I say: You can't have it both ways. If, as you say, we're doing so well, why is GDP growth slowing? If we're doing so well, why will more people be out of work? Why will we be building fewer homes? Why will we hit half a trillion dollars in debt when you campaigned on a fiscal and moral imperative to reduce it?

Speaker, we are actually poorer than we think. When I got to Queen's Park this morning to prepare and read the fall economic statement, I wanted to be surprised. I wanted to see tax relief measures for middle-income earners; they promised it in 2018. I wanted to see tax cuts for small businesses and funding for colleges and universities. I wanted to see a program that would train those youth so they can get jobs, that would help small businesses and Ontario businesses who are suffering under tariffs, and put those people, those young people, to work in those companies. That's what I wanted to see, Speaker. I wanted to see money for hospitals who are facing a billion-dollar deficit. And what did we see to address those issues, Speaker? Nothing.

Why? It's either because they don't want to, or they can't. So why don't they want to do this? Why don't they want to fix all these issues? It's because they would rather dole out money to their insider friends through the Skills Development Fund. They'd rather spend hundreds of millions of dollars on moving the Ontario Science Centre to Ontario Place and building a parking lot. They'd rather bury our money in an underground tunnel under the 401 than fix the programs that make Ontario great.

So let's come back to the numbers. Of the \$2-billion increase in programs, \$1.5 billion is for contingency; only \$600 million is for programs. None of that to education, colleges, universities or hospitals. Why, Speaker? Because it is not their priority. It's their priority to help their friends and get our money tied up in programs and projects that help their insider friends get rich off taxpayers.

Speaker, this is a fall economic statement that could have met the moment. I'm sorry to say it did not, and it's a sad day for the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: The fall economic statement fails to protect everyday Ontarians. People are losing their jobs. The cost of living is skyrocketing. Housing costs are still sky-high, and the Premier is talking about a ridiculous tunnel that will be a costly nightmare and will do nothing to fix gridlock.

There is no plan for families lining up at food banks because rents are sky high, no plan for 80,000 people experiencing homelessness because there is no affordable housing, no plan for young people who can't get ahead in the face of high unemployment and skyrocketing housing costs.

Housing starts are down this year after last year's historic lows. And the Premier continues to say no to legalizing mid-rises and multiplexes, no to protecting renters, no to building deeply affordable homes.

Speaker, people can't afford to live in Ontario. The feds will make it worse, and our kids will ask this government why they're cancelling the obligation to have a climate plan for future generations.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: A plan to protect Ontario: a concept I can support, but we all know a law can look good on paper, but the devil is always in the details.

From the macro of the province to, shall I say, the micro of our ridings, I hope this plan protects all steelworkers in this province, including those at the Nanticoke industrial park, who feel betrayed by this government.

Some \$400 million through the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund—good news, but I see it includes bridges. We all know I've asked here, until I'm blue in the face, when Caledonia will see the replacement of the Argyle Street bridge, at risk of becoming a national headline.

And I'm curious to see how the \$1.1 billion is spent in home care.

Sadly, there's no mention of fighting the illegal tobacco ruining our small towns—perhaps in the budget.

Sadly, there's no mention of agriculture this afternoon. I maintain the best way to tariff-proof Ontario is to increase processing capacity for our ag sector. Keeping processing local for, say, beef and pork reduces immediate tariff exposure and gives Ontario more bargaining room and domestic market resilience. Again, Speaker, it's hopefully in the budget.

I look forward to getting into the details of this bill.

PETITIONS

FOREIGN-TRAINED DOCTORS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to present this petition called “Ontario Needs Doctors—Not Discriminatory Rules.”

Interjections.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Should we wait for 30 seconds for everybody to exit, Speaker, or do I keep on going?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Would you like to keep going or should we just wait for 30 seconds?

Would you just quietly exit and keep the comments down? Thank you.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I am happy to present this petition called “Ontario Needs Doctors—Not Discriminatory Rules.”

Basically, a lot of people from all over Ontario—we’re at over a thousand signatures—find the new requirement for applicants to have two years of high school in Ontario to be unfair, discriminatory, especially for international medical graduates, IMGs. International medical graduates have already invested their time, their resources, including licensing exam, credential verification, and now, halfway through the process, they’re not allowed to get selected on first choice. Introducing this change midway through the application cycle undermines transparency, fairness and confidence in the selection process.

1340

The more selection we have, the more chances that we get the best physicians to come. So they petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the new Ontario high school attendance requirement for the upcoming selection.

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am proud to present a petition today that calls on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to properly fund our schools and to support our children.

The petition notes the cuts to per-student funding that have been implemented by the Ford government since they took office, amounting to \$6.35 billion removed from the public education system. There are consequences to that loss of funding. We see bigger class sizes. We see students who don’t have access to an EA. We see special education supports being cut. We see children who are still struggling with the aftermath of the pandemic.

As our kids are experiencing increasing mental health crises, we see the government spending only 22 cents per day per child on mental health supports. And we know from teachers that there’s a rising crisis of violence in schools.

The petition calls on the Ford government to properly fund education. Don’t try to pretend that Bill 33, by allowing the government to take over school boards, is going to fix the problem. We need to fund education and support our kids.

I’m proud to support this petition, affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Aditya.

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I’d like to thank John Duffy for sending this petition in. This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it talks about the cost to the economy of various trade barriers that are set up by various provincial governments across the country. These barriers tend to increase the cost of goods, and they also tend to increase the cost of services.

What this petition does is that it calls upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take a look at this issue and to institute a policy whereby we have what I will describe as free trade within Canada between the Canadian provinces. That’s something that I can certainly support. I think it’s good for workers in Canada. I think it’s good for workers across the country. I think it’s good for businesses in Ontario, and I think it’s good for businesses across the country too.

I will certainly support this petition. I will sign my name on it, and I’m going to give it to this responsible page, Lyla, who will bring it to the Clerks’ table.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition deals with social media use among young Ontarians. I tabled a motion back in the spring asking the government to work together with us to address the overuse of screen time and social media.

Many people would be surprised, I think, in this Legislature to learn that our youth are spending 4.8 hours a day on screens. The research—the growing body of research—tells a story of how this is impacting both mental health, educational outcomes and physical health.

In the spirit of collaboration that the finance minister was just talking about, this motion is sitting at social policy. It is waiting to be called. We are waiting to do the work. I think we should do the work together.

At the end of day, we do need to review the addictive nature of social media platforms. We do need to clarify the responsibilities of social media companies regarding moderation in the use of social media. And I think public health has to start warning parents of the negative impacts of overly using screens and social media. Remember, these algorithms are designed to be addictive.

That’s our job: Our job is to protect children and students in Ontario. Let’s get to work. Let’s work together. There are even some parents in here whose children are on social media a lot; maybe they should know what’s actually going on behind closed doors.

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. Deepak Anand: First of all, I want to say thank you to the member from Essex and, through him, I was able to get to this petition from Mary. Thank you, Mary, for bringing something that is very important for the people of Ontario.

Speaker, this petition is talking about how if there’s going to be a storm, there’s going to be an impact, and

we're talking about the storm of tariffs. With the fall economic statement coming out today, we can see that the people who put this petition together knew there is going to be a storm and there will be the impact of that storm, which is tariffs, and that is what we're seeing in the fall economic statement as well.

The wonderful people of Ontario are asking this government to come together, work together and break the barriers between all the provinces. That's something which we heard from the minister: about being a nation-builder, breaking those barriers and Canada becoming the number one customer for Canada.

I also want to say thank you to the members who have signed this petition, a forward-looking petition which this government is already implementing. I absolutely support this petition. I'm signing it, and I'm going give it to page Ava.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

MPP Jamie West: I want to thank Cathy Orlando from Sudbury for collecting signatures on this petition that's called "Scrap Bill 5 and Do Development Right." I also want to recognize that former Chief Moonias is up in the gallery.

Basically, what they talk about is how Bill 5 is going to create "special economic zones" and suspend labour laws, environmental protections, public health rules, even legal liability. First Nations leadership, as we saw during the committee meetings that we had, have been clear that Bill 5 violates the duty to consult and ignores the requirement of free, prior and informed consent. It also disrespects treaty rights and threatens critical land and water by gutting protections for archaeological sites and endangered species in the province.

The reality is that Bill 5, instead of speeding up projects, is more than likely going to slow down projects because of protests that are sure to arise from this. It's also going to slow down progress because of the legal conflicts that are going to happen. So what they're asking for is that the bill be repealed and start over with full consultation, including with First Nations, so they can do development right in Ontario.

I support this petition. This is actually what the Ontario Mining Association advocates for as the proper way to develop mines in the future. I'll affix my signature and provide it to page Naomi for the table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Pauline Villeneuve from Hanmer in my riding for this petition that's called "Double Social Assistance Rates." Basically, we have over 900,000 Ontarians who are forced to rely on social assistance right now. The Ford government promised a raise to the Ontario Disability Support Program, but that raise was only 5% and provided no additional support to those who receive Ontario Works.

Whereas inflation is at a 40-year high and people on fixed incomes are forced to make sacrifices every day just to survive, and whereas both ODSP and OW recipients live in legislated poverty, with a meagre \$58 increase to their ODSP and no additional support for OW recipients, they petition the Legislative Assembly to immediately double social assistance rates so that people can live dignified, healthy lives.

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

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Jamie West: I also have a petition entitled "To Raise Social Assistance Rates." As my colleague from Nickel Belt just said, Ontario Works is only at \$733 for individuals and ODSP is at \$1,368. That is far below what any rent locally would cost you.

There have been open letters sent to the Premier and two cabinet ministers that were signed by 230 organizations. They are recommending that the rates for OW and ODSP be doubled. In fact, we've been reading these petitions for so long that maybe it has to be even higher than that.

We just listened to the fall economic statement, Speaker. I don't think I heard anything about caring for the most vulnerable people who make the least amount of money who rely on the service. The reality is, in this petition they talk about how the people who are on ODSP, even though they got a meagre 5% increase, are still far below the poverty line. People living with disabilities are forced by the government to live below the poverty line, and obviously those on OW who are even lower than that are struggling to survive and probably likely are the reason we're seeing growing encampments in all of our communities.

1350

If you remember back when CERB was put in place, the basic income was \$2,000 a month. That was a standard that was chosen at the time that people would need to survive. As you can see, \$733 is far below \$2,000 and \$1,368 for ODSP is also far below \$2,000. The people who have signed this petition, which I support, are petitioning the assembly to double social assistance rates for both OW and ODSP.

Obviously, I support this petition. I'll affix my signature and provide it to page Rafi to the table.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Jeannette Rainville from Capreol in my riding for these petitions. They are called "Improve Access to Primary Care."

You all know that Medicare is a program that defines us as Ontarians, as Canadians. We get the care we need based on our needs, not on our ability to pay. But right now close to 2.5 million Ontarians do not have access to primary care. They don't have a family doctor; they don't

have a nurse practitioner. Some 40,000 of them are in my riding in Nickel Belt.

We all know that the best quality care is delivered by interdisciplinary care, so we have community health centres, Aboriginal health access centres, nurse-practitioner-led clinics, community-governed family health teams. They all have long wait-lists. They all are willing to take on more people, more patients, but they haven't had a base budget increase in about—well, since this government has been in power—and they haven't been funded to hire more staff, more nurse practitioners, more physicians, more nurses for years.

This has to change. The nurse practitioners were at Queen's Park today asking just that: Pay them what they are worth and fund more positions for nurse practitioners through all of the interdisciplinary teams.

They ask the Legislative Assembly to immediately increase funding for community health centres, Aboriginal health access centres, family health teams, nurse practitioner-led clinics and Indigenous primary health care organizations.

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

HEALTH CARE

MPP Jamie West: I thank my colleague the member for Nickel Belt for creating this petition, which was signed by, among other people, Janice Martell, who—my colleagues here may remember—was the person who brought forward the idea for an apology for the McIntyre miners, which we passed unanimously here.

The petition is entitled "Health Care: Not for Sale." Basically, they talk about the importance of the people of Ontario getting health care based on their need, not their ability to pay. That's what separate Canadians from the American model. Unfortunately, this Conservative government has been actively privatizing our health care system, increasing it rapidly.

We heard in the fall economic statement recently that there's going to be either more money given to long-term care. I think the people of Ontario don't see long-term care as an effective way of getting money to the front line, but we do see the private long-term-care industry making more and more money, while the people who live there aren't typically taken care of very properly.

We know that privatization will bleed nurses and doctors and health care professionals, including our nurse practitioners and PSWs. The reality is that we need to invest in our hospitals and not invest into shareholders' profits, at the end of the day. No matter how many times we hear, "You're going pay with your OHIP card, not your credit card," we hear countless stories, including filling the gallery with people who have had to pay with their credit card for health care.

The people who have signed the petition are calling on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop the privatization of Ontario's health care system and fix that crisis in health care by presenting a serious plan to

help recruit, retain and return respective health care professionals—as well as other things that I won't go into, because I see we're out of time for petitions, Speaker.

I support this petition. I affix my signature and give it to Naomi for the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 6, 2025, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion regarding report writing proceedings of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy on the study on intimate partner violence.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We'll resume debate with the member from Kiiwetinoong.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetich, Speaker. Thank you. This afternoon, I'm just going to continue the discussion with regard to the motion tabled by the government, a motion regarding the Standing Committee on Justice Policy's report on intimate partner violence.

Earlier this morning, I spoke about the Moose Hide Campaign. I thank them for the work that they do, not just in Ontario but across the country.

But, Speaker, I want to turn it over to the motion we are speaking about today to declare intimate partner violence as endemic. At the same time, we know that many survivors of IPV and organizations have called on Ontario to declare IPV as an epidemic. In fact, I know that over 100 municipalities, 150 organizations and, of course, multiple police associations have already declared IPV as an epidemic, and they do call on the government to do that as well.

I think there is a key difference between—you know, English is my second language. When I think about endemic versus epidemic, endemic, in this case, means that intimate partner violence is present or prevalent; an epidemic would require that the government to apply resources to its eradication by treating it as an emergency. That is a big difference. If this government is willing to recognize that there is an issue, then why don't they treat it with the level of urgency that it requires to be eradicated?

I know that when we talk about violence against women in Canada, it is described as a "deliberate race, identity and gender-based genocide" by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Since the inquiry took place, the proportion of femicide victims who are Indigenous has substantially increased, going from 5.4% in 2019-20 to 8.1% in 2022-23. Speaker, I know despite Indigenous women and girls making up 5% of the female population, they make up 20% of all women and girls killed in gender-related homicides in Canada. I know that these stats and real-life risks become even more extreme for Indigenous women who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ and Indigenous women with disabilities.

1400

Over 10 years ago, the rates of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada were described as an epidemic by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous women in Ontario are three times more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous women—three times more likely, just because of being an Indigenous woman.

Some of this information I have just shared was included in the statement released last fall by the Ontario Indigenous Women's Advisory Council. This council was announced by the Ontario government in 2020. It includes representatives from the Ontario Native Women's Association, the Chiefs of Ontario, Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Anishinabek Nation. One year ago this month, the advisory council declared intimate partner violence in Ontario an epidemic. Their statement at the time included recommendations, including the following:

"Indigenous women's safety be prioritized at all levels of government in all policies, plans, and strategies that impact, or have the potential to impact, the lives of Indigenous women."

Another quote: "Indigenous women be involved in the development of all legislative, policy, program and service responses to the issues that impact them, including gender-based violence."

Another quote: "Additional and separate investments for Indigenous men and boys to support healing and restoration of balance in communities."

And here's another quote, the recommendations from their statement: "Increased and sustainable investments from all levels of government into new and existing community-based culturally grounded programs and services that improve Indigenous women's safety and promote family and community healing, including funding for violence prevention, education, and awareness; culturally relevant shelter services, transitional housing and affordable housing; community-based child welfare prevention; Indigenous-specific mental health, addictions and wellness programs; and programs that support Indigenous women's leadership."

Speaker, we do not see these recommendations reflected in the discussions here today.

I say that because earlier this morning—as a member of Kiiwetinoong, as a member of the First Nations people, I am here to represent the unrepresented, and I am here to represent the under-represented. And this shows today where you do not see these recommendations at all in the dialogue that we are having today.

Speaker, we know that intimate partner violence does not discriminate. I know that up in northern Ontario, I know that up in Kiiwetinoong, we know that intimate partner violence is an issue. It is something that we face in the north.

In 2020, the municipality of Red Lake and the township of Ear Falls collected feedback from the public and stakeholders on a community safety and well-being plan. Part of their focus was on emotional and sexual violence, and I want to share some of their findings.

OPP—Ontario Provincial Police—data from the municipality of Red Lake's annual report showed that there were 16 sexual assaults and 89 assaults in 2019. While the report did not report specifically on domestic or intimate partner violence, we know that intimate partner violence represents nearly a third of all police-reported violent crimes in Canada and 75% of the victims identify as female.

The report also identified some of the gaps and some of the barriers that are faced related to emotional and sexual violence, some of which were that youth who are dealing with emotional or sexual violence need mental health supports to cope and move forward, but there are wait-lists to access the care that they need, and no crisis response services between 2 a.m. and 8 a.m. There is not enough focus on warm referrals between crisis response and aftercare supports.

There is a need to increase the community awareness of the issue and the supports. There is a need for counselling at the shelter. There is also a lack of support for men who face domestic violence and who want to leave with their children.

The report also noted some key opportunities that would help to fill these gaps, which I urge this government to help make a reality:

- to provide 24/7 crisis response services in Red Lake and Ear Falls;

- to establish a 24/7 youth hub—a safe space;

- and to take measures to increase awareness and co-ordination so that at-risk individuals can be connected to the right agencies proactively.

I know I'm running out of time here, but again, as part of being an MPP for Kiiwetinoong, I honour and represent the 31 First Nations and 24 of those that are fly-in. And I just want to say that declaring IPV as an epidemic is absolutely much needed. Meegwetich.

1410

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Hon. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today to speak on motion 8, intimate partner violence, brought forward by my colleague the associate minister responsible for women's social and economic opportunity, Minister Williams, and, of course, the great work done on the intimate partner violence committee by my colleague from Kitchener South—Hespeler, Jess Dixon.

We've had this discussion for many years since I've been in the Legislature. It's going to continue on and we're going to continue to debate supports in our attempt to end violence against women—intimate partner violence, what we're talking about today. Because every day in Ontario, there are women, children and families living in fear of someone they know, someone they once trusted. And it is a heartbreaking reality, and we've all been with members of our community hearing these heart-wrenching stories. We can no longer view them as isolated incidents. Intimate partner violence is not new, it's not sudden and it's not temporary. It's endemic, deeply rooted, persistent and present in every community across our province.

Today, our government stands united in formally recognizing that reality. Because when we speak the truth about the scope of the problem, we take the first step towards ending it. As a government, and has been said by many other colleagues, especially the two that I've mentioned, the words we choose matter, and this definition is deliberate. It's thoughtful and it's grounded in evidence. We know that the language alone does not protect people but language shapes the understanding and understanding drives action.

The word "endemic" is not used lightly. It does not appear overnight, and it will not disappear on its own. It's rooted in attitudes, inequities and histories that have been passed from generation to generation. By calling it endemic, we are acknowledging that this is not a temporary crisis, but an ongoing challenge that demands a long-term response. This definition aligns Ontario with the World Health Organization, leading academics and members from across this Legislature who have recognized the same truth. In doing so, we're sending a clear message: Violence has no place in Ontario—not in our homes, not in our workplace, not anywhere.

Our government has made it clear that we have zero tolerance for violence against women. That principle guides every law we pass and every dollar we invest. Because every woman, every person, deserves to live in safety and dignity, free from intimidation and the threat of violence.

We also recognize and celebrate the front-line workers, community leaders, advocates and survivors who dedicate their lives to ending this cycle. Their courage, their compassion and their persistence are the foundation of this work. We owe them not only our gratitude but our partnership and our continued support.

Madam Speaker, you have been in the House a length of time as I have been. We have shared many names of people that we have spoken to over the years, whether it's victim services in Durham, victim services in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes, Victim Services Toronto with Carly Kalish, who still informs us. Weekly, I have a call with her to see what next steps we can take. Because we are going to have to take further steps and we all know it, and it's heart-wrenching. But we are part of a solution by being elected members and having this podium and taking actions. I know we debate which actions, and sometimes we agree and sometimes we don't, but at the end of the day, the goal is always about ending the violence against women and people in this province.

Our government's commitment is not just spoken; it is demonstrated through action. We've taken concrete steps to strengthen protection for women, expand prevention efforts and support survivors. We've passed new laws, some of them the first of their kind in Canada, to make it harder to victimize women and easier for survivors to access justice.

I'm going to mention a few pieces of legislation that we have worked on. When I said "first in Canada"—I want to give a shout-out to the Minister of Education at the time, Minister Lecce, who passed the Ontario act to protect

students from sex trafficking, a \$2.4-million investment to mandate all boards to implement an anti-trafficking plan, the first of its kind in Canada, training the people that educate our children, giving them the resources. Again, it's education, but it is education for all of us—for the parents, for the students. Protecting our children: This is generational, trying to end violence.

Many of you know that I have had many pieces of legislation to combat human sex trafficking, so I'm quite proud of the multi-ministry work that we have done since we've been in government. I know that Minister Thompson, who was Minister of Education before, had certainly started that work.

Some of my new colleagues in the Legislature, the now Minister of Colleges and Universities, the MPP from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry—it was his bill, Bill 123, Erin's Law, that amends the Education Act to require school boards to implement programs for child sexual abuse prevention and reporting. It mandates that school boards must establish policies to engage students in age-appropriate discussions on the topics, provide information to parents and guardians and offer training to teachers and staff. It's allowing a comfort area where children who might have been abused can report safely in our schools—another piece that has been brought forward by our great members.

The member from Thornhill and I did an act to amend the name change act in 2023 so that under Christopher's Law—we stopped convicted sex offenders from legally changing their names in Ontario. They could hide their identities. They could be in jail and change their names before they got out, and unassuming communities are subject to victimization by repeat offenders.

I know that the Solicitor General has worked very hard with those members to get us this far in the Safe Streets Act, I believe it was—I have lots of pieces of paper—that makes changes to education. The Solicitor General at the time, Minister Sylvia Jones, brought in legislation for further protections and access to justice—the Ministry of Tourism, so that hotels and motels would more freely give their guest registry if there was something that the police needed, if there was untoward action that was going on at those hotels.

I know Minister Lisa McLeod at the time worked passionately on many angles of violence against women and the human trafficking that we have raised awareness about and that has been prevalent, and brought in much action to combat that.

The present Minister of Health, who was the Solicitor General at the time, brought in legislation for further protections and awareness, and we continue, as MPPs, to educate in our communities.

I know that the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler was an advocate, with the Minister of Education, Minister Lecce, in Coaching Boys into Men, which is through Interval House of Hamilton. Working with the Minister of Education, that program has now spread across all of Ontario.

1420

I know that the member that just spoke before me said about education for men and boys—we absolutely need to do that. There are good examples in our communities, and we need to push those further ahead.

I know I'm speaking of a lot of past examples, and I'm not naming them all, but I just want to say I'm very proud of our government, collectively, which has multiple ministries working together to combat human trafficking, violence, and is getting more access to justice in our systems.

I want to comment on the associate minister with her launch of Ontario-STANDS, which is the province's action plan to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. Through Ontario-STANDS, they're investing \$1.4 billion to address and prevent gender-based violence. This is one of the largest commitments of its kind in Ontario's history, and it's a long-term commitment. It is working with the final report for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Through there, she's launched Pathways to Safety. There are unique challenges faced by Indigenous women and girls, as was mentioned by my colleague MPP Sol Mamakwa. She's established the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council that guides the approach. I, myself, have worked with many Indigenous communities through the years to fight violence against women and the unique need that is there, and I'm so proud of the incredible leadership of the women in the Indigenous communities. It is really amazing, and I know it's going forward even further.

But it's the funding that supports front-line agencies, shelters, counselling services, prevention programs—all this makes a real difference in people's lives. Every dollar is an investment in safety, prevention and accountability.

Madam Speaker, we know that the government cannot end this problem alone. The solutions must come from the ground up, from communities who know the needs, risks and realities best. That's why we launched—again, the new associate minister—the \$100-million call for proposals to expand community-based programs, and I know the response was overwhelming. I know that women's resources in Lindsay that serve Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton, and the Peterborough YWCA that goes and supports my Haliburton area, the Durham region—all were part of these initiatives and funding and growing and talking to each other and, "What else we can we do?" That tells us that communities are ready, willing and determined to lead this fight.

Our government has worked with federal partners to secure \$162 million to support Ontario's role in the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. That funding helps align our provincial initiatives with the national priorities and ensures consistency of support across the country.

Through budget 2024, \$310 million was added over three years to help community organizations manage rising costs. We know inflation, staffing pressures—it's not immune to those community groups that supply such vital services, and survivors rely on their support.

In addition, the government has invested \$13.5 million over three years to enhance programs for women, children, youth and others at high risk of violence or exploitation. These investments are producing results. More survivors are finding safe shelter. More communities are offering prevention programs. More organizations are delivering trauma-informed care. Every one of these efforts—every program, every initiative—brings us closer to a safer Ontario.

Madam Speaker, when we talk about zero tolerance, it's not just a slogan. It must be reflected in the laws we pass, the budgets we set and the partnerships we build, and we're doing that. We are taking a responsible, evidence-based approach to describe this issue as it truly is. An epidemic appears suddenly and spreads rapidly, but intimate partner violence has been with us for generations. We recognize its depth, its persistence, the systemic changes needed to end it. This language respects the lived experience of survivors and the research of experts. Naming it accurately is not just semantics; it defines how we respond, it guides how we allocate resources and it shapes how society understands the problem.

Ending violence against women requires co-operation across political parties, governments and communities. I want to recognize the members who I've worked with in the past, not only the person in the chair at the moment, but members across the aisle that are still there. Truly, we have worked on many issues together about violence, and it's not a partisan issue. It's our shared and simple goal. I know that, most recently, the \$26.7 million that was announced by Associate Minister Williams—and also, I want to give a big shout-out to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, Minister Parsa, because we hear from the shelter spaces and they need some more supports.

There is more education out there. Many of the things I've mentioned in the past—we are educating people. Whether it's in the school system, it's in our communities, it's in our church groups, it's in our Probus clubs or it's in our Legions, people are aware. It's not a pretty part of society, but we have to face it. And how do we deal with it? We need those community partners.

A Place Called Home, Women's Resources in my Kawartha Lakes area—they're happy about the increase, not only for shelter spaces but the Family Court Support Worker Program that helps victims. As we all know, it is incredibly difficult to come forward to find ways to escape a terrible, terrible situation. Minister Williams has spoken eloquently about supporting women financially—economic opportunities, skilled trades and development. So they may even still be in this horrible situation, but they're able to find a financial path out, economic independence, and move on with their lives. All these many programs are so important, and they're so impactful, and they are working. That's the type of proof that we need.

I know that the previous Ministers of Children, Community and Social Services have been wonderful to deal with, to recognize, to work with other ministries. I want to thank the House leaders and MPP Steve Clark for his

many years of support when I have been here, and all my male colleagues who support—maybe it is mainly driven by the women that you see standing up, but it's supported by the men behind us in our Legislature. As I said, I'm very proud of the advances that we have made.

I want to say that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, especially through the pandemic—the assistance that was given, funnelled maybe through the municipalities as they are the social service providers—A Place Called Home in Lindsay received over \$1 million and was able to add on to their existing shelter beds. They have continued to get programs that give them the tools to—even just cameras to watch, not only in the washrooms, because, of course, there's this horrible problem we have with drugs in our communities—but to give them modern tools to deal with the situations present before them. They have mid-term housing to help people move on.

I am very proud of my municipalities for the work they've done with provincial governments, predominantly, and some of the federal governments. But we're all on the same forward-thinking path of: How do we deal with what's in front of us—let's be realistic—and what are the pathways?

I know that Associate Minister Williams—we've been lucky to have her in our caucus, because she has worked with these vulnerable individuals for decades before you got here, and so thank you for your leadership and your background that you've brought to this file. I really appreciate that.

Madam Speaker, as I close today, we have to go and forefront in our mind with: Violence will never be tolerated in Ontario. We need to protect survivors, and we need to continue working with every partner and every community to end it. Our government will do whatever it takes because the right to live free from violence is not negotiable.

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Recognizing intimate partner violence as endemic is an act of honesty and accountability. It tells survivors we see them. It tells offenders that we will hold them to account. And it tells every Ontarian that we are united in building a province where safety, dignity and equality are not ideals; they are realities.

Together, we can, and we will, end violence against women in Ontario. Every woman deserves to be safe, every family deserves peace, and every community deserves its chance to thrive free from fear. Madam Speaker, it's time that we continue this pathway and this motion and move forward.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: What a strange debate we are having here in this House today. About a year and a half ago, in response to the call to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic, the government struck a committee. That committee sat down; they did some work. That committee stopped doing the work. One member of that committee wrote a report bypassing legislative research and procedural affairs here, and before the House today, we have a

motion asking for us to look at that report. To say that these are strange days would be a grave understatement. Of course, things have really—as the Premier says, the cheese has truly slipped off the cracker around here.

I want to talk, of course, about the issue of intimate partner violence that is happening in the province of Ontario because, contrary to what you have heard, the stats tell a very different story than the messaging that is coming out of the government. I would say, also, to the members of this House that actions speak louder than even the symbolic words that we've heard in this House on this very issue.

I will say, I had the opportunity yesterday to question the Attorney General for the province of Ontario at estimates. For those of you who don't know, at estimates, we are called to ask about the fiscal decisions that the ministries are making. In fact, the Chair of the justice committee said, "We are here to determine if the Ministry of the Attorney General is making wise and effective decisions as it pertains to the resource allocation to deal with court backlogs, procedural policing"—you name it.

Of course, you'll know that I'm very, very concerned about what's happening in our court systems. If you go down Bay Street right now and you walk into the court there, it will not be a packed courthouse despite the backlogs. What we heard yesterday from the Ontario trial lawyers is that those courtrooms are often closed.

How you deal with intimate partner violence and how you build some confidence in a system that's supposed to deal with people who feel that it is okay or acceptable to strike their partner—primarily women—is that you hold them to account with a strong justice system. When that justice system fails those women and, ultimately, also fails the accused, then you have a compromised system in Ontario. That is when violence thrives.

I'll give you some context for this discussion because I certainly did not get any answers from the Attorney General yesterday. The numbers on the cases that are currently being thrown out, the sexual assault cases in Ontario that are being thrown out of court, where justice is not happening: In 2022, it was 1,326; in 2023, 1,171; in 2024, 1,439 cases were dispensed; and here we are, in 2025, with an all-time high number of sexual assault cases that went to court but then got dispensed, 1,530 cases.

Just try to imagine, just for a second, how hard it is for a woman who has experienced heinous violence. I'm going to be reading some quotes about this, but I just want to make sure that people understand that when we're talking about sexual violence, this is one of the most heinous crimes because it is about power. It is about holding power over another person and it is about stealing their humanity. That is why it is so vile.

The systems for many, many years have been designed by men, but women for years now have raised their voices around how hard it is to access justice once you have experienced a violent crime like sexual assault.

Of course, I did try to deal with this system back in 2023, and I brought forward Lydia's Law to this Legislature. For those of you who don't know, an MPP has the

right and the privilege to bring forward a piece of legislation once a year to address an issue that we feel is very close to us. Often these issues come from the heart but also come from a constituent. And in this case, for me, it came from Lydia.

This is almost three years ago now. I received a desperate call from Lydia's mom, and she was reaching out to help her daughter who had been sexually assaulted. She had been embroiled in a two-year court proceeding. Lydia was a child at the time. She described the experience of her daughter as retraumatizing and cruel. I would say that we obviously connected as mothers, and she asked if we could work together.

These are the best kind of private members' bills, when they're inspired by people, and also with the hope of actually changing the system, I would say. Because some private members' bills come through this house and they're very symbolic and they're very surface, but not this one.

She asked me, "Can we try to fix this system so that other daughters don't have to go through the court system like mine did?" And to be honest, at that time, I will tell you, I didn't actually know how broken the court system was at that moment. But this is what she said. She said, "My daughter was sexually assaulted. One of the bravest things she ever did was come forward and file a police report." Police will tell you, it's so hard for women to come into a station and disclose this. She had to sit down; she made a video statement; she went through the entire ordeal in detail hour after hour. She went on to say, "When the investigation was completed and it was communicated to us that the charges had been laid, there was a small sense of relief."

Because few people know this, but it's a very difficult to lay charges around sexual assaults. The body of evidence has to be there. The body of evidence has to be proven. And the police officers—who are very, very special officers who work in these cases—they know that they have to gather a body of evidence that will be tested in the court and tested by a lawyer. It's a huge risk, mentally and physically, for that person.

As she says, "The most difficult thing a parent could ever experience is watching your child suffer. Throughout the over" two years of the courts, "my daughter's mental health suffered immensely. From the first day of court until the final day of sentencing, we were faced with constant setbacks and miscommunications from the courts and constant delays due to court backlogs." And with every delay, there was a setback for Lydia.

This is a young woman who showed great courage, who was retraumatized by the justice system that was supposed to support her. This was the inspiration and the motivation for Lydia's Law.

We looked for some solutions. It turns out that the Auditor General for the province of Ontario back in 2019 made some key recommendations to address the lack of transparency and corresponding backlog in the court system. These recommendations were embedded in Lydia's Law. This is a piece of legislation that is grounded in the

Auditor General's recommendations. What it would have done is that it would have compelled the Attorney General to prepare a public progress report detailing criminal cases pending disposition and analyze the reasons for delays, complete with data that included breakdown for reasons of withdrawal.

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We want to know why these cases are getting thrown out. We want to know why a young woman, or a woman, goes through the court system and then gets the lawyer; passes the test to actually have the case be heard in an Ontario law courtroom; and then, for some reason, gets stayed, gets thrown out. We want to know why that's happening. Why did this happen in 2025 thus far with 1,530 cases? Don't you want to know why? I want to know why. I know my colleague over there wants to know why too.

But in order to make that happen, you actually have to do the work. The Attorney General has to do his work. And so, yesterday in estimates, I asked him, "How much have you allocated to expose and review and address all of these court cases that are not seeing justice?" Do you think that the Attorney General for the province of Ontario could give me a number? No. At one point, I said, "Are you even capable of saying a number with some zeroes behind it?" Nothing, Madam Speaker.

This is not privileged information. Just as a reminder, this is not a business here. This is the government. We are in charge of the people's money. Transparency is key as a key cornerstone of a democracy. The Attorney General for the province of Ontario should be able to tell me as the legislator from Waterloo how much he has allocated through his ministry to ensure that women who come forward and bring forward a sexual assault case—have the courage to do that—why they are not getting justice in the province of Ontario. You can write all the damn reports you want about intimate partner violence. If the justice system is not anchoring that report or those recommendations, then intimate partner violence will continue to rise. This is the premise. This is the premise of our very work here.

I want to say what happened was, after much consultation with activists and advocacy groups from all across the province of Ontario, my private member's day, my bill came up. Lydia was not able to speak to it at that time because she had a publication ban on her case, which is another huge issue for women who want to raise their voices when they're facing sexual assault. But she finally got that publication ban lifted, and she will bring her voice here to Queen's Park. Because what happened on my private member's bill day is that the government dispensed the bill without debate and sent it to committee to die.

You know what happens when you signal to the women of the province of Ontario that you do not want to have a serious conversation about strengthening the court system for women who have enough courage to come forward? You're basically telling them that you do not really care about intimate partner violence, that you do not think that

it's an epidemic and that you don't think that justice is owed to them. That's what happened on that day.

Putting aside all of the work—a whole year's worth of work that went into the bill. Putting aside all of the research and legislative research and legal counsel, we designed a good bill. We designed a good bill that would address what's happening in our court system, that women are being denied justice. But when the government dispensed it to the justice committee to let it die, you sent another message to the people of this province that I'm sure is not going to be contained in this report.

What's the use of a report if you're going to turn your back on women who are trying to seek justice when they have been violated? This is why people do not have confidence in politicians. This is why they lose trust in this institution as a whole. It's when you turn your back on women. To listen to some of the government members talk about everything that you're doing when you have fundamentally turned your back on them—because at the end of the day, without a strong justice system, without a well-resourced police service—because the police are just as frustrated as we are about this situation. I have to say, it defies logic on so many levels. I think that it's amoral to do so.

What I will tell you is that Lydia now, after a whole year and more legal fees—she has lifted the publication ban on her case, and she said to me, “I want to come back to Queen's Park. I'm going to tell them my story. Will you bring forward this bill again?” And I said, “You're damn right I will, and if you”—

Interjections.

Ms. Catherine Fife: There you go.

So I ask the question, honestly—honestly—how do we expect young girls and women to have faith in the system, and why would they report knowing how painful the court system is?

There are many things that have to happen to address intimate partner violence. I agree with the education in the curriculum; of course this has to happen. I think that there are some good programs out there. I know our sexual assault centre in Waterloo region, and Women's Crisis Services and the YWCA—all primarily female-dominated areas—have brought forward programming. They are looking at restorative justice. They work with the Child Witness Centre to support people who have experienced this kind of violence. But we're never going to truly address it if the court system isn't there to balance out the imbalance in society.

And speaking of imbalances, I do want to say, one of the things that we don't talk enough about is the lack of housing. There are many women who stay in unsafe relationships because they don't have safe housing. In Hamilton, a women's crisis centre had to turn away 50 women who were looking for shelter. If you turn them away, you're sending them back to the place where they're being violated. You're sending them back to that place of violence.

I heard yesterday—I mean, it was astounding to me that the Attorney General said he didn't care how much it's

going to cost. Well, we have 50 women on a wait-list at the sexual assault centre in Waterloo region. They're waiting over three months for counselling and for support, because this is the kind of trauma that you don't bounce back from. You need specialized care and compassion and you need to know that those moments of violence that happened to you don't define you.

Madam Speaker, to sum up, I got no justice from the Attorney General of Ontario. I got no answers. I got no numbers. And at the end of the day, when you're looking at addressing a core systemic issue that, as my colleague from Kiiwetinoong has indicated, is much worse in Indigenous communities—just a huge violation of human rights on all fronts. And you look at BIPOC community members who—their interactions with the justice system are not positive, I would say, not in the least way.

Then you look at the victim services organizations, the not-for-profits across this province, who the minister gave a shout-out to. Those not-for-profits across the province are struggling. I mean, we are fundraising in Ontario to keep women safe. How the hell is this happening in 2025?

And to also make a mention: When women are being violated and experience violence in their home—and the home is supposed to be safe, right? It's supposed to be a safe place—you're also experiencing what children are exposed to as well. All of this has a trickle-out effect from the justice system.

Right now, in Ontario, our justice system is broken. The Attorney General yesterday used a crazy word, I have to say, when he said, “There's magic happening in our courtrooms”—magic, okay? I've never heard such nonsense in my entire life in this place. It's like you're intentionally trying to be unserious about an incredibly serious issue.

This motion essentially amounts to game-playing as well, because not only did we not need a 1,000-page report from the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler because the body of evidence already exists. The pathways to more peaceful living arrangements and to justice for women who are facing intimate partner violence, the research, the evidence, the policies—they're just there, and they've been there for a long time.

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What we need is some political leadership from the Ford government, from his ministers. We need the resources allocated where the Attorney General can actually say a dedicated number to deal with this issue in Ontario. That's what we need. Regardless, though, we're still going to try to make it better for women. We're dedicated to this, and there are dates where we will do some report writing because, you know, another report is going to save another woman's life.

Madam Speaker, I'm sorry to be so passionate about it, but it is frustrating to be in 2025 and debating a motion like this today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I want to thank the member for Waterloo. She is determined, steadfast and she's a really good listener, so I hope that we can take what she shared

today to heart. To me, it's troubling that women don't have access to justice. Every time I go to Take Back the Night or another event, I hear more and more situations where women have put themselves forward, they've made a really challenging decision to share their story and seek justice against their abuser and have been left further traumatized.

I do want to say that I'm grateful to the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler for ensuring that this report comes back. I know she worked very hard to try to put these pages together, to take the committee feedback and put it into a package. And so, to the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler, I appreciate her determination to make sure that this issue doesn't die. But I have to say that I'm pretty troubled to be debating this kind of motion in this way, and I'll explain why.

I've had many experiences over my last two years in committee. Committee has been a bit of a farce, if you ask me. Zero times have my—I take amendments, and I bring them forward from a privacy commissioner or a child advocate group or experts in the field, and zero times have those amendments been adopted. So today, you're asking me to vote on something and debate on something that I have not seen. And I know that when it heads to committee, unfortunately, my experience of committee has been disingenuous. People come in, they share their experiences—we saw this with Bill 9: travelled the country, brought people forward and zero amendments.

I am hopeful that the government will prove me wrong, that this committee experience will be genuine and that you will listen and hear the amendments that we need from all parties. Because I know we all care about this issue; we all want to see an end to intimate partner violence. I hope that in the committee room, we can join together and make meaningful progress so that this report comes with real action, and it's a collaborative work.

But, while we sit here talking, the issues get worse. I was a school social worker for 11 years and I keep in touch with my colleagues. What I see troubles me. We see a rise in the misogynistic content of pornography. Strangling is now a norm. It is a norm in porn. Young men grow up, they are introduced to pornography, oftentimes from a friend at a school, often around the age of 12, and they're watching strangulation as something that a woman enjoys. So their first sexual experience, more and more often, comes at the expense of both the perpetrator and the victim because they think that this is real life. They think that she enjoys being strangled. They think that this kind of misogynistic, toxic pornography is welcome, and that's not okay. We see that rise and we have to be honest about the reality of what our kids are doing online every day. We could talk about books in schools all day long, but we know that this is where the harms are, and there are zero guardrails in place—zero guardrails in place for young people.

I worry about my daughter because she's five times more likely—she's in the age category, five times more likely—to be sexually abused. And do you know what I know? I know that in our province, four programs to

prevent reoffences of sexualized behaviours have been shut down—four. These are documented programs that help perpetrators, pedophiles, young offenders with sexualized behaviours, preventing them from reoffending, and they are shut down. They lost their funding. Those experts, those social work experts who work in this field and do the great work to stop people from reoffending and making more people victims—those are closed.

I don't have time to talk about the amount of trafficking. I keep in touch with the people from our local child psychiatry, from our police. I have to say that we have to be honest about what's happening along the 401 corridor.

Again, these things are luring machines. Girls think that it's their boyfriend who's taking care of them. They get addicted to toxic drugs. They will have a very hard time moving out of this system of trafficking. We are behind the eight ball.

While we talk, these things get worse. Alcohol is liberalized, making it more likely that people will be abused because we know alcohol is adding fuel to the fire. We aren't talking about these guardrails we need for our young people and we're stripping away the protections, the programs that I know about, not to mention the many others that are shutting down, to stop recidivism of childhood sexual abuse. I saw in the FES today that funding is going down.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: It's an honour to be here today to discuss the motion that's on the floor. Today we are formally recognizing the endemic nature of intimate partner violence in Ontario.

I know we've had a lot of discussion about, "Why endemic? Why not epidemic?" It comes back to what's in a name. What we call something matters, especially when our words carry power. We think about what the difference is. Endemic, epidemic—what does it mean in reality?

An epidemic, as we just saw with COVID-19, is something that's often very quickly onset, that lasts for a short period of time and that does necessitate a crisis response. The assumption is that once we're done dealing with it, it will then end, and that would come about suddenly.

But we know that things that are endemic don't work that way. I think that if we look inside ourselves and we think about the history of intimate partner violence, we realize that this is something that has always been with us. The acknowledgement that it is endemic in no way lessens the severity of it and in no way lessens the need for a serious response to it.

It will be something that will require more structure, that will need to occur over time and that cannot be snuffed out in an instant like with a vaccine or with something else. It's something that's going to require all of us to do serious work over a long period of time and to come to the table to address this crisis as it is.

We think about the history of intimate partner violence and what used to be normalized. I remember watching old

movies at my grandfather's house, some of those early James Bond movies that I used to love to watch when I was a kid. We look back on those now, movies from 60 years ago, and we realize how often women were being struck in these films and that that was considered normal.

Often, we do a tribute to the King. There were kings that had their wives killed publicly because they couldn't produce them a son, because divorce was illegal or for any other reason. It is embedded in our culture and in our society, and that is not something that is going to leave quickly or leave without everyone coming to the table and doing the work.

I want to start by thanking the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity, the member from Brampton Centre, as well as my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, who spoke so eloquently earlier.

I was here the other day for the member of Kitchener South-Hespeler's speech about how she basically demanded to be part of this committee and said, "If this is not going to go anywhere, then I am not the person that you want on this." We know how tenacious that member is and that there is no chance that we are going to put her on this file and that this file will end up in a cabinet somewhere collecting dust. This is going to get across the finish line. I have to say, I have a tremendous amount of respect and confidence in that member.

I look forward to getting this motion passed, getting back to committee and completing that process that we started with those hearings. I'm going to talk about those hearings a little bit later on.

I just heard the member from Kitchener Centre talk about the challenges with this new digital age that we're in and with the proliferation of sexualized images and videos online.

I was born in 1992, and I'm sorry for how that might make some of the members in the chamber feel—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Oh, stop it.

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: I forgot to thank the member from Waterloo for her incredible work, as well as the member from Oshawa.

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I was born in 1992, and so my generation was the first generation that went through that online revolution where, all of a sudden, everyone had a cellphone in their hands; when all of a sudden it became normalized to share images of each other with your partner, with your boyfriend, with your girlfriend. I saw the effects of that when I was going to school, and it wasn't once or twice. It was a constant thing, where a female friend of mine would have a boyfriend and would feel comfortable sharing an image and then, all of a sudden, everyone had it. All of a sudden it was online, and all of a sudden it was all anyone could talk about on social media. The total, all-encompassing feeling of dread and of guilt and of shame that they felt—even though it should never have been theirs; it should have been on the person that shared that image.

We do live in a very challenging time as it relates to our children seeing these things and being involved with

them. Sometimes I think it's tough, particularly for someone like me, for some of the men in this chamber, to understand how it feels to be in these situations. Through time, we've heard people talk about, "Well, why didn't you just leave?" Since I was about 12 years old, I've been this size, so I have always had an opportunity to walk out of any room that I'm in.

You have to set that paradigm aside sometimes and remember that that is not the case for everybody, and that for too many people, they feel stuck and they feel rooted. There's a level of manipulation, whether it's financial, whether it's that guilt and that shame, whether it's, "If you leave me, I'll tell about this or that or the other thing." And people don't feel they have that opportunity to be able to get out of a situation like that.

That's something that I became more aware of when I was the chair of the Belleville Police Service Board. I would talk with officers about what they were seeing out in the field, and I would talk with them about the victims. Thankfully, through the Community Safety and Policing Grant, we got money just recently for victims' support to make sure that those victims, when they come to the police service, are met by someone who has a trauma-informed response; are met by someone who is going to take them seriously, who's going to make sure that they're heard and the huge impact that has, predominantly on women who are trying to flee these situations; to make sure that when they express their situation, what's happened to them, they're taken seriously and they're believed. We know how hard it is for victims to talk about what's happened to them. So to make them go through that over and over and over again before getting any services is just unacceptable.

That's what our government is standing up for today, to say that we have an action plan to end intimate partner violence. But it begins with passing this motion, going back to committee, looking at that excellent report from the member of Kitchener South-Hespeler and really diving more deeply into this.

Those intimate partner violence hearings—I was asked sort of last minute if I would participate and I had some apprehension. I was nervous about the types of things that I might hear. I have been very privileged in my life that I didn't see any violence in the home. That just wasn't something that was top of mind for us. So I had to learn about it through other experiences. I had to learn about it as I walked through the world. As I mentioned, I was a pretty big kid—I was about this size at 12 years old. That was around the time that I noticed that, when I was walking down the street, women were crossing to the other side, and I didn't understand why.

I remember talking to my parents about that: "Is it something I'm doing? Is it the way I look?" I was almost, at first, a little bit offended. I'm going, "I'm a nice guy. If you're walking through a dark alley, you should hope to find me. I'll help you get through." But what I found from my parents was that this was a conditioned response, and it was a conditioned response from the fact that too often people who look like me don't use their power responsibly. They use their power to intimidate other people, to

belittle other people and to coerce an action out of someone else. And so, every time I would see a woman cross the street when I was walking towards them—and even now, every time I get into an elevator, you can feel it. You can feel the fear and the concern. That's why it's so important to make sure that not only are women leading this charge, but men have to come to the table as well and understand that we have to see this through a different paradigm; that we have to understand how it feels to someone else.

Those hearings, as I mentioned, were really challenging for me. I have a wife whom I love very dearly, and I have three daughters. When I listened to those stories and those women talk about the abuse that they had been subjected to—the coercion, as I mentioned, whether it's from being isolated from your friends and your family, whether it's from being cut off financially and being told, “You have nowhere to go if you're not with me.” We even heard one particular instance where a woman expressed that she had been forced to carry the child of her abuser. That, then, became an anchor to tie her to him, and she felt that she couldn't leave because that would mean that her daughter didn't have a father. But she knew that that father was going to continue to abuse both her and, very likely, that child. These are really difficult things to hear.

Every day, when I would leave that committee, the first thing that I would do is that I would call my wife, and I would just talk to her. I wouldn't talk to her about what had happened that day. I just wanted to hear her voice. I just wanted to know how things had gone for her. It gave me a little bit of peace knowing that my wife will never have to go through that, that my daughters will never have to see that in their home.

But when you are the father of daughters, it's something that you do have to think about. Am I doing the right things to protect them from what might be waiting for them out in the world? And I think, certainly, one of the best things you can do is not exhibit that behaviour in your own home. My daughters will never see it be normalized. They'll never think, “Well, that's just something that happens amongst mommies and daddies.” Because it's not, and it's not acceptable.

The challenge is that when kids see those things in the home, they think that that's how people behave. And from my perspective, I think about my daughters' futures, and I think about what happens if they were ever in a situation that they felt that they couldn't leave; where they were being abused; where they were being exploited. Could you imagine saying to your daughter, “You have to report this guy. It's not okay what he's doing”? And then she looks back at you and says, “But mom never reported you.” Or if you said to your daughter, “You have to leave this this relationship. This isn't healthy.” And then she can turn around and look at you and say, “But mom didn't leave.”

It's so important that we make sure that our kids, male and female, understand that this is not okay. Because this is a generational thing. What kids learn in the home, they exhibit when they leave the home. And so it's so important that we have everyone on board and that we commit to

doing better; that we commit to talking about it; that we commit to, as men, holding other men accountable.

When I was on the police services board, I found out exactly how pervasive intimate partner violence was in my community. And it made me sick, thinking: How many times did I go into a store and the person behind the counter had abused their spouse before I got there? Or had I shaken hands with these people? Or had I done something to help them and encourage them and not even realized what they were doing in our community?

It's important to make sure that, as brave as the women are that have come forward and expressed what it was like to have been victimized and to tell their story, to have to relive that trauma and that pain—and you could see it on their faces, that this was an uncomfortable thing for them to have to do. But the bravery that they exhibited, and many of them detailing horrific events that they had experienced—there needs to be an action to that. There needs to be a closing of that loop. They came in and they bared their souls for us, and they told us what they had been through, and there is an expectation from them that that will result in something.

The motion that we have before us today is to close that loop. We are saying, “Why don't we take this report, go back to committee and close that loop for all those women who are willing to come into a cold setting, with a bunch of people in suits sitting around a table, and have to publicly tell their story.” We need to make sure that we complete this for them and that something comes out of this.

I am so thankful for the minister and for my colleague from Kitchener South—Hespeler, because I know that that is going to occur: that these women will not have been asked to come down and to express what's happened to them in vain, that this will mean something.

As I look out across the House today, I see all of my colleagues and I know that they all want that to have meant something. They want that sacrifice, that pain, that re-traumatization and all of that which came along with the bravery that they exhibited on that day to mean something, and that's what we're asking for here today. We're asking to, please, let us close that loop. Let's get something out there and let's take more action. Our government has done a number of things, but we know that we have to do better. That's what part of this is, is making sure that as we move forward, we continue to do better.

What is the goal of all of this? We all talked about it a lot. We've got this report, and we're going to go back to committee, hopefully, if the motion passes.

1510

But we want to have a future where this doesn't continue to be an issue, where there is no more intimate partner violence, where women don't have to be afraid and don't have to feel tethered to someone that should be giving them the love and the care that they deserve and instead is visiting violence upon them.

How do we get to that point? It's things like this: It's things like making sure we close that loop for those people who came in and expressed their stories to us. It's things

like making sure that our sons know that it is not acceptable. It doesn't matter if you're drunk, it doesn't matter if you were stressed, it doesn't matter if you had a bad day at work, it doesn't matter if she made a mistake and it doesn't matter what she said to you: It's never acceptable to put your hands on someone like that.

It's equally important for our daughters to know that if he says, "It only happens when I'm angry," don't believe him. If he says, "It only happens when I'm drunk," don't believe him. These are not normative things. This is not something that is excusable. There is not a good reason for it. It is not your fault. You will be supported, whether it's by your family, by your community or in the courts by your government, and coming forward will mean something and you won't have to continue in this terrible situation.

I think about some of the great organizations in my community, like the Three Oaks women's shelter, that helps women get out of those situations. Because again, there is an economic piece to this. Women who can't afford to leave have to stay in these terrible situations. We need to make sure that those women can be extracted from those situations, can be put into supportive housing and can be helped to rebuild their lives with all the different tools that they need, whether that's skills training, whether that's economic reconciliation in terms of having the money they need to go out and get an apartment, to be able to take care of their kids, to not have to stay in an abusive situation.

As we talked about, this is something that has gone on for a very long time—really, since human beings have existed. But that doesn't mean that it's something that has to continue to happen. We can evolve. We can get better. We can do more. That's what this government is doing, and that's why we have this motion before us today.

We talk about "endemic," "epidemic." It's not a word game. It's not some partisan "You said this, so we'll say that." It's about recognizing the problem as it exists and as it has existed for millennia now. This is something that is with us. This is something embedded in our culture. This is something that continues to be in our music, in our movies and in our video games, and we have to make those changes as well. But it's important to make sure, whether it's young men or young women or anybody out there, that they understand they will be supported if they come forward and that there is no excusing intimate partner violence.

As I look to close, this is something that brings us into line with the World Health Organization. This is not a term that we have created. It's also one that scholars and members of the opposition have previously identified as well: This is a long-term problem that requires longer-term, serious solutions, not something that's just popping up today.

I think all of us, when we look inside ourselves, know that. We know how long this has been in our communities. As I said earlier, I'm very thankful that I didn't experience it in the home, but even now, when I see my kids at school, when we're in that kindergarten drop-off line, you can see

it. There are those kids who come in who don't have their backpack, don't have their coat, their mother looks tired, and you just know there is something going on there.

Even my daughters, as they have gone into school now—my oldest is six, my twins are four and a half. There have been boys that have run up and just punched them in the face. Of course, as a father it makes you furious and you want to make sure that kid is held accountable, that this doesn't happen anymore and that your daughters, when they go to school, are not going to be victimized. But then there is the other side of me that knows that kid learned that somewhere, that it didn't just happen, and that it's likely something they've seen in the home.

It's an evolved process. We have to hold the monsters who do this accountable. Grown men should never be doing this—and it is predominantly men—to their partners. We also have to make sure that when people come forward, they're believed, that they feel supported and that they know real justice will happen.

We have to make sure that we protect families as best we can from the fallout of these situations. No one wants to be in a situation where families are splitting up, but often in these situations that is the best thing that can happen—to remove those kids and to remove that woman from this terrible situation.

I thank all my colleagues for hearing me out today. There's a number of tools that I've used in this chamber and some of you may have seen them—often humour, often preparation and force—and I didn't have any of those tools today. I just wanted to speak from the heart directly to my colleagues about what this issue means to me, why it's so important that we pass this legislation, that we pass this motion, that we go back to committee, that we close the loop for all of those victims who came in and talked to us, and that they know that they will be supported and understood by their government.

I want to thank everybody for hearing me out today. I want to thank the Associate Minister of Women's Economic—they're too long, these names, right? I got economic development, job creation and trade, I mean—Women's Social and Economic Opportunity and the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler for the incredible work that you've done.

I hope that, as I look out across the aisle, my colleagues will support this motion and make sure that we get justice for all of those women that came in, that spoke to us during those committee days—which I know were tough days for all of us, but all we had to do was sit there and hear them. Think of how hard it was for them. They deserve to have this loop closed. They deserve to have justice, and we all deserve to go into a future without intimate partner violence.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate? I recognize the member from Thunder Bay—Superior North.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: It is an honour to have the opportunity to speak on this issue of intimate partner violence and gender-based violence.

I'm quite a bit older than some of the people who have spoken today. I remember, in the 1970s, when there were no shelters and there were no rape crisis centres. I do remember that the women who organized to put those things in place were roundly ridiculed in every public forum, but they persisted. I don't know if you've seen these photographs of people with signs up with grey hair saying, "I can't believe I still have to protest this," and that's what I feel about where we are right now.

We've learned a lot, and I just want to say that I'm not sure that gender-based violence is embedded in our human nature. It's embedded in patriarchy. It's embedded in an ideology, in a way of thinking that says that not only are men entitled, but if they don't feel in control, then there must be something wrong. There is something in that ideology that really creates pressure.

It harms men too. It certainly harms men who don't fit the—I'm going to say the standard male stereotype that you see on most television shows. I think of CSI and what they look like. You know, they're all buff and they're all strong and occasionally sensitive.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, that's optional.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Yes, it's optional.

Partly what has encouraged me—and one of the members across the aisle mentioned this—the Coaching Boys Into Men program. There's one taking place with football players in Thunder Bay and I was quite excited to see that and read about that. It was also interesting for me to note, though, that it's being paid for by one of the women's shelters, that they're actually sponsoring the program. And then I think: Okay, well, it's shifting the thinking about how to address this problem, but it's also probably taking funding out of direct shelter services. And then I also see that the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre is sponsoring programs and Thunder Bay Counselling is sponsoring programs all for young men. I think that is a very positive step forward.

I think it's also important to know that in Thunder Bay, we have actually the highest rates of intimate partner violence in Ontario. Here we go—Thunder Bay Police Service: In just one week in October 2025, they received 31 calls related to intimate partner violence. Apparently, we've got about 700 per 1,000 people, which is more than double the provincial average. Why is this the case in our particular community? I think there are lots of reasons. I do think that it's still taboo to talk about it.

1520

When I was a young person, there was violence in my house. My stepfather was beating my younger sister and was also beating my mother. I stood up against him at one point, so he threw me and he whacked me over the head too. We went and we talked to the police—there was nothing, really, at that time. And then we went to our church, and you know what? The minister sided with my stepfather—it must be us. And then we even went to counselling at the time. The counsellor said, "What are you doing to make your stepfather behave like this towards you?"

I hope that's changed. But nobody was talking about it, yet it was happening up and down the street. You kind of get these little bits and pieces where you'd hear fighting and crashing in somebody else's house, and you'd realize, "Oh, this is not just my house; this is happening in other places too."

What saved me at the time was the women's movement—the second wave of the women's movement, which started at the end of the 1960s and into the early 1970s. I was a high school student, and I started to discover it and realized, "Okay. There's something going on here that's not just about my house. It's not just about the relationship between people in this house. There's something much bigger and more systemic going on here." That was really, really important. I guess that is why, again, I go to that poster and say, "Okay, that was the 1970s. This is 2025 and we are still dealing with the same issues." But I'm not prepared to say that it's human nature; I am much more prepared to say there are ideologies and narratives that get repeated over and over and over again.

For a while, I was living with some young kids, and they watched Cars—remember that movie, Cars? They just loved it. I kept looking at it, and there were the boy cars and there were the girl cars. The boy cars were tough, manly and winning—whatever it was; I don't even know what the movie was about. I just saw these caricatures, and I thought, "Okay. Nothing has changed." Here we are, indoctrinating little kids with these gender-based ideologies and behaviours.

In fact, there was another little kid I met. He was only two. He came into the house and he goes, "I'm going to be a truck driver." He's two, but he pushed his voice way down, as far as he could go, and he puffed up his shoulders. And I thought, where did he get this from? He's only two years old.

I do think that it's an ongoing battle; there's no question about that. There are dominant discourses that teach children—and reinforce it as we get older—that there are certain relationships that, somehow, are normal. Those relationships are based on power and assumptions and a sense of entitlement.

So where are we here in this Legislature? It does concern me that there's a report coming out that's going to be written by one person, and it will be discussed in closed doors. That seems contrary to practice in this Legislature.

I've also always wondered why we needed to go reinvent the wheel in the first place with this committee. I can go to the website of the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre and see all kinds of data, all kinds of solutions, people working as system navigators—except when the funding runs out and then they can't. But I'm not sure that we ever needed another study to move forward because there is so much information and so much expertise there already from people—mostly women—who have been doing this work their whole lives.

I do want to go back to Lydia's Law and our earlier attempts to declare IPV an epidemic. I don't think it's worth splitting hairs over "endemic" versus "epidemic," but it does disturb me that it's taken so long to get here.

The evening that we were supposed to have a debate on Lydia's Law was one of times I've felt most terrible being in this chamber. There were 100 women and allies and supporters who had come to hear their voices reflected in that debate, and it was shut down before it could even start. That, frankly, seemed nasty and misogynistic. What was the value of shutting down all those people unless you didn't want to hear, unless the government didn't want us to hear what those women had to say and the realities of those experiences? Because unfortunately, people are still being sexually assaulted, violently assaulted, assaulted in their homes, assaulted sometimes in their places of work, assaulted sometimes in their places of religion.

And we know that when you get to court, chances are that it's not going to go through. People go to court and there will be a plea bargain or something because the court system doesn't have the capacity to actually hear all the cases. So then the people who had the courage to come forward do not get justice, and that's got to be crushing. That, to me, then, would bring a person to lose all faith in justice, in people, in fairness, and make you feel like, "Well, I've had this terrible experience. Apparently, nobody cares. It doesn't matter. The perpetrator won't be held accountable, so I'm just supposed to go back to my life and imagine this didn't happen when it did." That's utterly affected your whole inside: how you see yourself and, often, how other people see you too, or how you imagine that other people see you. It is not good. It's cruel.

I want to reiterate the need to be addressing the court system and the need to have more people there, so that no person who comes forward has to go through that experience of possibly even giving evidence and then having the thing shut down. We've got lots of work to do. I hope that whatever report comes out is a collaborative report with input from all people in this House.

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

Mr. Ric Bresee: I rise today to speak about the motion before the House, a motion that's connected to the recent unanimous recognition that intimate partner violence is endemic in Ontario and a motion that directs the Standing Committee on Justice Policy to review and table its report. This motion matters because it signals that the work of preventing violence, protecting victims and strengthening the systems will not end in a binder on a shelf. It ensures that evidence collected over many months from survivors, from experts and from front-line workers will move from testimony to tangible action.

This committee's work was unlike most government studies. It was a large-scale, government-led, cross-sector review of one of the most complex and costly problems in all of our society. It heard from more than 150 people, around 90 expert witnesses and 60 survivors. It reviewed national frameworks, ministry programs and the Renfrew county inquest, which examined the tragic murders of Nathalie Warmerdam, Carol Culleton and Anastasia Kuzyk.

Its design was deliberate, Speaker. Violence does not fit neatly inside bureaucratic lines. It connects prevention,

justice, housing, health, education and community safety in a single picture. Passing this motion allows the committee to complete its disciplined process: to review, adopt and table the report so ministries, communities and the public can begin the next phase of work with clarity and with accountability.

1530

A great deal has been said about the choice of the word "endemic." Calling intimate partner violence endemic is not minimizing it; it's naming it accurately.

An epidemic is a spike, a surge, an abnormal deviation from a healthy baseline. But unfortunately, there has never been a time when violence against women and gender-diverse people was abnormal. It's been constant. Endemic means something that is woven into our social, cultural and institutional fabric—something that persists for generation after generation, unless we confront it structurally.

Speaker, that honesty matters. When we call IPV endemic, we commit to long-term solutions, stable funding, cross-ministry coordination, consistent data and sustained prevention. We move from alarm to accountability. It's easy to issue declarations. Declarations sound bold, but they actually change very little. Endemic framing demands humility and work. If an epidemic needs containment, an endemic needs management.

In public health, an endemic condition is addressed through permanent infrastructure: surveillance, vaccination, education, prevention. Violence requires the same approach: continuous effort, measurable progress and constant vigilance. Endemic framing keeps the urgency alive without fatigue. It makes prevention part of the ordinary rhythm of government. It's important.

Speaker, for me, this is actually not an abstract policy discussion. This is personal. I grew up around violence. To give a little background, my grandparents were born in the early 1900s, multi-generational farmers who worked hard and struggled often; a very common story for many. My earliest memory of my grandparents is when they were in their seventies—quiet, tired, kind people, at least to my perception at the time. But I am told many stories that said that my grandfather was actually very hard on his children, especially the boys, using physical punishment for unmet expectations. I am also told that he pretty much ignored his daughters, kind of waiting for them to be married off.

My father—his youngest son—when he was about five or six, he contracted scarlet fever. In the 1940s, scarlet fever was something quite serious. He was bedridden for six weeks. And he told me the story, that he remembers hearing the doctor who had come to the house—he overheard the conversation where the doctor said, "Bobby will live, but he will never grow up to be a man."

The day my father was allowed to get out of bed, he went outside and he climbed up on about a four-foot pump stand. And he jumped off to prove that he was "a man." He fell flat in his face, and he went out and he climbed back up again, and he jumped off and fell flat in his face again. And he continued doing that, battered and bruised and bloody nosed, until he landed on his feet.

Speaker, from that moment forward, my father measured himself against a very narrow, punishing idea of manhood. That's the toxic masculinity that we have heard so much about. He spent his entire life fighting physically, verbally and emotionally to prove something that never needed proving. Unfortunately, that fight extended to his wife, my mother, and, later, to his children.

He left behind people with scars, myself included. It, unfortunately, didn't stop even there. My mother, the victim of this violence, ended up being a perpetrator herself. And as children, my siblings and I, we shared violence with each other, unfortunately. It spreads.

I share this with this House because it illustrates something that the committee heard time and time again: Violence is a learned behaviour. It repeats through generations unless it is intentionally interrupted through structure, through education and through empathy.

Speaker, I love my father. He was a challenging person. According to the rest of the world, they thought he was an intelligent, funny and caring man. He worked hard for his family. All that is true as well, but he was also very violent.

Later in life—we lost him at age 55—but in his last few years, with the help of the second wife, he did come to understand. Unfortunately, he carried the guilt of what he had done to his grave. That is what trauma does, and that's why this work matters so very deeply.

Speaker, I have to acknowledge my own privilege. I can walk to my car at night without feeling fear. I can stroll across a parking lot or down a dark street, and while I'm doing it, I'm thinking about what I'm going to make for dinner, not about who might be walking behind me. I don't check over my shoulder. I don't carry my keys in my fingers. I don't text a friend to make sure that they know that I'm getting home safe. I don't have to.

Unfortunately, my wife can't say the same thing. My transgender daughter definitely cannot say it. She faces, I'll say, many hate crimes every day on the street. Most women and most non-binary people face this kind of thing. They cannot say that they can walk down the street casually. They live with a quiet vigilance that most men will never experience. They plan their routes. They plan their shoes, their phone batteries, their exits. They measure their freedom in daylight and distance. That constant mental calculation of where to park, who to trust, when to speak, how to dress—I have to assume it's exhausting, and I have been told that it's exhausting. That's the invisible labour of survival.

Even for those who have never personally faced violence, the lucky ones, the fear of it still shapes daily lives. It influences where people choose to live, what jobs they accept, whether they go out after dark and whether they tell the truth about who they love. It seeps into decisions about child care, housing, transportation and even about health care.

This is not theoretical; this is practical. It's measurable. Surveys show that a majority of women and gender-diverse people change their behaviour because of fear, not even necessarily experienced fear. The fear itself ends up being a form of harm. It shrinks their lives.

So when we call intimate partner violence endemic, we're not using a metaphor. We're describing a condition that touches every space, every community, every income bracket. It exists everywhere all the time, embedded in daily life, sometimes visible, sometimes not.

That's why this motion matters, because until we build systems that are strong enough to remove that constant background fear, equality will remain something that we promise, not something that we deliver.

We live in a world that has conquered diseases, built vaccines, extended life expectancy, because progress happens when societies decide to do better. This Legislature has that responsibility right now.

As a cisgendered man, it's not only my duty to refrain from violence but to challenge it. My duty as a legislator is to model respect, to call out harm and to design systems that make safety the norm. Allyship is not a label; it's a practice, and it is up to all of us.

The committee heard clear, consistent themes. It heard that violence is not a string of isolated incidents. It's a predictable outcome of structural conditions: poverty, addictions, trauma, housing insecurity, gender inequality. It heard that prevention works; that early intervention, education and engagement with boys and men especially can reduce risk.

It heard that our justice and social service systems, despite their dedication, operate at the edge of capacity within structures that were built for another time. It heard that funding instability exhausts front-line workers and erodes the continuity of care. And it heard that data fragmentation hides both progress and risk. Each of those findings is echoed in the motion that's before us today. Passing this motion means turning those lessons into a coherent, practical plan.

1540

The report and the testimony point to what I call three plus one areas of action. The first—absolutely necessary—support for survivors: Too many victims remain trapped by dependence or fear. No one should have to choose between abuse or homelessness. Even in a housing crisis, safety must come first. We must ensure that shelters, transitional housing and counselling are available and are stable. Supports must be culturally safe, trauma-informed and person-centred; Indigenous-led where appropriate; 2SLGBTQIA+ specific; language accessible; available to persons with disabilities; and available in remote and rural communities like my own. We have partnerships with friendship centres, Indigenous health centres, settlement services, faith communities and local organizations to allow survivors to choose the care that reflects who they are.

Fear is not simply emotional, it's strategic. Abusers create fear to maintain control, and our response must be to remove danger and replace fear with stability—safe housing, financial independence and reliable counselling. When our Charter of Rights promises “security of the person,” this is what that must mean.

The second big thing is accountability and change. Accountability means a justice system that protects without

retraumatizing. Police, crown attorneys and courts need the capacity and the training and consistent risk-assessment tools. Bail and probation conditions must be enforced—and we must address those who cause harm. Rehabilitation is not leniency, it's prevention; it's necessary. Evidence-based programs for offenders, paired with mental health and addiction treatment, interrupt the cycle of violence. Where appropriate, the completion of such programs could be mandatory for probation, parole or for family reunification. Victims and offenders alike must see that the consequences are real and that change is possible.

Third, education and culture change: Speaker, this is a hard one. This is a really big one. It's the longest, hardest and most transformative work we need to do: raising new generations who reject violence as normal, who understand that respect is strength, not weakness. We often talk about prevention as though it was something separate from the culture, but they are part and parcel of the same thing. Culture is what teaches us what behaviours are acceptable, which ones are admired and which ones are condemned. If we want a culture that rejects violence, we have to teach it—not once, not in a moment of crisis, but continually, the same way we teach all other life skills.

Speaker, I'm starting to run out of time here, but I know that cultural change is possible. One example that I personally lived through: When I was a teenager, cigarette smoking was everywhere. You couldn't go to a movie without that cloud of blue smoke that hovered. I remember TV ads and magazine ads that told you smoking will make you thin, it will make you calm, it will make you sophisticated. Smoking is cool—even manly, to go back to that phrase. I remember doctors being interviewed suggesting one brand of cigarettes over another. It's ridiculous to think of that today. It was part and parcel of everyday life. And then at some point, in the late 1970s, I think, we came to the conclusion that we needed to do better. We began educating young people, through the curriculum, through peer programs, through mass campaigns. We spoke directly to the youth. And, Speaker, within a decade, smoking was banned from schools and hospitals and from airplanes, bars and workplaces. That shift didn't happen because people woke up one morning and felt differently; it happened because we changed the environment. We made healthy behaviour easy and harmful behaviour more inconvenient. We gave people new role models. By 2020, adult smoking rates had dropped from about a third of the population back in the 1970s down to about an eighth. It's not completely wiped out, but it has been a very successful program of re-education and changing the culture.

Speaker, we can transform violence in the same way. If we changed that addiction, we can change this as well.

Ontario schools already teach about consent and healthy relationships. It's an important start, but we can go further. Let's make sure that lessons about equality and boundaries and empathy are woven through all grades and all subjects. It's not a subject to itself but part of everything.

Let's build in learning about coercive control, technology-facilitated abuse. We heard the member earlier speaking about all the harm that is coming through with the

social media things. Let's equip the teachers and the coaches with the training that they need to model these lessons and give students the right language so that they recognize harm before it becomes habitual.

It's not just about classrooms. It belongs in sports. It belongs in the workplace. Education and culture change take time, but they do work and they save lives before the people are in danger. If we approach it with the same persistence that we once applied to that public health issue, we will see the curve bend.

Finally, as I said, "three plus one." The "plus one": We have to measure this. We have to get the data. The committee heard every partner: justice, health, education, social assistance. They all collect data differently. Without shared definitions, we can't track the changes.

Prevention is not just confined to government. The committee heard about work happening in schools, sports, workplaces—ordinary places where culture is shaped. Coaches describe safe sport programs that taught empathy—so very important. Every one of those reduces the case-loads, reduces the emergency calls, reduces the broken lives.

I've run out of time here, but Speaker, I need to say that passing this motion is not the finish line; it is the start of a disciplined implementation. Once the committee tables its report, the ministries can align their priorities and their policies, establish the metrics and build a coordinated prevention framework. Communities can see where they fit in. Partners can plan.

Speaker, I hope that everyone in this House supports this motion to move this—

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, Speaker—*Interjections.*

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciate the applause from the members on the other side.

This has been a really interesting debate this afternoon. I want to thank the members who have spoken so openly about very, very difficult personal experiences.

I heard the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington talk about his family experience growing up with an abusive father.

My colleague the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan talked about the abuse she saw in her home from her stepfather, abuse that was inflicted on both her mother and her sister and herself.

We heard the member from Waterloo talk about the interaction that she had with the mother of Lydia, a teenager who had been sexually assaulted and did not see her case proceed through the courts. As a mother herself—as parents, many of us, in this chamber, I'm sure that we can all connect with what the member for Waterloo shared about the bond that was formed as she talked to Lydia's mother about the experiences that Lydia had had and how she felt so profoundly failed by the systems we have in place to protect us.

1550

I just wanted to begin my remarks with some of my own personal connection to the issue of intimate partner vio-

lence. I grew up in the 1960s and 1970s and had become interested in issues of public policy. I'm not sure if there are other members in this House who recall that, in 1982, there was a famous moment in the federal House of Commons when NDP member of Parliament Margaret Mitchell stood up in that place and called on other MPPs to do something to deal with the scourge of family violence, because she had heard from too many women who were not receiving any supports and who were not believed when they brought the violence they were experiencing at home to the attention of the police or the justice system.

In 1982, when Margaret Mitchell stood up in the House of Commons, she was heckled; she was heckled down by male MPs at that time who dismissed entirely the issue of violence against women as a matter of urgent public policy that government had a responsibility to act upon. That moment really had a profound impact on me, Speaker, because it was the issue of violence against women that really mobilized my own political engagement with the NDP and in politics in general. I really wanted to get involved in politics so that we could make some change on this issue.

In 2006, Speaker, I was serving as a trustee on the Thames Valley District School Board, and two students, one in grade 8 and another in grade 10, Stephanie and Ashley Daubs, were killed by their father who was taking out his hate and his anger at their mother by killing his children. To this day, Speaker, I will always remember that and the loss of those two girls in an act of intimate partner violence.

In 2007, I was about to be sworn in as chair of the Thames Valley District School Board, and I think the day before the inauguration meeting we learned of the death of Angela Sedore, a grade 6 teacher in the Thames Valley District School Board, who was murdered by her intimate partner.

In 2015, I was here in this chamber, as many of us were, when we learned of the murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam, and I think the feeling that we all had was that this could have been prevented, that these three women in Renfrew county did not need to lose their lives if we had only taken the actions we know about, that we have known about for years, for decades. There have been so many expert reports. There have been so many coroners' reports with extensive recommendations about what needs to happen to prevent these deaths.

Since 2003, there has been a Domestic Violence Death Review Committee in place in this province that looks at every death through intimate partner violence and identifies the factors that contributed to those deaths and how those deaths could have been prevented.

One of the deaths that, again, really struck me as deeply personal was two summers ago, in July 2024. Breanna Broadfoot, a 17-year-old girl in London, was murdered by her intimate partner. She was stabbed and her former intimate partner was shot by police. But since the time of Breanna's death—actually at the time of Breanna's death,

July 2024, the committee that is referred to in this motion was having hearings. That committee had been struck. That committee was having hearings about how to prevent intimate partner violence.

And I'm glad that that committee was in place, even though it took so many years. I deeply regret that all of those opportunities that this government had, that previous governments have had, to take action, by moving forward with those recommendations that have been made in those countless coroners' reports, the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee reports.

We had the report of the Mass Casualty Commission that came out of the murder of 22 people in Nova Scotia, back in 2020. The Mass Casualty Commission report was released in 2022 and it was a very thick, multi-volume report with extensive expert testimony. Again, it provided a road map for what the government of Nova Scotia needed to do, for what every government in this in this country needs to do to prevent intimate partner violence.

But regardless of the fact that there have been so many missed opportunities when the government could have acted, could have moved forward, could have put in place measures to prevent the deaths of so many women in this province; I have to say thank you to the government for finally doing something, for finally seeking unanimous consent for a motion to recognize intimate partner violence as endemic in this province.

And one of my colleagues has already said we're not going to quibble about whether it's endemic or epidemic; I think we're just going to take that declaration, take that recognition of the government that this is a systemic problem that requires systemic solutions. That means working across ministries, mobilizing resources, reviewing policies and legislation, listening to people on the front lines, listening to survivors, listening to the shelter workers who support survivors, and taking action.

Unfortunately, what we are talking about today in the motion that is before us is not what we need to do to address the issue of intimate partner violence in Ontario. The motion that is before us says that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy will receive a draft report that was written by a member of the government, will move into closed session and consider that draft report, and then will issue that report that is considered in camera by the committee to the Legislature.

I have to say that this is a complete departure from the way that this House is supposed to operate. I reflect on my own experience as a member of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, which was established under the previous government and included members on the other side. I know, actually, the Minister of Health sat on that committee. The member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock sat on that committee. I sat on that committee.

We travelled, which was something that the government's IPV committee did not do, which was important when the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment was meeting. It was important to travel. It was important to go to northern Ontario and hear from Indigen-

ous women about their experiences with sexual violence; to hear from people in rural, northern and remote communities about their experiences and the lack of supports and the kinds of changes that they needed to see to keep them safe.

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But as I said, that select committee that I was part of travelled, so we had the benefit of hearing from witnesses. That committee, as every standing committee of this Legislature does, had a researcher assigned to it. The researcher took careful notes of all of the testimony that was provided to the committee and summarized all of that testimony, whether it was in provided in written form or oral form. And then that legislative researcher—that independent, non-partisan, legislative staff person—took all that information and drafted a report with recommendations that had been received by the committee, that had been heard during that period when the committee was travelling and when meetings were held at Queen's Park. That was my experience with a committee that was looking at an issue of sexual violence and harassment. It was a good process, Speaker.

We met to consider the draft report that had been provided by the legislative staff. We offered our own suggestions about things: nuances about the things that we had heard, other recommendations that we thought should be included in that report. We came out of that process unanimously with a report that was that was approved by the committee and delivered to the Legislative Assembly.

The motion that we have before us today is quite different from the process that I have just described. The motion, as I said, calls on the committee to receive a draft report that was written by a government member. Now, that government member—I have no doubt about her sincerity, her passion and her commitment to this issue; I really don't. I've heard that member talk about her experiences as a crown attorney. I know that she feels just as strongly about this issue as I do, and as many of my colleagues do. But it does not serve this assembly well when we start to allow members of a political party—one political party that has the majority in the committee—to write a report in camera that is going to come out of the committee as the committee's report and then come to this assembly for a vote. It is completely unorthodox, and it undermines the whole process that we are supposed to be engaged in when we work in committee.

I've talked to members, and a lot of members in all parties in this Legislature have told me—and I agree—that committees are where real work can get done. Also, committees are where you can have some really meaningful exchanges with members on the other side of the House, and you can find common ground with members on the other side of the House.

Yet to start this process of report writing at the Standing Committee on Justice Policy with a draft report that was written by a government member does not support that kind of free-flowing exchange of ideas that we want to see in a standing committee of this Legislature.

That is why, Speaker, my colleague the member for Windsor West moved an amendment to the government's proposal. My colleague the member for Windsor West said, "Listen, instead of starting with a draft report that was written by a government member, this committee should consider a draft report that is written by legislative research, which is the process that every standing committee in this House that has ever written a report starts with—a draft that is prepared by legislative research." And that draft uses the presentations, the written submissions, the testimony, the deputations that are received during the committee's hearings and highlights the recommendations that have been made by stakeholders and experts as to what needs to happen to deal with the issue.

Speaker, that would be the appropriate process. Given that it's been far too many years of inaction, given that we are finally on the verge of starting to make some meaningful change that is actually going to make a difference for women who have experienced violence, that would be the appropriate way to proceed.

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

Rush to your seat.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I just saw the clock is always staying on the 20 minutes, so I just wondered why.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Yes, we had a slight situation, and it's fixed. Thank you. I recognize the member from Richmond Hill.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I rise today to support motion number 8. We all care about the importance of intimate partner violence. Our government has been very clear from the start that we are committed to addressing gender-based and intimate partner violence with seriousness, responsibility and real solutions. We're not using this as political theatre, but rather, I really thank the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler as well as our Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity. I thank you for making this statement so clear. It is important, in response to the member opposite from London West saying that while we're questioning just on "epidemic" and "endemic"—

Interjection.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Yes, thank you very much for reminding me. I'm sharing my time with the member from York South—Weston. Thank you. I was just rushing back to my seat. I almost forgot about this one.

But let me elaborate. The reason why we're having this debate here is we see that it is very important for us to understand the difference between "epidemic" and "endemic". Because when we say this is endemic, we are bringing a solution to what we all want to support and what we want to eliminate: the violence that we have from the intimate partner.

I thank, as I said, the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler. She took a lot of studies and research to understand the difference between the two words. Endemic means it's deep-rooted, persistent and present in every community across our province. Our government stands united in recognizing that truth, because when we speak

honestly about the scope of the problem, we take the first real stab towards ending it. This is really bringing the solution to the problem, to the matter that we all face.

The words we choose really matter. Endemic is not a word we use lightly. It is deliberate, thoughtful and grounded in evidence. Violence against women didn't just appear overnight, and it won't disappear on its own. It's built into attitudes, inequities and patterns that have been passed down for generations.

By calling it endemic, we're saying that it is not a temporary crisis; it's a long-term challenge that demands long-term solutions. That's why it's so important for all of us, really together, to find a solution. We should not end it ourselves up here wasting the time in this debate but rather put it into action to resolve the problem.

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When the opposition is using the word "epidemic," as we learned during COVID, it is sudden and explosive. Endemic problems, on the other hand, are persistent, predictable and deeply rooted in systems and structures. The World Health Organization in 2021 stated clearly that violence against women was endemic in every country and culture. It is a reality that we face. Pretending otherwise doesn't make it better; it makes it worse. Declaring it an epidemic might sound dramatic, but it doesn't go far enough to acknowledge how deeply this violence is embedded in our society.

It is truly disappointing that instead of standing shoulder to shoulder with us, the NDP has chosen to turn this into a partisan fight. Why can't we work together to make sure that we really find solutions to this problem which we all recognize as important? The women of Ontario don't need delays; they need action. This is not a time for wordplay and political point-scoring. The opposition's refusal to co-operate tells you everything you need to know about their priorities.

Our government's commitments are not just spoken. It is demonstrated through funding, through legislation and through results.

In 2022, we secured over \$160 million from the federal government for Ontario's role in the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

In 2023, we launched Ontario-STANDS: Standing Together Against gender-based violence Now through Decisive actions, prevention, empowerment and Supports. Through Ontario-STANDS, we're making the single largest investment in this fight in Ontario's history: \$1.4 billion. This \$1.4 billion supports prevention programs, survivors and their families, a responsive justice system, Indigenous-led approaches and wraparound community supports that actually make a difference.

Last year, we expanded this action plan with an additional \$100 million, funding 85 community-based projects that target root causes of violence. Every dollar we invest is a dollar towards safety, prevention and accountability.

These investments are changing lives. We're seeing more survivors find safe shelter, more communities launching prevention programs and more agencies offer-

ing trauma-informed care. This is what taking action and real progress looks like.

On Monday, we announced a \$26.7-million investment to expand shelter spaces and family court supports. That funding alone will support over 300 new shelter spaces. Those are really solutions. This is across more than 65 shelters province-wide.

Madam Speaker, we also understand that safety and economic security go hand in hand. That is why we expanded the women's economic opportunity program, helping thousands of women gain skills training and independence. Since its launch in 2018, more than 5,700 women have benefited from pre-apprenticeship, pre-employment and entrepreneurship programs.

Through our Investing in Women's Futures Program, over 10,000 women have received supports that they need to rebuild their lives. Through counselling, education and job training, we build up women because these are the best ways to protect women. This is to empower them as well.

In response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, we launched Pathways to Safety, a strategy shaped and led by Indigenous women. The Indigenous Women's Advisory Council has guided this work every step of the way, ensuring Indigenous voices lead the solutions.

We've also taken decisive action against the horrific crime of human trafficking. In 2020, we launched the anti-human trafficking strategy backed by \$307 million over five years. We have since renewed that strategy with an additional \$350-million investment, bringing it to a total commitment of over \$650 million by 2030—the largest in the country. These aren't empty promises. They are concrete steps that protect the vulnerable and hold traffickers to account.

Intimate partner violence cannot be solved overnight. It requires sustained focus, not headlines and not slogans. The NDP may want to treat this as a short-term political win by calling on us to change our mind to use the term "epidemic"—it is not an epidemic; that's why we say this is endemic. How we define a problem determines how we solve it and bring good solutions to it. If we treat an endemic issue like an epidemic, we risk wasting our resources and losing time. By being honest—by calling it what it is—we lay the groundwork for sustainable, generational change. This isn't semantics; it is our responsibility. Our government has zero tolerance for violence against women. This is not a slogan; this is a standard.

I like to pass the time to the member opposite so that he can continue what I have started.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member for York South–Weston.

MPP Mohamed Firin: I would like to start off by thanking my wonderful colleague from Richmond Hill.

I rise today to support this motion to allow the Standing Committee on Justice Policy to receive, meet, review and respond to the report written by the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler. The member from Kitchener South–Hespeler has done a wonderful job spending countless hours on this. I would also like to acknowledge

the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity for the effort that she's put into this as well and I want to thank her.

This should be straightforward; this committee has done its work. The motion simply lets them meet, review the findings and present the final product to the House so that we can all move forward together. Instead, the opposition has chosen to turn this into political theatre. They are forcing debate on something procedural, while survivors and service providers wait for the next phase of action.

The subcommittee on intimate partner and sexual violence spent months hearing testimony from over 150 people—experts, advocates, police, health care workers, shelter staff and survivors. They heard the evidence to underlie a framework that connects prevention, justice, housing and mental health. And now, after all that work, the opposition is choosing to delay over delivery.

What this government is choosing is action—action that has already begun and that is making a real difference in communities across Ontario. The government has listened to the themes that emerged from the committee's hearings. We've heard the calls for long-term stability in victim services, for better coordination across ministries, for earlier prevention and for more consistent data. Those same themes are already reflected in the work under way through our Ontario-STANDS, through Pathways to Safety, through our anti-human trafficking strategy and through our historic investments in housing, health care and women's economic opportunity.

This isn't talk; it's a record. In 2023, our government launched Ontario-STANDS: Standing Together Against gender-based violence Now through Decisive actions, prevention, empowerment and Supports. It is a \$1.4-billion plan focused on prevention, survivor support and system integration. We expanded it last year with another \$100 million for 85 community-based projects addressing the root cause of violence. These projects build partnerships between schools, shelters, police services and local organizations so that early warning signs don't fall through the cracks.

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We also secured more than \$160 million in partnership funding from the federal government through the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, because ending violence is not the job of a single province or a single ministry; it's a national responsibility.

In response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Ontario created Pathways to Safety, designed and led with guidance from the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council. We listened. We funded community-driven programs that combine cultural safety with practical support in housing, healing and justice.

We've also renewed and expanded Ontario's Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy, investing another \$350 million over five years, bringing our total investment to more than \$650 million by 2030. That is the largest dedicated anti-trafficking commitment of any province in

Canada. It has helped thousands of women and youths escape exploitation and rebuild their lives. The opposition can keep pretending nothing is being done, but every survivor who walks into a shelter, every counsellor funded to deliver trauma-informed therapy, every police officer trained in risk assessment knows the truth: Ontario is acting.

We've also recognized that safety and economic independence are inseparable. That's why we expanded the women's economic opportunity program and the Investing in Women's Futures Program, which have already helped tens of thousands of women gain the skills and confidence to build stable and independent lives. These programs include pre-employment training, entrepreneurship support and counselling for survivors of violence.

And we're going further. The new women's economic leadership and legacy fund, the WELL fund, will provide dedicated support for survivors of trafficking who want to rebuild through education and entrepreneurship. This is what commitment looks like. It's not a slogan. It's not a budget line. It's not a press release. It's a partnership agreement signed, funded, working on the ground.

Earlier this week, we announced a \$26.7-million investment to increase shelter capacity and strengthen the family court support workers program, with more than 300 new shelter spaces at 65 sites across Ontario. The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses said it best: "It is investments like this one that will open doors to safety, well-being and futures free from violence." That is what we're doing, opening doors.

Speaker, here's what frustrates me. The opposition knows all this. They know the scale of these investments. They know that the government of Ontario has invested millions of dollars into prevention, survivor supports, justice modernization, and continues to do so. Yet the opposition continues to tell the public—and tell the survivors—that nothing has been done. That kind of rhetoric is not just wrong; it is dangerous. When political actors insist there are no supports, when they use your platform to spread messages that no one cares, they risk convincing survivors that there is no help to be found; that calling a hotline, walking into a shelter space, or seeking counselling won't make a difference. That narrative isolates people. It breeds despair.

Let's be very clear. This government is not denying the seriousness of intimate partner violence. We are treating it as one of the undeniable public safety and public health issues of our time. The ones undermining that seriousness are those who use it as a stage. When the opposition chooses performative outrage over progress, they contribute to hopelessness. They tell survivors that the government does not care, when the truth is that this government has done more financially, structurally and culturally than any other government before it. We can debate ideas all day, but no one in this province should ever be told that help isn't there. That message perpetuates abuse, and it perpetuates hopelessness.

The motion before us is about finishing the committee's work so that Ontario can keep building on what has already

been achieved. It allows us to move from hearings to formal recommendations; to connect themes that the committees heard with programs already under way. It's about continuity, consistency and credibility.

This government has heard what the committee has heard: that prevention works when it starts early, that justice modernization saves lives, that front-line workers need stability and that data must guide decisions. These are the very principles driving Ontario-STANDS and every other initiative we've launched. This is how serious governments behave: We identify, we invest, and we implement.

And the truth, Speaker, is that Ontario's progress has been built on partnerships. Every dollar invested through these programs supports the work of community organizations, local shelters, Indigenous leaders and educators. These are the people keeping Ontario safe. They deserve to know that their government sees them, funds them and stands behind them.

When the opposition tells the province it has done nothing, it disrespects those workers. The women's shelters directors in Kenora, the outreach counsellors in Peel and the officers in Kingston; the social workers in Windsor, the volunteers who run crisis lines in northern Ontario: They are doing life-saving work every day and their efforts are strengthened by the provincial leadership and investment.

Speaker, this government doesn't see the report review process as a delay, we see it as a discipline. This motion is discipline—

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

MPP Jamie West: I'm proud to bring my voice to this debate. There have been a lot of good stories on both sides, and for the most part non-partisan: people just sharing their perspectives about what's going on and telling personal stories, which is one of the reasons I enjoy afternoon debate. We get to know each other on a personal level and that side of the story.

Today, just as people are tuning in and I've been following, we are debating a motion, and the motion basically is directing justice policy to meet for four days for report writing, which is very normal. What is a little different on this is that the MPP for—I wrote it down so I wouldn't forget—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Kitchener South–Hespeler.

MPP Jamie West: Kitchener South–Hespeler; sorry. I did write it down, and I couldn't find it on my page. We're not allowed to say people's names, if you're watching here, so I was looking for the riding name. They wrote their own draft report, and this is the report they're going to review.

This isn't what normally happens. Normally what happens is you sit in committee and you hear from subject matter experts, validators, people in the community and the Clerks take notes. The Clerks write non-partisan notes. Our Clerks are very much non-partisan and they ensure that what's in there is actually what we've heard, so we

don't have even the chance of a bias, or as limited amount of bias as possible in what was heard.

And I've heard many times on both sides of the House that they believe that member's heart is in the right place, but it is unusual to do this. I mean, it's a long, lengthy report. I haven't seen the report, obviously, but I've heard it's hundreds and hundreds of pages.

So the committee will be meeting for four days, and the members of the committee—this will be in camera, so the members of the committee won't be able to speak about the discussions or any decisions that are made in the meeting. And so afterwards, when it says the committee agreed, what that means is how they voted is how the committee agreed. So potentially, yes, the committee agreed to the outcome of the report, but because it's in camera, you really could have a situation where the committee is the government, which has a huge majority over the opposition, the third party and the independent members.

And that means that, really, whatever the government wants to do, they can do, and that stands for this debate we're having right now. They can decide to do whatever they want to do and we're hopefully in this debate encouraging them to think twice about what they're trying to do. Then the report will be edited by the same government-dominated committee and presented as the final committee report, so it will be presented on behalf of everyone in the room, but there is that potential that it was not really agreed to by everyone in the room.

So the process is much different than what you would see normally happening here, and that's how we got into this debate. This is way, way outside of what we normally do. And it is dangerous to do things in a way that is unusual to what you've done, so we're actually a long way from home in the first place.

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Just to take you back in time—because I've heard my colleagues talk about how quickly we need to get this done, and I would argue that there was the opportunity to get this done a lot quicker. In fact, in April 2024, we could have gotten this done. So in April 2024, the member for Windsor—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Windsor West.

MPP Jamie West: Windsor West, thank you—I know everyone's names. The member for Windsor West had a bill that she was debating, Bill 173, the Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic Act. Basically, that was calling for intimate partner violence to be declared an epidemic. During that debate, we could have just had the debate as a private member's bill. It could have just gone through. The government could have voted in favour of it, and it could have gone to committee. It could have gone through, and we would have come back—much before the 2025 election—and passed this. It was a very important bill.

I'm sure we've all received calls to our offices. For those of you who are not elected and are watching on TV, you know people who have been affected by intimate partner violence; we all do. The stat is one in four. But I

think that the stat is probably closer to one in two or one in one, because it is pretty rampant.

This idea didn't just come out of an MPP's mind one day, that we should do this. This goes back actually—I just want to get the date right—to the Renfrew county inquest. In 2015, Ontario lost three women to preventable gender-based violence. They were murdered in Renfrew county, and their names—their names are important; I apologize if I mispronounce them—were Anastasia—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Kuzyk.

MPP Jamie West: Kuzyk—thank you—Nathalie Warmerdam and Carol Culleton. They were victims of intimate partner violence at the hands of their former partner. Their former partner had historically demonstrated patterns of abuse and violence.

They took seven long years. The jury did an inquest and issued 86 recommendations. These were all about targeting the systemic roots of IPV, intimate partner violence and gender-based violence—family violence, sexual violence, human trafficking—all of this stuff, all wrapped into one. The recommendations went to all kinds of different bodies, but 68 of those 86 were provincial. And also, because of the murder, there was a coroner's inquest. The coroner's inquest had 86 recommendations, so 154 recommendations entirely.

Out of those 154 recommendations that happened, there was not one that said, "When the member from Windsor West brings a bill forward to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic, we hope that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario forms a new committee to study this on top of it and publish a report based on one MPP's conclusions." None of this had to happen. I don't know why we started down that path to look at this on our own. But I want to say that recommendation number one—and it doesn't mean it's the most important one, but the very one they put at the very top of the inquest—is to formally declare intimate partner violence as an epidemic. That was in June 2022.

Through a lot of work and help, the member for Windsor West formed a private member's bill—like I said earlier—Bill 173 from 2024. During debate, the Conservative government said they were going to support this bill. They created a subcommittee on intimate partner violence, which is a little bit different, but it sounded really promising. It sounded like this is something that should happen; we should get this right. The member agreed to it, and we were moving forward.

In the words of the government, the committee was tasked to "conduct a substantive, in-depth study on intimate partner violence to give us a better understanding of what additional supports are needed; to travel across this province"—which is important—"and to be given the tools and resources required to come back with recommendations so we can be a leader in this country; to conduct an in-depth, thorough investigation and come up with reports that we can enact as quickly as we possibly can; to look at every aspect of the issue, so we can come with a Team Ontario approach to how we deal with the

challenges that are being faced every day in communities across this great province."

During debate on this and similar bills about violence towards women, we have had the gallery filled with women who have been affected by this and family members who have been affected by this. They have been waiting and waiting for a partner. They have been waiting for a tunnel that doesn't seem to have light at the end, and I think they saw hope when they heard this happening, that something finally was going to happen. I've heard a lot of my male colleagues talk about "as a son," "as a father of a daughter"—and I understand why you would say that, but I don't think it lands the right way.

I want you—instead of thinking of somebody who was not affected, put yourself in the shoes of a father who was affected, who is up in the gallery, desperate for a champion to stand by them and to make this happen as quickly as possible, to do what's right for their family member. That's what they're looking for.

This committee was formed—and it's a huge undertaking. I'm not minimizing the work that was done because there was lots of work done. There were lots of sessions where they sat. The first phase was in July 2024. They had 90 experts, professionals and organizations. They were all consulted in July. I commend the members of the committee who went there because July is a time when, normally, we're in our ridings, meeting with our own constituents.

So they did a lot of work and then phase 2 happened in November 2024. It was ministers: the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity; the Minister of Education; the Minister of Health; the minister of mental health and addictions; the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation; the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, the Solicitor General; and the Attorney General. Lots of ministers coming together, which is a very positive sign, again, because ministers are also very busy.

I'm just going couch it a little bit—I'm not being partisan about this, but there were only five minutes of questions allowed, and I assume that would be five minutes per party going around, but it really minimizes the amount of questions you have to be able to debate on this.

In the final phase, the committee invited selections of survivors and families of survivors to share those testimonials, which is difficult. Earlier, people had talked about how difficult it is to retraumatize somebody because not only have they survived the assault; they have to relive it. They relive it when they report it, they relive it when it's litigated and they relive it when they come here, so it takes a lot of courage and support to be able to do that. Not only is it a stressful time while you're doing that in front of a bunch of strangers, talking about a very vulnerable time of your life, it's difficult to do in the days ahead as you think about how hard it's going to be and then whatever it takes in recovery afterwards.

So they were held in Toronto. People could join in person or via virtual meeting platforms, and those were in January 2025. I want to remind everybody that originally

there was a commitment to travel across this province, to be given the tools and resources required to come back with recommendations so that we can be a leader in this country.

I live in Sudbury, which is four hours north of Toronto, and it is difficult for people in my riding to get to Toronto. There are people in my riding who don't have access to high-speed Internet, and there are people in my riding who simply do not know how to use Zoom or any of those outlets in order to connect who would like to be heard.

Interjection.

MPP Jamie West: But we didn't travel to where they were.

One of the members—they changed the title so now he is the Minister of Education—had publicly declared that “should the committee accept this challenge, we will authorize them and provide them all the necessary resources that they need to travel the entire province, to go to other jurisdictions, if need be.”

At that time, the leader was the House leader, and the House leader has a lot of authority. But for people desperate in northern Ontario—and I'm reminded by members who are farther north than me that Sudbury doesn't count as northern Ontario—there was not that opportunity to be heard.

I want to go back to the Renfrew county inquest. Their number one recommendation was to declare this, intimate partner violence, an epidemic, and I think they chose those words in particular because of how important they were. I have been on different inquests, including coroners' inquests, and they choose words very importantly. For some reason, there was a motion earlier this week to declare IPV endemic. And there has been a lot of debate today about how maybe that's better, or maybe it's more accurate, or maybe it's this or that.

1640

But the reality is, if you put yourself into the shoes of the victims and the families that had filled our galleries several times, they are waiting for you to be an ally and a champion for them. They want to hear those words that would make a difference for people who will not be able to protect them but maybe will protect people in the future, and that word is “epidemic.”

So we can sit here as legislators and debate words and pretend that they're the same or as meaningful, but I think we're missing the point. “Epidemic” is the word they're looking for. It doesn't matter if the other word is better or stronger; it just simply does not matter. We are failing people who are victims of intimate partner violence, people who have had terrible, terrible circumstances, and sometimes—many times—more than once. They're looking for someone to be on their side, and we dropped the ball. I'm not going to say “we.” I'm sorry, this is not—I didn't agree to this. And I promise I'm not going to be partisan, but I'm not holding on to that kind of blame. I believe we should have declared it an epidemic.

I want to talk a little bit about intimate partner violence. I was thinking today about Patrick Stewart. I'm going to be showing my nerdy side, but I liked *Next Gen* and I liked

X-Men. And Patrick Stewart has been very open about the violence that his father inflicted on him and his mother growing up. There's a famous quote, because Patrick Stewart would go to protests for violence towards women, and he would say, sometimes, nobody listens to women until an old white man shows up. So I'm here to offer my services as an old white man because I don't believe that the government has been listening to women in this issue.

And I'm not trying to be overly dramatic and I'm not trying to insult. Many people are listening well. But you're missing the point when it comes to the epidemic and how important it is to so many of these women.

In my riding of Sudbury, the Greater Sudbury police is creating a pilot project on intimate partner violence. I'll tell you how we got there. The statistics in Sudbury are continuing to rise in intimate partner violence. I was startled when I read this: There are roughly 58.6 cases reported to the Greater Sudbury police every week. That blew my mind, because I knew it was an issue, but I had no idea. That is more than half a hundred cases a week. It's unbelievable in the city where I live.

They had roughly 3,500 intimate violence calls for service in 2024, which indicated a significant increase. There has been a 68% increase in the number of crisis calls in the last year. And the YWCA Geneva House in Sudbury has reported a full shelter on a daily basis.

The trauma at the YWCA is that, during COVID, when we were doing everything virtually in videos, I was trying to promote some work that YWCA was doing. I phoned them to let them know that I was going to be nearby filming, because the women in that shelter are so traumatized that if they see a man they do not know anywhere near the building, even though there's a fence around it—it's a shelter for women who have been abused—it will cause crisis for them, and I could do damage just by being in the area. So I would let them know, even though everyone knows me in Sudbury, that I'm just doing a video about the event they're having soon to let them raise awareness during COVID.

In Sudbury—and I'm proud of this—we have declared intimate partner violence an epidemic. We have taken the bold step that the government doesn't seem to want to do. And I can't wrap my head around why. If they're almost the same words, let's use the word that people want.

So this pilot unit—basically, they're dedicated to doing this. They have people who are specially trained, who understand the nuances better, who I would assume would provide much better service to people in this situation. And with the pilot unit, people are already reporting that there's been better engagement, improved file quality and reduced delays in investigations. They're going to be moving on with this pilot project just to ensure that it's working well and hopefully receive ongoing funding.

I heard earlier today that somewhere in the GTA, the police there are going to get another helicopter. The police in my area are hoping they can afford winter tires. And so, I'm hoping that we look at the funding model because, population-wise—the city of Greater Sudbury has an area

even larger than the GTA, Hamilton and Peel but a population of a much smaller quantity: 190,000 people.

We have a limited amount of time, but there are a couple of things that were brought up today that I think are important to talk about.

Affordability is through the roof and unemployment is through the roof and the cost of housing is through the roof. If you are living in a house or a home or an apartment where you're being abused and you do not have a job and you can't afford rent and you can't afford food, you are trapped with an abuser. You cannot leave, and so when we criticize the fall economic statement or the budget or the Premier's jobs disaster, what we are doing is advocating for people who cannot escape abuse. They cannot escape their abuser.

Sometimes it's difficult mentally to be able to leave, but even if they have the wherewithal to be able to leave, if they're not worried they're going to be tracked down and beaten up—and I've worked with people who have fled provinces to flee their abuser through women's groups. We are in a situation in Ontario where they cannot afford to leave and they are trapped with their abuser, and that's shameful, and we need to do better on this.

We can't have a situation where affordability prevents someone from their freedom, and especially when they have children. We've heard from colleagues in our own House talking about being abused as a child along with their mother. We can do better. All of us can do better.

I apologize to my colleagues if it was a little bit partisan in parts. I'm trying not to be; I'm trying to recognize my friends who spoke from the heart and do the same to you as well.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity for me to be in the House today and speak on this important issue.

It's my pleasure to rise in the House—not in support of the opposition's amendments but in support of the draft report on intimate partner violence provided by the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler being submitted for the purpose of it being in committee.

But anyway, as a government, words are very important, and it's imperative to recognize the value held in words. Indeed, the words we use matter, the words we use hold meaning. That's why I rise today to formally recognize the endemic nature of intimate partner violence in Ontario.

The use of the word “endemic” in the characterization of gender-based and intimate partner violence attests to its systemic nature. Gender-based and intimate partner violence is, sadly, present in our society. It's pervasive and it's marked by persistence and systemic patterns. Indeed, intimate partner violence is widespread and does not exist in isolation. By acknowledging intimate partner violence and gender-based violence as endemic, as an endemic issue, our government recognizes that the long-standing and pervasive nature of intimate partner violence requires

a policy approach that is centred on management and reduction.

A part of the measures our government has been working on and investing in—and, I would add, making historical investments in, because as the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler reminded us in her remarks, a declaration does not solve gender-based violence; an action does, plans do. The issue, which involves the physical and psychological and sexual exploitation of women and girls, is one of the most persistent and systemic issues facing our society. That's why we recognize it as an endemic issue and not as an emerging crisis—because this issue is entrenched in societal structures, and quite simply, declarations do not create the architecture for reform. The framing as endemic aligns Ontario with the World Health Organization, leading scholars and members of the opposition who have all previously identified intimate partner violence as endemic. With this motion, it is our sincere hope that all of us here as Ontario's elected representatives will speak with one voice and make it very clear that intimate partner violence requires actions and not a declaration. That's the motion that I'm supporting.

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To demonstrate our commitment to addressing the endemic nature of gender-based and intimate partner violence, our government has formed a comprehensive policy approach centred on management and reduction. We continue to invest towards building long-term systems of prevention, stability and cultural transformation.

We are building on the funding of \$1.4 billion and launched a call for proposals for community-based programs to prevent and address gender-based violence, backed by \$100 million over the next three years. We've secured \$162 million from the federal government to support the implementation of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

As the former parliamentary assistant to children, community and social services, I would like to share some of the province's recent investments in this area over the course of the last few years. In budget 2024, there was an additional \$310 million over three years to address the increase in operational costs for community organizations, and that included funding of \$5.5 million for gender-based violence.

In 2024, our government also provided an additional \$13.5 million over three years to enhance initiatives that support women, children, youth and others who are at increased risk of violence and exploitation. This includes:

—\$6 million in investments over three years to support Children at Risk of Exploitation, or CARE, Units, one in Kenora district with increased access to trauma-informed, specialized supports for children and youth who have been involved in sex trafficking;

—another \$4.5 million over three years in additional funding for the Victim Quick Response Program+ to increase access to basic necessities for victims of human trafficking and gender-based violence, especially in the northern, rural and remote communities, and I'm going to

talk about some of the remote communities and the work that we've done further on in my remarks;

—\$2.5 million over three years in additional funding to increase outreach to children and youth with involvement in the child welfare system, and they link them with resources and educational supports, which is so important;

—half a million dollars in 2024-25 to increase training for the workers in the child welfare sector to help them respond to human trafficking and identify at-risk children and youth.

These are all measures that are active. They're not declarations; they're movements towards a more successful Ontario, a more—a healthier Ontario and a better situation for our most at-risk—our children and our women in our community.

We've also invested \$18.7 million in funding, the bulk of which will flow to approximately 400 gender-based violence service providers across the province to help them hire more staff, improve services and increase their ability to provide services to women and children.

In 2024, we invested an additional \$2.1 million over three years to expand victim and sexual assault services in underserved communities.

Additionally, in 2024, we invested \$18.5 million over three years to enhance the Transitional and Housing Support Program, and I'm going to talk a little bit about that later on. I'm giving you a lot of numbers and a lot of figures, but I'm going to get into some stories that are reality, really soon. That Transitional and Housing Support Program helps victims of domestic violence and survivors of human trafficking find and maintain housing and helps them transition into independence, which is so important.

I'd like to take an opportunity to talk about some of the work that I've recently witnessed as the parliamentary assistant to housing, because I truly appreciate the opportunity to connect the dots between the two ministries that I hold so dear to me.

In September, I visited St. Thomas and went to a place called Project Tiny Hope. Project Tiny Hope is a combined effort between the provincial and federal governments and the YMCA that gets our most vulnerable individuals, including those escaping gender-based violence, a second chance. It's 40 tiny homes, a mix of one-, two- and three-bedrooms, with supportive services for the residents. This funding comes from the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative. We call it COCHI for short. The houses are fully outfitted with a full kitchen, bathroom, laundry machine, private bedroom and living rooms. They're wonderful units, and it's giving these vulnerable women and their children a fresh start and a new opportunity.

Going back to the work that we've done historically, in August 2024, we announced an investment of up to \$26.7 million over three years through the Women's Economic Security Program, known as WESP, to support 25 programs across Ontario that provide training opportunities for women, and this is so important. They need that hand up. They need that job. They need that step. They need that confidence. And I know the minister would appreciate this

because she understands better than all of us, in her previous life, that women need that confidence and they need that opportunity to move forward, especially for their children.

This investment will include up to \$11.7 million in funding through a bilateral agreement with the federal government on the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, and this investment is part of Ontario's four-year action plan to prevent and address gender-based violence. This plan focuses on building safer and healthier communities through violence prevention while supporting women's well-being and economic opportunities.

Since its inception in 2018, 5,700 women benefited from WESP, with 2,700 women pursuing further education or training, or starting an apprenticeship, a business or a job. This is incredible work, and I want to thank the minister for women because she truly understands that space; she comes from that environment because of her work in social work and she gets it, and for that, I'm very grateful.

We're continuing to fight against human trafficking by investing more than \$345 million over the next five years as we renew our government's anti-human trafficking strategy, and this brings our government's total commitment to more than \$650 million. We've provided children's aid societies with more tools to protect the youth in their care from human trafficking. And on Monday—this is a great announcement, Speaker—we announced \$26.7 million in investment aimed at protecting survivors of gender-based violence by expanding access to emergency shelters and enhancing the Family Court Support Worker Program. This funding would add more than 300 new shelter spaces and boost capacity at over 65 emergency shelters across this province. Ontario shelters, by the way, serve—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

Hon. Steve Clark: Please continue the debate, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member from Thornhill. Please continue the debate.

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

So getting back to this, these shelter spaces will serve over 12,000 women and dependents each year, and this funding will help increase accessibility to emergency shelters across the province and help victims navigate the Family Court system. These supports are integral to supporting a woman's transition out of violent or unsafe environments and helping her rebuild a stable and independent life, free from abuse.

This investment will help front-line agencies and survivors with a safe place to heal and rebuild their lives, increasing capacity at over 65 emergency shelters including rural and remote and northern communities, and

Indigenous-led shelters to ensure a space is available where and when it's needed.

So, Speaker, I'm going to talk a little bit about my previous life. Not too many years ago, I was exposed to so many instances that circled around the issue of intimate partner violence. Years ago, I worked under the child protection act and directly dealt with numerous files that circled around the placement of children under the child protection act in the realm of family law. The work was exceptionally rewarding. I worked with different social agencies and counselled to help achieve the best possible results for the children and the families that were affected. And I've seen countless files that have resonated within the theme of intimate partner violence. I recall having so many colleagues who were so diligent—they worked so hard—to ensure that we met the time frames so that we could achieve the best possible results for both the women and the children impacted. It was rewarding work, and I'm so proud of the time that I spent working within that realm. It gave me great perspective.

1700

The Family Law Information Centres, also known as the FLIC offices, which provide assistance and guidance for the filling out of forms within the court processes—I understand; I remember seeing the look on those women's faces when they would walk through the courts. They needed help, and those FLIC offices were there to help them.

The family court support workers, through victim services throughout the province, provide essential guidance and assistance. This is such important work, and it provides planning and safety. These people are angels. They accompany the sometimes very scared and shaken women to their appointments.

Both of these programs that I just talked about, by the way, just recently received more funding in the package that I talked about earlier—

Interjections.

Ms. Laura Smith: Yes—giving more women and families more support when navigating the court system.

One of the highlights of my work within the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services—and supported by that same ministry, you'll recall—was the YIPI program, standing for “Youth in Policing Initiative.” YIPI provided youth with an exceptional opportunity to work and mentor with various police organizations across the province, giving these youth a solid foundation because that's what it's all about. I know the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler talked about having a solid foundation or an architecture for our students—and this is the important stuff. This is the important stuff.

Overall, we've made comprehensive and expansive investments that provide more prevention, more protection and more support for women and children affected by gender-based violence and intimate partner violence. But while we have made investments and policy changes, we also recognize that there is critical work that still needs to be done. We need to keep working on what we've created and continue down that road because intimate partner

violence is not confined to the past; it continues today, and that's why it's endemic and sometimes visible and brutal and sometimes hidden behind closed doors.

Madam Speaker, while progress has been made, we know that this is far from over—because everyone deserves to live free from fear and to be able to make choices about their life, their home and their future without the shadow of violence. Yet so many still face danger in places that should be safe—in their homes and in their communities.

I've talked about some of our government's investments that support women's economic security and expand access to shelters, crisis lines and other supports that are part of some of the packages that I discussed, and these investments truly matter. We can only carry this as far as the work being done to change our cultural fabric, and the pieces less talked about. A statement—that isn't the work; this is the work.

Gender-based violence is not always visible; I think I've talked about this. It's not always marked by bruises or police reports. I'm going to do a shameless plug: I brought a private member's bill, an amendment to the Change of Name Act, which actually provides that heinous criminals under the sex offender list, Christopher's Law, cannot change their name. I did this because of the work that I did in my previous life, and it was widely supported, so much so that it was adopted into the safer streets bill. I didn't even have to cross the line with it. It was accepted, and we got it done for Christopher and the memory of him, and for his parents. That was a proud moment.

It's the woman who stays silent because she fears so much, and it's the child who feels hopeless when they've been exploited and tormented, never knowing what true security feels like, and it's the mother who lies awake at night wondering how she will keep her children safe if she leaves. These are all very real issues that I could get into from my previous life, but I really don't want to cry in this House again. I want to keep that very clear. I could be very emotional, and it's very challenging to talk about this issue because I've seen it first-hand and it's very difficult.

That's what makes this issue so meaningful, because behind every statistic is a person whose life has been interrupted, a child who's seen too much and a community forever changed for that child. We owe it to future generations to help break that cycle. That means continuing the important work. It means making sure that our youth learn what healthy relationships look like, that they understand boundaries, empathy and respect. It means giving our teachers and coaches something that I know the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler has talked about, the tools to identify when a student might be in danger and to know how to help. It means having the resources and supports necessary to help those who are affected by gender-based violence and helping those people affected transition to safety, stability and independence, all while ensuring that they have access to housing opportunities and other opportunities to rebuild their lives.

So, I want to thank the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler for her hours and hours of work on this. I was

able to join her in committee, and I know how much dedication she put forward on this critical issue of making knowledge usable, because that's what it's all about. We can make a declaration, but taking that information and making knowledge effective, bringing in architecture—and I'm quoting her.

I want to thank the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity for their steadfast leadership, who helped bring so many of the different projects that I just talked about into fruition, because these are the architects. This is the architecture of what we need to continue to build on.

I'm going to go back once again to the remarks of the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler: Declarations do not create architecture for change; plans and actions do.

The work for gender-based and intimate partner violence is not done, but neither is our resolve. We're going to continue to strive, not just today but every day, to effectuate positive and systemic change. That's why I'm in support of our motion, which provides the term "endemic," and that's why I am not in support of the amendment that was submitted by the opposition.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I really appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill today. I have to say it's been interesting for me to follow the people who have spoken before me. It's a very substantial and emotionally wrenching issue. I have to say that there are two parts here I want to touch on, and the first is the process by which we develop a report and an approach to the issue, and then talking about what our priorities have to be in dealing with this issue.

First of all, I have to say, as my colleague from London West said earlier, that there are real concerns that this is an approach that is problematic, that we have had a historical approach to writing reports, which is one in which committee assemblies, people come and make presentations and staff put together a report based on the debate and the information brought forward.

In no way, shape or form am I disparaging the work of the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler. I have no doubt that that member has put in the time and the thought, the commitment to giving the quality that is required. That being said, it is a very different approach to dealing with reports from this body to have a situation in which a government member writes the report in advance. One should always be very careful about these things.

I will say, having been here for a little while, I used to say to the Liberals when they were government, "You think you're going to be government forever, and you're acting as if your hampering of the opposition is something you're never going to be subjected to." Well, no government lasts forever. When you do things that are problematic in terms of the opposition being able to actually intervene, when you do things that undermine democratic norms, you create problems.

I will say to the Conservatives today, you think you're going to be government forever, but I'm telling you, you

won't be. And there will be times when you will look back and say, "Why on earth did we change a democratic process that, in fact, served the province and the Legislature well?"

1710

In this matter before us, I want to say that the amendments made by the MPP from Windsor West and the MPP from Parkdale—High Park to amend the motion before us are amendments that we should accept so that, in fact, we respect and utilize the process of report writing that has been developed through many, many years in this institution. And notwithstanding all the faults of this institution, the process of having an open and democratic approach to writing reports is something that is far more productive than having the government write those reports.

That being said, I want to talk, then, to the other part of the issue, and that's the whole question of, how do we come to grips with intimate partner violence? How do we come to grips with an epidemic that sweeps through our society? Because it is absolutely clear that it makes sense to provide those supports so that women who are in desperate and dangerous situations and their children can get out of those situations safely and quickly.

But, Speaker, I used to be a property manager, and one of the things that I learned in the course of commissioning one of the buildings I was managing was a long discussion I had with a firefighter who was doing the fire safety check. And, as he said to me, "Fabulous, you've got all these exits all set up properly. Fabulous, you've got the fire hoses, the extinguishers, the emergency lighting system. But in my book, you should be doing everything possible to prevent the use of those in the future. The absolute best outcome is you never need to use those particular resources. The absolute best outcome is that you prevent the fire in the first place."

And, as it's been pointed out to me, the absolute best outcome or the best approach is one in which we invest in the people in this society, in the young people in this society, so that we don't find ourselves in a situation where women and children are physically or emotionally abused and where they desperately have to find a way out. We need to be investing in the mental health supports, and the—I don't quite know what the correct term would be, but let us say the processes that help those who perpetrate these kinds of abuses to change their whole approach.

Because I think the reality is that for a lot of couples that get together, there will be women who will be attracted to men who will have a variety of positive attributes, with some attributes that are absolutely poisonous. And rather than have their whole lives disrupted, they would much rather that those people change the way they lived in the world, the way they treated them and the way they treated their children. And if you're going to do that, you have to make the investments. You have to make them up front in the schools with young people so that young men are emotionally literate, so that they know how to deal with frustration and anger in a way that does not result in damage to people around them, particularly the ones that they love, or that love them, or that depend on them.

And that is going to take a fair amount of investment. It's not just simply a question of having classes in the schools; it's a question of, in the schools and in other youth-oriented facilities, making sure that there are those who have the training to help people come to grips with the difficult emotional realities that life presents to them. That has to be, I think, the first and most critical step: preventing the fire from happening in the first place, preventing the frustrations from coming out in a way that is destructive.

But the other side of it, then, is to deal with those people who actually have engaged in that kind of physical, psychological or emotional damaging behaviour, and counselling those people and helping them actually come to a situation where the positive elements in their personalities—and I have met people before who I thought had a variety of great talents but fundamentally lacked that emotional regulator, that emotional understanding so that they could interact with people in a productive and non-destructive way. I've seen those elements in their personalities at war with each other. We need to have in place the investments so that those people who are engaged in that war have a very powerful ally helping them change their personalities.

As everyone in this room would know, and everyone who's dealt with people for any length of time, it's awfully hard for people to change. It's awfully hard for people to deal with many of those destructive impulses. But if, in fact, you make the investment and if, in fact, they're highly motivated to try and make their lives work—because, in a person, I think you can have a co-existence of that great love for a partner and children along with an inability to modulate or control one's emotions so that you're treating them in the way that's proper. That investment, at that end, would hopefully make the need for the other investments around shelter, around the ability for people to get out of a relationship much less necessary. Right now, it's necessary. You're not doing the front end; you're not doing the prevention, so you're getting the damage later.

Let's make sure that everyone is safe now and do that rapidly. But it's far less expensive for a society and far less expensive for individuals if they, in fact, are given those tools so that relationships can actually be healed and go on in a way that is productive. I would say, Speaker, in the hearings that I hope are held, that those perspectives are the ones that are brought forward and that this Legislature actually talks and thinks through, how do you deliver a program of prevention like that that will transform people's lives and eliminate the need for someone to flee in the night with their kids out onto the street in order to protect themselves?

I know that's a thought that may be alien to a number of people. But, for our purposes, the lowest-cost, least-disruptive approach to human life is to make those emotional interventions, those educational and psychosocial interventions, the part of the strategy dealing with this problem with the other approaches an add-on—not your number one focus.

With that, Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity.

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

Ms. Natalie Pierre: I'm honoured to rise in this House today to speak in support of the government's motion to recognize the endemic nature of intimate partner violence in Ontario.

I'd like to begin by thanking my colleagues on the committee from all parties for the seriousness, compassion and care they've brought to, and continue to bring to, this very important work. This committee showed what is possible when the Legislature puts politics aside and puts people first.

This report represents the voices of countless Ontarians who have lived through intimate partner violence, the families and the children who have been affected by it, and the dedicated professionals and volunteers who, unfortunately, respond to it every single day. We owe it to all of them to listen, to act and to make real, lasting change, and we owe it to them to be honest about what we're facing.

1720

Speaker, we must begin by calling this issue what it truly is: Intimate partner violence is an endemic in Ontario. That word, "endemic," carries enormous weight. It signals that this crisis is not isolated. It's not occasional. It's not temporary. It's woven into the lives of too many people, too many families and too many communities. It tells us that this violence is not confined to certain households or communities. It is persistent, it is widespread and it is deeply rooted across our society. It does not surge and recede like a passing storm. It is sustained by structures, attitudes and inequities that have built up over generations. And because it is persistent, our response must be equally persistent, measured not in days, not in headlines but in systems, standards and results; measured in stability, not symbolism.

The numbers bear this out. Police respond to intimate partner violence calls in Ontario every few minutes. Thousands seek safety in shelters or reach out through crisis lines and community programs each year. Many more suffer in silence, unseen or uncaptured in any data.

Yet behind every statistic is a person: a mother, a sister, a neighbour, a family member, a co-worker, a husband, a sibling. All people who deserve safety, stability and dignity. The stories heard through the committee were often heartbreaking, but there were also stories of resilience, courage and hope—survivors who came forward not only to be heard but to ensure that others don't have to endure the same harm. Their courage is a call to action, and it must move us forward with seriousness and humility.

Ontario's government is committed to protecting survivors, preventing violence and building stronger, safer communities. Under the leadership of Premier Ford, Minister Parsa and Associate Minister Williams, we have taken meaningful steps to strengthen supports for victims and to hold perpetrators accountable.

We have increased funding for violence-against-women shelters and sexual assault centres, because we know these are often the first places survivors turn when they need safety. We have supported innovative, community-based

programs that connect survivors to housing, to counselling and to legal resources, particularly in rural and northern communities, where access can be limited. We have expanded collaboration between police, crown attorneys and community agencies, ensuring that survivors are not left to navigate complex systems on their own. These are concrete steps, and they are making a difference.

But as we all know, meaningful progress does not begin and it does not end with individual programs. It continues through structure, coordination and long-term planning. And as this report reminds us, the work continues.

In committee, we heard the need to strengthen prevention, improve coordination among services and modernize how we respond to intimate partner violence.

Words matter, and yesterday, Associate Minister Williams made an important point about why “endemic” is the right descriptor. Epidemics erupt suddenly and recede. Endemic problems are chronic, they are predictable and they are deeply woven into social systems. Calling intimate partner violence an endemic is not about minimizing the harm; it’s about naming a reality.

This violence has persisted across eras, across cultures. It is intergenerational, and it resists quick and reactive fixes. When we use accurate language, we commit to the right kind of solution: long-term, structural and coordinated solutions. That is how we honour the testimony we heard and the lives we are trying to protect.

We also heard from the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler about the discipline of finishing the work before us. This motion is not a slogan; it is a mechanism. It moves us from listening to implementing. It tells survivors and partners that their contributions will not sit in transcripts. They will be translated into policy, translated into practice, and there will be accountability.

Declarations are important, but declarations do not align training, do not coordinate calendars, and they do not stabilize base funding. A coordinated long-term framework does. This motion is about putting that framework in place so that ministries, partners, police, educators and service providers can act together, consistently and at scale.

First is prevention. Prevention is not separate from public safety; it is public safety at its earliest and most effective stage.

The committee heard that the first signs of risk appear long before adulthood, in classrooms, in arenas, on sports fields, in families under stress and in workplaces where isolation or coercion take hold. Teaching respect, consent and healthy relationships needs to be consistent, age-appropriate and reinforced over time. When we equip young people with the language to recognize controlling behaviour, when coaches model leadership with empathy and accountability, when workplaces provide psychological safety and clear reporting paths, these are early interventions that prevent escalation. Prevention is practical, measurable, humane and effective.

Second is modernization of the justice system. We did not hear a lack of dedication; we heard a system working at full capacity inside structures designed for another era. Police, crowns, defence and victim services are adapting

through integrated bail teams, specialized intimate partner violence courts and better information-sharing. Modernization in this context means clarity and coordination, standardized risk assessments, consistent reporting and technology that allows justice partners to see the same facts at the same time.

Third is stability for the front-line workforce, the people who answer the phone calls in the middle of the night, who staff shelters, who sit with families in crisis. These professionals are the core of our response.

They told the committee that predictable funding is not a luxury; it is safety. Stability reduces turnover, preserves expertise and ensures continuity for victims.

Fourth is data and accountability. We’ve heard you cannot manage what you do not measure. A provincial data standard—shared indicators, regular public reporting—lets ministries and partners evaluate what works, repeat success and adjust quickly when outcomes fall short.

The government has also taken significant steps that align with these pillars. We moved quickly to launch Ontario-STANDS, our action plan to prevent gender-based violence, backed by a historic investment to improve safety, expand culturally appropriate supports and connect systems so that child protection, policing, health care, justice and education do not work in silos.

1730

We expanded that plan with community-based projects—education and awareness, early intervention, service integration and economic security. We built on that work with a targeted investment to expand access to emergency shelter spaces and strengthen the Family Court Support Worker Program. We renewed and expanded Ontario’s Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy and we launched Pathways to Safety, guided by Indigenous women.

I’d also like to talk a little bit about what my colleague the MPP from Thornhill mentioned earlier, just to talk about some of the other initiatives and legislation that has come forward from this House.

The MPP from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock and the MPP from Thornhill tabled a joint private member’s bill to stop convicted offenders under Christopher’s Law from legally changing their names. This was to prevent sex offenders who have committed horrific crimes from having the ability to hide their identities by changing their names. This private member’s bill was captured in Bill 223, the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act, 2024, complemented by an investment of \$307 million in supporting victims and survivors of human trafficking.

There was also Bill 123, or Erin’s Law, brought forward by the MPP for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry that amends the Education Act to require school boards to implement programs for child sexual abuse prevention and reporting. The law mandates that school boards must establish policies to annually engage students in age-appropriate discussions on the topic and provide information to parents and guardians.

The law mandates child sex abuse prevention and reporting education in Ontario schools to help prevent abuse through early education. For students, school boards

must ensure that students are engaged annually in a developmentally appropriate manner. For parents and guardians, information about child sex abuse prevention and reporting must be made available to them. For staff, teachers and other school staff must be provided be provided with information each year and for policy development, each school board is required to establish a policy for these requirements.

My colleague the MPP for Oakville North–Burlington also brought forward legislation called Keira’s Law, which was brought forward and enacted in part of Bill 102, the Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, which received royal assent on June 8, 2023. Some of the key aspects of Keira’s Law were focused on judicial training—the law mandates that provincial and federal judges receive specific training on the dynamics of intimate partner violence and coercive control. There was an amendment to the Criminal Code requiring that, in release orders for accused individuals facing domestic violence charges, a judge must consider the necessity of electronic monitoring to ensure safety. It addressed expanded education and the goal was to better equip the legal system to recognize and address the complex patterns of abuse in family and intimate partner relationships to prevent tragedies.

Finally, in 2021, the MPP for King–Vaughan, the former Ontario Minister of Education, brought forward legislation around human trafficking, focusing on human trafficking prevention education in the elementary health and physical education curriculum.

All that, Speaker, just to say this is not a one and done. We can see by the number of pieces of legislation that have come forward from members of this House over years that this continues to be an important topic.

Speaker, the effects of intimate partner violence extend far beyond individual households. It affects children who witness abuse and carry that trauma into adulthood. It strains our health care system, our justice system, our social services.

Addressing intimate partner violence is not only a moral imperative; it is a matter of public health, economic stability, and community well-being. No single ministry, no single sector, can solve this alone. Prevention must always come first, but accountability must never be forgotten.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the front-line workers who show up every day: the shelter staff, the counsellors, the nurses, the doctors, the teachers, the police officers and advocates. Their compassion embodies the very best of Ontario.

And to the survivors who shared their stories: We hear you, we believe you and we will act.

Let me return to why finishing this process matters. This motion brings forward the committee’s work to the next stage: review, adoption and tabling. So ministries and partners can plan against a common text with shared definitions, clear recommendations and timelines. Some may ask, why now? Because the evidence is clear and because survivors deserve action.

Speaker, recognizing intimate partner violence as endemic commits us to endurance. It tells us that prevention and response are not projects with start dates or end dates; they are core responsibilities of government, and this motion is the bridge between testimony and implementation.

Progress is possible when we work together, when we listen and when we act. Intimate partner violence is preventable, addressable and we all have a role to play. Let us adopt this report, align our systems and do the hard, patient work that real change demands. Thank you.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: It’s an honour to rise here today and talk about this motion. The motion is to receive a report written by the government member for Kitchener South–Hespeler on intimate partner violence, and this followed a series of consultations that took place over the summer of 2024.

I’m going to talk a little bit about the process—and I’ll come back to the process, but it’s the process that we’re undergoing here. In fact, the reason that we’re even debating this is just wrong. It breaches the committee process, which is a cornerstone of our democratic parliamentary process. I’ll come back to the process in a little bit.

I do welcome the opportunity to speak about intimate partner violence. I will say that this is not my area of expertise, but I recognize that if we are ever going to solve and bring an end to intimate partner violence, that men must listen, we must learn and we must speak out. I’ve been listening to the members here. I listened at the consultations that took place in the summer of 2024, and I’ll try to respond with some of the things that I’ve learned over that time about intimate partner violence and also gender-based violence, and some of the changes that need to take place and some of the changes that men need to implement.

This is probably one of the most personal debates that I’ve witnessed in this Legislature, and people from both sides of the floor have talked about their experiences of intimate partner violence. The member from Thunder Bay–Superior North talked about her family being impacted by intimate partner violence, and then when her mother and sister went to get help from a counsellor, they were asked what they had done to make their father and husband so angry. That was the response at that time. It was blaming the victim. I hope we’ve come farther than that, and nobody who experiences and actually seeks out help for intimate partner violence experiences that kind of victim-blaming anymore, because that is just appalling, and it leaves the person with nowhere to go and no help.

We heard the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington talk about his father, who was abusive but, through a later partner, came to understand and feel shame for what he had done. I think that experience speaks to the need to educate boys and men about intimate partner violence, about consent, about healthy relationships. I think that has got to be the cornerstone. If we are ever

going to solve and bring an end to intimate partner violence, it has to start with the education of the next generation and the current generation of boys and men.

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He also talked about gender-based violence for his trans daughter, who often experiences gender-based violence when she is walking around her own community. That is shameful. It speaks to just how prevalent this is. Intimate partner violence is one part or one example of gender-based violence, but it also includes human trafficking. Gender-based violence includes sexual violence. It includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological and economic and educational abuse. It involves coercion and threats directed at an individual based on their biological sex or gender identity.

People experience this far too often. Victims, the people who have experienced intimate partner violence or gender-based violence who spoke in this Legislature today and who spoke at the committee hearings in the summer of 2024, spoke about living in a constant state of fear. The mothers and the women often talked about looking for an avenue of escape, planning their escape over a period of weeks, months or even years, because they needed to find a safe place to go to, where their violent partner would not be able to find them, but they also needed to find a place where they could look after their children, where their children would be okay.

I would say that the example of intimate partner violence that most resonates for me—when I was in grade 6, a block over from me, the father of a family of five boys and one girl killed all of the boys; the girl escaped. He killed his wife and then he killed himself. One boy was a year older than me; one was a year younger than me. None were in my grade, so they weren't like my best friends, but we certainly knew who they were and we certainly knew who the kids were.

For the entire school and the community, it was just so insanely shocking that even now, when I walk by the house where that went by—and this is 50 years later—I still feel the sensation and still wonder, “How did this happen?” The explanation that was given to us at the time was that he was angry over a speeding ticket. This is the 1970s, and we really didn't have an understanding. There weren't conversations about intimate partner violence. The conversations we are having now are allowing us to understand this issue to a much greater degree and have much more intelligent conversations, but those kinds of violent episodes continue throughout our society. Decades later, they still happen.

I've got a gun violence work group, and a woman I worked with, Alison Irons, is a retired RCMP officer. Her daughter, Lindsay Wilson, was 26 when she was killed by her partner. I'll just read a section of the newspaper article about this:

“In April 2013, Jeremy Pearson, 32, killed Lindsay Wilson, 26, in Bracebridge after the two broke up. Pearson, who also killed himself, used a gun he bought legally. He had been issued a gun licence despite being on

probation after convictions for assault and forcible confinement.

“The charges stemmed from a 2000 incident in which Pearson and another person kidnapped a man and drove off with him near Kingston. The victim managed to escape by opening the door and rolling out onto the highway, escaping serious injury.

“Despite his criminal record, he was issued a gun licence in 2004. In 2009, his licence was renewed even though he was facing a new charge after he was accused of stealing jewellery from someone he was privately buying firearms from....” This all came out in the coroner's report.

Alison has dedicated the last 12 years since her daughter's death to trying to prevent other mothers from suffering the kind of loss that she has suffered. Her daughter, at the age of 26, was a victim of both gun violence and of intimate partner violence.

Alison, I don't know if you're listening right now but just know that your daughter's story is being told and that we are all learning from it and we're all trying to draw the lessons so that we can all work collectively here to bring an end to intimate partner violence.

One of the more recent mass killings was in Renfrew in 2015, when three women were killed by one man. Anastasia Kuzyk, Nathalie Warmerdam and Carol Culleton were killed. In 2022 there was a massive inquest, a long inquest. In 2022, the Renfrew inquest reported with 86 recommendations—86 recommendations to address intimate partner violence. This was after years of consultation and work and research to come to these 86 recommendations.

The first recommendation was to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic, and in April 2024, my colleague the member for Windsor West brought forward the Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic Act. The first ask in that act was to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. It led to a committee of this Legislature. I'll get into the process of what we're doing here a little bit now. It led to a committee to study intimate partner violence.

The frustration from my colleagues, who are strong advocates for bringing an end to intimate partner violence—the frustration they said was, “We already have 86 recommendations. We don't need to do a further study. Let's take action now.” This was back in the spring, in April 2024. They were asking for action now on intimate partner violence. In the Renfrew inquest, none of the 86 recommendations said, “Hey, we need further study on this.” They had the actions that we needed to take.

Now we're here, a year and a half later, and we're debating a report that was written by a member of the governing party. I'll come back to that in a minute. I will say, though, that the Renfrew inquest has led to action. Ninety-five municipalities have declared intimate partner violence an epidemic. The city of Toronto declared intimate partner violence an epidemic on July 20, 2023.

When the city was debating this, when the city was discussing intimate partner violence as an epidemic,

Mayor Olivia Chow talked about her own experience of intimate partner violence. This is why she is such a champion for bringing an end to this. She said she and her mother had to escape her abusive father. They had very little money. They ended up in a basement apartment with a mattress that they had to share, but that was their escape plan. That was the way that they were able to get away from the violence in their home. She recognizes that her story is just one of thousands and thousands of stories like hers.

Declaring intimate partner violence an epidemic is the first step to taking the actions that we need to provide educational supports to everybody, particularly to boys and young men but also to girls, to also talk about what a healthy relationship is and what a healthy relationship isn't, what consent means.

Yesterday, the Toronto police took another step. They released, for the first time, data on intimate partner violence. There is no particular criminal offence called "intimate partner violence," so what they did is they accumulated data that is intimate partner violence, but the charges that were laid included assault, murder, sexual assault, threatening, harassment and intimidation against intimate partners. Those are the charges that were laid.

The police and a local women's shelter say that making these numbers public is an important step in raising awareness on this issue, which the city of Toronto declared an epidemic in 2023. Carol Latchford, who's the executive director of the North York Women's Shelter, said, "It's great that this data is getting out there, because once the data is out there, it's evidence, and it shows the reality of the situation." She's asking for action because now that we've got this data, it allows the government and the police to focus their resources on bringing an end to this. Carol Latchford, the executive director of the North York Women's Shelter, also said, "It's not getting better. It's like a disease."

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I'm going to come back to the process. I would say the frustration on this side of the House of my colleagues is that a year and a half ago, my colleague from Windsor West brought forward a bill to address intimate partner violence, which includes declaring it an epidemic. We're now 18 months later, and we're debating a motion to accept a report from one of the Conservative members, that they wrote based on the consultations that took place in the summer of 2024.

The reason this is so unusual—so far as I have been able to see, there has never been a motion quite like this in the history of this Legislature. Normally, a committee gets a mandate and they have consultations. While they're having those consultations, there are staff from the Legislature—there are researchers and librarians. The researchers and librarians listen to all the consultations, and they pool all of that into a report. That draft report goes back to the committee, and members of the committee from all parties can have a say—"Well, I think you missed this. I think you got this right. You may have this wrong." They can make some edits to it and changes to it and have a

discussion about what recommendations will go into it. The unusual thing about this process is that instead of the non-partisan staff—the researcher from the committee—writing the report, the Conservative member wrote it herself. I believe that this member actually is committed to bringing an end to intimate partner violence. But it should not be a partisan issue. It should not be partisan work. This is one issue that I think everybody in this House is committed to bringing an end to—intimate partner violence and gender-based violence. At least, I hope we are all committed to that, and that we're all willing to put the resources that are needed to bring an end to this so that women, in particular, are not living in fear.

I worry about this process, though. I worry about a partisan member writing the report that's supposed to be written by non-partisan staff. I worry about the democratic process of this Parliament.

I've been a member of this Parliament since 2018. This Parliament does not function as I hoped it would.

The government rarely listens to us in committee. Committees are supposed to be where you put down your partisan hats and you actually just listen to the other side and you work on amendments and making the best legislation possible.

The Conservative Party has 84 seats in here. They've got a majority. They can pass any legislation they want.

What I've discovered here over the last seven years is that, really, most of what happens here is a charade. The Premier and a few close ministers and a lot of people who are lobbying behind the scenes make all the decisions. If you want to be a cabinet minister one day, or a parliamentary assistant or a chair of a committee, or even if you want to stay in the Conservative Party, you have to toe the line. With that party control, it means that I see a lot of members voting on things that they would not normally vote on.

So there are very few opportunities for this place to function in a non-partisan way, and one of those few opportunities is for the researchers—the independent, non-partisan researchers—to write the report, to draft the report from a committee, from committee hearings. And to lose that process—to lose that non-partisan process—is a danger not just with this bill but for all future bills, because if we allow this to happen now, it means that we have a precedent so that when we have a committee hearing and the committee hearings go across the province, as they did on intimate partner violence, they will come back, and one of the partisan Conservative members will write the report. Or maybe the next time, if it's the NDP that's in power, we could do the same thing. But I'm hoping we wouldn't. And I think the New Democratic Party—I don't think we would, because it's in the middle of our name. We're committed to democratic processes. We're called the New Democratic Party not because we're new—the party is 64 years old—but because we're committed to stronger democracy.

And this process that we're undergoing, this debate on this motion to bypass the normal committee process, is a violation of the parliamentary democratic process. And I

think it's a dangerous precedent to set to bypass that process, to have that one part of that process that's supposed to be non-partisan taken over by the governing party.

On especially an issue like this, intimate partner violence, we should all be working together. We should be crossing the floor. We should be avoiding partisan debates. We should just be looking for the best solutions and the most implementable solutions that are immediate, actions that we can take immediately, because we started this debate more than 18 months ago, and now because of this process we're still debating and we're still deciding what actions are going to be taken. We need to solve intimate partner violence as quickly as we can, and we need the government to take action.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: It's a pleasure to rise in the House on behalf of the hard-working residents and families of Simcoe-Grey but also because of the importance of this debate.

My colleague across the way finished his comments by saying it's time for action. That's exactly what this government has been doing, and in fact, that is exactly what the IPV hearings at the justice policy standing committee last term were designed to do.

I was a member of that committee, Madam Speaker, and we heard over the course of 14 days from almost 150 witnesses, 90 experts and 60 victims and those with lived experience in this area. I can tell you that, although for 22

years I was a lawyer and I practised family law in a small community or a rural community and came across this issue on a number of occasions, I did not appreciate the nature and extent of this issue nor the devastating long-term psychological and emotional harms that the victims and their families suffer as a result of it, not just the physical harms, and the immediate disruption to their lives.

We heard over the course of the hearings at the justice policy committee from a multitude of individuals both with lived experience but also front-line workers who saw the devastation and the dysfunction on the ground. But we also heard some very positive stories about things that were being done to combat this. One of the most interesting topics that we discussed was the importance of breaking that cycle of violence. There's incredible evidence and statistics to show that those that grow up in an environment of domestic abuse and intimate partner violence are in many respects condemned to relive it in their lives unless we can take positive action to break that cycle. So, what we heard was the importance of implementing upstream programs, both through the educational system, through other organizations, minor sports and other ways that we can interact with young developing children, both boys and girls, to talk about healthy—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Sorry to interrupt the member. It is now time for orders of the day.

Debate deemed adjourned.

Report continues in volume B.

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Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Leader, Third Party / Chef du troisième parti
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Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gilmour, Alexa (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
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Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
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Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport
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McKenney, Catherine (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
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Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Deputy House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
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Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
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Rosenberg, Bill (PC)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Chris (IND)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smyth, Stephanie (LIB)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises

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