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of Ontario



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18 November 2025

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Mardi  
18 novembre 2025

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Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly  
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly  
Greffier : Trevor Day

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 18 November 2025

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 18 novembre 2025

*The House met at 0900.*

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 17, 2025, on the motion for second 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):** I recognize the member for Ottawa South.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Thank you very much, Speaker—déjà vu. I think I've been here before, about nine hours ago, and some of you were here as well, too. I won't pick up where I left off—if you remember, you struck out last night. Those of you who were here: three strikes.

Actually, I want to talk about what I started on, and the theme is choices. It's all about choices. What you show us here is what your choices are, and I have a story about choices. About two years after I was elected, I was in a grade 5 class. I like to go into classrooms and say, "Ask me any question you like—any question." You get great questions like, "How much money do you make?" Or "What's your favourite colour?" Or "Who's your favourite other politician?" But then this one young girl stands up and she says, "What's the hardest thing about your job?" I was only two years in, and what I used to say is what some of us say: "I sit all day long. I'm not moving and it's going to kill me." But that 10-year-old, she's not going to understand—because she sits all day long and she's not old like me—so she made me think really quickly.

The answer to that question, the hardest thing about our jobs, is to not do all the things you want to do for people. We have to make choices; we can't do everything. So we have to do those things that are important. That's the point I was trying to make with this bill. We can see what the choices are and what the choices aren't, and I think the three things in Ontario that you've got to get right if you

come to this chamber are: make sure people's health care is there for them when they need it; make sure your school system is great so kids will have opportunity; and make sure your economy is good so young people will have jobs. If you get those three things right, that's the thing that most people want and most people need.

When I look at this document, I don't see that reflected. I don't see a plan for youth jobs, youth careers. We know that 200,000 young people are looking for work—actually, 220,000. We know it's a big problem, but I don't see anything here. I don't see anything here to help those small businesses hire those people.

We know that our hospitals are saying, "We're \$1 billion short," and that's a result of the government not providing enough funding and the hospitals having to use something called working capital. As you continue to use your working capital—those of you who are in business—and you're not backfilling that and paying that off, you begin to have a debt that grows and grows and grows. The hospitals are saying, "We need \$1 billion." I don't see that in this document. It's not there. That help's not there.

Then, if I look for something for our schools, because we know that our schools aren't safe places to learn or to work—I've travelled part of the province, I've got more to do, but we know that they aren't safe places to learn or to work because of three things:

(1) Class sizes have grown. They're too big.

(2) Special education is underfunded by approximately \$850 million a year, so boards have to spend \$850 million more than the government is giving them.

(3) We have a mental health crisis in our schools with our kids, partly because of the pandemic but partly as a reflection—and some across the aisle would know—of what is happening in our society.

It's amazing. You walk in to any place and it says, "Foul language or harassment or any kind of bullying will not be tolerated." When did that happen? When did you phone somebody and the first message that comes on, when you go through the automated thing, is saying, "You'd better behave." We've got a problem and it's reflected in our schools and the government is not addressing that. That's not in this document. That says something about choices. The three things that are most important aren't there.

But here's what's there. I want to focus on one thing in particular and that's the changes to the Election Act. Here's the biggest problem with that: These changes are going to make it harder for people to vote, and this is why. You're taking away the fixed election date—that's fine. We shortened the writ when we had a fixed election date,

to 28 days, because we all knew what was coming. That's why it's only 28 days, because we knew when the election was.

Now what you are saying on the other side is, "We're going to choose when it happens." To be honest, I'm agnostic about that. Whatever way you want to do it, that's fine. I wasn't a proponent of fixed election dates. But here's what the problem is: The Chief Electoral Officer has said, "I need more time to organize an election," but you've kept the writ the same. So you can call it willy-nilly any time you want and the people who are responsible for voting in your riding—the 124 ridings across this province and the dozens of places that exist inside those ridings, the returning offices—it takes lot to set those things up. It's not like a car ignition, folks. You don't just turn it on and it turns over. You have to plug it in and warm it up. And if you're not going to give them 35 or 42 days, it's going to make it harder for them to do the things they need to do for the people in your riding to vote—the people who vote for you, the people who vote for us, all of us. It's just going to make it harder. That's making it harder for people to vote and that's wrong.

The other thing we do is, all of a sudden, we've had to raise donation rates—I heard from somebody—because we've got to harmonize it with other provinces. So we've got to get to five grand and we've got to index it to inflation, but don't index some things that we do for people to inflation—or the people who help people in our province, we don't index their funding to inflation—but you guys want to index donations. But you don't do it for other people.

It's a pretty self-serving piece of legislation that you've inserted here. Although the piece that I don't think is self-serving is the piece where we are making it harder for people to vote. That's not good for any of us. You're making it harder to vote because you're allowing for a snap election to be called, like last February, where there are 28 days—28 days—for the returning officer to get ready.

I see someone over there, whose name I won't mention, shrugging at that. These are people who work to make elections fair and free and open and who try to make it accessible for people to vote. That's their responsibility. They've got to find dozens and dozens of polling places.

The argument that I'm making here is, why didn't you make the writ longer? The Chief Electoral Officer asked for it. What you're doing in this bill is, you're going to make it harder for people to vote at a time when democracy is under threat, under threat from within, under threat by things like social media and trust in government. You're going to make it harder for people to vote.

Of all the stuff that's in this bill, that is the worst thing. Because you know what? It's not like the self-serving part, which is pumping up the donations and letting them be indexed to inflation. It's actually the thing that is most important to people in elections: their ability to exercise their democratic right, the stuff we all talked about before we left last week, about democracy and why we have

Remembrance Day and what people died for. We talked about that, and we all waxed eloquent about that.

**0910**

But on the other side, you're saying, "Yes, it's not that important. We're not going to listen to the people who run elections, who try to make sure that our democracy works." You haven't listened, and it's just in this bill. Because you can do whatever you want over there, because you can pass this in six and a half hours or however long the minister wants to time-allocate it to, or the minister of time—there's no minister of time allocation, but there might be one.

So, I just think it's all about choices. I don't see education. I don't see health care. I don't see youth jobs in there. What I do see is election finances that we don't really need to change. We don't need to make it five grand. We don't need to index it. But, actually, not thinking enough about how elections are run and what we need to do to protect the democracy that everybody waxed so eloquently about last week, about how important it is and how people sacrifice so much for our democracy—and then you see this in this bill. It's called cognitive dissonance, right? That's what it is, and we should all be concerned about it.

I hope that—today is Tuesday, right?

**Mme Lucille Collard:** Yes, it is.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Today is Tuesday, so it's caucus—

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** All day.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Tuesday all day. Thanks for reminding me. It was a late night last night, so I kind of lost track of where I was at. I do admit, I did have to nap before I came back here last night. I'm an old guy.

I just hope you go back to caucus today and go, "What's with this? What's with this part of the FES bill here?"

**Hon. Steve Clark:** What's with your speech?

**Mr. John Fraser:** Hey, look, it's 9 o'clock in the morning. You're all still sitting there. I'm awake, I'm here, I'm going, right? I was here at close last night—

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** So were we.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Yes, I know. I have a deep appreciation for that. When you see other people across and they're actually listening at midnight—it takes a bit of work to get you to listen sometimes, but sometimes it works.

I don't see stuff in there that talks about our health care system, that invests in the thing that hospitals are asking us to do. I don't see an investment in education. We know that we have that problem of having schools being safe places to learn and to work. The reality is, we don't have enough adults in schools. Go and ask anybody in a school; go and ask a principal, anyone. Pick a school in your riding. We don't have enough adults. It's a problem. That's why you have a problem sometimes with violence and civility, and they're not safe places to work—nothing in there. And I see nothing about youth jobs.

So, it's all about choices, folks, and the choices that you've made are—the things that are important, they're going to take a back burner or we're going to put them on the shelf. But the things that are important to us—which is making sure that we can change the election rules without

actually thinking that you may be disenfranchising some people because you're not actually giving the people who protect that democracy that we have, the Chief Electoral Officer, all the returning officers and all the people who work in elections, enough time to get it right.

Elections Ontario only had one week to get ready for the last election—one week in the middle of winter. One week. I know in my riding, they had a returning office in a big box store, likely for more than what some people make in a year. That's what's a returning office.

So, it's not a joke. If we're all going to, on Remembrance Day, stand up here and talk about democracy, then we have to respect it. Making these changes without recognizing that people need to get ready for an election, the people who are impartial, who take care of these things—if we don't give them the time to be able to do it, it's not going to be free and fair because some people will be disenfranchised. Just like in the last campaign, 42% of people showed up—42%, less than half. That's something that we should be concerned about, all of us. It doesn't matter where we stand or what colour we wear—42% of people—and this part of the FES bill is going in the wrong direction.

So if you hear anything this morning from me, it's, you have to say—to the gentleman across from me, who I believe is responsible for this part of the bill—this writ needs to be longer, at least between 35 and 42 days. That's the right thing to do. That's what it is federally. That's what it was before, and you can have a shorter writ as long as you know when the election is. Right now, what you're saying is, "We're going to decide whenever," and that's fine; I don't care. Just make it fair and free. Not changing that writ is absolutely the wrong thing to do.

The people who we all work for, who vote for all of us here, or who just vote, they deserve better than what's in this bill.

Thank you very much. I will turn it over to my colleague from Don Valley West.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** I recognize the member from Don Valley West.

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** I'm grateful for the opportunity to rise today and speak on Bill 68, or the fall economic statement.

I wanted to just do a little reminder. There are so many government ads out, and they spend hundreds of millions of dollars on them, but there was one a while back called, "It's happening here." Taxpayers paid \$40 million for those ads, Speaker, and they really need a rewrite, so I'm going to give the government some help here.

The economy is trending worse than expected: It's happening here.

We are forecast to have half as many new jobs expected in 2025 and even fewer in 2026: It's happening here.

Unemployment will be close to 8% next year: It's happening here.

Housing starts will only reach half of the government's yearly target: It's happening here.

Services like health care, schools, post-secondary education, which are already in crisis, will not get the funding

they need to maintain service levels over the next three years: It's happening here.

Speaker, the numbers show a very stark reality. This government says, "Oh, everything is great. We're doing a great job. Trust us; don't worry." But the numbers show a starkly different picture. Unemployment is at a 13-year high. This government has been elected for over seven years. It's at a 13-year high. Over the course of 2025, it will average 7.8%, up from 7%. Government-projected unemployment will remain stuck at that 7.8% next year.

Remember when the government promised they were creating a province where businesses would be flocking to invest and grow, where they told the people of Ontario that their policies would unleash unprecedented economic momentum? Well, one look at the fall economic statement shows that simply is not the case. The numbers in their own document show a very different picture, one of falling confidence among businesses, weakening job creation, an economy that does not live up to the government's hype.

The government likes to talk about economists when it when it suits them and rating agencies. Let's talk about that for a minute. Private sector forecasts that underlie the government's assumptions have repeatedly been revised downward for 2025 through 2027. When the 2024 budget was tabled, job creation for the period was expected to total 365,000, then a year later, the 2025 budget: "Oh, sorry, 180,000." Now with the FES, we're down to just 171,000, or 190,000 fewer jobs versus the 365,000 projected just a year ago. So, what does that say, Speaker? Well, it confirms that private sector forecasters don't believe the government's policies are moving the dial sufficiently. That's what we've been saying on this side of the House since this government was first elected: Conservatives are not doing enough to boost economic growth and create jobs.

We have over 700,000 people in this province. We have over 200,000 young people unemployed; the highest unemployment rate among youth in the large provinces—Alberta, BC, Quebec—at 16.3%, Speaker. That's not happening in Alberta. That's not happening in BC. That's not happening in Quebec. It's happening here.

**0920**

Let's talk about housing and construction, clearly a driver of economic growth. Canada's population is growing; we need houses. We've been needing houses for a long time. This government even said so themselves and set a target of 1.5 million new homes, which, now, they're not even talking about because, of course, they can't get it done. The fall economic statement revealed just how bad it is. We now know that housing starts are projected to reach only half of the annual target needed to meet that broken promise of 1.5 million homes. That's not a small miss.

According to their updated projections, housing starts are expected to fall. Let me say it again: Housing starts are expected to fall by 17,000 units over the next three years. Keep in mind that's 17,000 fewer than they themselves promised just six months ago. The gap between their words and their results is simply a big miss. That shortfall

would be concerning on its own, but when you consider that Ontario is now headed towards the lowest number of housing starts in more than a decade, that picture becomes even more troubling.

Even with all the “incentives” and housing bills, one after another, that this government has thrown at municipalities, they can’t get the industry moving. At a time when families are struggling more than ever to find an affordable place to live, this government is delivering less, far less than what the moment demands. Failing to tackle the affordability crisis by making housing more attainable—it’s happening here.

Speaker, let’s talk about government services. This is the basic nuts and bolts of government. This is what we’re here to do: health care, education, building our province. I wanted to be surprised when I read the fall economic statement to see the real action, the stimulus that they would create to get our economy moving, with tax relief measures for middle income families, tax cuts for small businesses, funding for colleges and universities to train our youth for the jobs of the future and the billion dollars in shortfall funding that hospitals are facing because of cuts that they’ve been experiencing. We’re left with simply no direction on any of those files, no promising future on any of those files.

But it continues to get worse because, once again, this government is not telling the whole story to taxpayers. The finance minister continues to either be deluded or not be transparent when he forecast the path to balance in 2027-28.

The Auditor General talks about debt reduction strategy in the Fiscal Sustainability, Transparency and Accountability Act. Under this act, the government is not fully in compliance. I’ll say it again: the Auditor General has found that this government is not fully in compliance with the requirement to develop a debt burden reduction strategy, including setting out net debt-to-GDP objectives and providing a progress report on the supporting actions and implementation of the strategy included in the last budget.

So why did they get that failing grade from the Auditor General? Their debt burden reduction strategy is not fully implemented due to the province—listen carefully here—not clearly demonstrating how debt will be managed. This from a government that said reducing the debt and managing the debt was a fiscal and moral imperative. They have the Auditor General of the province, who they laud when it suits them, saying that they don’t have a debt reduction strategy. They’re breaking their own law, Speaker.

And then we have the Financial Accountability Office, who says that deficits are likely to total \$50.8 billion through 2030. So what’s going on? Who’s right, the government or the FAO? Well, the FAO recently concluded that the Ontario budget will not be balanced before the end of the decade without finding fiscal savings, reducing program spending or increasing taxes. It’s pretty simple, Speaker.

The cost drivers for health care, long-term care, social services, education all outpace the funding increases in this government’s budget and fall economic statement.

Rather than providing the necessary supports and services for the programs that make Ontario a great place to live, that attract investment, that attract people to come and work and build a life here, this government is more focused on pet projects like the tunnel under the 401, moving the science centre to Ontario Place and, of course, the infamous Skills Development Fund and how they help their friends.

Speaker, Ontario’s fiscal situation is getting worse, not better. The debt sustainability measures are all deteriorating. Let’s just look at those numbers: Net debt-to-GDP is rising from 36.2% to 38.4%, almost where it was when this government took office; net debt-to-revenue is rising from 191% to 210%, surpassing the government’s own 200% target; net interest-to-revenue is rising from 5.5% to 6.7%. And on top of all of that, Ontario is approaching half a trillion dollars in debt.

So how can we possibly be spending more and not feeling like it, Speaker? It’s simple: Never has a government spent so much to deliver so little.

If the government continues to go down this path, they will soon run into an even harder situation. As I said, to balance the budget, the government will either have to do cuts to programs, raise taxes or actually, in fact, delay again, like they’ve already done five times; five times they’ve delayed that path to balance. They’ll have to move the date. They will move the goalpost once again. The Premier recently said, if you don’t like the rules, change them. That’s what this government is doing. Every time they set a goalpost for when they’re going to balance the books, they just say, “Oh, sorry, guys. We missed it. We’ll go on to the next year.”

Let’s talk about transparency, because it’s certainly not in the fall economic statement. Let’s talk about the increase on the energy rebate. There will be at least another \$2 billion going towards the rebate program, but it’s nowhere to be seen in this document—nowhere. The government knew well about that increase long before they published this document—long before they published this document, Speaker. That means the deficit is worse than expected, it’s worse than reported and the path to balance is even further away.

It’s very simple: Taxpayers are not being told the whole story in the fall economic statement. What story are they being told? Well, yes, we have a situation with uncertainty. We have tariffs, but yet we have very little in relief. Page 152 of the FES document shows new spending consists of the following: a \$2-billion increase in programs, but \$1.5 billion of that is contingency. That’s not an increase in program spending. Again, the government says it themselves: “We’re setting money aside for a rainy day.” Yeah.

Of the \$600 million that is new, none of it is going to hospitals, education or colleges and universities. So, a piddly \$600 million in new spending when the government is going on and on about the threat of US tariffs, and yet they can’t find any money. Why? Because they’ve stripped the coffers clean on their pet projects like the 401

tunnel, Ontario Place and, again, the Skills Development Fund, which I'll talk more about.

Speaker, it's all because their priorities are wrong. They don't want to have colleges and universities with the money that they need. They want to help their friends at Therme. They want to move the Ontario Science Centre. Again, an AG report told the government it would be cheaper to keep it where it is and fix it than to move it. I think the government has very clearly turned a blind eye to that Auditor General finding and recommendation.

And then, of course, we've got the second feasibility study for a tunnel under the 401. Maybe it's because they didn't like what the first one said, but we don't know, because they won't share it with us. Again, they talk about the amazing public servants who work here, and I believe that. The public servants did a report on the tunnel, and they won't tell us what it said. I wouldn't call that transparency, Speaker. That is taxpayer money. They're spending taxpayer money on a study. Hard-working public civil servants looked at that, did some assessment, and we don't know what the results said.

If it only stopped there, Speaker, that would be bad enough. But again, we've got this government committing—doubling down—on spending more money on the scandal-plagued Skills Development Fund. It's almost comical, Speaker. It would be comical if it weren't so serious.

**0930**

This government is going to throw another quarter of a billion dollars to the Skills Development Fund in the next few months, which the Auditor General has said was not fair, was not transparent, was not accountable. Instead of admitting, "Mea culpa; yeah, we made some mistakes," what is this government doing? They're keeping their labour minister. The Premier says it's the best program ever. Speaker, if it's the best program ever, we are in serious trouble. It's turned out that it's simply giving taxpayers out to their lobbyist friends and organizations who support them. It's not about creating jobs. That seems to be a shield. If only it were about creating jobs, because the 700,000 people who are unemployed and the 200,000 youth who are looking for their first job would really like it to be about jobs.

I tried, during the estimates hearing last week, to get a better understanding of what, if any, controls are in place for the Treasury Board to ensure value for money because that's what they say they do. Let me just read a bit of their mandate: "The Treasury Board Secretariat provides leadership and advisory services that support evidence-based decision-making, prudent financial and risk management, transparency, accountability, transformation and modernization efforts across the public sector in Ontario. TBS strengthens the way government is managed and helps to ensure value for money in government spending and results for Ontarians."

Speaker, how can that mandate be true today when we've got what's going on with the Skills Development Fund? I asked the Treasury Board President to tell me what controls are in place to ensure that, after a ministry

has been given funding for a project, a ministry whose job it is to ensure value for money, they can actually fulfill that mandate? What did I hear from a government who claims to be fiscally responsible and transparent, who claims to be working for taxpayers? Nothing, Speaker—silence—because if they had admitted there was a problem, that would be admitting to needing a major course correction, which clearly this government is not ready to do. But we're here to keep demanding that.

The Ontario Liberals gave this government the opportunity yesterday to fund a program that could make a tangible difference right now. The opposition day motion that I brought forward on behalf of our Ontario Liberal caucus could have created up to 75,000 jobs each year for young people. We heard from high-schoolers from Beaches–East York, the riding of my neighbour here in the chamber, MPP McMahon. These students created a survey among their classmates to understand the job shortage for teenagers in Toronto. Here's one statement in response to the question, "Do you want a job?"

"Yes, I want one. I've applied to 100-plus positions on Indeed as well as walked into places with résumés and references and asked for applications or to speak about employment opportunities. It's always either a no or no answer at all. Even people my parents know who are hiring don't want to hire teens."

Our employers need help to support those teens, and our teens and youth need that help. Instead, this government voted that motion down, maybe because they're either unwilling to admit that other parties have good ideas, even though again they say those kinds of things, or they simply do not care about the 200,000 young people looking for work in Ontario. Or maybe it's both.

As I said, I hoped to be surprised in the fall economic statement. I hoped to see bold leadership. I hoped the government could have provided tax relief for middle-income earners. They promised that in 2018—still haven't delivered it. Tax cuts for small businesses: They say they've done it. Speaker, it was 0.2%, 0.3%—hardly anything. We've been calling for a 50% cut in the small business tax rate, and they voted it down several times.

We asked for funding for colleges and universities, a jobs program for youth. I was hoping to see funding for hospitals; HST removal for home heating and an HST rebate for all new homebuyers, not just first-time buyers; support for family sports and activities for their kids, but this government chose not to.

Speaker, they can't have it both ways. They can't call themselves fiscally responsible while not once tabling a balanced budget. They can't say they're protecting Ontario while also not doing more when things get worse.

We're got a fall economic statement that shows GDP growth slowing, unemployment rising and housing starts falling. That's what this government tabled in the fall economic statement. And it's not just about tariffs. This government has had nine quarters of rising unemployment. Housing starts have been falling. It's just a big fail, Speaker.

We deserve transparency from our government—a government that levels with Ontarians. We deserve a government that treats us with respect by telling the whole story, not just the flattering parts; a government that has the courage to face our challenges directly without pretending they don't exist or hoping no one will notice. And above all, we deserve a government that provides real solutions, not ads, not spin, not programs for their friends—real solutions, Speaker.

What will the government do to balance the budget? Will they raise taxes, cut services or will they delay it yet again? They won't say. An accountable government would not mislead people about the actual cost of hydro and an increase in their rebate; would not eliminate fixed election dates through what we thought was a finance bill by giving themselves up to five years in power, when everyone who voted in the last election thought it would be four at the most.

An accountable government would not put forward schedule 15, amending the Ontario Place act—which the city of Toronto and everyone else is still trying to figure out: What the heck are they going to do with the CNE?

An accountable government would admit their mistakes—real, consequential mistakes, like giving hundreds of millions of dollars in Skills Development Fund money to applicants who didn't deserve it, simply because they were friends of the Premier, the Minister of Labour, or because they hired their friends as lobbyists, where low-scoring applications leapfrogged higher scoring ones with no justification.

Ontarians expect a government not to hide from its record, but to own it. They expect accountability, transparency, respect for taxpayer dollars and how they spend it. Sadly, Speaker, all three are missing from this bill. It's a sad day for the people of Ontario and those who thought they were voting for a government that had the capability to see Ontario through these tough economic times.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** I recognize the member from Beaches–East York.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Good morning, everyone. It's been a while since I last saw you in this midnight sitting, crazy scheduling House—which, I would just say, had we come back in September like we usually do, like we normally do, maybe we wouldn't be sitting to midnight. But that's a topic for another day.

I'm here this morning to talk about Bill 68, as you know, the fall economic statement. I'm always happy to rise in this House and represent the amazing people in beautiful Beaches–East York. I might deal with a couple of different schedules than my colleague here, which is how we work well together.

We'll start with schedule 1: the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act. I guess I shouldn't be surprised. In a place with a group who cannot say the words “climate change,” cannot admit there's a climate emergency, is allergic to anything environmental—it should be no surprise that you're cancelling the cap-and-trade act fully.

What you're doing, as you know—this bill removes the government's obligation to establish and publish targets

regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It removes the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks's obligation to produce a climate change plan and report on it regularly. Why would you want to do that in 2025, right? Nothing is happening out there. No floods, no forest fires, no derechos—nothing.

If you recall, the Auditor General, in a recent special report, found that not only is this government forcing Ontario to most likely miss your greenhouse gas emissions, they predict that, in 2030, greenhouse gas emissions will be even higher than initially anticipated. That is something that cannot happen, and I will do my darndest not to make that happen.

Ontario is primarily relying on federal initiatives to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, but currently, current federal and provincial initiatives combined are unlikely to achieve the targets we need. That's what this government seems to do, is kick the can down the road or point the finger—“Oh, the feds can do that; the municipalities can do that”—and actually just pass the buck. Municipalities are doing it; people are doing it in spite of this government. They're looking to their leaders to actually lead, but that's not happening, so they're doing it in spite of all you. So you have agencies and not-for-profits doing that work—the colossal work that they shouldn't have to do fully, because they should have a government that actually cares about climate action.

**0940**

Many of your municipalities have green councils, and they have declared a climate emergency—they have done that at their council meetings. They have great climate action groups. I wonder what you say to them when you see them on the street.

Toronto has been a green leader for a long time. When I was on council—with the Premier, I might remind you; we were councillors together, when he voted for many green initiatives—we passed the city's first climate adaptation and mitigation plan called TransformTO, which is still in effect today. Hopefully you won't meddle with that. I shouldn't give you any ideas, for crying out loud.

These groups are doing it, in spite of the provincial government. It is our job to be leaders and lead.

And even though they likely overestimate the reduction, they still project that we will not hit our targets.

We absolutely need consistent and trustworthy data that can inform all of our decisions—so, facts and stats and science. We need to listen to that. And we need to listen to experts. This might come as a surprise to you, but we're not the sharpest knives in the drawer. There are experts out there in certain fields, who are more knowledgeable, more experienced, than all of us, so it is up to us to heed their advice.

We need mandates to ensure that the ministry must consistently evaluate their initiatives to course-correct where necessary—specifically, with the waste sector.

If you were here last night to hear my scintillating speech, which—I know you were hanging on every word. I talked a lot about trash, because I'm very worried about trash, and you should be too, with extended producer re-

sponsibility coming down the pike on January 1 and your communities not even knowing about it. In Toronto, one resident actually ripped the Circular Materials sticker off the blue bin because they thought their blue bin had been vandalized. In Newmarket–Aurora, the member has already spoken—she is talking to Circular Materials because it's already causing a scene with the big bins in her small areas, where seniors can't mobilize those bins. So I would get a little bit more proactive if I were you, because it's coming down the pike and you're not ready.

The Auditor General found that the province has little to no progress—you've made little to no progress on meeting your greenhouse gas emission targets or implementing the 2017 commitment to ban organics from landfills. Oh, my gosh. What are we doing sending organics to landfill sites? Guys, that's an easy win. Let's just do it. Let's just do it together. Trash, the last time I checked, was not a partisan issue. So that's something I'll come and talk to you about.

We're running out of landfill space. Some members live near Southwold, near London. That's where the city of Toronto's landfill site, Green Lane landfill, is. It will be at capacity by 2035. Whoa. The last time I checked, that's 10 years from now. And we're not ready. I'm not sure if any of your communities want to be a new host site for Toronto. Do you want Toronto's trash?

Let's get proactive on waste diversion and waste reduction measures.

Also, we talk about Trump and the tariffs all the time. What are we doing to eliminate our shipping of waste to Michigan? We are still doing that. All that President has to do is wave his finger and end that in a heartbeat, and then we're in trouble. And that is industrial, commercial and institutional waste going to Michigan daily, in massive trucks that are emitting more greenhouse gases, which you don't want to track, you don't want to put targets on. These are easy wins for you guys, and you can look good. I'm helping you. I'm your new brander, your PR agent. I'm trying to help you look good.

We could also talk, as I did last night on Bill 46, about the circular economy. That is a win-win. That is job creation. That is an economic boon. If we focus on deconstruction instead of demolition, think about the cost savings with those materials. We should not, in 2025, be throwing out all the materials from buildings we are demolishing. That is complete baloney. Am I allowed to say that word? All right. That's all I will say on—

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Withdraw.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Withdraw—it is a food product.

Okay, schedule 1, we're done with for now. We're on to schedule 3. Oh my gosh. I'm going to need a little drink of water.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** You've got nine minutes left.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** All right. I'd better speed up my rant.

Conservation authorities: Okay. Again, I'm not sure how many of you are geotechnical experts.

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** Anyone?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Anyone? Anyone? I thought so—nobody.

**Hon. Graham McGregor:** I'm sure the Speaker is.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Maybe the Speaker is.

You're trying to remove immunity from prosecution for good-faith actions by ministry-appointed conservation authority inspectors and appointed conservation authority administrators. You're creating the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, with the mandate to oversee conservation authorities; transition authorities to a watershed-based framework; standardize procedures; and report on the effectiveness of conservation and management in the conservation authorities. But like changes to Ontario Health, in schedule 2, it may borrow money and is exempt from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

This new agency must provide a report every three years. Every three years? Are you kidding me? How about every six months, every year? Because—I don't know; has anyone had a flood in their area recently? I don't know. Flooding—let's see—cost BC \$9 billion. Come on. It cost Alberta \$5 billion.

We know the high cost of inaction. The Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario has told you that for every dollar invested in climate action it's a \$3-to-\$8 savings in cost avoidance. You guys are the fiscal conservatives.

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** They say they are.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I don't know.

That to me makes sense—dollars and cents. So you have this new agency. You're taking 36 conservation authorities, which are doing a great job. They know what they are doing. They have the massive expertise and education, boots-on-the-ground training. They know their local watersheds. You have to know your local watersheds, your headwaters, your rivers, your creeks. You need to know and be able to help mitigate flooding as best you can. You need to not be building on flood plains—hello, greenbelt.

It's already working so well, and yet you're going to reduce their ability. You're creating seven entities but with this kind of overarching umbrella because you think the 36 aren't working? Maybe you think it's slowing down housing. I'll tell you what is slowing down housing: political will. We could upzone the avenues in Toronto alone, right here, right now, as-of-right—eight to 10 storeys. Let's do it. Bring it to Beaches–East York. The Danforth subway line has two to three storeys. Ratchet it up like Europe—eight to 10. Come on. Let's do it. That's how you build housing. You be bold. You be brave. You put in sixplexes. You put in co-ops.

You don't look at big massive watersheds to build housing. Do you think that's going to be affordable? That is not affordable—\$43,000 for a basement flood. Just do it right the first time. Isn't that a song, Get It Right the First Time? I won't sing it for you, but I could.

**0950**

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I love your singing voice.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** Hey, at least they're listening.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Yes, at least they're listening.

We talked about the high cost of inaction and investing preventatively. Some 10% of homes in Canada are no longer insurable relative to flood risk. We know that flooding is the number one cause of public emergency in Ontario, right? Flooding is the number one cause of public emergency in Ontario, and you want to rip out the conservation authorities and just play with them and somehow make these seven entities have to go all different places where they've never been and they don't have that expertise, local expertise. You're messing around with something that is working well.

There is a high cost of inaction, with \$1.2 billion total insured catastrophic losses in Ontario in 2022. I don't know; you're not paying attention to that.

I could go on and on and on about conservation authorities, but I think we'll switch over. We will switch to schedule 18, Wasaga Beach. I missed another one. Okay. We'll do Wasaga Beach first, my hometown area.

As you know, I spent many a summer in Wasaga Beach, because I grew up in Collingwood. I was actually a life-guard down there, so I know the area very well. This is an interesting one, because the town would like to develop and add some economic viability—more economic viability. I know Nancy Island. It definitely needs an investment. It's a historic site. It's a bit under disrepair, so I'm with you on that. I'm throwing you one teensy bone, one teensy bone you're getting for that, Nancy Island. That's the only thing. But I worry this might set precedents, so I'm just telling you, to be very careful with Wasaga Beach.

Ontario Place, on the other hand—there's going to be no bones thrown for that because that is a dog's breakfast, what you've done with it. The most beautiful, open green space you remember from your childhood, and you could have done something really innovative. You know, a design call with landscape architects or the universities and colleges. A design competition; how fun would that be? Instead, in a time of an affordability crisis, a health care crisis, a climate emergency, you feel the best thing you can do for Ontarians is put in a spa. A \$2.2 billion spa—never mind the parking lot—on Toronto's waterfront, one of the most gorgeous waterfronts in Canada, I would argue. It's a gem, it's a jewel, and what are you doing? A spa. That's the answer. All your troubles will go away when you're floating in that hot tub. You'll forget about the housing crisis. You'll forget about not being able to get groceries. You'll just be floating around, all Zen, at peace.

My last thing, in my couple of minutes: schedules 7 and 8, electoral reform. Wow; I don't know what to say about that. You guys do not have a good record on electoral reform. Look at what you did in the middle of the 2018 election—

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Fixed it.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Toronto election; not your municipality, Mr. Essex. Didn't mess with your councillors; didn't mess with your mayor.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Address the Speaker, please.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Essex: You still have all your councillors, but this government chose to target Toronto, cut Toronto city council in half in the middle of an election. Who does that? Who does that? What is that, some wild czar? The Premier would know, as a city councillor, as I do, the workload—the development applications alone are a full-time job, never mind constituency assistance, events, speaking, that kind of thing. But you cut city council from 44 councillors and a mayor. You cut it in half—wow, not a good track record—in the middle of an election.

You also just whip up the idea to have an election day whenever you want. Even my American friends are shocked that a government would just pull a date out of a hat and say, "Hey, this is when I want it." But what you're doing with this super-short writ is you're favouring incumbents. You're favouring yourself. I'm a term-limit girl, and I ran on term limits—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Maybe it's time.

Here's the thing: By that super-short writ—it's an affront on democracy. You are telling people you can't run for office, because it is very difficult, as you know, to get out there and to get talking to people in that short time.

All I will say to you: Stop meddling in things that are working well and fix what is broken.

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

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Good morning, colleagues, good morning. My question will be to my colleague from Beaches–East York this morning. I just was wondering if she supports parliamentary democracy, because that's the system we're in and we actually don't have fixed election dates under the constitution.

But my question is related to schedule 17. I know she didn't get time to talk about schedule 17 in her remarks this morning, because she was going through some of the other schedules. But in schedule 17, we're expanding the manufacturing tax credit to foreign-controlled companies operating in Ontario. Some are in my riding.

Last night in the debate from the member from Peterborough–Kawartha was talking about snow plows. Actually, every snow plow is manufactured and assembled in Mount Forest, Ontario, by Viking—American-owned and, obviously, challenges with the steel.

Will the member opposite be supporting schedule 17 in the fall economic statement and the bill in front of this House, and supporting those good-paying jobs in Perth–Wellington and across Ontario?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thank you to the member from Perth–Wellington. What I will say to that member: Congratulations on becoming a new dad.

And yes, anything I can do to support local businesses in Ontario, I like to do. And you know, that's an interesting story about the snow plows and that business in Mount Forest. I know you represent a great area.

But what I would say is, what you do with your bills is you sprinkle in a couple of decent things with a million poison pills. How do you expect us to support that when

you're killing the conservation authorities, you're killing Ontario Place and you're killing cap-and-trade?

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

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I'll address my questions to the member from Beaches–East York. I want to thank you for your comments today. I could hear the passion coming out, especially when you started using language like “baloney” to describe this government's bill.

Last Thursday, my staff were going through this bill, Bill 68, and they found in schedule 15 a section about Ontario Place. It said that they're expanding the Ontario Place project to include a bunch of property identification numbers. We asked what those property identification numbers were; it turns out it's all of the Exhibition grounds. And so, now the Exhibition grounds will be part of the Ontario Place project, where this government has passed legislation that says that they can seize ownership of any property that they need to or they want to, and they can violate any provincial and municipal law. Does that fit your definition of baloney?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I should probably use a plant-based description, so maybe vegan baloney—  
*Interjections.*

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Celery? Tofu?

I know that the member from Spadina–Fort York has been very passionate about the waterfront, as we all are in Toronto, and we all should be in Ontario. And what is happening to Ontario Place is—I'm going to try and use parliamentary language—is shocking, alarming, unnecessary and immensely destructive to Ontarians as a whole.

This little, kind of sneaky business of adding other properties while people aren't paying attention—for crying out loud, Ontarians have to be Sherlock Holmes to figure out the fine print, as we do. Exhibition Place belongs to itself. There's a royal winter fair. There's a—

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

1000

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** My question is for the outstanding member for Beaches–East York.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** I'll certainly clap for that.

It's well recognized that you are quite the expert on environmental issues. I've heard you speak at length about some of the risks to flooding, and I've heard you provide a lot of your advice on flood mitigation, flood prevention. Could I ask you to lean on your experience around flooding issues and environmental issues to speak to some of the things that you wish you had seen in this legislation?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** The conservation authorities have helped protect Ontario for years—they truly have. The members know it because they are in your ridings. They deserve Orders of Canada for the work they do. You don't mess with them, because once you do, you're going to have a colossal disaster on your hands. We know the price: In BC, the price tag was \$9 billion; in Alberta, it was \$5 billion.

We need to be preventative and proactive, and I begged you to do that. I even had a private member's bill on

flooding awareness and emergency preparedness. You guys seemed to want to support it, and then what? You killed it.

Don't mess with things that are working well. Focus on the messes we need to clean up, health care being one.

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

**Mr. Joseph Racinsky:** I listened to the member from Don Valley West, and my question is for her. I tried to follow what she was saying, and it was typical Liberal double-speak. She was talking about the deficit—

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

**Mr. Joseph Racinsky:** Withdraw.

She was talking about the deficit but also the lack of investment. My question is: Does she think we should solve those problems, like we believe, by growing the economy or—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Order. I need to be able to hear the member speak, please.

**Interjection:** “Double-speak,” he said.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** He withdrew. Continue your question.

**Mr. Joseph Racinsky:** Should we solve those problems by growing the economy, like we have done, or should we take a page out of the Liberal playbook and raise taxes?

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** I'm not sure where to begin. I'm going to quote the finance minister. I don't know where to begin. This government has had nine quarters of rising unemployment. This government has seen debt per capita rise by 15%. This government is on a path to half a trillion dollars in debt. This government inherited a province where we had an unemployment rate of 5.8%. It's been as high as 7.8%.

This government doesn't know how to manage the economy; they can't manage their own books. We have a Treasury Board Secretariat and a President of the Treasury Board who has no control over the Skills Development Fund.

I am not going to listen to the member from Wellington–Halton Hills tell me about how to manage the economy. Last time I checked, he didn't sit on the board of the Bank of Canada.

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

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I'll ask another question of the member from Beaches–East York. You were a city councillor. We asked the government, “Why did you bury in this bill the power to seize control and ownership of Exhibition Place and the power to break any municipal or provincial law on it? Why was it buried in code within this bill with a bunch of PIN numbers?” Their response was, “Well, we want to give ourselves the power to quickly build the Ontario Place project, and we're doing this in the spirit of collaboration.”

When you were a city councillor, did anybody ever say, “Hey, we're going to seize control and potential ownership of the property that you own, but we're doing it in the spirit of collaboration”?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Well, I think if they did, they'd go to jail. But that didn't happen when I was there. I don't know what this government's obsession is with Toronto—other than the Premier wanting to be mayor—

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** And Prime Minister.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** And Prime Minister—but there's so much municipal meddling, but it's specifically Toronto-focused—speed cameras, bike lanes, cutting council in half. Why don't you focus on Ontario?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Address the Speaker, please.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** It's a compliment that you like Toronto but leave it alone; leave what's working alone. Build houses; get people out of the hallways in the hospitals; invest in climate action; get your act together, get your books together and stop meddling in things that are working well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** I'll go to further debate. I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Rob Flack:** Well good morning, Speaker, great to be here today. I didn't get to enjoy the night sitting last night. I was here for a while but I thought the Speaker did an outstanding job in hosting last night. The House has never looked better, in my humble opinion, at least since I've been here.

Obviously, it's an honour to rise in the House today to speak on Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act, a plan that reflects our continued commitment to building a stronger, more resilient and self-reliant Ontario.

As I stand here, I am reminded of the strength and determination of the people of this great province: the small business owners who open their doors before sunrise; the families who balance work and caring for loved ones; the health care workers, educators and skilled trades people who keep our communities thriving; the municipalities that play a vital role in making our community strong; and the farmers that feed our cities. These are the people this plan is for.

Around the world, all of us around, we are seeing uncertainty and we've got to hit the pause button. Global markets are shifting; interest rates remain high. The international shifting of financial and money market considerations have echoes and impacts here at home. We see it within our housing sector, and as I've said repeatedly, it is our job as a provincial government to help Ontario's small business owners, families, professionals and tradespeople to weather these tough times.

It's for us to set the foundation for us to grow, prosper and build Ontario. That is why our government is not standing still. We are facing these challenges head on with a plan rooted in prudence, discipline and optimism because our fiscal plan and the measures proposed in this bill will help drive it forward. It is about balance—balance between investing in the public service Ontario depends on and maintaining the fiscal flexibility needed to respond to a changing world. It's about protecting the progress we have made while ensuring our province can adapt, grow and lead in the years ahead.

This plan recognizes that Ontario's future depends on empowering our people and businesses to compete, to grow and to lead not just in Ontario, but on the global stage. Ontario has never been a province that waits for opportunity. We build opportunity and through this plan, through targeted investments, responsible fiscal management and an unwavering focus on growth, we are positioning Ontario to be the most competitive place in the G7 to invest, create jobs and do business.

That's what this bill represents: a clear, confident path forward, one that protects workers, families and businesses today while building a stronger tomorrow for every region and for every community in this province.

The foundation of this plan is a continued and unwavering commitment to the public services that matter most to the people of Ontario such as health care, education and making our community safer. These public services are not just line items on a balance sheet. These are pillars that support strong communities and our growing economy. In a time of global uncertainty, we are maintaining those pillars while staying fiscally responsible in how we protect Ontario both progressively and for our future.

Over the past year, our government has continued to make historic investments to strengthen our health care system. We're building new hospitals and expanding existing ones in every corner of the province. From the new Windsor-Essex Acute Care Hospital to redevelopments in Ottawa and Bowmanville, these investments would add approximately 3,000 beds over the decade, significantly increasing access to health care.

#### 1010

At the same time, we are investing in the people who form the backbone of our health-care system by expanding training, improving recruitment and recognizing international credentials. We are not just filling vacant job positions. We are strengthening the resilience of Ontario's health system for the future and creating rewarding, good-paying professional careers.

As the Minister of Finance announced this month, we are also investing \$1.1 billion in home care services and hospital-to-home programs, because Ontarians deserve the right care in the right place, and that starts at home.

Speaker, we are doing the same in education, ensuring students have the support and opportunities they need to succeed in a changing world. We are building new schools, expanding access to skilled trades and supporting the delivery of science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs, or STEM programs. These program investments alone will fund 20,500 STEM seats per year at our post-secondary institutions.

That's not all. Just as it's important that we ensure our students are set up to succeed, so too are we helping to ensure a pillar of every community in Ontario is set up for success. Municipalities are key partners in keeping our communities strong, and we are committed to supporting them so they can continue serving their communities effectively.

Through this plan, and a measure proposed in this bill, our government is taking steps to strengthen and simplify

the administration of education property taxes. We're proposing updates to the Education Act that will streamline and reduce the administrative workload or burden on municipalities and on school boards. These are practical, good-governance changes to support municipal and school board administrative processes.

Just as we are simplifying processes for our municipal partners, we are also investing in the infrastructure that keeps our province moving. We are continuing to invest in the infrastructure that connects our province: new highways and public transit projects, from the Bradford Bypass and Highway 413 to the Ontario Line and GO Transit expansions. These projects aren't just about moving people faster; it's about improving the lives of so many Ontarians. These projects are unlocking economic growth, improving productivity and connecting workers to opportunity. These are all the ways we are protecting Ontario families, workers, farmers and caregivers.

However, we are not done, Madam Speaker. We are making it easier for families to get into their first home. Through our plan, first-time homebuyers can now receive an 8% HST rebate on the provincial portion, helping them keep more money in their pockets as they take this important first step. This is a practical measure that supports working families, encourages home ownership and ensures Ontario's economy continues to grow in a way that's sustainable and inclusive.

It is also a strong step towards getting Ontario building, to build the new homes current and future Ontario residents will need. I have said so many times, it takes too long and it costs too much to build here in Ontario, and this bill, this plan, is a strong step forward in reducing the costs, the burdens, to homebuyers and, also, to homebuilders. That alone is worthy of support, and I encourage every member to join in endorsing this important plan.

Madam Speaker, through it all, our government remains guided by the same principles that have defined our approach since day one: responsible stewardship of public dollars, strategic investment in what matters most and flexibility to adapt as conditions change.

We are proving that it's possible to invest in Ontario's future without compromising our fiscal integrity. To build a province that's both compassionate and competitive—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I apologize, but we are out of time, and it is now time to move to members' statements.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### CALEB HOLLAND

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I rise today to recognize an extraordinary young person in Whitby: the 12-year-old author, Caleb Holland, who's demonstrating both creativity and compassion well beyond his years.

I had the pleasure of attending a fundraiser hosted by Caleb to support the publishing of his first book, *The T-Rex King*, a project born from his imagination and dedication.

What makes his efforts truly inspiring is that he's not only focused on his own dream, but he's also collecting tween and teen fiction books to donate to other children in Malawi.

Through his actions, he's promoting literacy, generosity and the belief that stories can empower and uplift. His initiative reminds us that leadership and community spirit can begin at any age.

I encourage Whitby residents to support this young author's mission and celebrate the impact he's already making. He's a shining example, Speaker, of what happens when passion meets purpose.

Congratulations, Caleb, on this remarkable accomplishment.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** We're in a housing crisis in Ontario. Rents are sky high and homelessness is at record levels. In Ottawa West–Nepean, large corporate landlords like Accora, Homestead, Minto and Paramount are issuing above-guideline rent increases year after year after year. The number of bad-faith evictions and renovictions is increasing as landlords try to push out renters so they can jack up the rent on the next tenant, like what happened at Aspen Towers last year.

These are the challenges that a government that was truly interested in addressing access to housing would be tackling. Instead, this government is ramming through Bill 60, a bill which helps big corporate landlords, but completely abandons renters.

Tenants already face an uneven playing field at the Landlord and Tenant Board. When tenants are served notice of an above-guideline rent increase or a renovation, they have to wait a year just to face off against corporate lawyers on Zoom, like the seniors at 2400 Carling, who are fighting an AGI for the second year in a row.

They were denied an in-person hearing that would have accommodated residents who don't have Internet access and aren't familiar with digital technology. My office had to coordinate with ACORN just to make sure that the residents were set up to participate. These seniors also don't have the same resources to hire a lawyer that Paramount has.

The government is pushing this bill through without even allowing people to come and share how this bill will impact them. They don't want to hear from tenants. They've made it very clear what side they're on and it's not the side of families, students and seniors.

## VOLUNTEERS

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** What a memorable constituency week: poignant Remembrance Day ceremonies

and amazing meetings with veterans, students, businesses and constituents, all who inspired me greatly.

On Saturday, I ran into Bani. She was a page here from Kanata–Carleton earlier this session. She was selling bracelets that she had made—multi-talented. My favourite was one that said, “Be kind.” That spoke to me and I’m proud to wear her artistry every day.

Speaker, there are people struggling across our province—people who are lonely, scared, many having a hard time putting food on the table or making ends meet. People need our help. With kindness and generosity, we can make a real difference in the lives of members of all of our communities.

This year, the Kanata Santa Claus Parade is raising funds and donations for the Kanata Food Cupboard, who are celebrating 40 years of helping those in need. Wonderful, committed volunteers—neighbours helping neighbours.

Next month are parades in Constance Bay, Carp and Fitzroy Harbour—all run by volunteers aiming to make the Christmas season just a little bit brighter.

Speaker, I’m just so proud of everyone who puts kindness and generosity at the forefront. We can choose to make a world of difference. Let’s do it together.

#### COLUMBUS CENTRE

**Mrs. Michelle Cooper:** In the heart of Eglinton–Lawrence stands a true landmark of our city’s Italian community: the Columbus Centre.

For more than 40 years, the Columbus Centre has been a gathering place where generations have come together to celebrate culture, language, art and sport. It is where young people learn to swim, seniors share espresso and stories, and families come together to honour their proud heritage.

This centre isn’t just a building; it’s the living soul of Toronto’s Italian Canadian community. From festivals and concerts to fitness and education, it embodies the values of hard work, family and community that help build our province.

1020

I want to thank Villa Charities, its volunteers and everyone who continues to make the Columbus Centre a beacon of culture, inclusion and community spirit in our city, especially in the heart of Eglinton–Lawrence. They have an Italian heritage wall. They are here with us today: CEO Marco DeVuono and his entire team from Villa Charities. It’s such an honour to see you here in the House to be part of this special day with me. Thank you for being here. Thank you for coming to your House and spending time with us here today. Welcome.

#### NATIONAL ADDICTIONS AWARENESS WEEK

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** Yesterday was the beginning of National Addictions Awareness Week. In my riding of St. Catharines, a flag was raised symbolizing

hope, recovery, compassion and shared goals of combating stigma.

Organizations like Community Addiction Services of Niagara, Positive Living, Start Me Up Niagara, YWCA and ARID, to name a few, each work in tandem with our most vulnerable residents, providing critical harm reduction programs and recovery support.

Since the beginning of 2025, Niagara paramedics have responded to no less than almost 400 suspected opioid overdoses, an average of 55 a month. In August, Positive Living Niagara responded to seven suspected overdose calls in a single afternoon. And get this: The provincial average for opioid-related ER visits from January to March of this year sits at 36.9% per 100,000 people, and Niagara sits at an alarming 48.8%.

Opioid-related deaths are 100% preventable. Wrap-around services that are accessible and provide targeted care is how we save lives, ease tension in our health care system and alleviate wait times in our emergency rooms. This National Addictions Awareness Week, I call on this government to commit to continue funding our safe consumption sites straight across Ontario.

#### BARRY CALLEBAUT CHOCOLATE FACTORY

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Speaker, last week, I had the pleasure of attending the ribbon cutting of Barry Callebaut’s new chocolate factory in my riding. This \$146-million investment into the Brantford facility represents Barry Callebaut’s largest North American investment to date.

Brantford–Brant is quickly becoming one of Ontario’s fastest-growing food-manufacturing regions. Investments such as this bring jobs to countless employees across manufacturing, R&D and customer-facing roles who live our shared values of quality and innovation.

There’s a reason this world-class company chose to invest in our community. It says a lot about who we are: hard-working people, proud of what we make and ready to compete with the best anywhere. And it says a lot about our government, a government that enables and believes in this kind of growth, growth that starts in places like Brantford, in real industries, with real people.

Speaker, I am proud to represent a community that continues to grow and thrive. Achievements like this are the result of hard work by local leaders, trades-workers, and of course, the fantastic team at Callebaut. Last week, I had the opportunity to see the results of that hard work, and our community will continue to see them tomorrow and next week and in the next years as Brantford–Brant continues to be the best place to live, work, play and raise a family.

#### TENANT PROTECTION

**MPP Catherine McKenney:** Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Carleton University Students’ Associa-

tion for their excellent report, *No Room for Students: Closing the Rent Loophole That's Driving Us Out*.

This report exposes a brutal reality: Seven out of 10 students spend more than 30% of their income on housing. In Ottawa, students pay 25% more than the median rent because of how often they must move. Students are being systematically priced out—not by accident, but by design.

The culprit is vacancy decontrol. While sitting tenants have modest protections, the moment a student moves out—for a co-op, a new academic year—corporate landlords raise the rent to whatever they want. With student turnover rates nearly double the average, young people are being gouged at every turn. And now, Bill 60 makes it worse, cutting notice periods for the LTB, slashing appeal times, silencing tenants.

CUSA's recommendations are clear and achievable: restore vacancy control and eliminate the post-2018 rent control exemption.

Speaker, when students are priced out, everyone is priced out. This government should listen to these young people, adopt their recommendations and treat housing as the human right it is.

Ontario had vacancy control before. We can have it again. CUSA has shown us the way.

#### JOSEPH BRANT HOSPITAL

**Ms. Natalie Pierre:** This past summer, I joined Minister Jones, Associate Minister Thanigasalam, hospital leadership, donors and members of the Burlington community to mark the beginning of a transformative redevelopment at Joseph Brant Hospital.

Together, we kicked off the redevelopment of the new, expanded and modern mental health and addictions inpatient unit at JBH. The new unit will feature private rooms with ensuite washrooms, specialized therapeutic spaces, a new six-bed adult psychiatric intensive care unit and an outdoor courtyard overlooking Lake Ontario. These upgrades will create a safer, dignified and healing environment for individuals experiencing mental health illness.

Speaker, this project is not just about construction; it's about ensuring people in my community of Burlington and the surrounding areas can access high-quality mental health and addictions care closer to home.

I'd like to recognize the generous donors that helped turn this project into reality, including Michael and Laura Paletta for their generous \$5-million donation. I'd also like to recognize the commitment of the Joseph Brant Hospital Foundation.

Phase 2 of the redevelopment project will also include a new outpatient unit and a Child and Youth Mental Health Day. This redevelopment will strengthen care in my community for years to come.

I'm proud to support this work and grateful for everyone helping to bring this vision forward.

#### HOUSING-ENABLING WATER SYSTEMS FUND

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I have more great news from the riding of Essex, this time for the municipality of Lakeshore, which applied for the funding available under the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund, a fund offered by the government of Ontario to build housing across the province of Ontario. The municipality of Lakeshore was successful and will be receiving a grant in the amount of \$32 million to help build water infrastructure in the municipality—these are water lines, sewer lines—and also to help fix flooding that's occurring in the municipality.

As a result of this grant, Lakeshore will be able to add many more housing units to its housing inventory, including single-family homes, semi-detached homes, multi-residential homes. Everybody who wants to find a home in Lakeshore will find what they are looking for.

I want to congratulate Lakeshore, and in particular the mayor of Lakeshore, Tracey Bailey, on the success of this grant, and thank the Minister of Infrastructure and the Premier of Ontario for this Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund. Together, we are building in Ontario and building every day.

#### GO TRANSIT

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** This weekend, trains are finally travelling down the tracks between Kitchener, Guelph and Toronto on the weekend. So whether you're going to a game or you're visiting family or, like myself, travelling to Toronto for work, this direct train will mean that life is more comfortable, convenient and affordable for everyone. And it will ease congestion, meaning less soul-crushing commutes for everybody.

I want to give a huge shout out to Aaron and the team at Metrolinx, a shout-out to Minister Sarkaria, regional MPPs, the K-W chamber of commerce, TriTAG, the city of Kitchener, the city of Guelph, the city of Waterloo, the region and the more than 12,000 people who sent emails in the past few months and the thousands more that signed petitions to get this project off the ground. The response was epic, and I'm so grateful we could do this together.

But we know that as many people travel into the region as travel to Toronto for work, so we need to keep pushing for two-way, all-day GO. We know that transit that is affordable, comfortable and convenient is the best way to tackle congestion and climate change right now, together.

Thank you, everybody, for your participation. It's been great to have everyone involved in this awesome project.

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#### HOUSE SITTINGS

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I'm now going to recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I would like to advise the House that the night sitting scheduled for this evening is cancelled.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mike Harris:** We have some distinguished guests here today, but I want to recognize one of them specifically: Chief John Riches from the Waterloo region paramedics is joining us today.

**Hon. Trevor Jones:** A very warm welcome to the team from Ontario Pork, hosting lunch in rooms 228 and 230 after question period; to Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers—they're also hosting a meeting in 228 and 230 this evening. And finally, one of our fan favourites is Chicken Farmers of Ontario, who are featuring fresh chicken wings tonight.

Thank you to all the members on both sides of the House for taking meetings with the farmers who feed cities across Ontario and the world. Have a great—

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

**Hon. Graydon Smith:** I just want to recognize and welcome a special guest from my riding, Matt Thomas. He's the chief of the Parry Sound District Paramedic Service. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your service.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to recognize Dr. Tunde-Byass, Dr. Evo, Dr. Filipe Santos, Ms. Megan Lacy, Dr. Sarah Khan, Dr. Natasha Johnson, Julie Sobowale and all the international medical graduates, including Dr. Rachis, who are here today. Welcome to Queen's Park. Welcome—

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

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** Speaker, I wish to introduce Daniel Breton, president and CEO of Electric Mobility Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I, too, want to welcome the pork producers, and the fruit and vegetable growers, but a special shout-out to the Chicken Farmers of Ontario, who just opened their new office in Guelph just last month, with a special shout-out to Carleigh Johnston, communications business partner at Chicken Farmers of Ontario, who's here from Guelph today.

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** From my riding, my friend and community champion Henk Lise, district committee representative for the Chicken Farmers of Ontario. Welcome back to the House, Henk.

**MPP Billy Denault:** I want to introduce an innovative representative from my riding, Chief Nolan, county of Renfrew's chief paramedic, who is here with Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs. Chief Nolan, welcome to your House and enjoy question period.

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** I rise to wish my minister, the oldest MPP in the House and the most respected senior, who is too busy to grow old—our Minister Raymond Cho, who is only 89 years young—a happy birthday—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** This morning, I would like to welcome the members of the Lung Health Foundation to the chamber. Notably, I'd like to welcome Scott and Wendy Bailey, who are COPD patient and care advocates; along with Jessica Buckley, the CEO of Lung Health Foundation;

Donna Duncan; Husna Malik, Erin Dufour, Kait Allen; and Donna Cansfield.

**Hon. Kevin Holland:** From Thunder Bay, I want to give a warm welcome to Shane Muir, chief of Superior North EMS.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I'd like to welcome a chicken farmer from Brantford—Brant, Ryan Game.

**Ms. Natalie Pierre:** I'd like to welcome Greg Sage, chief of Halton Region Paramedic Services. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'm delighted to welcome London West constituent and paramedic chief Stephen Turner to the Legislature today.

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** I, too, would like to welcome the Lung Health Foundation, and a special welcome to previous member of this Legislature Donna Cansfield.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** A couple of members from the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs: Greg Sage, the president; Troy Cheseboro, vice-president; and Mike Nolan, vice-president. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** Today, I'm pleased to welcome Robert Savage and Tom Roberts, who will be visiting us at Queen's Park.

Enjoy your day, your lunch and your tour. Thank you for being here.

**Mrs. Michelle Cooper:** I want to welcome, from Eglinton—Lawrence, Villa Charities to Queen's Park: Marco, Joseph, Mary, Ingrid, Kathleen, Anto, Therese, Allan, Linda, Gabriella, Tara, Lisa and Daniela, welcome.

**MPP George Darouze:** Speaker, it's a great pleasure to welcome the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs to the chamber today.

I'd like to especially welcome Chief Pierre Poirier of the Ottawa Paramedic Service to the House today. Chief Poirier is a great chief. It was a pleasure for me, working with him at the city of Ottawa.

Welcome to your House.

**Mr. Joseph Racinsky:** I want to welcome my 2025 interns: Xavier Jones and Jason Holliday. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam:** Speaker, I would like to welcome the Federation of Canada Nepal Chamber of Commerce. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** Joining us from Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill is York region chief Chris Spearen, from the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** We have a number of special guests with us as well today, as mentioned: the former member for Etobicoke Centre in the 38th, 39th and 40th Parliaments, Donna Cansfield—and joining us in the Speaker's gallery is a former Speaker, the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London in the 37th, 38th and 39th Parliaments, and the Speaker in the 39th Parliament, Steve Peters.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I would now like to invite the pages to assemble for their introduction.

Before I introduce them, I'd like to let the members know that two of our pages are actually the daughters of our assembly family members, so you're going to have to guess which two; you may tell by the way they blush.

From Ajax, Shriya Bhatt; from University–Rosedale, Jasper Chandra; from Don Valley East, Thrived Chandramouliswar; from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Mairead Charpentier; from Scarborough North, Andrew Darwin; from Oakville North–Burlington, Julian Duan; from Beaches–East York, Emelin Dumessa; from Parkdale–High Park, Oskar Gambhir; from Kitchener South–Hespeler, Murphy Harris; from Toronto–Danforth, Violet Harris; from Sarnia–Lambton, Anna Hatch; from Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte, Luke Hu; from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Manélie Lavictoire; from Markham–Unionville, Adelaide Lim; from Wellington–Halton Hills, Olivia Morris; from Eglinton–Lawrence, Mila Morzaria; from Don Valley North, Manaswini Nanda Kumar; from Spadina–Fork York, Ojas Sharma; from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Ithaca Silva; from Mississauga–Erin Mills, Raj Somaia; from Mississauga–Lakeshore, Tristan Stefely; from Davenport, David Tabachnick; from Northumberland–Peterborough South, Lucas Alexander Teo; and from York–Simcoe, Emery Warner.

1040

We welcome all to Queen's Park.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** And if you're wondering which two are our family members, or the daughters of our families—it's the page from Markham–Unionville and our page from York–Simcoe. So there you go.

Welcome, everyone. I know your parents are proud.

## QUESTION PERIOD

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** My question is for the Premier.

Yesterday, the Premier said that he's not worried about the OPP investigation into government funds that are going to Keel Digital Solutions. In fact, he bragged that the system is working.

If the system is working, why did it take two years to trigger a forensic audit of Keel Digital Solutions?

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

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** As I said yesterday, within 24 hours of receiving the results of this audit, the matter was referred to the OPP.

Let me tell you what we are doing for the publicly funded system. Over the last two years, we've invested almost \$2.5 billion into our post-secondary system. This

year, in budget 2025, which the opposition did vote down, we invested another billion dollars into the post-secondary system—our publicly assisted post-secondary system. That's another 100,000 funded seats that have come online to all institutions, whether they're colleges, universities or Indigenous institutes. Of those seats, over 20,000 of them are new STEM seats—on top of the 70,000 STEM grads who are graduating every single year.

We'll continue to be there, time and time again, for the post-secondary system, whether it's with new nursing seats, new teaching seats or new construction-related seats. We'll continue to make those strategic investments for the post-secondary system.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, back to the Premier—but I'll add that 10,000 good jobs gone in the college sector is nothing to brag about.

The only reason the Premier thinks that the system is working is because it's letting him and his ministers run a friends-and-family scheme on taxpayer dollars.

We now know—because the Toronto Star has also reported—that bureaucrats were sounding the alarm about Keel's SDF application. But instead of listening to the experts, the Minister of Labour hand-picked that company anyway.

So, back to the Premier: Why did his minister ignore the flags that were raised by experts about Keel's application?

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, the projects selected advance the priorities of government and the program which, at its core, is to train people.

We know a priority of this government is mental health. In fact, just later this week, I'll be meeting with the Police Association of Ontario to talk about mental health for their front-line responders. It's a priority of this government, and in some services, with 20% off with PTSD, we have to do more to support them.

The reality is, we have a risk assessment process for the SDF program, that I developed with the ministry, where the deputy minister is able to deselect an applicant if they feel the risk of the project is too high. That's what I say when I say we work with the ministry to continue to improve the integrity of the program.

I appreciate the opportunity to highlight more in the supplementary on additional programs we're doing to support mental health of construction workers.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Back to the Premier—but now it's the deputy minister's fault?

Follow along here: Endless, endless embarrassing headlines, and yet the Premier just keeps digging his heels in to protect this Minister of Labour. He claims the system is working—but working for who? Not for the honest, hard-working people of Ontario, I can tell you. But for the Premier's lobbyist friends, for the Conservative Party donors—yes, for sure, you betcha.

An audit, an OPP investigation, warnings from ministry evaluators—but apparently nothing was going to stop this minister from getting millions in taxpayer dollars to that company.

Back to the Premier: Why were these red flags not enough to prevent the Minister of Labour from giving government grants to Keel Digital Solutions?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, as I said, it's a back and forth with our ministry officials. Over the course of successive rounds, we've implemented monthly reporting, from spot audits to now a full audit, the risk assessment process after projects are selected that support the priorities of government and the program.

I want to talk about another one: the De Novo Treatment Centre in Huntsville, a union-supported training centre—another program we're supporting to tackle mental health and challenges. We know it's a problem that affects the construction sector, which is why I was proud to visit it with the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka this past summer, where we met with workers who are getting back to work faster, driving productivity and driving this government's build agenda—a \$200-billion plan that's advancing critical projects in public transit; critical projects for roads, highways, bridges; new nuclear.

These are projects we're investing in that are supporting workers. The members opposite vote against each and every one of these nation-building projects.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, back to the Premier again. The Premier may not want to face it, but the Auditor General's report on this fund exposed very serious issues about how this minister is administering public funds, and every day it just gets worse.

I want to remind you that the auditor's report points very clearly to the fact that this government is using the SDF fund as a pay-to-play scheme, but that's not all. If you look on page 23 of the Auditor General's report, she warns as well about other Ministry of Labour funding streams that are administered the same way as this fund. I want to know, does this mean the minister has his hand in all of those pots too?

To the Premier: How many government funding streams is the Premier using as pay-to-play schemes?

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, as I said, this government is supporting the training of workers—the training of workers that will help in uncertain economic times when we've got a President south of the border leading an all-out assault on key sectors of Ontario's economy.

This was implemented in the wake of the pandemic, and, as I said, we're working with the Auditor General to continue to strengthen the program. I've implemented a number of measures as minister to improve the integrity of the program and we're continuing to train people. At its core, 100,000 workers have gained employment within 60

days or less. It's people getting better training for better jobs with bigger paycheques.

Just yesterday, I was at Union Station—Alberici—and I met Marvin, one of the graduates of the Hammer Heads Program, that is helping socio-economically disadvantaged youth from across Ontario. He's now a 10-year employee working on the most ambitious public transit project in Ontario's history. We're proud to make those investments—

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I tell you, Speaker, it really boggles the mind here how this minister can use working people of this province as a shield for his behaviour. It is shocking.

There is a very dark cloud hanging over this government and every single government member—every single member of this chamber knows it. The only person who doesn't seem to understand that is the Premier, right? He's the only one who doesn't seem to understand that this minister needs to go. He is digging his heels in to defend this minister while Ontario is in the middle of a jobs disaster.

What is it going to take for the Premier to take this seriously and fire this minister?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, we stand beside workers. We stand beside them to advance their best interests—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** Just yesterday, I was at Rosedale Valley, a bridge with Bridgecon, where I met Lewis there, another worker I stand beside. Through Oaks Revitalization—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** —he's gotten a second chance at life. He is now a taxpaying member of Local 183—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** It has changed his life, and he is working on the critical infrastructure that they oppose.

It's no wonder organized labour has abandoned them in droves—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** —because they don't support building. At its core, that's what this is about: building. That puts these members to work—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** —supporting the training for new nuclear plants. Again, they oppose those new nuclear plants, like the one we're exploring in my own riding, Speaker, or small modular—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I apologize to the minister. I will caution the comments that I'm hearing on the opposition side. If it happens again, someone will be warned.

Back to the minister.

1050

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, these are factual projects that the government is investing in to nation-build. At a time when we've got to stand up for Canada, stand up for Ontario and support our workers, we're making the investments to build a better tomorrow for our grandkids. We're not going to apologize for that, Speaker.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Everyone in this room, and all across this province, knows what needs to happen. It is disappointing, to say the least, to see the Premier continue to condone this behaviour and to see this Minister of Labour drag working people and their unions in them through the muck because of his behaviour.

Workers at CAMI at Ingersoll or in Brampton and Windsor are literally putting their lives on the line to save their jobs. At Titan Tool and Die in Windsor, the workers put their bodies between the trucks taking tools across the border and moving parts south.

Meanwhile, all the Premier seems to be worried about is protecting this minister and keeping his gravy train on track: \$2.5 billion of taxpayer dollars used to fill the pockets of the Premier's insider friends instead of turning around this jobs disaster.

If you will not stand with Ontarians, Premier, and fire your minister, why should anyone trust you?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, the only one dragging the unions of this province through the mud is that member opposite. We've seen it on social media, when she has tried to invoke their name. They very promptly reminded her which government is investing in their workers; which is the first government to invest in training centres; to invest in better training. Speaker, those members recognize that when we invest in bridges and highways, when we invest in new nuclear, in Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass, their members get a paycheque and get a chance at building a stronger Ontario.

For many of us who immigrated here who are part of a generation that nation-built, we're doing that again. That's what this Premier and this government are focused on: nation-building projects of consequence. Organized labour recognizes that their members get a better job with a bigger paycheque thanks to the investments of this Premier, this finance minister—

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

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's another day, and more news about the \$2.5-billion skills development scandal. Some of that news is, yesterday, the Premier was asked if he or his office intervened on behalf of any skills development clients. His answer was no, which is, I think, kind of hard to believe, because in all the scandals that we've seen, like the greenbelt and Ontario Place, we know that all roads lead to the Premier's office.

So my question to the Premier is—because I want him to be absolutely sure—in this \$2.5-billion Skills Develop-

ment Fund scandal, does he want us to believe that neither he nor anyone in his office—while money was being shovelled out the door to PC insiders, to lobbyists, to people who were friends of the government and friends of the Premier—had absolutely nothing to do with it?

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** We've established that skills development funding is supporting rapid training. The only members that are looking at those affiliations is that member opposite. We've established it supported funds led by former candidates of the Liberals. But that doesn't matter; what matters is the training they're doing. That's what we're investing in, Speaker.

We've improved the program since its inception. As I mentioned, I incorporated a risk assessment process that my team and I developed with our ministry officials that incorporates that after selection, that gives the deputy the ultimate final say, should the deputy feel that any projects were of high risk. This is a back and forth, a dialogue or a relationship that we have to support training in this province.

Speaker, we also support the recommendations of the Auditor General and are already implementing it today as we speak. But the reality is, we've got to support training—

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** I guess that risk assessment process missed the \$10 million they gave to the strip club owner. But we'll talk about that maybe more later.

Speaker, so many of these people are connected to the Premier, like their party donors, their former campaign managers, like Kory Teneycke. You see them in press conferences and in photo ops. Just get on to YouTube and you'll see the Premier with a whole bunch of Skills Development Fund recipients—some of them that didn't score so well, Minister.

I know the minister is being protected by the Premier and I've got to figure out: Why is that? In any other job, he would be gone. But you know what? If all roads lead to the Premier's office, once the minister falls, we know where we're going.

Does the Premier actually want us to believe that his office and himself did not have anything to do with intervening on behalf of any skills fund recipient?

**Hon. David Piccini:** There we go again, the member denigrating the hospitality sector for some of the largest event spaces in downtown Toronto in a world-class city—front of house, back of house—or other priorities this government selected, like carpenters, like operating engineers; investing in better training, better equipment to build world-class infrastructure, because the first government to truly build on a large scale is this government.

The investments we've made—as I mentioned today, Union Station, Highway 413, Bradford Bypass. In fact, the tower cranes we saw in operation just yesterday require highly skilled men and women to operate them, and they need training to do that.

This government will continue to invest in new nuclear in communities like mine, in small modular reactors, in

record investments in public transit. Every time, those members vote against it. It's not surprising that they don't support the training either.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** I hope the Premier and his caucus have a great chiropractor, because it's going to take more than one session to fix their necks from looking the other way for so long.

This \$2.5-billion Skills Development Fund scandal smells, but Keel Digital Solutions sticks out like a sore thumb. We know the minister is in conflict because his friend was lobbying for them. We know that the ministry said they're going to buy their own software from themselves. We know that it underwent an audit. We know it went to a forensic audit, and now it's at the OPP anti-rackets squad.

My question for the Premier is, are the Premier and his office incompetent, looking the other way or complicit?

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

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** Thank you, Speaker. As I mentioned to that member opposite yesterday, within 24 hours of receiving the forensic audit, we recommended it to go to the OPP at that point.

Again, I'll tell the member opposite the investments we are doing into our publicly assisted post-secondary system. Through budget 2025, which I'll remind that member he voted down, we invested another billion dollars into the post-secondary system. That's on top of \$1.3 billion we invested last year into the system—almost \$2.5 billion we've invested into post-secondary in the last 18 months.

Some of those investments include \$750 million into new STEM seats; another \$75 million in construction-related seats, skilled trades and planning; \$56 million for another 2,200 nursing seats, because we know we need more nurses; as well as \$55 million for more teaching seats—there will be another 2,600 new teachers coming online by 2027.

We'll continue making those strategic investments while the member opposite is no help to anyone.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. John Fraser:** I would just like to remind the minister that while they were shovelling money out the door from the Skills Development Fund, he let go 10,000 people from our colleges. I just want to remind him of that.

My next question is for the minister responsible for the Treasury Board. We know that Keel Digital Solutions was the subject of an audit that was later sent to the Treasury Board for a forensic audit, and we now know it's with the OPP anti-rackets squad. The questions that I have are:

(1) When did the audit begin—the date?

(2) When was the audit finished?

(3) When was the Treasury Board informed of the need for a forensic audit, when did that audit start and when was it received?

Does anybody have an answer to those questions over there?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I'll remind the member to direct your questions through the Speaker.

The Minister of Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** As I just said—I don't think member was listening—within 24 hours we acted swiftly upon the results of the audit and reported it to the OPP.

Again, Speaker, let me tell you what we are doing for the system: \$1 billion in budget 2025 went into the post-secondary system. That's on top of the \$1.3 billion, the largest investment in over a decade. On top of this, we're doing a funding formula review for the sector. We've been listening to the 47 publicly assisted colleges and universities to understand where their needs are.

**1100**

We'll continue to make those investments, whether it's in STEM, nursing, skilled trades. We'll continue to be there for the sector time and time again, as we always have. It's the people of Ontario that elected this government because they trust us with the taxpayer funds.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** You had to give them money because you starved them for so long that they were going to collapse, and you couldn't let that happen. They fired 10,000 people, Minister. Have you not figured that out?

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** That's embarrassing in this province.

The next question is, how is it that a company under a forensic audit, where we're saying, "We don't believe what you're telling us. We think you're hiding something"—that's what a forensic audit is, in case anybody doesn't know—actually got another grant from government? Does anybody talk to each other? Is anybody taking care of the people's money there? What else is going on that we don't know about that you're not taking care of?

So just how is it that they could receive more money when they were in the middle of a forensic audit or they're even being audited in the first place? It's incompetent. How does that happen?

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** Twenty-four hours, Speaker: We acted very swiftly upon the recommendation and reported it directly to the OPP.

But you know what? I'll continue to share the investments we are doing in our post-secondary system: \$750 million going into 20,000 STEM seats. That's 20,000 new STEM grads that are going to come online into our sectors that are needed the most. That's on top of the 70,000 grads we are graduating annually in the STEM systems.

We have also invested \$75 million for 7,800 new seats for construction-related programming.

The first few months on this job, I was at AMO. I heard from our municipal partners, and they were worried about planners—a lack of planners in the system. We invested strategically into the system to bring more planners online. We'll continue to make those strategic investments, like the \$56 million into nursing seats, the \$55 million into

teaching seats. We'll continue to make those strategic investments.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** Ten thousand people lost their jobs, young people can't get a course that they need and this minister is crowing about his record. It's unbelievable.

Maybe I'll make this easier for the minister. I asked the date. I'm glad you did it in 24 hours, but was it last November, last December, last March? What—October? When? What are the dates? I don't care that it was 24 hours. That's great. Besides, it wasn't you guys that referred it; it was the public servants, because they have an obligation. So stop taking credit for the work, especially when you're overriding it all the time.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** Sorry, Speaker. It's just so hard. It's just so hard not to do that sometimes.

But what I want to know is, what are the dates, Minister? What are the dates that I asked for? Don't give me "24 hours." When did you know?

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** Last week, within 24 hours of getting the report back, we reported it to the OPP. I don't think I can be any clearer to the member opposite. Within 24 hours, we swiftly acted upon the recommendation and reported it to the OPP.

I know he doesn't like to hear it, but we've invested a billion dollars. Without the support of the opposition, we've invested a billion dollars in budget 2025: \$750 million going into new STEM programming, \$75 million into construction-related seats, \$56 million into more nursing seats, because after 15 years of Liberal governments, we're continuing to catch up because of the lack of foresight that the Liberal government had.

We'll continue to be there for the publicly assisted post-secondary system, unlike the member opposite who just keeps speaking down on the system.

#### FOREIGN-TRAINED DOCTORS

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

Ontario is facing a severe shortage of family physicians: 2.5 million Ontarians don't have access to primary care. Yet, the government has introduced a last-minute policy preventing most internationally trained physicians, like those in the galleries today, from applying in the first round of residency placement, despite the fact that 60% of IMGs choose family medicine and have to come and work in underserved communities like the one that I represent.

Why is the government creating new barriers that will prevent physicians from practising in Ontario?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** It is hard to square when we see expansions of medical schools in the province of Ontario. Just yesterday, I had the opportunity to speak to the new learners at TMU in Brampton, who are so excited to be able to train in Brampton and ultimately practise in the province of Ontario.

Our government was actually the government that has expanded primary care access in the province of Ontario with an investment of \$2.2 billion. Why are we doing that? Because we know, as we train more learners, as we accept more residency students in the province of Ontario, we are going to have opportunities that have been unheard of in the province of Ontario.

I am proud of the fact that it was Premier Ford's leadership that has TMU in Brampton today, that in the years to come we will see a new medical school in York region. We are making and laying a foundation to ensure that people across Ontario who want to train in our medical schools have that opportunity.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** We all know that the students at TMU that she's referring to won't be allowed to practise for another six years minimum. The IMGs sitting in the gallery are practice-ready.

The government's new rule disqualifies international medical graduates from the first round of residency applications based solely on where they attended high school, a factor that has nothing to do with medical competence. Most of us don't know where our physician went to high school and, frankly, don't care. But it harms francophones; it harms immigrants; it harms racialized physicians; and Canadians who studied in other provinces, like francophones in Quebec, or studied abroad.

How does this government justify an exclusionary, non-evidence-based policy that restricts equity in medical training and that will harm patients?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Under Premier Ford's leadership: an expansion of 1,290 medical seats in the province of Ontario. Under Premier Ford's leadership: an expansion of 1,730 residency spots that were not available previously. We are absolutely welcoming the world to Ontario to make sure that as we see our population rise, as we see our population expand, we are ready, we are accepting.

When I came in as the Minister of Health, I specifically directed the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and the College of Nurses of Ontario to quickly assess, review and ultimately license internationally trained and educated physicians, clinicians. Why did we do that? Because people were waiting too long and they wanted to work in the province of Ontario.

We've made those changes. We are now seeing licences getting granted within 10 days. The system is working. We are absolutely working with—

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

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Ontario's young people are in crisis. More than 200,000 are out of work. For teenagers, one in four can't find a job. The Skills Development Fund that was supposed to be there to help them has turned into a billion-dollar boondoggle.

The Auditor General found that it's not fair, transparent or accountable, with politically connected, low-ranked

projects getting funded over higher-scoring ones. Now a forensic audit has uncovered tens of millions of dollars in irregular spending so serious that one recipient was referred to the OPP—the same recipient who took the Minister of Labour to a Leafs game and had him to his fashion week wedding in Paris.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance is supposed to be the guardian of the public purse. So to the minister, through you: Did he budget for the SDF and increases to the SDF before or after he knew about political interference and the fundraising scheme that has caused such a scandal?

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** When it comes to the youth of this province who are seeing the uncertain economic times we're in, they're seeing a Premier that's got a plan to build—youth that were abandoned by that party who let apprenticeship rates slide, who turned their backs on working-class men and women of this province. Let's go to another sector: Their high-tax agenda drove out manufacturing, crushing our manufacturing sector.

**1110**

It's this Premier that has cut taxes, this Premier that has created a climate for economic development growth, Speaker, that is empowering young people—young people who are joining new residency spots, new doctor spots, new nursing spots; young PSWs who are getting trained to enter the workforce. Many of these programs are supported through the Skills Development Fund with one goal: to train.

We're going to continue doing that, Speaker, to offer a better tomorrow for Ontario, to nation-build, to stand tall on a global stage and to domestic and onshore our supply chains.

We've had no support from the members opposite, who voted against each and every measure we've taken to nation-build and to build a strong—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Member for Orléans.

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Last week, I took the minister's advice: I visited All-Pro Electric in Ottawa, an SDF recipient that's actually working—young people in trades; real jobs, real skills; no lobbyists, Madam Speaker. Their message to me was clear: Don't let the scandal destroy the program. Clean it up.

Employers and trainees who are doing everything right are now terrified that this successful program will be cancelled because of the government's mismanagement and political favouritism. We don't want the SDF to be cancelled. We want it to be cleaned up and for ministers to be held accountable.

I've always thought that the Minister of Finance was an honourable person, so, Madam Speaker, through you, what measures is he going to put in place to ensure that his budget measures aren't abused by political insiders and a fundraising scheme that's holding down this government?

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Madam Speaker, I—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Thank you.

Why doesn't the honourable member opposite do something right for the province of Ontario and vote for the fall economic statement? Can you do that? That, Madam Speaker, would be the honourable thing to do.

But let me tell you this: Is the member opposite voting for the 18,000 new construction jobs at Darlington, new jobs, good jobs in our nuclear industry? No, he's voting against it. While their government was in power, what did they do for the 300,000 manufacturing jobs that left this country? They didn't stand up for Ontario workers. They didn't stand for Ontario businesses. They keep voting no.

Which way are we voting, yes or no?

**Interjections:** Yes.

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Which way are they voting?

**Interjections:** No.

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Which is the right way to go? The answer for Ontario is yes.

## IMPAIRED DRIVERS

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** My question is for the Attorney General.

Public safety is a pressing concern back home in Bay of Quinte and across Ontario. People want to feel secure, and they want to know that their government is standing up for them. Speaker, under the leadership of the Premier and the Attorney General, our government continues to advance the ongoing work to safeguard Ontario families and communities.

This morning, the Ministry of the Attorney General issued a news release on protecting Ontario families by holding impaired drivers accountable. This initiative was built on the recently passed legislation in the Safer Roads and Communities Act, 2024. This release really hit home with me as, just last week, I attended a Mothers Against Drunk Driving memorial in Quinte West for Rebecca Beatty, who was killed by a drunk driver at just 22 years of age.

Speaker, can the Attorney General please share more information about this legislation and how it will enhance public safety and hold offenders accountable for victims like Rebecca and for families like the Beattys?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Thank you for the question from the member of Bay of Quinte.

I am happy to announce that no child should have to bear the weight of a loss of a parent due to impaired driving. That's why our government is evaluating measures that would require impaired drivers to pay financial support if they kill a child's parent or guardian.

This work builds on the recent actions of my colleague to crack down on dangerous driving—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Doug Downey:** I can't believe I'm getting heckled on children who are left behind.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Madam Speaker, I cannot believe the NDP are heckling me when we are talking about children who lose their parents due to drunk drivers.

This government will build on the work of the Minister of Transportation in the Safer Roads and Communities Act and reinforce our commitment to hold impaired drivers accountable.

The devastating impact reaches far beyond the immediate loss. It leaves a child struggling both emotionally and financially. We will stand with our children, Madam Speaker. We will hold drunk drivers accountable for their actions. I will have more to say in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Bay of Quinte.

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Thank you to the Attorney General for his response. It is encouraging to see our government continue to take decisive action on serious issues that impact Ontario communities. By introducing measures that protect Ontario families and hold impaired drivers accountable, we are sending a strong message: Reckless driving will not be tolerated.

The Attorney General mentioned new measures that would require impaired drivers to pay ongoing child support if they cause the death of a child's parent or guardian. This is a significant step towards ensuring that families affected by such tragedies receive the support that they so desperately need.

Speaker, through you, can the Attorney General please share further details on these new measures and whether additional penalties or consequences are being considered to further strengthen accountability?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Thank you again to the member from Bay of Quinte. It is true that our province has some of the toughest penalties in North America for impaired and reckless driving. We are doing our part in holding impaired drivers accountable.

As mentioned, as part of the upcoming legislation, we are exploring the best way to improve the system to access financial support for surviving minor dependents and victims killed by impaired drivers. Families already have the ability to sue impaired drivers in civil court, but that's not enough. Additional measures, such as requiring a convicted impaired driver to pay financial support, would strengthen accountability and help ensure children receive meaningful support in the wake of such tragedies. Our province will also explore similar requirements in other jurisdictions, such as Texas, which outline how impaired drivers convicted of intoxicated manslaughter must pay child support to surviving minor dependents.

We will engage with impacted stakeholders, including victims' families, legal experts, law enforcement and community partners, to help evaluate the most effective approach.

Madam Speaker, under the leadership of the Premier, we are going to make a difference in the lives of children.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**MPP Wayne Gates:** My question is to the Premier. The Patient Ombudsman's new report raises serious red flags about long-term care. Quality of care is now the number one long-term-care complaint: 25 mandatory reports were filed because residents were put at risk. Four

out of five seniors who complained about hospital discharge felt it was premature and unsafe. Instead of fixing the system, the government passed Bill 7 to push seniors out of the hospital faster.

Seniors built our province. They deserve safety and respect. Speaker, given the Ombudsman's clear warning, what immediate steps will the government take to fix long-term care and ensure our seniors are safe and have the support they need?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston.

**Mr. John Jordan:** One thing I can guarantee everybody: The long-term-care homes of today are not the long-term-care homes of 2018 that were inherited by this government. There are more staff to reach four hours of care per resident per day. There's air conditioning. There are sprinkler systems. We have over 24,000 new and reconditioned long-term-care beds in this province. Our government has been taking real actions to improve and strengthen Ontario's long-term-care sector, ensuring the safety and well-being of every resident.

That's why we introduced the Fixing Long-Term Care Act in 2021, the most robust safety framework in North America, providing new enforcement tools and enhanced accountability measures. Under Premier Ford's leadership, we've invested \$72.3 million to double the number of long-term-care inspectors in this province.

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

**MPP Wayne Gates:** Well, that member is right: In 2018, the RCMP wasn't investigating or wasn't called into the long-term-care homes in Oshawa.

Back to the Premier: This government can pat themselves on the back all they want, but the facts don't lie. This government just set a record: the highest number of complaints to the Patient Ombudsman ever recorded. And it's no coincidence that it happened while the government is privatizing Ontario health care.

We saw during the pandemic that private long-term-care homes performed much worse than public, not-for-profit homes. Yet the Premier is doubling down on investment-led, for-profit long-term-care homes.

Why is the Premier letting the conditions in long-term-care homes get worse through privatization? We need to protect our moms, our dads, our aunts, our uncles, our grandparents in long-term-care homes, today and going forward.

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

1120

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** As usual, this member leaves out some important facts. And the facts are that we've actually expanded the Ontario Patient Ombudsman's responsibilities—why? Because we know that as we expand across Ontario, we want people to be protected; we want people to have pathways, to ensure, if they have questions, if they have complaints, they know that they can go to the Ontario Ombudsman. I thank him for his work. It is important that

people understand what services we are expanding in the province of Ontario, what is available.

And, yes, when you have questions, comments or concerns, an independent Patient Ombudsman is there to assist you.

Thank you for your work.

### COST OF LIVING

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** Madam Speaker, may I begin by complimenting you on your spectacular transformation of the Legislature—between the decorations, the trees, the cheer. It's a reminder that Christmas is almost here.

No one can deny that Christmas is a time for friends and family, but some members of this House have taken that a little bit too closely to heart, whether it's the Minister of Labour and his long-time buddies or the Premier and his business associates.

Only the friends and family of members in this House seem to be getting ahead, while everyday Ontarians are getting left behind.

Yesterday, members of this House had a chance to stand up for everyday Ontarians, to introduce a youth wage subsidy that would increase the number of youth jobs, and every Conservative member in this House voted no.

My question to the Premier is, in an affordability crisis, why is it that the only people to get ahead are the Premier, the Minister of Labour and Kory Teneycke?

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, thank you. Yes, the Christmas spirit is alive and well, and I appreciate the work you've done with the Legislature.

Speaker, we all share a common commitment to advance opportunities for youth. And I want to say, the members opposite talk about a wage subsidy.

Through successive rounds of the SDF, that was incorporated to support youth—like Youth Employment Services. Tim Lang was here the other day. He does some incredible work to support youth in downtown Toronto—some of the most marginalized youth—to give them better training for better jobs.

Chris, a member of the Carpenters' Local, whom I met the other day, spoke about the opportunity to actually enter an apprenticeship. Where is he today? He has had a certificate of qualification; he's a certified Red Seal apprentice.

I know the member response—hopefully he's as keen to stand up and raise up the buildings we're building, that those carpenters are going to work on, through building a stronger Ontario, and support our fall economic statement—

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

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** Madam Speaker, Christmas also means time with family, exchanging gifts, and playing games, like Monopoly.

Monopoly is a game where ordinary players go around and around, collecting 200 bucks, while one person snatches up all of the property for housing and jacks up the rent. That person's name is Mr. Money Bags. Sound like anyone we know?

Ontario has now become a game of Monopoly, where the Premier is snatching up the science centre, Ontario Place, the Exhibition grounds, so that he can reward his friends and leave the rest of us behind.

I actually got my hopes up the other day—because yesterday the Premier said he would steal our idea to rebate the HST on primary residences for all homebuyers. And then he said the Minister of Finance won't let him.

Why does Mr. Money Bags—sorry. Why does the Premier have every excuse in the books not to fix the affordability crisis unless he—

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

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Madam Speaker: First of all, I want to thank him for his question.

I have the best finance minister this province has ever seen. He's a prudent fiscal manager, because the foundation of everything we do in health care and education and infrastructure is one thing—is our economy.

You saw, last month, when the country created 65,000 jobs—55,000 people were created right here in Ontario out of the 65,000, bringing home a better paycheque, a bigger paycheque.

But let's talk about Monopoly here for a minute. I can't even believe we're even communicating. But you know something? They treated this province like a Monopoly game for 15 years. They sold Park Place. They had the get-out-of-jail-free card. I don't know if your—the campaign manager or whatever the hell he was, that actually—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Yes. Withdraw.

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

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** My question is for the Premier.

Times are tough: over 700,000 Ontarians unemployed, and now, electricity prices up a whopping 29%. We can create good-paying jobs and reduce electricity prices in Ontario if this government would end its ideological opposition to the global green energy sector.

I spent last week visiting companies that are creating good-paying jobs right now in Ontario, unlocking prosperity in the \$8-trillion clean economy. But to grow generational jobs, they need a government that has their back.

So, Speaker, will the Premier say no to increasing electricity prices with US-fuelled, dirty gas plants and American high-priced SMRs, and say yes to good-paying, generational jobs with made-in-Ontario—

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Madam Speaker, we are saying yes to the largest nuclear build-out in Canadian history. We are investing in the Bruce C project that will add over \$100 billion to the national GDP. We are supporting the Pickering nuclear refurbishment which the former Liberals—and the Greens, for sure—would have closed. We are committed to building the largest net new nuclear generator on earth.

If the member opposite wants to advance clean and affordable and reliable power, then they will commit today. All opposition members will affirm today their strong support for our nuclear build-out that adds value to Canada. Technology that is indigenous to the nation, a supply chain that is built with 90% Canadian business—the obvious thing is to say yes to the nuclear energy built right here at home in Ontario.

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Speaker, it's understandable why electricity prices are going up a whopping 29%, listening to the minister's answer.

New nuclear is two and a half to three times more expensive than low-cost wind, solar and storage. This government is doubling down and locking us in on US technology with their SMR; locking us in to being dependent on US-enriched uranium, increasing climate pollution by 400%; locking us in on US-fuelled gas plants instead of made-in-Ontario, low-cost renewable energy, the cheapest energy in the world now. That's why \$2.2 trillion, double what's going into fossil fuels, is being invested in it right now.

Will the government say yes to lower electricity prices and yes to good-paying, generational jobs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Madam Speaker, the problem with the Liberal Party and those of the Greens is that you said yes to paying 10 times above market for renewable energy—

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** You pay 80 cents to a kilowatt hour.

Madam Speaker, to suggest the triumph of ideology over affordability—they enabled a party that increased hydro rates a thousand dollars a year—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** It is the greatest liability cost to the people of Ontario, for families and seniors. And frankly, you should be ashamed of defending that record.

This Premier came in with a plan to stabilize rates. Energy has been at or below inflation; there is no commodity price on earth that has maintained that. We launched the largest energy-efficiency program in the history of Canada, a 2-to-1 saving for the people of Ontario.

But what this does expose is that the Greens, who adjusted their platform this year, the NDP, who adjusted their platform to be in favour of nuclear—it demonstrates yet again you would shut down every nuclear asset. You would kill 80,000 jobs. You would increase energy rates.

You would destroy the industrial policy of this province. We won't let that happen.

1130

## SENIORS' SERVICES

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** My question is for the Minister of Seniors and Accessibility, our very own super senior, who has spent over three decades in public service following a previous entire career in social work and education and who, as we heard, is celebrating his 89th birthday today. A very happy birthday to you, Minister.

Speaker, seniors bring so much to our communities: their experience, their volunteer work, their leadership. We all benefit when they stay active and connected.

In Cambridge, we recently held a seniors active living fair. It was a great way for people and seniors to learn about programs that help them stay engaged. I want to thank the organizers for putting on such an incredible event.

Speaker, can the minister share more about how our government is expanding the seniors active living fair program across Ontario?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** Thank you very much, and thank you to the member for raising important questions. I met many seniors at the fair in your riding, and many seniors told me that the MPP is doing great work for seniors. Thank you.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government is expanding the number of seniors active living fairs. This year, we'll have 102 in-person seniors' fairs across Ontario, touching every region in our province. We are making sure that our seniors can access information in the way they want, helping them stay fit, active and socially connected. In this way, we are giving seniors the dignity and respect they deserve.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler.

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** Thank you again to the minister for his response and all of his work.

Speaker, seniors like our minister help build this province. They're still contributing every single day through their experience and their involvement in our communities. When we support them in staying active and connected, everyone benefits.

In Kitchener South—Hespeler, many local groups have relied on the Seniors Community Grant Program to run activities, bring seniors together and keep them engaged in community life. Speaker, can the minister tell us more about the Seniors Community Grant Program and the impact that it is having across Ontario?

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** Thank you to the member for another excellent question. Our Seniors Community Grant Program provides local community groups with grants of up to \$25,000. Last year, we were able to give over 300 grants to support these programs and activities. These organizations are helping our seniors stay fit, active and socially connected. The window is open

until December 18 for community groups to apply for next year's grant.

Together, we can help ensure that our seniors live with the dignity and respect they deserve.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Speaker, the Eglinton LRT passed 15 long years in the making, and there is still no opening date. Families along Eglinton—Ontarians—are tired of this government spending their tax dollars without any accountability, any transparency. They want a clear opening date.

My question is simple: Minister, when will the Eglinton LRT open?

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Yesterday, we marked the opening of Mount Dennis Station, which is also on the Crosstown line, making incremental steps towards ensuring that we are getting transit ready. A member that lives near Mount Dennis—what would have taken them close to 40 to 45 minutes to get to Union Station will now take them only 16 minutes by jumping on either the Kitchener line or the UP Express to get to the airport or downtown to Union Station. This is real change that we are bringing to people and neighbourhoods across the area, and we'll continue to ensure that we open it when it is reliable and safe to do so.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member from Scarborough Southwest.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Before the minister and the government pat themselves on the back, I just want to make sure you all understand that two stations opened for GO. The Eglinton Crosstown station opened for GO and UP Express, yet the LRT itself has no opening date. The line is not open, so let's have facts here.

They blew their latest September deadline and had to pause testing because of Metrolinx's own failures. There are serious concerns, questions about major construction deficiencies, tracks that were actually built wrong. Metrolinx is clearly withholding information, and Metrolinx has been doing this for so long. Ontarians are so fed up.

Again, to the minister: Is he going to give us a straight answer, or is Metrolinx withholding information from him and his government as well?

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Madam Speaker, as that member knows and as we have stated on numerous occasions, construction is complete on the entire line. There are no more civil works that are happening. It is simply in the testing and commissioning phase, Madam Speaker, and we will continue to do it and ensure that it is a safe and reliable system.

Last year, the team at Metrolinx, GO and UP Express had a record month: 7.5 million rides combined between both the GO and UP Express. That is a ridership record, Madam Speaker, because we're investing in public transit, which the members of the NDP and Liberals oppose every chance they can.

Whether it's a \$70-billion investment, whether it's the One Fare Program, the Liberals and the NDP have voted

against every single time. One Fare, for example, Madam Speaker—if you're a member that is now getting onto the station at Mount Dennis, you don't have to pay two fares. You jump on the UP Express, get onto the TTC; you're only paying one fare. That's transformational, and that's what we're delivering.

### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** My question is to the Premier. Crippling gridlock is punishing commuters and suffocating the GTHA. This crisis is holding our economy hostage with congestion alone costing \$44.7 billion annually. Instead of prioritizing solutions to this urgent issue, the government is wasting taxpayers' dollars again on a \$9.1-million feasibility study for his tunnel vision under Highway 401, an idea that has already raised safety concerns.

It gets worse. The company hired to do the feasibility study is being sued by the city of Toronto for alleged design errors on the Gardiner Expressway project, with claims up to \$36 million.

My question to the Premier: How can we trust this government to build a \$100-billion tunnel when every major transit project is delayed, over budget and no end in sight? Stop the dreaming.

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

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** I don't know where to start, but let's look at the record of the previous Liberal government. For 15 years, they did absolutely nothing—not a single transit system, not a single road, highway or bridge to speak of.

Guess what? We've got shovels in the ground on five priority subway projects; \$70 billion in public transit across our Metrolinx projects is happening. Like I said, last month, 7.5 million riders on GO and UP combined—that is a record that we have set because we're investing in public transit.

Madam Speaker, \$56 billion is the cost of gridlock to our economy. That's why we're putting forward solutions that will make a difference—unlike the previous Liberal government that didn't put a single shovel in the ground, didn't get anything built. That's why we're getting shovels in the ground, and that's why we're building for the future.

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

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** Madam Speaker, let's try this again. Last Friday, I was at Scarborough Town Centre helping light the Christmas tree, and I found myself wishing that the Eglinton Crosstown LRT would finally open by Christmas Day, but here we are still waiting, still hearing excuses and still seeing no progress.

For example, the Scarborough subway extension is currently plagued by a stuck boring machine, leaving us in the dark about the project status and transparency. Where is the machine? This is not the first delayed project in the transit portfolio; all high-priority transit projects under this government are delayed. We are frustrated.

I ask the Premier: If you can't even tunnel the Scarborough subway extension, which is 7.8 kilometres long, how on earth can you manage a complex tunnel connecting Mississauga to Toronto, which spans approximately 50 to 55 kilometres? Wake up, people.

*Interjections.*

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

I recognize the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Madam Speaker, I don't even know where to start, but you know what, I thank the member for their question.

We've got priority transit projects in this province because the Premier put a vision forward to get those built. Guess what? We've got shovels in the ground in every single one of those projects.

The former Liberal government has nothing to speak for when it comes to transit or highways in this province. They got absolutely nothing done, they didn't invest in these infrastructure projects, but we're fixing that, and we've got shovels in the ground.

That's why we're building the Ontario Line that will move 400,000 people every single day. That's why we're building the Scarborough subway extension in that member's area of Scarborough, which they voted against. That member who lives in Scarborough and rides transit in Scarborough voted against the Scarborough subway extension.

The people of Scarborough were ignored for too long, but the Premier and this government changed that. That's why we're investing in Scarborough and we're investing in rapid transit for Scarborough.

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

*The House recessed from 1142 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### RESPECTING WORKERS IN HEALTH CARE AND IN RELATED FIELDS ACT, 2025

### LOI DE 2025 SUR LE RESPECT D'UN AUX TRAVAILLEURS DU DOMAINE DE LA SANTÉ ET DE DOMAINES CONNEXES

Madame Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 69, An Act to require the Minister to take certain steps to improve the working conditions of health care workers and workers in related fields / Projet de loi 69, Loi obligeant le ministre à prendre certaines mesures pour améliorer les conditions de travail des travailleurs du domaine de la santé et de domaines connexes.

**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):** Does the member wish to explain the bill?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The bill is quite simple. What we are trying to do is to make sure that PSW jobs become good jobs, become careers.

How do we do this? By making sure that no less than 70% of the people employed—whether in a hospital, in a long-term-care home, in home care or other agencies—will have permanent, full-time employment.

Second, we will make sure that every personal support worker receives at least \$8 an hour more than minimum wage, as well as health benefits, membership in a pension plan, and some sick days.

We will also make sure that homemakers receive at least the minimum wage for each hour of work that they do.

This would help with our shortage of PSWs in home care and long-term care across the health care system.

### SUPPORTING MOBILITY, AFFORDABILITY AND RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION IN ONTARIO ACT, 2025

### LOI DE 2025 POUR UNE MOBILITÉ ACCURUE, DES PRIX PLUS ABORDABLES ET DES TRANSPORTS PLUS FIABLES EN ONTARIO

MPP Hazell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 70, An Act to amend the Metrolinx Act, 2006 and the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to transportation / Projet de loi 70, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur Metrolinx et la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun en ce qui concerne les transports.

**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):** Does the member wish to explain the bill?

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** The bill amends the Metrolinx Act, 2006, and the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act.

The Metrolinx Act, 2006, is amended to add a new object for Metrolinx requiring it to promote and facilitate the integration of routes, fares and schedules of municipal bike share systems. Section 29 is amended to require Metrolinx or a subsidiary corporation to ensure that any assets sold or disposed for the purpose of building residential units include at least 20% affordable residential units.

Finally, the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act is amended to specify mandatory maintenance standards for Highways 11, 17 and 69. The act is also amended to provide that the minister shall develop a plan to modify these highways into a 2+1 configuration and to set out requirements regarding the plan.

## PETITIONS

### SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** This petition is entitled “Stop Bill 33 and Keep Elected Trustees.”

People in my riding are very concerned about the loss of democratic engagement over public education. Bill 33 removes the ability of parents and community members to hold decision-makers accountable through the democratic process. It also consolidates control of our local schools in a centralized Toronto office, which makes no sense whatsoever. It also threatens people at the college and university level, trying to squelch student voices and reduce the independence of research.

Frankly, all of this is a cover-up for not funding our public education institutions.

I fully support this petition, and I will give it to Olivia.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Tom Rakocvic:** This petition is entitled “Repeal Bill 33.”

Today, educators, trustees—like my good friend elected trustee Matias de Dovitiis—students and many others came here in opposition to Bill 33, because they believe the voices of our school communities matter. Elected trustees have had their powers taken away, meaning that friends of this government have been appointed to make decisions regarding education. Of course, that has led to many problems across this province, including in my own community—a school where three grades are being taught out of a single class.

This is not the way to move forward with education. We have to stop these cuts.

I’m certainly supporting this petition to repeal Bill 33.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** We are facing some really economically difficult times. The cost of living has skyrocketed—from groceries, to rent, to insurance, to hydro bills. It’s everywhere you turn.

We’re in a situation, though, when people are on fixed incomes, like if they’re on social assistance—and a lot of them are on social assistance because they can’t work, from physical ailments. There are health reasons. They cannot sustain paying rent, groceries, insurance, even cellphone bills—any utility bills. It’s really difficult to make that dollar stretch. There are individuals in Ontario making, for instance, on Ontario Works, \$733 per month; if you are receiving ODSP, it could be \$1,169. This is not enough to live on. It really is legislated poverty.

They’re asking the government to recognize the citizens of Ontario, to increase social assistance rates, at a base of \$2,000 per month for Ontario Works and ODSP—because basic income and CERB has given evidence that this is at least a start, where people can live in a decent and dignified way.

I support this petition. I would like to sign it, and I will give it to page Julian to deliver to the table.

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I have a petition here, and it is a petition that we’ve heard before—it is on a topic that we’ve heard before. It is about the absolute chaos being introduced in our trading relationship with the United States of America as a result of Donald Trump’s tariffs, and it is describing the chaos that is being created in the automotive sector as a result of these tariffs.

As many of us know—particularly those of us who are from auto manufacturing regions—various parts in North American automobiles will cross the border sometimes as many as seven times in order to go into an automobile. A real North American automobile contains parts from both sides of the border. This was intentionally done by our two countries in order to make the North American automobile manufacturing sector competitive with the world.

#### 1510

As a result of these tariffs, not only are Canadian jobs at stake, but US jobs are at stake also. These tariffs damage all of North America. American jobs are being lost, together with Canadian jobs.

This petition recognizes that and encourages our Ontario government to continue working to remove these tariffs and get our North American automobile manufacturing sector back up into a position where we can compete with the world, as we always have.

I support this petition. I will sign this petition and give it to page Mila to bring to the Clerks’ table.

### HIGHWAY SAFETY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Jonathan Quinn from Chelmsford in my riding for these petitions. They’re called “Make Highway 144 Safe.”

Highway 144 is a highway that starts in my riding, goes for about 325 kilometres, and ends in my riding. It is used by many mining companies. At least seven of them use this highway every day.

There are grave safety concerns about using Highway 144. There are many collisions that happen on Highway 144. It leads to hours-long closures, where commercial and private traffic may be stuck. There is no detour; this is the highway that goes north from Sudbury toward Timmins.

They feel that northerners deserve to have safe roads in the summer and the winter.

So they ask the government of Ontario to organize a round table with representatives from the Ministry of Transportation, the police, the ambulance services, the tow truck operators, the shipping companies, the mining companies, the school bus drivers, and other road users to find solutions to this dangerous highway. We have to make this safer. Too many people have lost their lives on Highway 144.

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

#### INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Just looking at this petition, it's actually something which I have read in before; I guess it is because it is important, it is valuable, it is required. This petition is from the people of Ontario—and it's actually from one of the residents of Essex. It's saying, "We are worried. We are concerned."

We know the tough time is a test time, and this is the time which we are going through right now. We see the trade barriers within Canada costing the economy \$200 billion every year and lowering the gross domestic product by about 8%.

Actually, furthermore, this is saying we need to stand up, we need to act now, we need to work hard.

Thank you to this government; thank you to Captain Canada for taking that lead and making sure to tear down these barriers to unlock Canada's full economic potential.

It's further saying that we need to make sure all the territories are working with each other and together so that—not only Ontario—we can build a better, stronger Canada.

I absolutely thank these residents who have signed this petition; many of them are from Essex, as well.

I support this petition. I'm going to give it to you again, Mila.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This is a petition entitled "Bring Back Rent Control."

This petition is calling for strong rent control on all homes, including homes built after 2018; vacancy control, so there's a cap on how much the rent can be raised between tenancies; and measures to stop illegal evictions, so tenants can be protected and live in safe homes.

I support this petition. I'll be giving the petition to page Jasper.

#### TENANT PROTECTION

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I am pleased to be able to share the concerns of folks across my riding. As they have seen recently, the government is moving forward with a new set of changes to the Landlord and Tenant Board that would strip away tenant protections and make it easier for folks to be evicted. Unfortunately, it leaves the door open for ending rent control as we know it in Ontario. We know that this is an attack on folks who just want to pay their rent and have a place to live.

Ontario is already in a housing crisis, with skyrocketing rents, stagnant wages. And at least 80,000 Ontarians are

currently unhoused. Bill 60 before the Legislature, with this issue moving forward, is not going to make that better.

So I have a petition here petitioning the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the attack on tenants' rights at the LTB and strengthen protections for renters in Ontario by implementing real rent control, banning above-guideline increases, and enacting a maximum/minimum temperature law to protect tenants from sweltering summer heat and frigid winter cold, and also to push for solutions that will solve our housing crisis, like building more affordable and supportive housing.

Of course, I support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Andrew.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. Tom Rakocvic:** This is a petition from North York Harvest Food Bank. It's called "Stop Bill 60."

In fact, yesterday we were joined by food banks across the province of Ontario, advocating for the people who are coming to receive food from them. In fact, more than a million people in Ontario today, we learned from them, are relying on food banks; these are including working families—something that we haven't seen forever in this province.

When you think about it, with the escalating, skyrocketing cost of rent, 88% of the people accessing these food banks are people who are experiencing food insecurity, people who can't afford to buy food, because all their money is getting spent on rent. Increasingly, more and more of them are ending up on the streets, homeless, in so many cases.

So this petition is calling to stop Bill 60, which will further take away the rights of tenants and result in more and more individuals and families living on the streets.

I want to thank the food banks for coming here, for all of their important work, and for presenting this petition, signed by so many.

I will certainly be signing this and giving it to page Emery.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** This petition is entitled "Keep Long-Term Care Records Public."

The recent red tape bill—I call it the "red bull bill"—removes 15 years' worth of records that are currently public on a public website. People are quite shocked about this, because this is material that is already publicly available, that the government now wants to hide from public view.

The petition asks that the records be kept intact and that they be added to each year, so that people can have a longitudinal view of what is actually happening in long-term care.

I fully support this petition. I will put my signature on it and give it to Ithaca to submit.

## HEALTH CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Rejeanne Fredette from Chelmsford in my riding for this petition. It's called "Health Care: Not For Sale."

As you know, Speaker, people get care based on their needs, not on their ability to pay. But the Ford government wants to privatize our health care system, putting all of that at risk. The privatization means that a lot of people who work in the public sector—whether it be nurses, PSWs, physicians—will leave our public hospitals to go to private clinics, making the shortage even more acute.

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for the government to stop all plans to privatize Ontario's health care system; to fix the crisis in our health care system by making sure that we can recoup, retain and respect health care workers with better pay, better working conditions; to help license the internationally educated nurses and other professionals already living in Ontario; and to incentivize health care professionals to choose to come work and live in northern Ontario.

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

1520

## FINANCEMENT DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais remercier M<sup>me</sup> Denise et M. Léo Bourque de Chelmsford dans mon comté pour cette pétition. La pétition s'appelle « Clinique des désordres neurologiques du mouvement à Sudbury ».

Je ne sais pas si vous le savez, monsieur le Président, mais le nord de l'Ontario a un très haut taux de désordres neurologiques du mouvement. Que l'on parle de maladies comme le Parkinson, le Huntington, la dystonie, le Tourette ou bien d'autres, les taux sont beaucoup plus hauts dans le nord de l'Ontario que dans le reste de la province.

La ville du Grand Sudbury est reconnue comme un centre pour les soins de santé dans le nord de l'Ontario. Donc, ils ont signé la pétition pour demander au gouvernement de mettre en place immédiatement une clinique des désordres neurologiques du mouvement dans la région de Sudbury, composée d'une ou d'un neurologue spécialisé dans le traitement des désordres du mouvement, ainsi que d'une ou d'un physiothérapeute, d'un ou d'une travailleuse sociale au minimum, pour que les gens n'aient plus à voyager dans le sud de l'Ontario, surtout lorsque tu es atteint d'une maladie et d'un désordre neurologique.

J'appuie cette pétition. Je vais la signer, et je demande à Olivia, qui est très patiente, de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING CHILDREN  
AND STUDENTS ACT, 2025LOI DE 2025 SUR LE SOUTIEN  
AUX ENFANTS, AUX ÉLÈVES  
ET AUX ÉTUDIANTS

Mr. Stan Cho, on behalf of Mr. Calandra, moved third reading of the following bill:

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Debate?

**Hon. Stan Cho:** Speaker, I'm actually thrilled to hear others debate this order, so I will leave it there. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** I'm very shocked that the government is not actually going to speak to their bill that takes away the rights of parents, communities, students, and workers to have a say in their local schools. But perhaps that's appropriate, because they've done a lot of talking, but not very much listening. I think that's why we're seeing this bill rammed through today, why they haven't allowed the bill to go to committee, which is where the people of Ontario actually have the opportunity to come and share their perspective on legislation that the government is bringing forward.

It's very clear that they know this legislation is not popular, that nobody is asking for this, that nobody wants this to happen. They're hoping that they can just sneak this through without people actually paying attention. It is very clear that what people want is not this attack on the rights of parents and students and workers and communities to have a say in the decisions that affect our local schools across the province, in very different contexts, very different circumstances. What people actually want to see is investments; not the shutting out of perspectives and of the people who are actually affected by decisions in communities. And it's very clear that nobody is asking for this bill.

Just today, we had students, the Ontario student trustees, trustees from boards that have been put under supervision, who spoke very clearly, saying that students are not asking for this; they do not want this. Students do not want to lose their voice. They want more ways to participate in decision-making, not fewer. What they are actually looking for are investments that allow them to have smaller class sizes, mental health supports, and safer schools. That's what students want.

What we're seeing under the government's vision for education is a scenario where student voices are completely shut out. It's not just democratically elected trustees, who are adults, who have been sidelined; it's student trustees elected by their peers to represent student voices. What we're seeing in the boards that the government has

already put under supervision is that the supervisors won't even talk to them.

In fact, at the TDSB, the supervisor promised he would attend at least one out of two student senate meetings. Do you know how many he attended, Speaker? Zero. That's the kind of value that that supervisor puts on the voices of students in decisions concerning their own education.

We had workers here today who were incredibly clear: This is not what teachers and education workers are looking for. They are not looking for people who come in, sweep aside the voices of community, make cuts to special education, appoint directors of education who send their kids to private schools and who attack negotiated benefits—benefits that are collectively negotiated, which is a charter-protected right in the province of Ontario.

In fact, we know that workers are opposed to this legislation, because just one union—the Catholic teachers—had over 9,000 emails and petition signatures sent to this government saying this is not what workers want for education.

No parent is asking to lose their voice. I spent the last few months going to every school in my riding to talk to parents; not one of them said, "Please take away my voice. I would like to have less of a say in what happens in my child's education."

In just the last 12 hours, we know that there were over 4,500 emails sent to government members from every corner of the province, every single riding, because that's how motivated parents are feeling to protect their right to have a say.

But what we're seeing under this government's vision for the future of education is that parents have no role. The supervisors they've appointed are making decisions in the dark, behind closed doors. They're restricting public access to meetings. They are refusing to answer questions, to answer phone calls, to the point where the government is trying to create an additional layer of bureaucracy that will apparently be funded from money, once again, coming out of our classrooms—because these supervisors, who are getting \$350,000 of our taxpayer money each, can't be bothered to pick up a telephone when a parent is on the other end.

We're hearing from our communities that they don't want this bill. There was a letter sent earlier this month, signed by over 40 leaders from many Christian denominations, saying that this bill is profoundly anti-democratic; that this bill does not respect Jesus's teaching to honour the children, for they show the way to the kingdom of God; that this bill does not respect local wisdom and local context. Those religious leaders asked for this bill to be withdrawn.

We know—from the supervisors this government has hand-picked to sweep aside democratically elected trustees and the voice of parents in five boards already—that this is going to have a profoundly negative effect on education in the province of Ontario. These supervisors have zero qualifications in education. What they do have is close ties to the Conservative government—a former Conservative MPP; a former federal Conservative candidate; a former

staffer to Stephen Harper who worked on Tony Clement's leadership campaign; a Conservative donor who is buddies with the Minister of Education. Those are the kinds of people this government thinks should be given \$350,000 a year—that's coming out of classrooms—so that they can do three and a half days of work, not listening to parents and to students.

The government knows this bill doesn't have support, and that's why they think they can ram it through, under the cover of darkness, with very little debate and no time for people to come and share their perspectives on this bill. But we're not going to stand for it. We're going to give government members one last day to think about this, before the final vote tomorrow. But the fight doesn't end here, because the people of Ontario have a right to a say in the decisions that affect them.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I do rise today to speak once again on Bill 33, the Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025. It's a bill that, despite the promising title—like we see in many of the government bills—represents yet another step in a troubling pattern we've seen from this government, that is the concentration of power at Queen's Park and the erosion of local democratic voices.

We have only a short, time-allocated debate on a bill that will affect the very foundation of how we educate our children and care for our most vulnerable youth, and that in itself speaks volumes. This government seems more interested in controlling education and child welfare than in listening to those who live and work within those systems every day.

As someone who served as the president of a school council, making representations to the school board, before becoming a school board trustee and the chair of a French-language school board, I think I can say I speak with lived experience when it comes to appreciating how local perspective matters. Local representations led to the opening of a new school in my riding, Trille des Bois, that has been offering an innovative learning model that has had students and parents excited about education for more than 15 years now—gone will be that kind of successful initiative if decisions are centralized and made uniform at Queen's Park.

**1530**

Let's start with the government's justification for this bill. They claim that Bill 33 improves accountability, efficiency and consistency. Those are admirable goals, I'll agree, but the way this bill pursues them is actually deeply flawed.

Centralization does not equal accountability; in fact, history shows the opposite: When power moves further away from the people it serves, transparency decreases and responsiveness declines.

School boards exist precisely because education is not the same everywhere in Ontario. The challenges in Toronto are not the same as those in Timmins or Hearst. The needs of a large, urban board are not those of a rural or francophone board. Yet, this bill imposes a blanket, top-

down approach, as if every community faced identical realities.

Speaker, elected trustees are the only people in our education system directly accountable to parents. They know the schools, they know the teachers, and they know the families. They attend the school concerts, they respond to parents' phone calls, and they face the voters every four years. When the minister replaces their authority with unilateral power, he is silencing those voices.

Local governance isn't about bureaucratic obstacles; it's democracy at work. It ensures that decisions about our children's education reflect local priorities, linguistic realities and cultural identities.

For example, for Franco-Ontarian communities, this is particularly dangerous. French-language education is not just a matter of instruction; it's a matter of identity and survival. Our school boards are more than administrative units; they are pillars of our culture, and their governance model is actually exemplary. They exist because generations of Franco-Ontarians fought for them, from the days of Regulation 17 to the creation of independent French-language school boards in the late 1990s. Those boards have their own identities and realities. They have smaller catchment areas, larger distances between schools, fewer resources, and a constant need to recruit qualified French-speaking teachers. They innovate daily to maintain quality and access, often on very limited budgets.

The same is true for rural and northern boards. Consider a rural community like Red Lake or Kapuskasing, where small schools are the heart of the community.

If the government or Queen's Park would dictate a uniform policy, it would ignore those realities.

For example, if a provincial directive might assume that boards can consolidate schools to save costs—that would be impossible when your nearest French-language school is 100 kilometres away. And a one-size-fits-all funding formula might not account for bilingual resources, dual-track facilities or minority-language recruitment. So, a decision, for example, from the government, to merge schools might make financial sense from Queen's Park, but it would devastate a small town's social fabric.

Local trustees understand those trade-offs; they live them. A centralized ministry cannot possibly capture that nuance from 500 kilometres away. And once you eliminate the need for local consultation, the human cost of those decisions disappears from the radar entirely.

We saw this clearly during the pandemic. When the Ministry of Education issued province-wide directives, many boards struggled to apply them. Some rural boards couldn't meet the same ventilation standards as urban ones, because their schools were decades older. Francophone boards had trouble delivering online learning platforms in French. Yet, there was little flexibility, little room for adaptation, because everything was centralized. The result was confusion, frustration and inequality.

Another problem with centralization is that it discourages innovation. Boards that once piloted new programs—mental health initiatives, STEM curricula or community

partnerships—will hesitate to act if they fear ministerial override.

And trust, actually, does matter. When local stakeholders—teachers, parents, students—feel that decisions are imposed rather than co-created, morale drops, at a time when what we should be doing is really uplifting our education system.

Education is, at its core, about individual needs, yet this bill applies collective punishment. It ignores that equity sometimes requires difference.

The same applies to child welfare, another pillar affected by Bill 33. Each community faces unique challenges—Indigenous children, racialized youth, francophone families—and local agencies tailor their approaches accordingly. Central oversight may sound efficient, but it risks creating rigid protocols that fail to reflect cultural and regional realities. In child welfare, the absence of local knowledge can literally mean the difference between keeping a family together and tearing it apart.

Let's consider what happens when you remove local expertise from decision-making. A few years ago, a northern school board raised alarms about mental health support for youth in remote communities. Because they had local data and relationships, they proposed integrating social services directly in schools. That model became a success story, but it started locally. If that same initiative had required prior approval from Queen's Park under a centralized regime, it might have died in bureaucracy. How many innovations like that will now be lost?

This bill gives the minister broad new powers, to appoint supervisors to issue directives, to intervene in budgets, and to override governance decisions, all with minimal transparency. There are no clear thresholds for when those powers can be invoked—no requirement for independent review, no mandatory consultation with affected communities or with linguistic-minority boards. Essentially, it asks Ontario to “trust us,” but trust in government is earned through accountability, not demanded through legislation.

This bill is part of a broader trend of centralization we've seen over the past few years—I'll just list Bill 23, Bill 98, Bill 124—and now Bill 33 extends that pattern into education governance and child welfare. Each of these changes erodes the ability of local institutions to make decisions based on the realities of their communities. Taken together, they amount to a quiet but profound restructuring of public decision-making in Ontario.

What is particularly disappointing is that there was an opportunity here to strengthen our education system meaningfully. The government could have worked with boards to address teacher shortages, mental health crises and infrastructure needs—issues that every parent and student actually feels. It could have collaborated with francophone and Indigenous partners to ensure culturally relevant education. Instead, it chose to tinker with governance structures and concentrate power.

Ontarians need don't more bureaucracy at Queen's Park. They need classrooms that work, schools that are safe, and systems that listen.

Democracy doesn't just happen here in this chamber; it happens in the school gymnasiums where trustees hold public meetings, in the community halls where parents voice concerns, and in the classrooms where teachers adapt lessons to local realities.

Every time we take that power away, we make our system less responsive, less equitable and less democratic.

Bill 33 may pass—time allocation ensures that outcome—but history will judge whether it strengthened education or weakened it, and I fear it will be the latter, because good government is not about uniformity; it's about understanding diversity and empowering people to make decisions that reflect their communities. Ontario deserves that respect, our children deserve that respect, and our local voices deserve to be heard, not overridden.

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

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** My presentation this afternoon is going to focus on the elements of Bill 33 that impact the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security.

1540

Speaker, when students attend an Ontario college or university, like Ontario Tech or Trent Durham, to pursue their post-secondary education, they deserve to know where their fees are going and what criteria they need for admission. Our students deserve transparency, accountability and fairness when embarking on their post-secondary journey.

That's why Bill 33 is so important. If passed, it will provide maximum clarity and information to students and their families, increase consistency—and is centred on the student experience. These proposed actions build on the Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act and associated directives introduced in 2024. These directives required institutions to increase transparency of education costs—such as textbooks and other learning material—and required anti-hate, anti-racism and mental health policies.

Our government has consistently stood with Ontario's hard-working students and their families, and that will continue to be the case going forward. Every dollar matters for households in Whitby and across the region of Durham, so we want to provide full clarity on how each dollar invested in post-secondary education is spent.

We've heard from students and families who have told us that accessing detailed information on tuition and additional student fees can be challenging, particularly in understanding the purpose of these fees.

That's why, if passed, Bill 33 will empower our government to require publicly assisted colleges and universities to provide students with comprehensive details on tuition and ancillary fees, including how those funds are allocated, and make this information publicly available. And now we're taking it a step further by making sure information about tuition and ancillary fees is clear and consistent across institutions, and made available to students and the public.

Speaker, as we always have, we're going to be consulting with the sector to understand which fees are necessary,

which fees may not be, and when that opt-out process could begin—making sure, in the process, there are no disruptions to student services or the delivery of our world-class education.

Students and their families deserve to know where their money is going and that every dollar is well spent in pursuit of their education. Through Bill 33, if passed, our government will make that happen.

In addition, we know that admission processes vary widely by institution and can be unclear to students and their families. That's why, through this bill, we would also increase transparency by requiring post-secondary institutions to have merit-based admissions and to clearly outline the criteria and processes for admissions. When prospective students are trying to better themselves through higher education, they deserve to know the standards they are being evaluated against, and those standards should be directly related to their academic achievements and potential for success in Ontario's economy. The intent is to ensure admissions processes are clear and fair for all students, and to preserve access for everyone pursuing a post-secondary education in Ontario.

We know our colleges and universities are already home to the best and brightest this country has to offer, but for many prospective students, the application requirements can be confusing. So, through this legislation, if passed, we would take the mystery out of applying for post-secondary education, ensuring our students know exactly what they need to begin achieving their full potential at a college or university.

But rest assured, there will always be pathways for students of all backgrounds and abilities to access post-secondary education. And that takes investments every year, like \$90 million for students with varying abilities and mental health services, \$40 million for programs enhancing post-secondary accessibility and employment outcomes, and more than \$18 million in the Indigenous student success fund to support Indigenous learners attending colleges and universities.

Speaker, we will be working with our sector to ensure that diverse pathways remain available. Should Bill 33 pass, we will engage the sector to support next steps and implementation, have consultations to understand which fees could or should be optional and what current admissions policies look like. We'll be doing that with universities like Ontario Tech in Oshawa as well as Trent Durham GTA because, at the heart of it, post-secondary education is about preparing students to make successful contributions to our workforce going forward. What we're doing is working hard to create the right conditions for students to succeed, both during their academic journey and in their future careers.

Ontario will continue to build a strong, resilient economy, and part of that process requires engaging with students—and that will continue—as well as their families. It's often my case, in my constituency office, that we'll have families and students come in and talk about what choices exist at community colleges as well as universities. We want to make sure that when students attend

an Ontario college or university to pursue their post-secondary education, they'll know where their fees are going and what criteria they need for admission and how they, going forward, can meet their aspirations.

I want to be clear—I want to be absolutely clear that our government will do whatever it takes to uphold Ontario's world-class post-secondary education and ensure students are ready for the jobs of tomorrow. But underscoring all that is ensuring that we continue the broad consultation process that we started earlier with earlier legislation, including hard-working families and their students.

Speaker, we believe in empowering all young people to reach their full potential, which is why I urge my colleagues to support Bill 33. If passed, it will provide maximum clarity and information to students and their families, increase consistency, and is centred on the student experience.

I spoke earlier about the earlier piece of legislation, the Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act, and the associated directives. I want to assure those who are watching today or listening in that these directives require institutions to increase transparency of all education costs such as textbooks and other learning materials. That particular aspect has been a long-standing issue for students going forward.

Taken together, we believe, again, in empowering all young people to reach their full potential, which is why I urge my colleagues across the aisle to support Bill 33. Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on Bill 33.

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I am proud to stand up here to speak about Bill 33, and I also feel a sense of dismay. For those who are listening, this bill, Bill 33—a significant bill that affects a lot of people, a million students—is being rammed through at record-breaking speed. It is not going to committee. The public cannot have a say in committee about this bill. We cannot introduce amendments. And this government has decided that we will only have two hours—just two hours—of debate for third reading before this bill moves to the next stage to become law. It is very undemocratic, and it's the latest in a whole series of undemocratic moves this government has made: ramming through omnibus bills; getting rid of school board trustees' power; moving forward with special economic zones, so there's whole areas of Ontario that are exempt from local rules, workplace safety rules. The list goes on.

**1550**

The reason why I am so concerned about Bill 33 is because I'm a Toronto MPP, so we've already seen what happens when you get rid of school board trustees and their power to influence the school board and you replace them with an unelected supervisor with no experience in the classroom—not a vice-principal, not a principal, not a teacher—an accountant whose background is working at Metrolinx, not an agency that we consider to be exemplary—and I know you agree with that as well—who is now responsible for running our school board.

That's what this bill intends to do. It gives the government the power to take away the powers of school board trustees across Ontario and the school boards across Ontario. And what we have seen in Toronto is a supervisor who refuses to respond to emails and answer basic important questions that parents have. Basically, it's a black hole. We have seen this supervisor decide to cut funding to special education. Kids who are the most vulnerable kids that are accessing our school board system, their class sizes are going to be seeing an increase.

In my riding, we have a few schools—we have Beverley, we have Heydon Park, we have Lucy McCormick just on the other border in a neighbouring riding. All of them provide high-quality education to kids that are so vulnerable, whose parents are struggling so hard. And the first thing the supervisor did was cut funding to special education. What a cruel and unethical thing to do. Who's that going to help? I don't know.

What I'm also concerned about with Bill 33 is that it gives the government—the Ministry of Education—the power to direct school boards to sell off school property. In our riding, we have a school, Heydon Park—it's a high school. It provides schooling to high school students that are at risk. The ministry has just directed Heydon Park to no longer take in grade 9 students. Enrolment has been cut for grade 9, which sends a very clear message that the ministry has some ideas on what is going to be happening to that school and that school property. And we fear it is going to be one of the many school properties that will be sold off to deal with an artificially created funding shortfall that this government has created by not properly funding schools. People are very worried about that.

Let's be clear, if school properties are sold off, we're never getting them back. In a city as expensive as Toronto, we're never getting them back, and it boggles the mind why we would want to sell off school properties at a time when over a thousand people are moving into Ontario every day and the city of Toronto is looking at building 285,000 more homes to house people in the next 10 years. Where are families going to be sending their kids if we are selling off school properties? It doesn't make any sense at all, and this bill allows the government to head down that very dangerous path.

I am very concerned about what the government is doing to post-secondary education. My riding—I represent the University of Toronto. I've spoken to the student unions at the University of Toronto about this government's move to gut funding that goes to student unions. And what that means is that the radio station, the local newspaper, the student union that advocates for students' interests, mental health supports, all of those programs will be under threat. All of them will be under threat. Students already decide how and what they're going to fund through a democratically elected process. It makes zero sense—it makes zero sense—to meddle in how they manage their own affairs.

What we are calling for is for the government to listen to what Ontarians are telling you and back down on Bill 33. If you want to fix education in Ontario, properly fund

our schools. If you want to fix post-secondary education in Ontario, invest in post-secondary education. That's what Ontarians are calling for.

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

**MPP Tyler Watt:** I rise today to speak strongly against Bill 33, the so-called Supporting Children and Students Act. I say "so-called" because when you read this bill, when you look past the talking points and political theatre, it becomes painfully clear this bill does not support children, does not support students, does not support educators. This is just yet another power grab from this government. What it supports is centralized political control in the hands of the Minister of Education.

Let me get the typical Conservative talking points out of the way. There have been issues with school boards, and some people have abused their positions of power, but you can't paint an entire population with the same brush. I agree that we should be supporting students and I agree that we should be holding school boards accountable. But let's be honest: This bill continues the government's pattern of grabbing power, blaming everyone else for the mess that they created and pretending that heavy-handed oversight is the same thing as actually investing in public education.

Speaker, as someone who represents a fast-growing community with overcrowded schools, overworked staff and a post-secondary sector in crisis, I can tell you first-hand Bill 33 does absolutely nothing to fix the real problems.

Let's start with the central issue of Bill 33. Bill 33 takes decision-making away from local representation, from university and college governance bodies, and hands it all directly to one minister.

Let's talk about schedule 2, which I call "the education minister becomes the emperor act." It rewrites the Education Act so that the minister can investigate boards whenever he feels like it, using a vague new standard called "matters of public interest," issue binding directions to any board, overrule or reverse any local decisions. The minister can even oust an entire school board and vest control in himself without needing the Lieutenant Governor in Council's approval, something that used to be required for checks and balances. That is not democracy. That is not improved oversight. That is unprecedented ministerial control over public education, which is clearly this government's motivation.

The bill eliminates long-standing consultation requirements before the minister can declare a provincial interest. It removes independent oversight. It strips away the Divisional Court's ability to revoke a ministerial takeover order. It introduces ministry auditors who report directly to him and internal auditors who will now operate under his rules, not the boards'. This is dangerous, not only because it concentrates power, but because it creates the perfect environment for political interference in school operations.

Then we have the most bizarre clause in the bill. The minister now gets to approve or reject the names of schools—talk about priorities. Under the new section 174

of the Education Act, boards cannot name a school, new or existing, without the minister's approval. If the minister rejects a name, a board is forced to revert to a previous name or use a temporary street address as the name of the school.

Ask yourself, why does the minister need the power to rename schools? We already know that this government loves to create culture war distractions. They love to insert themselves into decisions that should belong to local communities, Indigenous partners, educators and kids. School names are deeply meaningful. They reflect local history, local heroes and local values. Now every one of those choices has to go through the minister's filter.

Moving on to the ministerial takeover of boards—no more checks and certainly no more balances. Schedule 2 gives the minister the power to investigate boards under wide, vague terms like "public interest." Once that investigation happens, the minister can issue directives or remove the board entirely.

New section 230.3 says the minister can take over a board if he believes the board has "done, or omitted to do something, that could affect a matter of public interest." This is subjective, undefined and open to misuse.

This bill lets the minister launch investigations into school boards not solely based on financial mismanagement, not necessarily on violation of the act but on public interest, whatever the minister says that that is on a given day. If the minister doesn't like what the investigation finds, they can now issue binding directions and, in extreme cases, seize control of a school board without even needing cabinet approval anymore.

The Lieutenant Governor in Council is cut out entirely—one minister, one signature, one school board gone. When power becomes this broad, the real question is not, "Will it be abused?", but when. That is not stability. That is not effective governance. That is politicization masquerading as accountability.

Let's move on to schedule 3, where the government goes after Ontario's colleges and universities with language that sounds harmless, but it is anything but. Schedule 3 requires colleges and universities to:

- assess applicants based on merit;
- publish admissions criteria;
- implement research security plans dictated by the minister; and
- comply with fee regulations set by cabinet.

#### 1600

Now, at first glance, who wouldn't support transparency? Who wouldn't support fairness? But let's be honest about what's actually happening here.

Let's start with the research security plans and how they can and will, under this government, become political tools. The minister can dictate the timelines of developing research plans, what must be included or what's to be researched, which partnerships are acceptable and which are not.

These could very quickly become mechanisms for political interference in academic freedom and research partnerships. You can't convince me that the experts—

people completing their PhDs and researchers in their own fields—don't know what's better than the minister from downtown Toronto about research in their own field. This government doesn't seem to care about academic freedom or supporting the researchers of today. This is simply another power grab from this government. As an example: What prevents a minister pushing institutions toward private-sector partnerships aligned with his party donors? This isn't exactly a new concept as we are deep into the Skills Development Fund scandal.

Next, fee regulations sound student-friendly, but this government has caused the crisis where we need these, where students' governments use these fees to fill in the gaps. I have had countless school governments and advocates reach out to me about how detrimental cutting these fees will be to their schools.

Ontario colleges and universities are collapsing financially because of this government. They froze tuition without replacing the funding; starved institutions for years; billions in cuts projected over the next few years; forced them into dependence on international student fees, then watched as the international student cap devastated their budgets. Now, they want to swoop in and regulate fees like they're the heroes cleaning up someone else's mess. This is like cutting the brake lines and then charging the mechanic with bad driving.

This government can blame the federal government all they want for the collapse of colleges and universities, but this is your doing. You underfunded colleges and universities with the lowest per-student funding in Canada and made these institutions depend on international students to keep these establishments afloat. Now that that's over, you're here pointing fingers and doing nothing to actually address the problem.

Here is the pattern: This government breaks the system and then blames everyone else. This bill fits perfectly into this government's established pattern of: cut funding; cause chaos; blame workers, boards and institutions; take away their power to govern themselves; and centralize everything in the minister's office. We've seen it with school repairs—\$21.7 billion in backlog ignored year after year. We've seen it with teachers—3,500 teaching jobs cut. We've seen it with CUPE workers with Bill 28—the unconstitutional attack that this government brags about. We've seen it with universities and colleges starved and then scapegoated. And now we see it here again in Bill 33.

Speaker, in my riding of Nepean, one of the fastest-growing in Ontario, we are desperate for new schools. Our classrooms are overflowing. Our post-secondary students depend on nearby institutions like Carleton University and Algonquin College.

What do my constituents need? New schools; smaller classes; better ventilation; more teachers, EAs and ECEs; mental health supports—a stable, well-funded college and university sector.

And what does Bill 33 give them? A minister who can rename their schools, a minister who wants to take over school boards and dictate from downtown Toronto, a

minister who wants to control how universities admit students, and zero dollars to fix a single problem.

Nepean and Ontario deserve better than political theatrics. I believe real support for children and students means investing in them, not micromanaging them.

That's why we should clear the school repair backlog, double school capital funding, expand mental health supports in every school, fund colleges and universities properly, eliminate OSAP interest and raise the repayment threshold, and protect, not erase, the authority of school boards and academic institutions. That is what real support looks like.

Speaker, Bill 33 is not an education bill. It is a centralization bill, a power concentration bill, a bill that prepares our education system for political interference, not student success. It undermines trust, erases local autonomy and continues the dangerous pattern of one minister tightening his grip over every part of the education system, from child welfare, K-to-12 education and post-secondary.

Children and students deserve better. I beg this government to actually listen to the people on the front lines—the education workers, the parents, the students—about how we can actually make meaningful change in legislation for them. Ontario deserves better, and that is why I will be voting against Bill 33.

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

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I do appreciate new school builds, but when it comes to education policy, I really wish the government would talk to the people who work in schools. I was a school social worker for 11 years, and I can tell you that I don't find any resemblance to what I need in education in this bill.

I have to say, ETFO, the education worker unions, CUPE, OSSTF, OECTA, all the French-language boards and unions—they work in these schools every day, and they deserve a meaningful partner in the government when it comes to protecting and investing in public education.

We should not be looking at public education as an expense. It is an investment. If we want a society with highly skilled people who can do the jobs that we need for our society, for our economy—if we want a healthy democracy—we have to be sure that we look at investments in our education system as beneficial for decades to come. If we get education right, everything else will fall into place.

I urge the government to pay their bills. Imagine you get invited to supper by a friend, and then they continuously refuse to pay the bill and say, "I'm saving money."

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Well, what's for supper?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** Exactly. I need the government to pay the bills. This is what I hear from people who are running school boards. We know so many school boards are starving.

What they need is enough money to pay for sick leaves. Teachers get 11 sick days a year, or 10. We pay them for four, so we're not paying those bills. We're not paying to make repairs to administrative buildings. We're not paying for cyber security fees. These costs go up every year and we need a government that can pay the bills,

because they don't have other streams of income. They can't continually have bake sales to make up for the gaps in the budget that are real.

Bill 124: This government mandated on me an artificial wage freeze. Now that the courts have decided that that was unconstitutional, here they are left holding the bag on trying to pay for these costs. And do you know what happens with those costs? My local high school in Eastwood, for example, has gone from eight custodians to two—maybe. There are cutbacks to librarians; a lot of schools can't afford to pay for a librarian in their schools.

We see cuts in special education. I talked to a special education teacher who said once in the last two weeks, she was able to provide educational assistance to those students who are learning how to read—because we see the stats: 25% in elementary schools and 35% in secondary schools don't have teachers. On a daily basis, they are scrounging to find teachers to be in our classrooms, because they have these understaffing issues. We call them “fail-to-fills.” I urge the government to get data on fail-to-fills. That's what I'm hearing from schools: They want to make sure there's a teacher in every classroom and a special education teacher to deliver spec-ed supports.

And our EAs: This government took the EAs, the lowest-paid workers in our education system, and were mandating and kind of pushing them with strike action. We need to make sure we have more EAs. Think of the money we're spending on consultants: \$350,000 plus \$40,000 in expenses. That's a lot of money and that's a lot of EAs.

If any of you have been there at the end of a school year, you'll know it's like the Hunger Games. Every school wants to have supports for the students who need it most because the kids are not okay. What I see is kids arriving to kindergarten not potty-trained. Kids are arriving to kindergarten and they are not potty-trained, so we have principals doing potty training.

The kids are not okay. They're spending more time on screens, so they're not developing social skills. Attention spans have shrunk in half. Imagine trying to teach kids whose attention spans have shrunk in half. That's documented, because they're growing up in front of screens.

We need more supports for kids so they can regulate their emotions. I say, “Put your lid on.” We have a lot of kids whose lids flip really easily because of how they're growing up in our society, and so they need caring adults who can help them build those tools when they enter school. But what they're faced with is crowded classrooms. What they're faced with is staff shortages. And what they're faced with is a lack of EA support that they need to get through the day.

**1610**

I also think, for children's aid societies—if you talk to poor people and you tell them that “the help we're going to give you is help budgeting,” it's insulting. Somebody on Ontario Works, for example, gets \$390 to pay rent. It's not a budgeting issue; it's a math issue. When we talk to school boards, when we talk to children's aid societies, and we talk about waste, it's like an insult to them. Because

it's not about the budget, always. It's not about some milkshake. There are some major gaps in the funding formula that really need to be addressed.

The same goes for colleges and universities. I worry that this government, by addressing these incidental fees and student union charges that are democratic—these people are elected; they're deciding how to spend the money—we're going to just spend more money on court challenges. This government has spent a lot of money on court challenges.

And universities and colleges are experts on processing applications. To act like people aren't merited to be entered into colleges and universities is, I think, misleading. I think we're looking too much at what is trending really well on X instead of what the evidence is saying and what the workers of this province who work in colleges and universities, work in children's aid societies, work in our elementary schools and secondary schools are saying.

What I think is happening is, unfortunately, I worry that we're turning Ontario and our assets into a yard sale. I look at what's happening with our water and the uploading of assets to a centralized service. What's going to happen with those assets? We're asking municipalities to upload billions of dollars of assets. Now we're asking for school boards to lose control over their assets. I live in a neighbourhood, for example, where there is an empty school, but guess what? Right now, it's surrounded by skyscrapers. And there is an uptick and an overpopulation of the school across the street. If we don't plan well, we risk selling off this school that is underutilized, yes, but without predicting what the future holds. Our school infrastructure can't run on a four-year cycle like we run government.

I mean, our government shouldn't run on a four-year cycle. We should look long term, and that's what school boards try to do with bricks and mortar. It's really hard to plan bricks and mortar when we have an ebbing and flowing of our school population. So let's not turn our education system into a yard sale. I know we're open for business, but we shouldn't be for sale.

I worry that we're punching down and we're attacking democratically elected trustees. I know some have made mistakes and there have been errors, but I think there is a process in place for code of conduct stuff that we could be using right now to root out any bad actors and bad behaviour and address the legal cost that we are seeing.

But my biggest worry of all, I think, is the threat to democracy. Trump would salivate at the opportunity that this government is taking—Bill 5, getting rid of all legislation if we just call something an economic zone. There's a lot of vagueness in this policy of how supervisors can come in. They could come in because I coughed twice. They could say, “Aislinn coughed a lot. That's public interest, so we're going to come in and supervise your school board.”

How many of these people are from the communities they're supervising? How many of them have a background in education? I worry that there's less merit in the people that we appoint to tribunals, to supervise school

boards than we're talking about here. I think we've got to look in the mirror a little bit when we start talking about merit.

Another thing about democracy: I worry about us selling off public assets. I think we undermine the public system like we're doing in health care, colleges and universities and the education system to support the private sector, and we know that that is not a better use of money. We look at what's happening to the States. We have widespread drops in people's critical thinking. And what does that mean? That people are being misled and they're voting for somebody who's selling them lies. So I worry that if the educational quality goes down and we stop investing in these systems and we start to privatize more and more, we will see a major shift in the capacity and ability of our young people.

We should not be telling misinformation. I worry about the math. Sometimes we say we are making it better, but we're spending more money trying to save and create these efficiencies, like an overpriced milkshake.

Overall, I hope this government doesn't end up like Mike Harris Sr. selling off the 407 at a loss, because I want us to remember and look back at how we functioned in this place and not have any regrets. I'm sure we'll all have some regrets. Nothing is perfect, and we make the best decision we can at the time. But I think the best way to make the best decisions going forward is to have all the information.

I want to know from this education minister: When was the last time you talked to teachers? When was the last time you talked to an EA? When was the last time you talked to a principal and a director of education and asked what they need? Because the list of things that I hear from them that they need does not match this bill.

I do think that with great power comes great responsibility, and I worry that by centralizing power, we risk making some major mistakes by not having all the information, not being open-minded, not having qualified people at the table like the supervisors. That would ultimately harm our kids.

I'm a mom, and I know some of you are becoming grandparents or parents. What we need to make sure of is that we have a public education system that is loving and has adequate access to caring adults. Whether that means small class sizes, whether that means educational assistants or social workers in the schools, we need to make sure that we have more and more caring adults in our school system and that we listen to those caring adults. They know our kids better than anybody else.

If you want to come and talk to me about mental health issues in our school system and what families need, I had a caseload of 120 students with mental health challenges. You can imagine what it's like to carry a caseload of 120 students with mental health challenges. I was run ragged, and I was putting out fires. When we have good ratios—when we have enough caring adults in the room—we can move forward in a beautiful and meaningful way.

And so I urge you to invest in those caring adults and to listen to them, because that is the prevention of all sorts

for all the negative outcomes that can happen in people's lives, whether it's crime, health outcomes or poverty.

When we have caring adults building their capacity and good trades like auto tech—those buildings are falling apart, the kitchens are falling apart; we need infrastructure. We need adults to make our education systems work properly.

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

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** I rise today to speak in strong support of Bill 33, the Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025. Introduced by the Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education, this legislation proposes comprehensive reforms across several key statutes, including the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017; the Education Act; the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act; and the Ombudsman Act. Bill 33 is primarily about strengthening accountability and transparency so our schools, children's aid societies and post-secondary institutions put children, youth and families first.

As the member for Oakville North–Burlington, I believe this bill offers meaningful benefits for my community and for Ontario more broadly.

In our government's announcement on May 29, 2025, Minister Calandra stated that parents deserve confidence that school boards are making decisions in the best interests of their children's education. We are strengthening accountability and transparency across Ontario's education system to ensure that every dollar invested is preparing students with practical skills for good-paying, stable careers.

Bill 33's stated objectives include:

- empowering the Minister of Education to investigate school boards in matters of public interest, issue binding directions, approve major school board expense policies and work with local police services regarding school-based programs;

- requiring publicly assisted colleges and universities to adopt merit-based admissions criteria and publish them, to develop and implement research security plans, and to regulate student fees;

- strengthening oversight of children's aid societies by requiring reviews of bylaws, public access to those bylaws and in language that children and youth can understand;

- expanding the mandate of the Ombudsman to include individuals aged 18 to 22 who have aged out of care, thereby enhancing oversight for this vulnerable cohort.

**1620**

These changes, taken together, represent a significant reform package—one that builds on past efforts to improve governance and compliance in education.

Let us turn our attention specifically to how Bill 33 would benefit people in my community: students, parents, educators, and the broader community.

In Oakville North–Burlington, the Halton District School Board and the Halton Catholic District School Board are responsible for delivering high-quality education in a rapidly growing community. Bill 33's provisions give the ministry greater capacity to intervene when boards

may be underperforming, running chronic deficits or are mismanaged. For parents, this means they have greater confidence that funds are used effectively and that board governance meets high standards. For example, when concerns emerge about expense policies, financial audits, or delay or cost overruns in the construction of new school facilities, Bill 33 allows enhanced oversight and more rapid response.

Even in my own community, some concerns were raised with the decision of the Halton Catholic District School Board to spend more than \$41,000 on international staff travel, including trips to Brazil, Haiti, Germany and the United Arab Emirates. The Halton District School Board, based on only one complaint, decided to rename a school, at a projected cost of \$250,000 without consulting the school community. This raises serious concerns about priorities and accountability. Taxpayers deserve assurance that every dollar is focused on student learning, not questionable travel expenses. This serves to highlight why stronger provincial oversight of school boards is essential.

Speaker, another reason why this matters: Halton is one of Ontario's fastest-growing regions. We are experiencing explosive growth. In the five years between 2016 and 2021, the population grew by nearly 9%, and much of this growth comes from young families moving into the region, attracted by strong job opportunities, vibrant communities and a high quality of life, all of which place increased pressure on local schools. This rapid growth shows no signs of slowing. Halton is projected to reach more than 1.1 million by 2051. That's nearly double our current population. As these new families put down roots, the need for higher-quality schools, and more of them, becomes even more essential.

Bill 33 also introduces a requirement for school boards to collaborate with local police services to provide access to school premises, allow participation in school programs and implement school resource officer programs where available.

In our community, all the school boards, including MonAvenir, a French Catholic school board, enjoy a positive relationship with the Halton police service, and parents rightly expect safe and nurturing learning environments. This initiative builds real connections and acts as a bridge between students, families, the school system and the police. As Mark Baxter, the president of the Police Association of Ontario said, "The School Resource Officer Program plays a crucial role in fostering trust, safety, and mentorship within our schools." And he continued: "There is a list of reasons why it's a good idea to have a resource officer in school: mentoring students, being there to assist with intimate partner violence incidents when they come up and the complexities of cybercrime."

Many young people from my community will pursue post-secondary education in the GTHA or enter the local innovation economy. Bill 33's merit-based admissions requirements and the fee transparency regime, as set out in schedule 3 of this bill, help ensure fairness and clarity in the pathway from high school to college or university. For the Halton region, which focuses on innovation, talent

development and economic growth through the mega-region framework, this is meaningful. If colleges and universities publish clear criteria and ensure admission is based on merit, our local students and their families know what is expected and can plan accordingly.

This aligns closely with our regional strategy of building talent pipelines for high-value jobs in advanced manufacturing, tech and services.

As well, through schedule 1 and schedule 4 of Bill 33, there will be enhanced protections for children's aid societies and youth who have aged out of care. For youth transitioning out of children services agencies, the new measures mean that youth will receive better information about their rights, in language they understand, and recourse through the Ombudsman.

It's vital that all youth, including those from vulnerable backgrounds, are well positioned for student achievement and real-world success.

As our region continues to grow, we need schools and post-secondary institutions that produce skilled graduates who are ready to contribute and thrive in their personal and professional lives. Bill 33's accountability and transparency reforms support this objective.

This means that when a new school is built in Burlington or Oakville, parents can trust that the school board is following rigorous expense policies and audit regimes; that when a student from Burlington applies to a regional college, the criteria and fee expectations are clear; that when a youth aging out of care in Halton seeks support, the Ombudsman oversight ensures their rights are respected.

Speaker, it is vital that we strike the right balance: ensuring accountability without stifling local innovation, ensuring cost-effective governance without reducing supports that matter most to students and their families. And this bill accomplishes that.

Let me illustrate two examples in my community. Let's say that a graduate from Dr. Frank J. Hayden Secondary School in Burlington applies to a college in Ontario. Under Bill 33's schedule 3, the college must publish admission criteria and ensure entrance is merit-based. This clarity helps students plan, reduces barriers and supports regional mobility of talent. Or let's take a young adult in Burlington who has aged out of care—under this bill, they will now be able to enter into a "continued care support" agreement and will now receive clear information, in language they understand, about their rights and about the Ombudsman's services under schedule 4. This ensures that vulnerable youth in our community are better protected and supported.

Speaker, even the Toronto Star columnist Martin Regg Cohn has acknowledged that the current system is broken. Last August, he wrote: The current model "clearly isn't working in the big cities and large regions where school trustees are increasingly out of touch and school boards out of control."

In conclusion, Bill 33 is a bold and far-reaching piece of legislation. It recognizes that the challenges in education, child welfare and post-secondary in Ontario are complex, interlinked, and demand modern accountability

frameworks. But more than that, it recognizes that students, children, youth and families in communities like mine, in Oakville North–Burlington, deserve transparency. They deserve fairness. They deserve to know that their schools, colleges and welfare supports are managed in their interest.

As the MPP for Oakville North–Burlington, I see clearly that the future prosperity of my community and region depends on talent, inclusion and strong institutions.

I urge all of my colleagues to support Bill 33 so that we move forward with the objective of delivering better results for every student and every family. Together, let's ensure that Oakville North–Burlington and all of Ontario benefit from an education and child welfare system that is fit for the future.

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

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** Bill 33 is not about strengthening education. It's about ignoring parents and the local communities who know our schools best.

Bill 33 gives Queen's Park sweeping powers to override school boards and seize control under vague public-interest claims.

It strips locally elected trustees of their role, replacing community decision-making with centralized, one-size-fits-all control—it's what I call the mystery telephone that sits on a desk somewhere in Toronto and, somehow, everything that parents need and kids need, they're going to pick up that phone, and maybe God will speak and tell them what they need. There we go.

1630

Bill 33 silences parents and blocks access to their representatives, making it harder to openly voice their opinions and ask for help for their children.

It ignores the voices of parents and students from Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving communities who have very serious concerns about mandating police in schools. What I see with that is that you've already set the stage for criminalizing students, which is appalling.

We also know that Bill 33 cuts out special-needs kids—that they have no voice. Without their trustees, they have nowhere to go to try to get what they need.

But most of all, all of this distracts from the real issue, which is the \$6.3 billion that has been scooped out of education funding for our public schools over the last eight years. And that is the crux of the problem.

It's interesting, because we've got the denial of democratic rights—the school trustees were actually the first form of democracy. It was very important to parents to have access to that in education. So we are denying parents access to those democratically elected people. We're also denying parents and communities the right to actually contribute to what is going on in this bill, because they're being denied public hearings. So it's kind of a double whammy of anti-democracy that's built into this bill and built into the way that this government operates.

I would like to speak briefly about what's going on for universities.

I have copies of 150 letters from students at Confederation College in Thunder Bay opposing Bill 33.

I also had a very lengthy meeting with the student union at Lakehead University, who are dead set opposed to this bill. They see unnecessary government oversight. They want us to defend and legislate students' right to organize and safeguard the autonomy of campuses.

I really question why the government is so afraid of students organizing. Do they not want them to be able to think for themselves, to gain skills as student leaders? Apparently not. Apparently, that's dangerous. And if we listen to Premier Ford—he's definitely afraid of what students might talk about. God forbid they have ideas different from the current ideology of this government.

Of course, they want to see immediate and dedicated public funding into the post-secondary sector.

We know that post-secondary schooling in Ontario is the lowest-funded in the entire country—roughly \$6,000 less per student at universities and over \$13,000 less per student for colleges.

This government has deliberately misled the public—oh; withdrawn.

This government has deliberately underfunded public education for years. They don't even call it “publicly funded post-secondary.” What do they call it?

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** Publicly assisted.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** “Publicly assisted.” Bill Davis would be rolling in his grave if he heard that. What a betrayal of public education and young people in our province.

We know that student organizations provide incredible services. They're very important.

I will just say one last thing here: This merit-based admissions thing completely overlooks how those decisions are actually made. Where it comes from is straight out of the Trump playbook. “Let's just get rid of DEI, because oh, my God, it's a threat.” Nonsense. We know where it's coming from, and shame on this government for putting it in this bill. University students and college students are not worried about whether they get in or not, because the rules are already very clear and, frankly, they're fair.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** Have faith. Here we go. My House leader reminded me to stand up, but I had already reminded you that I was going to stand up, so—oh, I've got 14 minutes. I feel sorry for all of you guys. You have to listen to me for 14 minutes. Are we all awake? All right. Good.

I want to start off by saying, I think, something we all already know: Schools belong to the families and the communities they serve. It has been that way for hundreds of years in Ontario for a reason. Schools are different in Timiskaming than they are in Toronto—and then Ottawa is different from Windsor; it's different from Sudbury; it's different from Thunder Bay. They're different. They need to respond to local needs. If you look at Bill 33, it goes in the other direction.

The Minister of Education and the Premier think that they can run education in Ontario from downtown Toronto. It's not going to work. Running it from an office in Queen's Park is not going to work.

There's a lot in here about governance, and I think governance is really important, but the government is missing the boat. If the minister wants to make an omelette and he wants to crack some eggs, as long as the omelette is local, democratic, transparent and effective, have at her. I don't care whether you have five trustees or 20 trustees; that's not the problem that exists in our schools.

The problem that exists in our schools right now is that they are not safe places to learn or to work. I know that because I've spent some time travelling around, talking to the people about what's happening in our schools. There are three reasons for that. Class sizes are too big, we know that. We know that special education is being underfunded by \$850 million a year, that the government is not sending to the boards, that they have to find somewhere else, and we're not even meeting the needs of children with exceptionalities. The third thing is, we have a mental health crisis in our schools, marked by things like incivility—it's the same thing that we see in our society all around us. We know there's a mental health problem—but these are kids; these are young people. So many of them have been affected by the pandemic and are affected by these things here—the screens, the phones. It's a problem. But the government is saying, "Look over here."

One of the latest look-over-heres—and it's not in this bill—is, the Premier is going to give every teacher on the elementary panel, maybe more, maybe 200,000 of them, or 120,000, a P-card, a purchasing card. Unfortunately, he didn't tell the Minister of Education, who I think rightly said, "That's the Premier's idea, and I don't know how it's going to work." It's not going to work because there's so many. It's not going to work—because the problem is not going to be fixed by a P-card. You're not going to make a class size smaller with a purchasing card. It's not going to work. You're not going to get a child with exceptional needs the help they need with a P-card. It's not going to happen. And we're not going to fix the mental health crisis in our school because somebody has a P-card. But it's a great little bauble; it's like pointing in another direction. It will be popular because it sounds good. It's totally impractical. It's not even a fully thought-out idea. Somebody told the Premier that, and he remembered it, and it just came flowing out when somebody asked him a question.

I think children and families in our province deserve a little bit more thought than that—a little bit more thought about things like class sizes. They're too big. They're too big in the elementary panel. They're too big in the secondary panel. That makes it harder for the kids to get what they need. Not having enough support for students with exceptional needs, when we have a policy of inclusion and an Ontario Autism Program that is literally not functional, makes it harder and less safe for children, teachers and SSLs.

The mental health needs of our kids—it's not a surprise. I've said this again and again. We go into a bank, and there's a sign that says, "Harassment will not be tolerated. Foul language will not be tolerated." You phone your insurance company, and they tell you the same thing. Everywhere we go, we're being told, "You need to behave. You can't act out." Do we think that's not happening in our schools?

I have a neighbour; he's a great principal, a fantastic principal at—I can't remember if it's Roberta Bondar or what. It's a school in my riding. It's a big elementary school. He's a nice guy, a really good principal. He works really hard, and he knows all the kids in his school. I was talking to him about these safe schools, and he said, "I had a chair thrown at me by a 12-year-old girl the other day." I said, "What?" Then he said calmly, "It's just another day."

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I have a friend whose wife is 70, and she went back for one year. She wanted to go back because she loves the kids, and she wanted to have that experience. She had one child in her class who has really exceptional needs and behaviour challenges and sometimes requires a few people to restrain the child—because that's what's there. The first time it happened, she ended up with a bunch of scratches on her arm, so she went to see the vice-principal. The vice principal's response was, "I guess she'll have to wear long sleeves"—not "How are you? What happened? Oh, my God." Instead, it was, "Yes, that happens. Just wear long sleeves."

How do we get there—where that happens and the government is not saying we've got a big problem?

Actually, our kids have a big problem, and the government is not seeing it.

Yes, there are some bad trustees, and they make bad decisions, and governance has to be looked at. But you can't walk by the thing that is so obvious and important and try to point at P-cards and trustees and whatever else. Trips to Italy—we all agree that's bad. There's a way of fixing that. You don't have to do a piece of government legislation to fix that—we've had problems with boards before, and we've done the things that needed to be done—but now what the government has done is use it as a tool to silence people.

Special education is \$850 million short. The government is not spending enough, and boards have to find it somewhere else.

You get the supervisors in—by the way, who are making \$350,000 a year, not including expenses. That's probably more than the average Ontarian earns in four or five years—I'm just saying that. And they're all accountants. I have nothing against accountants, but none of them have any educational experience. One of the things they do is a special education committee, something that should be open to the public, talking about how children with exceptional needs—how their needs are being met, what needs to be done, and what the problems are. The supervisors pull the plug. You can't see it.

What would we say if the Speaker decided to pull the plug on these cameras here? We'd all be screaming. It's not democracy, is it?

It's not even actually about that; it's about the people we're serving knowing what we're doing and knowing what's being done for their kids. That's not fixing anything.

Then, to say the government is going to set up these offices or call centres where you can call up if you have a challenge with your child in school that's not being satisfied by the school—you've got a cross-boundary transfer; your child has exceptional needs; there are mental health needs; there's bullying or something going on that's not getting resolved. There are problems in schools. That's not a solution. You have people there who can do that. If you want to make it better, then work at making it better. Ensure that people have someone that they can go to, that they can see, that they can feel and touch, and they don't have to drive halfway across town to get to. Come on. What would you expect for your own family?

I came here, like most of you came here, for the things that are important. I think the three things that are important are to take care of people's health care—make sure their hospitals are good, and make sure it's there for them when they need it. That's what we want. We all want that for all of us, no matter what our ideological bent is. I think that's kind of a standard in Ontario. I would like to believe that. That's what we're all here trying to do, maybe in different ways.

Make sure the economy is good so our young people have jobs. That's a good thing. It's an important thing.

Make sure our schools are great so our kids have opportunity, but not just because it's the nice thing or the right thing to do; because it's the smart thing to do, because the most valuable commodity in the global economy is what? Highly skilled, highly trained, highly educated people—and healthy people too. We do those things not just to be nice and good and moral, but to do it because it's enlightened self-interest.

But when I look at the fall economic statement, I don't see anything there for either of those three things—nothing, zero, zilch, nada, on the things that are most important to our families, so you've got to ask yourself why. Why are we not focusing on the things that are important?

Pointing the finger and saying, “Look over here at these P-cards,” or, “Look over here at these trustees. They were really bad”—yes, they were. But I could do the same thing and say, “Look over here at the Skills Development Fund.” Should we just actually eliminate the Legislature because the government is shovelling money out the door to insiders and friends and donors? Should we do that? No.

I don't understand why the government can't just simply focus on making sure we take care of our schools.

I've said this before: You got your licence plates for free, whether you have one or two or three, but Johnny is not getting what he needs in school. You got your licence plate for free, but by the way, the class size for your children is way bigger than it should be. You got your

licence plate for free, but—heck, I'm sorry—the mental health needs in our schools are just not being met. But you don't have to worry about that licence plate fee. It's a billion dollars.

The problem that the government needs to address in education is really simple. It's not that complicated. We don't have enough adults in our schools. We don't have enough EAs, SSLs—whatever you want to call them. We don't have enough ECEs. We don't have enough teachers. We don't have enough mental health workers. And we don't have enough youth workers. We're not meeting the need. We don't have enough people. It's not complicated. We need more people. I don't see any investment in this.

And do you know what? Great schools are not just a thing that's over here on this side; on that side, in that party—I remember Bill Davis. This is not the party of Bill Davis. I'm sorry; to those of you who think you're there—you're not. You're not there to build up schools—because it's not happening—

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** How many schools did you close?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Fraser:** You're not there to build up schools. You're not there to get graduation rates up.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Fraser:** I know it hurts. I know it really hurts, but you've got to hear this. You've got to hear this because you're letting our kids down.

Our schools aren't safe places to learn and to work because class sizes are too big, and you know it.

You know you're underfunding special education by \$850 million a year, so it's coming up short for the kids who need it.

And the third thing is—yes you can wave at me all you want there, the member from Whitby, but it's the truth—you're not taking care of kids' mental health, and you had better get to it.

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

**Ms. Natalie Pierre:** I am honoured to rise in the House today, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, and stand alongside my government colleagues and speak in strong support of Bill 33, the Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025.

Bill 33 represents another meaningful step forward in our government's ongoing work to strengthen the safety, accountability and integrity of Ontario's child welfare system.

Bill 33 reflects our continued commitment to ensuring that services designed to protect young people truly meet the standard they deserve, to ensure that every child in this province has the opportunity to succeed and to thrive.

If passed, Bill 33 would amend the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017—CYFSA for short—as well as several related statutes.

The amendments aim to achieve two important, overarching objectives: first, improving accountability and transparency within children's aid societies; and second, expanding and clarifying the role of the Ombudsman to enhance oversight and ensure that young people receiving

services under the CYFSA are better supported, better protected and heard.

**1650**

These reforms continue the work we began in our first term—work that remains grounded in the principle that the safety and well-being of young people must always be at the centre of our decisions.

Since taking office in 2018, our government has taken significant action to modernize and support the child welfare system in the province of Ontario.

Bill 33 builds on that foundation by reinforcing the expectation that services must place the highest priority on safety and protection; must meet consistently high standards of quality; and must respond to the cultural, emotional and social needs of children, young people and families across the province of Ontario.

Throughout this process, we have engaged extensively with partners across the province. We sought perspectives from children's aid societies, from caregivers, from advocates, from community agencies, and from young people with lived experience in care. Their insights and experiences have played a crucial role in shaping this legislation.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to this work; particularly those who shared their personal stories and personal experiences. Their voices are reflected through this bill.

The measures included in Bill 33 reflect not only community feedback but also recommendations from Ontario's Ombudsman—an office that has been serving the people of this province for half a century. Their work has consistently highlighted the need for clearer oversight and improved transparency in the systems that serve children and young people.

This legislation was also strongly informed by the public consultations held for Bill 188, the Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024, as well as the extensive engagement conducted as part of the CYFSA legislative review. These conversations produced invaluable feedback about what is working, where improvements are needed, and how we can better support young people receiving services.

Speaker, improving the child welfare system requires ongoing dialogue with the people and organizations who support young people every day.

That's why the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is building on the work of Bill 33 by consulting the children's aid societies and out-of-home care licensees on proposed regulatory amendments that complement this legislation. These proposed changes would require children's aid societies and licensed care providers to display clear, age-appropriate information about the rights of children and young people and the process for making a complaint or for raising a concern. This information must be presented in accessible, child-friendly language and posted in locations where young people can easily see it and where it can easily be understood. Through the CYFSA legislative review and our many engagements across the sector, we heard repeat-

edly that many young people in care do not always remember, understand, or feel confident about their rights. That is not acceptable. Every young person who receives services from a children's aid society deserves to know what their rights are, what quality care should look like, and what steps they can take if something isn't right. By making this information more visible and easier to understand, we will help ensure that young people are informed, that they are supported, and that they are empowered.

These proposed requirements will also align with existing obligations to post information about the Ombudsman and are consistent with posting requirements in other care settings.

These proposed regulatory measures build on Ontario's Quality Standards Framework. That's why our government strengthened accountability and raised the bar for children's aid societies through the quality standards framework, making sure every child in care receives safe, high-quality and consistent support by:

- strengthening oversight of foster care and group homes;
- enhancing privacy protection;
- increased frequency of visits;
- requiring new police record checks; and
- requiring that information about the Ombudsman on how to contact their office is posted in care facilities.

The quality standards framework sets out what high-quality care should look like across all licensed out-of-home care settings, including child welfare, youth justice, child and youth mental health services, and special-needs programs.

This framework is not just a guideline; it's an educational tool that outlines the essential elements of safe, supportive and effective care. It provides practical guidance to ensure that vulnerable young people in care have what they need, not only to be safe, but to thrive and achieve better outcomes.

Under the previous system, too many children fell through the cracks, facing instability and uncertainty instead of safety and opportunity. Our government took action.

To support this implementation, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services released free sector-wide training to help service providers understand and apply these standards consistently. We also released child-friendly resources—including "The Care You Deserve" website and poster—to help young people understand the standards of care in language that is clear, accessible and meaningful to them.

Similarly, our government introduced the children and young persons' rights resource in 2020. The resource was created because we heard directly from young people that the rights-based provisions in the CYFSA were often difficult for them to interpret or to understand. This resource addresses that barrier by explaining rights using simple, plain language. It helps young people understand what their rights are, why those rights matter, and how to seek help if they believe those rights are not being respected. It also acts as a resource for families, caregivers,

service providers, and communities—helping adults better support young people in understanding and exercising their rights.

With the quality standards framework in place and the children and young persons' rights resource available province-wide, Bill 33 and the accompanying regulatory proposals will expand this progress even further.

Our goal is simple: to increase the number of young people who understand their rights and to empower them to exercise those rights if and when needed. Through stronger oversight, clearer expectations and better access to information, we can give young people the confidence they need to speak up, seek help, and advocate for themselves.

Speaker, this is why our government remains committed to continuously strengthening the quality of care offered to children and young people across Ontario. We will continue engaging with front-line workers, with community experts, with partners, with advocates to identify new ways to improve services.

This also includes ongoing, dedicated engagement with First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban Indigenous communities. Their leadership, knowledge and lived experience are essential to building a system that meets the unique needs of Indigenous youth and their families. Ensuring culturally appropriate, community-led supports is fundamental to achieving better outcomes and advancing reconciliation. We must and we will continue this work collaboratively, respectfully and meaningfully. Their contributions—along with the input of countless service providers, caregivers, and young people—remain at the heart of our government's vision to leave no child or young person behind.

**1700**

Bill 33 moves us closer to that vision. It strengthens oversight, improves transparency, enhances awareness of rights, and reinforces our commitment to ensuring that every young person in Ontario receives the high-quality care, protection and support they deserve. These are not symbolic changes; they are practical, impactful, and informed by the people who rely most on these services.

Speaker, we know that young people succeed when the systems designed to support them are strong, accountable and responsive. We know that when those systems don't match the reality on the ground, the consequences can be severe and long-lasting.

That is why this work matters. That is why Bill 33 is necessary. And that is why our government will continue working tirelessly to strengthen Ontario's child welfare system. We will keep listening. We will keep learning. And we will keep acting to ensure that young people across Ontario have access to the supports, stability and opportunities they need to thrive.

Bill 33, if passed, is about accountability and transparency. For the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, it means that children's aid societies and licensed residential providers must provide information about the Ombudsman to children and youth in care. Children's aid

societies will be required to review their bylaws, update them, and make them publicly available.

Bill 33, if passed, will increase accountability, improve transparency and strengthen youth rights.

Speaker, every child deserves a safe, loving and stable home, along with the resources and supports to achieve lifelong success. That's why our government is continuously improving the child welfare system to focus on services that prioritize safety, protection and the needs of children, youth and families.

The Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025, is our government's next step to ensure that every child and youth in Ontario is supported and protected.

Together, we will continue building a stronger, more responsive and more compassionate child welfare system—one that puts the well-being of young people across Ontario at the centre of everything we do.

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

**Mr. Tom Rakovec:** I really appreciate the opportunity to speak to this.

If there's one thing that this government has more in abundance than any government ever before, perhaps even on planet earth—do you know what that is? It's nerve.

We are debating a bill whereby they have taken over school boards—five of them—because they say that they're not managing their affairs and their money well. And do you know what their plan of takeover has been? It has been to get rid of all of the democratically elected trustees, elected by the communities that they represent—people who can receive a phone call and do their best to help—and replace them with friends of theirs who they are paying \$2,000 a day, \$350,000 a year. And since they've done that, do you know what you're seeing? If you've got a kid in school right now, they're probably in a split class. So now what's their solution in education? Put all the kids—two grades into one. In some schools in the province of Ontario, there are three grades in one classroom, a first-ever under this government. That is the solution from their administrator friends who are getting paid top dollar. And all of the meetings have been moved—because they hate consultation and they hate transparency—indoors, closed, curtains shuttered, doors shut, windows shut. “We're not going to let you know what the decisions are that are being made.”

All that they're leaving is carnage in education, and parents are angry. But do you know what? They just do this—because getting sued is like Tuesday for them, right? It's just how it works.

Why do I say that there's nerve? Well, Speaker, this is a government that has taken the debt of the province of Ontario to half a trillion dollars, making it the most indebted sub-sovereign state on planet Earth. I have reached out to NASA and NASA has actually directed the James Webb telescope in a wide arc across the universe, and in fact, nowhere in the universe has the debt of any sub-sovereign state ballooned to the level it has here. It's unbelievable, right?

And what has this board presided over? Almost historic job losses—tens of thousands in every industry. I mean,

you've got a minister now dubbed the minister of favours on his own *Amazing Race*, okay? We've all seen the show. And he's travelling the world. He's in internationally regarded cities. I mean, you go to any sports event—doesn't matter—and he's there. He's in the prime seats, right? That's what's happening and that's this board. And so they're bristling at what's happening.

It's a government; it's a board. I mean, you can essentially equate it to be essentially the same thing.

What we are seeing is losses in jobs and money going out the door to their friends in record numbers. I mean, it's like Halloween and they're shovelling it into bags that their friends are walking away with.

There is mismanagement on every level. When you look at anything—it doesn't matter what it is: car insurance, highest it's ever been; electricity bills, highest it's ever been; gas bills, highest it's ever been. Everything is record in costs and the debt is in record, so taxpayers are spending all this money and getting literally nothing.

You know what their emergency management plan is? It's a three-pronged one. First thing is they wait for some sort of crisis to bail them out—international, external, doesn't matter. They're hoping for it. And then there's probably an internal countdown. When that doesn't happen, the second thing that they do is they try to wage some kind of culture war, okay? That's the second thing they will do. If it's not working, "Let's wage a culture war, let's do this." And if that doesn't work, shut down the House and run commercials.

During the Jays, during the World Series, all we saw was what was the cause of them rising the Legislature early for the summer: It was the Ring of Fire. And I have to tell you, they are now going to open the Ring of Fire just to pay for the commercials to open the Ring of Fire.

If there's any board that should go into receivership, it's this government. So, why don't you follow your own advice and just do it? Because you're really making a mess of the province, worse than any board you could ever accuse of doing.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais dire quelques mots par rapport à l'impact du projet de loi 33 pour les francophones de l'Ontario.

Les francophones de l'Ontario parlent d'une seule voix. On est tous sur le même horizon. On n'en veut pas du projet de loi 33.

Le système d'éducation francophone en Ontario, ça assure la survie des francophones en Ontario. C'est dans nos écoles que nos enfants apprennent les règles de la langue. Ils apprennent notre culture. Ils apprennent notre histoire. Ils apprennent à développer les compétences nécessaires pour continuer à parler français pour le reste de leur vie.

Quand on vit en milieu minoritaire, tu te lèves à tous les matins en disant : « Ne descends pas ton arc », parce qu'on ne sait pas quand le prochain coup va venir. On ne sait pas ce qui s'en vient, mais on sait qu'on doit prendre une décision à tous les matins de continuer à parler français, parce que de se faire assimiler, c'est tellement facile.

Je vais vous faire une petite leçon d'histoire, monsieur le Président. On avait, en Ontario, le règlement 17. Le règlement 17 empêchait l'enseignement du français. C'était une loi qui a été passée par le gouvernement de l'Ontario qui disait : « Vous n'avez pas le droit d'enseigner en français en Ontario. » Ça a pris plus d'une décennie de se débarrasser de ce projet de loi-là.

On se souvient de la bataille des épingles à chapeaux. Mon collègue de la Baie James a amené de l'avant—c'étaient les mères francophones qui avaient sorti les épingles de leurs chapeaux pour défendre les institutrices qui enseignaient le français parce que c'était défendu de le faire.

**1710**

C'est seulement dans les années 1960 et 1970 que le gouvernement a commencé à subventionner les écoles secondaires francophones. On peut parler aux gens de Sturgeon Falls; ils s'en souviennent de la mobilisation communautaire qu'ils ont dû faire pour venir à bout d'avoir une école à Sturgeon Falls—la même chose à Penetang. Ça a demandé beaucoup, beaucoup d'efforts, de temps et d'énergie pour venir à bout d'avoir nos écoles francophones. On ne veut pas les perdre.

En 1982, l'article 23 nous donne, finalement, le contrôle et la gestion de nos écoles. On a dû attendre en 1998 pour avoir nos conseils scolaires francophones. On est ici, les francophones, pour vous dire qu'on veut nos conseils scolaires francophones. On s'est battu longtemps, on a travaillé fort, on les veut.

La dernière chose qu'on veut, c'est quelqu'un à Toronto qui prend un téléphone pour un problème à l'école de Foleyet. Ils ne savent même pas c'est où sur une carte de l'Ontario, Foleyet, encore moins quelles sont les ressources qui sont disponibles. Même chose si je dis l'école Notre-Dame du Rosaire à Gogama à quelqu'un de Toronto. Il va aller sur Google Maps pour venir à bout de savoir où c'est, cette affaire-là. C'est eux autres qui sont supposés d'aider mes constituants, d'aider les francophones de Gogama, de Ivanhoe, de Foleyet, de partout dans mon comté? Bien, voyons donc. Ça n'a aucun bon sens.

Vous ne pouvez pas aller de l'avant avec ce projet de loi-là sans commencer des repoussées par la communauté francophone. On n'acceptera pas ce que vous êtes en train de faire. On a travaillé bien trop longtemps pour avoir droit à nos écoles françaises, pour avoir droit à nos conseils scolaires francophones. Je vous garantis qu'on ne laissera pas le projet de loi 33 nous enlever tout ça, parce qu'une menace à notre système scolaire francophone, c'est une menace à la survie des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, I don't often get a chance to speak in these debates, but I really needed to be here because what is transpiring here in the Legislature today with this government ramming through this legislation without proper debate—real debate—without hearing from community members, is just so shameful. I think it's really important to be here to call out what's happening and to talk about what really matters.

Because in the last 19 hours, 55,000 emails—more than that, actually—have been sent to this government. Parents, students, teachers, education workers, community members, all saying the same thing: Do the right thing.

But this government has the wrong priorities, and they always have. Time and time again we see it, right? The Minister of Education talks about pretending that this is going to somehow fix the issues in our schools, but the issues in our schools are of the government's own making.

The fact is that since 2018, the government has cut \$6.3 billion from public education. This year alone—just this year alone—they have cut another \$300 million. And you see it. We see it across the province, as parents, as education workers. The kids see it. Class sizes are ballooning. Essential programs are being cut. Teachers and education workers are truly stretched to the limit. They are at the breaking point.

And our schools are literally falling apart. Speaker, I had to go back and check this again today. Back when I was the shadow minister for education, and when I ran to be elected in 2018, with the previous mess that the previous Liberal government had actually left, we had a capital repair backlog at that time—an infrastructure backlog, really—of about \$15.3 billion. I remember that figure well. Today, it's at \$16.8 billion. So more than 10—that is a significant increase, right? Another billion.

Students are learning in classrooms that have leaky roofs. We have broken heating systems. We have asbestos in the wall. Children cannot drink from the taps because there is lead in the drinking water. One in 12 schools in Ontario has the same roof panels that this government alleges were the reason that they closed the Ontario Science Centre. Just let that sink in: the same panels that the Premier said were too dangerous for people to be under—apparently, that's safe enough for our kids.

The government's current capital plan for education falls \$12.7 billion short of what is actually needed right now, and it's not only our public school system; it is also our post-secondary institutions that are impacted by this terrible legislation. It is cut after cut to services, to programs. We have seen mass layoffs in our college sector—10,000 college workers laid off.

That is the real crisis in Ontario education, Speaker—overcrowded classrooms, not enough workers, not enough supports—and our children are the ones who are paying the price, because they are falling behind. At a time when we should be investing in our future, we are leaving them behind.

What is this government's solution? It is Bill 33, the bill we are debating right now. What does that legislation do? It fires elected school trustees. It replaces them with \$350,000-a-year government appointees who are based in Toronto. It cuts student services—food banks, mental health supports, sexual assault centres—in our post-secondary institutions.

While children—and, well, everyone—need smaller class sizes to succeed, while they're desperate for enhanced special education or mental health supports, this government is busy paying Conservative insiders \$350,000 a pop to make decisions from downtown Toronto. Students do

not need political interference. They don't need government control. They need investment right now.

It's all about priorities. We always say that: It is about priorities. The Premier—I remember; we all remember this—he told the 800,000 unemployed Ontarians that they needed to look harder. While Doug Ford was out there playing Captain Canada and Batman or whatever for the cameras, this government turned the Skills Development Fund, that is meant to help working people, into a pay-to-play scheme for lobbyists and donors. The Auditor General called it “not fair, transparent or accountable.” We remember. This is a government that has chosen, as a priority, to spend \$2.2 billion on a luxury spa at Ontario Place. It is a government that is choosing to spend that money—\$400 per household in the province of Ontario—while schools have a \$16.8-billion school repair backlog.

Let me tell you what we have heard from Ontarians. That's what I really wanted to make sure I did here today. Some 55,000 emails in 19 hours—from every single corner of this province, people are expressing their outrage. Parents are saying, “Don't silence us.” Students are saying, “Don't cut our supports.” Communities are saying, “Don't take away our voices—our locally, democratically elected voices.”

What did this government do when people expressed those opinions? They chose to shut down debate. They rammed this legislation through anyway. It's really quite shameful, Speaker, because this is what we have seen this government do time and time again, whether it's privatizing health care while hospitals close and nurses leave the profession—and now Bill 33, silencing parents while they pay insiders \$350,000 a pop, cutting student services while our students go hungry, taking power away from communities while schools are actually falling apart.

Speaker, if this government doesn't know what the solution is, I am very happy to provide it to them. It's pretty straightforward: Just properly fund education in the province of Ontario. What students need is investment, not political control. Parents need a voice, not Toronto insiders making decisions about their communities and their schools and their children. Schools need repairs, not power grabs.

I'm going to ask the government again to do the right thing. Vote no on Bill 33, or better yet, just shelve it. Let's have a conversation about what communities really need right now: Fund our schools, listen to parents and support our students and our education workers.

And with that, I have to say I really want to give the government one last opportunity to do the right thing, to take the time that's needed to reconsider what you're doing here, reconsider the direction that you're taking with this legislation.

I am going to hope that they will take the evening to consider this decision more carefully, and I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Ms. Stiles has moved adjournment of the House.

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

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

All those opposed to the motion, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This is a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1721 to 1751.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Will the members please take their seats?

Ms. Stiles has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerks.

All those opposed to the motion, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerks.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day):** The ayes are 24; the nays are 61.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** I declare the motion lost.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 6, I am now required to put the question. Mr. Cho, Willowdale, has moved third reading of Bill 33, An Act to amend

various Acts in relation to child, youth and family services, education, and colleges and universities.

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

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*Third reading vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. Steve Clark:** If you seek it, you will find consent to see the clock at 6.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** The House leader is seeking unanimous consent to see the clock at 6 o'clock. Agreed? Agreed.

*Report continues in volume B.*







**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, OOnt

Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Donna Skelly

Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,

Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Allsopp, Tyler (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
<b>Bresee, Ric (PC)</b>	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
<b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Cerjanec, Rob (LIB)	Ajax	
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Jeux
Ciriello, Monica (PC)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Cooper, Michelle (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
<b>Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises et de l'Approvisionnement
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Darouze, George (PC)	Carleton	
Denault, Billy (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence
Fairclough, Lee (LIB)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Firin, Mohamed (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
<b>Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	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
<b>French, Jennifer K. (NDP)</b>	Oshawa	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gilmour, Alexa (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Gualtieri, Silvia (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
<b>Hamid, Hon. / L'hon. Zee (PC)</b>	Milton	Associate Solicitor General for Auto Theft and Bail Reform / Solliciteur général associé responsable de la Lutte contre le vol d'automobiles et de la Réforme relative aux mises en liberté sous caution
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
<b>Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)</b>	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Hazell, Andrea (LIB)</b>	Scarborough—Guildwood	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)</b>	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé des Forêts et des Produits forestiers
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
<b>Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)</b>	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
<b>Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)</b>	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines
Lennox, Robin (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
<b>McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)</b>	Durham	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)</b>	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
McKenney, Catherine (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)</b>	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Deputy House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	Timmins	Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement et de la croissance économique du Nord
<b>Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)</b>	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security / Ministre des Collèges et Universités, de l'Excellence en recherche et de la Sécurité
Racinsky, Joseph (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire Economic and Community Partnerships / Ministre responsable des Partenariats économiques et communautaires pour le développement du Cercle de feu
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Rosenberg, Bill (PC)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Chris (IND)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
<b>Skelly, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)</b>	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smyth, Stephanie (LIB)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises

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