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Mercredi
19 novembre 2025

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 19 November 2025

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 19 novembre 2025

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): 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 18, 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): Further debate?

MPP Wayne Gates: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House. As you can tell, my voice is a little off today. That might be good for the Conservatives.

I want to start on what is not in the economic statement. I want to talk about affordability. I want to talk about the fact of what our kids and our grandkids are facing today. When we take a look at youth unemployment, it is close to 17%. I look across the aisle, and I look over here on this side here, with the Liberals. We all have kids. They're all going to school and they're getting a good education, but when they're coming out of school, there are no jobs for them, and certainly no good-paying jobs.

What does that lead to? Living at home longer—they're living in our basement. Then, when they finally get that opportunity to move out, they have to take a look at the cost of rents. I can talk from experience on this. I have kids who are looking—they tell me all the time they love me, but they don't want to live with me. But when they go and look for an apartment—do you know what is it in Niagara, a one-bedroom apartment, two-bedroom apartment? It's \$2,500 a month—a month. You look here in Toronto, and we all have apartments that are paid for by the Legislature—or most of us do; I guess some do go home. Some go home to their new babies. But at the end of the day, most have an apartment here. Those apartments are now \$3,500.

I was talking to a young guy in the elevator yesterday. He goes to the University of Toronto—\$3,800 a month he's paying for an apartment. I said to him, "How do you afford it?" He said, "It's terrible"—

Interruption.

MPP Wayne Gates: I just got a note that says I am sharing my time with the member from London North Centre, so there you go. I just wanted to get that out.

Then he gets to the second point of what kids are facing today—because the economic statement is supposed to say how great it is in the province of Ontario; it's not the truth. It's nowhere near the truth. It's not great in Ontario, and it's certainly not great for young people.

I look over here, and some probably have nieces, nephews who are going into the same situation I have with my kids. How do you afford to pay that kind of rent? I'm asking you. You can tell me when you ask me questions. Tell me how you can afford it. You can't.

I said to him, "So what do you do?" He says, "Well, I skip meals. Some days I go to my class and I don't eat." I know the minister; I talk to him all the time on how important it is to have a meal before you go to school. There are a lot of kids—and you know it—who are going to school hungry today, trying to learn. Here is a guy going to university—our future—skipping meals.

And how did it all happen? It happened because of the government. I'm going to repeat what my colleague said. When I first came here—I have been here a while now, five terms I think it is now, well over 10 years. I look all across here and I don't think there's anybody here sitting right now that has been here longer than I have, on the Conservative side. I'm pretty sure of that. When I came here, I'll be honest with you, I didn't even know what an encampment was. There were not a lot of homeless people in the province of Ontario. Today, every one of our communities—I see my good friend from Peterborough is here; I talked to him last night about his glasses. Every one of us is facing encampments in our ridings. And I'm going to be fair to the Conservatives and the Liberals; put your hands up if I'm wrong, that you are not facing it; that you don't have homelessness in your ridings; that you don't have seniors, after they have been renovicted because they can't afford their rent, going to food banks in the province of Ontario, continually going to food banks.

I have seniors come to my office—and again, I'll ask my colleagues if I'm wrong. Seniors come to our office. They tell me they're going to food banks. They're also telling me very clearly, those that do have a place to stay, that they're skipping meals. They're not having three meals a day as a senior, after, quite frankly, they've worked and they've given their life. We all know what's going on with pensions today. We know how hard it is to make ends meet. I can talk from the workplace I came from. A lot of people know I worked at General Motors for 30 years. I was a union rep for close to that period of

time. The one thing that was nice about GM, they had a pension, but that pension does not have COLA anymore. That means they are living on their pension on what the price of everything was almost 15 years ago. So even those individuals are now coming to our office and telling me, “Gatesy, we’re struggling. We are having trouble making ends meet.” The good news is, they still have their good benefit packages, but as far as trying to pay rent, buy food, all the other necessities of life, hydro bills, everything else: “We’re struggling.”

When the minister stands up and tells how wonderful it is in the province of Ontario, I have to stand up and say that I disagree. I can give you examples. I’m challenging my colleagues on the other side, when you stand up and talk, let me know if you don’t have the same problems I’m facing and the same problems they’re facing in Welland, the same problems they’re probably facing in Toronto here, in London. We all have the problems. Ontario is not in good shape right now. And yes, you can blame Trump for the tariffs. That’s fair; that’s reasonable. But we didn’t have tariffs when encampments started in the province of Ontario. The encampments didn’t start since we got tariffs. The encampments have been there. People going to food banks didn’t start just when we got the tariffs put on to us about a year ago from Trump. Are the tariffs hurting the province of Ontario, particularly Ontario, particularly in the auto sector, in steel, in lumber? Absolutely, but that is not what caused the problem in Ontario.

What’s happened? Again, I am going to challenge my colleagues. What’s happened? Unemployment: Today, in the province of Ontario, it’s the highest level in decades; 800,000 people. Think about that: 800,000 people are unemployed. Young people like I talked about are 17% unemployed. So when you stand up and say how great it is in Ontario, it’s not remotely accurate.

0910

How can we fix the problem? Because it’s easy to stand up here and throw mud at the government. Quite frankly, I could do it all day. Again, I’ve been here for five terms. We’ve been asking this government to double ODSP. Not once have they said, “That’s a good idea.” How can people live in the province of Ontario on \$1,200 a month? I’m asking everybody over there: Explain it to me. I can’t. When they come to my office and they say they’re on ODSP, they can’t find a place to live. They can’t pay for their groceries. They can’t take care of their kids.

Why? Why haven’t they doubled ODSP to give them at least a chance, a chance of raising their family, a chance of having a life in the province of Ontario? We are still the richest province in the country. Why aren’t we doing the right thing and doubling ODSP, increasing OW? There’s a solution.

Why don’t we bring back rent controls on new builds? If there’s a problem that caused a crisis in rents, it was that bill that was brought in by the government—I think it was in 2019—when you took rent controls off new builds, which drove rents through the roof, by the way. Why don’t you get rid of that bill? Why don’t you bring back rent control? I’m asking you, why don’t you? Hopefully, when

you ask me a question, you can say why you feel it’s important to do that. You can say that there’s more rental market out there. There’s lots of rentals out there. Nobody can afford them. It makes no sense to me.

We have our housing starts. We went through about a year with the Minister of Housing at that time saying how important housing was, that we’ve got to get housing, that we’ve got to build 1.5 million houses, that we’ve got to get rid of the greenbelt. How many remember that fiasco? “We’ve got to get rid of the greenbelt.” Luckily, you backed down on that. That was a smart decision. But we’re nowhere near building the houses we need, nowhere near building affordable housing.

I have to wrap up. I forgot. I was looking at the clock thinking I had 20 minutes. I apologize. I’ve just got to say two things. My good friend Burd Sisler, after he celebrated being the oldest Canadian, ended up in the hospital. You know where he went? The Fort Erie urgent care centre that you want to close. I’m saying to you, keep the Fort Erie urgent care centre open 24/7, 365 days a year. Some 40,000 residents of Fort Erie depend on it.

I’ll turn it over to my colleague.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Speaker, I rise today to mark the passing of a local hero who touched countless lives with his kindness, powerful voice and his enduring presence as a media icon and community leader.

Bill Brady passed away this week at the age of 93. Born in Windsor, he moved to London as a young man to work in radio and became known for hosting the first telephone call-in show in Canada, which remained on air for more than two decades. His media reach expanded to local television with CFPL-TV, where he hosted the game show *Act Fast*, later becoming general manager, then operations president of Blackburn Radio and senior vice-president of the Blackburn Group. He was inducted into the Canadian Broadcast Hall of Fame.

Beyond media, Bill dedicated himself to public service through University Hospital and the London Health Association, Transplant International, the Robarts Research Institute, the London Centre For Juvenile Diabetes Research and the Canadian Heart Foundation. In recognition of these contributions, he received an honorary doctor of laws and was appointed a member of the Order of Canada.

Known for his voice, wit and oratory skills, Bill created the Easter “Bunny Bundle” competition, rallying schools and businesses to raise funds for vulnerable community members. His daughter Linda Barnard said, “He just wanted to help people who were less fortunate, particularly children. It broke his heart when he saw children in distress.”

Community members like Lynda Bradfield recalled the 1978 winter storm when Bill stayed on the air for 30 hours straight, connecting people with help and offering reassurance. She wrote that Bill “went on for hours on end, relentlessly trying to get help for folks stuck, stranded or missing, making each of us feel heard, cared for and hopeful.” Columnist Jane Sims noted his 67-year marriage

to Mary Ann and reflected on the fitting snowfall after his passing, reminding London of the storms he once guided the city through.

Thank you, Bill, for your kindness, dedication, strong voice and stronger heart. London is better because of the hearts you touched and the example you set. May we all carry forward even a fraction of your spirit of service, compassion and belief in a better world. Rest in Peace.

Speaker, as I rise today to discuss Bill 68—and I'm reluctant to use the titles that this government provides for their bills because I don't feel that, through the bills, they satisfy what the title actually implies. At this time in our province, we have a homelessness crisis that is unparalleled. We have never seen this type before, and at the same time, construction starts are way down for this government. People are struggling. People are not vulnerable, Speaker; they are made vulnerable. They are marginalized, and they are marginalized largely because of the policies of this government. This government would pat themselves on the back for indexing ODSP to inflation, but when it is done, it actually keeps them under the poverty line. It is willingly acknowledging and admitting that people are not receiving enough on social assistance and this government is happy to keep their head below water. People can hardly afford the necessities of life. They can hardly afford rent. They can hardly afford food. People are making tough choices every single day, and this government has turned a blind eye to the crisis of their own making.

On Monday, an open letter was delivered to Queen's Park. It was signed by over 100 organizations. It asked the government to repeal Bill 60, another piece of odious legislation that this government is using to attack renters, to benefit their wealthy corporate insider friends, to make sure that people can be squeezed for every single last dollar they have when they're barely scraping by. The letter was signed by 132 organizations. These included student unions, shelters, legal clinics, unions, food banks. What that letter points out to this government is that it would remove discretion from adjudicators at the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Speaker, we have to acknowledge that during a time of having an unparalleled housing crisis, why on earth would the government put in place policies that would make it easier for people to become homeless? Not only are they not building the housing that people need and that people require, but they're also jeopardizing the people who are currently housed. What is the end result of this going to be? There will be yet further people on the streets, yet further people on social assistance and people struggling to simply live their life.

What is also deeply concerning in this government is that it is very clear who they're listening to. They're not listening to tenants. They're not listening to seniors. They're not listening to people who are on social assistance. They're not listening to the people who they were elected to serve. In fact, they're listening to their corporate insider friends who simply want to make more money at any cost. Have we considered the moral values of this

legislation? Have we considered how we need to make sure that we are looking after people? I wish the government simply understood the very basic tenet of the golden rule: We should treat others the way we would like to be treated. And yet, now that they have this power, they're not looking after people. I would wish that they could, for a moment, put themselves in the shoes of someone who is on the Ontario Disability Support Program and imagine what that would be like. By listening to these voices, by truly listening and listening with an open heart, we can hear that they are worried every single day. As it gets towards the end of month when rent is due, the worry gets more and more and more.

But yet this government with Bill 68 really has, in fact, delivered cuts: cuts to health care, cuts to education. There is no climate change plan within this. What is deeply disturbing is that they're even going against their own ethos, their own mandate, their own identity, because once upon a time, Conservatives were known for being fiscally prudent, for making sure they saved for a rainy day. But instead, they're spending like drunken sailors; they're even worse than the Liberal government before them. This legislation, and the sum total of so many pieces of legislation that we've seen from this government—they're really looking to seize power. They're looking to centralize power. They're looking to control. They're looking to seize assets through school boards, making sure that they have access to the lands that are held. We see Ontario Place—my goodness—and now the CNE. This government really does not know when to stop in its megalomania.

0920

What this will do, with this government's reckless spending and funnelling funds to their insider friends and donors, is that it's going to result in a \$27,000 per-person debt for the people of Ontario. What this government is doing to the people of Ontario is putting them in the hole to the tune of \$27,000.

We hear a lot of words from this government, and yet their actions are not in concert with those words. We hear a lot about standing up for workers, but when there's an opportunity, they stand down; they sit down. They sit on the sidelines, and they ignore workers. Right now, we have plants that are closing, workers who are struggling, and yet this government has seen fit to funnel the \$2.5-billion Skills Development Fund to their insider friends, to their buddies—to a strip club, Speaker. This is the kind of thing that, normally, if you were to say it out loud, people would not believe you, and yet these are the headlines from this government.

As I finish, this government is all about show; it's all about words. Recently covered by Isaac Callan and Colin D'Mello, this headline reads, "Ford Government Launches New Ontario Place Campaign, Won't Say How Much it Cost"—what a surprise, Speaker. It's deeply distressing.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to my two colleagues from across the way for their remarks this morning. My

question is to the member from London North Centre, a question related to his remarks.

He didn't mention anything about the crime initiatives and crime-fighting initiatives that our government has put in place over the past couple of years as well, and I know crime is affecting many of our places that we represent in this place; it affects rural Ontario and, obviously, it does affect London, which he represents a portion of.

Since launching Operation Deterrence in January 2025, our government has taken bold action to protect Ontario's borders and communities: over 39,000 hours of ground patrols, 2,500 of aerial surveillance and more than 41,000 vehicle inspections, seizing illegal firearms, drugs and stolen vehicles.

Can the member opposite please tell me if he supports these efforts to secure our borders and keep our communities safe, yes or no?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank my colleague for the question. One thing that we stand for in the official opposition is community safety. Community safety will be realized through ensuring that people are housed with full wraparound supports, yet this government, instead of ensuring that people who are struggling are housed, would instead seek ways to punish them. We saw Bill 6 and we saw Bill 10; we saw that they are actually trying to take away these people's human rights. Fining people who are homeless \$10,000? That makes absolutely no sense.

I strongly urge this government to listen to the voices of small businesses who are seeing the unbridled chaos that this government has created by not ensuring that people have appropriate housing and mental health supports. This government can do it. There are health care providers within the Toronto area who realize that housing is health care; housing is fundamental; housing is foundational. Without it, nothing else matters.

Instead, this government would rather try to use their seats and their authority to turn a buck for their insider friends. That is unconscionable, because not only is there a human cost, but there is a financial cost to leaving people on the streets. It costs less to house people with supports.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate this opportunity to ask a question of my colleague from London North Centre.

I had a meeting the other night with tenants in my riding about the dire situation that they're facing financially as above-guideline increases continue to erode their ability to buy groceries.

Could you speak to the impact of this bill on those tenants who are already barely getting by, combined with the impact of the anti-tenant bill, Bill 60?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank my friend from Toronto-Danforth for an excellent question. Here's a clear example of an elected member who listens to their constituents, who listens to people who reach out and who have deep concerns about government policy and legislation.

Yet, through Bill 60, we see a government that is full of people who are clearly not listening to tenants, not listen-

ing to people who are at their wits' end, worried about how they're going to pay their bills, how they're going to live. This government has got rid of rent control on buildings first occupied after November 2018, and they also, through Bill 60, are finding ways to even more erode the meagre tenant protections that are there.

Above-guideline rent increases are absolutely unconscionable. There is already plenty of money that corporate landlords make on rent alone; they should not need to use AGIs as a tool to cover for repairs that they already have the funding to make. I think about seniors who have lived in buildings for decades, who are deeply concerned about having to live in their cars because once this building is sold to new landlords, it looks at people not as a person but as a number on a ledger sheet.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Speaker, the member—both members, actually—spoke, I think, quite at length about some very fundamental issues that we're facing as a society and the fact that this bill is really silent on a lot of them.

Another issue that this bill is silent on is climate change. So I would like to ask members opposite—well, members beside me; either one—about, if it was them, what concrete climate plan would they implement to ensure that Ontario actually meets and exceeds its emission targets and not just reinstate them.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member for the question. We are very proud to have the Ontario Green New Democratic Deal. It is something that is a living document, and we need to make sure that we're responsive, that we're listening to the science, we're listening to all of the developments that are happening. We need to see further investments in renewables. We know that they are much faster to build and they're easier to maintain. It's what people want.

Unfortunately, the last Liberal government really gave a bad name to the green energy file because they awarded contracts that really benefited corporations over people. We need to make sure that people are at the heart of any green energy infrastructure as well as the benefits from it. This is something that we need to be investing in, yet this government is actually expanding their use of fossil fuels and gas-fired plants. It is deeply concerning at a time when we know there is no planet B; we cannot go backwards when it comes to the environment. Yet this government has attacked the environment time and again, through the greenbelt, through not ensuring that the environment is a coherent mechanism. Undermining watersheds: Those things are like chains, and if you weaken one link of the chain, then it, unfortunately, impairs the entire system.

This government does not have a plan at all, and I think they've gotten rid of climate change targets because they don't want to admit that there is such a thing as climate change. It's ideological for them. It is not fiscal, it is not reasonable, it's not humane and it has nothing to do with the environment.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank the member for his remarks.

One of the things that our government is proposing is to make life more affordable, especially for the first-time homebuyer. I'm a mother; I have children. Like everybody else in this room, I think we want the best opportunity for our next generation. Our government announced that we're eliminating the HST for first-time homebuyers on new homes valued up to \$1 million. When combined with the action taken by the federal government, this is a savings of up to \$130,000 per home. This will spur on growth and new builds.

Will the member support us so we can get this work done for the next generation?

MPP Wayne Gates: I think any help that we can do getting young people to buy our homes is a great idea.

But let's talk about where we are, because you want to talk about affordability. I spent 10 minutes talking about affordability; you didn't listen at all. People can't afford our rents. They can't afford to buy groceries. Make no mistake about it, you used to go to a grocery store—and you can put your hands up. You can disagree with me; I don't have a problem with it. You'd go to a grocery store and for 100 bucks you'd come home with a couple of bags. You go to a grocery store today and you're going home with one bag. That's the reality of what's going on.

What makes me upset even further, because I did a video on this last week that I'm sure you guys all watched: The Weston family are making record profits at a time that our food banks are being used more than at any time in the history of the province of Ontario. Food banks are running out of food and you're talking about affordability? Come on. Wake up.

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We have young people that can't afford to get out of their house or who are living in your basements until they're 30, 31, 32, and they've done everything right. They've gone to university, they've got a job, but they can't afford to move out because they can't afford the rents in the province of Ontario because you took off rent controls. What the hell are we doing for our young people? So don't stand up and tell me about affordability. Make sure that our kids can get a job and be able to raise their own family. They can't do it in this province anymore. It's frustrating.

I've got three daughters. I'm going through it every single day, and I feel terrible as a parent standing here saying my daughter can't afford to pay her rent.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Response.

MPP Wayne Gates: That is my response. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: This has certainly been an engaging debate this morning. It's always a good opportunity to talk about affordability for families—families that can't pay rent, families that are having trouble paying the highest hydro bills in the history of Ontario, families that can't afford to buy a new home.

Of course, a government that promised to cap hydro rates has not done so. They're higher now than they've ever been while taxpayers take money out of the tax account to subsidize this. At the same time, we have rising and record levels of unemployment—unemployment that has not been seen since the last time the NDP government formed power here in Ontario.

My question to the NDP is, if we have record unemployment that we haven't seen since the last time they were in power, and now the Tories are in power, why should Ontarians trust any of the economic advice that you're giving to the government?

MPP Wayne Gates: I've only got four seconds, but when you privatize hydro, rates are going to go up. The Conservatives did it and so did the Liberals. I'm getting—

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

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak on Bill 68, budget measures, and the fall economic statement. I'm going to be sharing my time with my colleague the MPP from Toronto—St. Paul's today.

Every time I come into the Legislature, I listen carefully to what is being proposed. I try to see the merits of what's in front of us, to see if government has listened or reflected on some of the outside expert advice presented to them. These last few weeks, we've also had the opportunity for discussion of government spending at estimates, at committee. That gives us a chance to get under the hood, get into the books, ask a few more detailed questions.

This is what I am seeing and what I've heard: It appears that the economy is getting worse, not better. Job creation forecasts are dim. In 2024, job creation was expected to total 365,000. It was revised at the beginning of this year to 180,000. Now the fall economic statement has revised it to 171,000. The government talks incessantly about protecting Ontario, announcement after announcement, but it's not happening and it's not working. Unemployment is at 7.8%, the highest it's been in years. Some 700,000 people in the province are unemployed and 200,000 of those are young people. The highest unemployment rate is among young people, at 16.3%.

We are also seeing an increased reliance on food banks, with working people needing to use most of their money to keep a roof over their head and needing to turn to food banks to be able to feed themselves and their families.

The Liberal caucus, actually, this week proposed to address this crisis in youth unemployment by investing in a youth career fund, to invest \$450 million from the protecting Ontario fund in our young people to stimulate their careers. But what was the answer? It was a unanimous no.

In section A of the fall economic statement, the first paragraph—you know, the page that has the picture of the Canada and the Ontario flags—describes that the government has put aside \$30 billion for relief and support for workers and businesses. We had a detailed solution to create jobs in communities across Ontario using some of that money they've already set aside. It could have helped young people feel some hope—hope for their careers and for their future. But the answer was a unanimous no.

Yet every time I meet with industry leaders that are coming here to Queen's Park and I discuss the impact of the situation in the US, I ask them about that fund, that the Premier and his team constantly boast about. The reality is, they aren't seeing it. They aren't getting access to it. Proposals go in and there's no response. Farming and agricultural, including meat processing, autos, small businesses, manufacturing—the economy continues to slide. We lose more jobs, like what we're seeing in the job loss in the Ingersoll plant. So if that's where the money is going, why are they not seeing it out there to help those industries?

But then there are the other choices that I'm seeing in this fall economic statement. We know that 67% of the Ontario budget that the government is responsible for is actually for ensuring that the foundations are there. This is the role of the provincial government. These are the basic foundations of our economy and how we actually protect Ontarians. What are they, Speaker? Health care, education and post-secondary education. This is the primary job of the government, to make sure education, post-secondary institutions and the health care system provide the basics for our families so they can thrive and our communities and our province will prosper, giving everyone a fair chance to succeed.

People often ask me why I decided to leave my job in health care to run for office, because I actually loved working in health care. It was what I wanted to do since I was a little girl. And my simplest answer is this: I wanted to see a government that saw it as their job to help our health system and publicly funded education system to be successful—that that was their goal: to make sure it was successful. For example, the government and its members would wake up every day and they would think, "Oh, I wonder if there were fewer people that waited in emergency departments last night? Were there fewer seniors cared for in hallways? I wonder if the teenagers that needed access to crisis service for mental health care knew where to go and get that help? And doesn't it feel so good to see class sizes reduced and kids getting the education they need, and their teachers feeling energized instead of burned out." They might ask, "I hope our nurses, physicians and social workers are feeling well supported today as they work to keep our population healthy. We need them. By supporting them, we're not just enabling people's health but enabling them to contribute to our economic prosperity. Today is a day when people have access to the newest therapies they deserve."

Speaker, those are the questions that I want people in this government to wake up thinking about every day. However, I don't think those are the first thoughts of the government each day. It's not what's shown in their actions here.

I was also taught as a manager that when you invest in something, you manage the largest investments with the most purpose and intention to get the kind of impact that you want to see. You measure the outcomes you want so that you know whether you're getting those results.

I need to point out the choice that's been made here. At the highest level, the government had already planned a \$2-billion reserve and another \$2-billion contingency at the start of the year. Now, with the fall economic statement, we see that they've elected to increase the contingency fund by another \$2 billion to \$4 billion. That's a choice. They could have invested it. They could invest it in so many areas that would help to keep people healthier. As families face greater uncertainty, their health declines, their mental health declines. We could invest in health care. We could invest in keeping people healthy.

The Financial Accountability Office has assessed where we are on health care, on education and post-secondary education. It's arm's length. It's a third-party assessment of the decisions that have been made to invest our taxpayer money. And what do they say? Health care: the lowest per capita spending in the country, by far. The government talks about even more efficiency; well, you know what? They've pushed and pushed it for years. How much more can we squeeze out without cuts to service? We needed a 4% increase just to keep pace with inflation and population growth. We are seeing a 0.7% increase.

At estimates, I learned the government is choosing to spend \$142 million less in long-term care this year. They haven't been able to build the long-term-care beds they needed, so the investment will drop away.

Hospitals have accumulated close to \$1 billion in deficit. This is years in the making with conscious underfunding, and there's no intention to address it.

Education: the lowest per-capita per-student spending in the country, by far. Nope—no intention to address it.

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Post-secondary education: The lowest per-capita spending in the country by far. Nope; in fact, we're only going to spend less in that area and make things worse.

The government had the opportunity to take \$2 billion and try to help these systems instead of putting it into contingency, but no—refuses.

So I have to ask, are we hoping for failure? What are they waiting for in not using that money? Between this conscious starving and bills such as Bill 33 on the table to increase control and take away local voices, it feels like a plan for control and then failure of our public systems. I can't help but arrive at that conclusion, and I find it very disappointing.

Even in the schedules of the budget measures, we see more examples of this. Our park systems, our conservation authorities—centralize control, starve the system so they break and then call it a failure. Wouldn't it just make more sense to see it as the job to help them be successful?

We know that countries that invest in health care, in education, have the most resilient economies. They're set up for success by that very action. And that is the provincial government's job: to ensure that they're there when we need it.

But in this fall economic statement, we see some other clear choices by this government: millions invested in a feasibility study for a tunnel under the 401. I don't know about others in the chamber, but I was reading the polls

again yesterday on this, if that's what will guide decisions. What's unbelievable is, the vast majority of people in Ontario don't even want it.

Even more money is planned to go out the door in the Skills Development Fund that the Auditor General has said has been managed unfairly with no transparency. Every time I read more detail about it, it blows me away.

As an example, do you know that there were 647 high-ranked proposals? All the money could have gone to high-ranked proposals that the ministry staff felt were worthy of receiving funds. But instead, they decided to allocate \$742 million to proposals that were ranked low, really hand-picked by the minister himself. There were more than enough great proposals to be able to get to something much, much better.

I had planned to make some comments as well about the Conservation Authorities Act and schedule 3 and also what is happening at Wasaga Beach, but I'll just say this: These are, once again, plans to centralize control, underfund and reduce the insights that are coming into local planning decisions and the ability to protect our environment.

With that, I will turn it over to my colleague the MPP from Toronto—St. Paul's. And I'll just say this: Sadly, there were choices that could have been made here, and they weren't. I'll also need to step away; with all the changes in the schedule put forward by this government, I have an important meeting for my constituency with the Ministry of Infrastructure.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member from Toronto—St. Paul's.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Thank you to my colleague from Etobicoke—Lakeshore as we continue debate on Bill 68.

When Ontarians open a budget bill, they expect to see measures that respond to challenges facing their families and their communities, and they expect a plan that helps with the cost of living, with jobs, with housing, with stability. But what they don't expect is that, hidden inside a budget bill, far from public attention, their government chose to rewrite the rules of elections in Ontario. Yet that's exactly what is happening in Bill 68, schedules 7 and 8, which deal with elections and campaign financing.

And they are not simply administrative updates. They fundamentally alter how our democracy functions. They grant more power to the government of the day while removing safeguards that were designed to protect the public interest.

These changes do not make Ontario stronger. In fact, they make this government stronger. Elections should not be shaped around the needs of the incumbent.

The removal of fixed election dates is one of the most striking changes in this bill. Fixed dates were introduced almost 20 years ago because they serve the public, not the government. They give Elections Ontario time to plan properly. They let municipalities prepare polling locations in accessible spaces. They allow young people turning 18 to be captured in targeted registration efforts. They let new citizens know when they're going to be voting. They help

voters organize their lives so they can participate fully. Fixed dates take away the ability of a Premier to pick a moment of political advantage and call an election when it suits them. That's why they were adopted. What this government is doing here is taking Ontario backwards.

If this bill passes, Ontario will join exactly one other province in Canada that does not have fixed election dates, and that is Nova Scotia. Every other province and almost every municipality in this country understands the value of predictable and stable democratic timelines. Why does this government want to stand nearly alone in giving itself the ability to call an election at any moment? Why is Ontario being moved into a category of our own, a category that weakens democratic accountability?

Unpredictable elections are not an innovation. We see them in American state politics, where election timing becomes a tool not for public service but for partisan strategy. This is not a model that protects the voter; it confuses them. It limits engagement. It benefits the governing party above anyone else. Ontario should not be copying the worst instincts of American politics.

This bill does more than remove the date itself. By wiping out the fixed schedule, it also removes all the associated transparency rules that depend on that schedule. The Chief Electoral Officer will no longer be required to publish polling locations months in advance. There will no longer be a guaranteed targeted registration program to make sure that youth, new Canadians and individuals who have recently turned 18 are added to that voters list. There will no longer be a requirement to provide projected election costs ahead of time. And government advertising rules that once applied in the months before an election simply vanish because there are no longer months before an election. There is only whatever date that the Premier chooses.

The public loses transparency, accessibility and predictability. The government gains flexibility and control. That is not a fair exchange.

The second major democratic change in this bill is the increase in political donation limits. Under this bill, individual contribution limits jump from \$3,300 to \$5,000. Rather than small annual increases, those limits will now rise with inflation indefinitely. With last year's inflation, these limits would have gone up by more than \$100 every single year. That's not an approach that benefits everyday Ontarians struggling with bills or rent. Of course, this is an approach that benefits people with thousands of dollars to spare.

I've yet to meet a young person in Ontario who's asking the government, "Please raise the donation limits. Please?" I've yet to meet a family trying to keep up with the cost of groceries who thinks that the most urgent form of relief is to make it easier to make a donor contribution to more political parties. Yet this is where the government's attention is.

Youth unemployment in Ontario is high and rising. We have a generation of young adults facing unstable work—as my colleague was talking about—unaffordable housing and serious barriers to getting ahead. Our province should

be mobilizing every tool to support them. Instead, the government has chosen to focus on its own electoral advantage. While young people worry about their job prospects, this government is worrying about campaign limits and campaign timing for donations and elections. While families worry about whether they can afford their next rent increase, this government worries about whether donors can contribute 5,000 bucks instead of 3,300 bucks.

It's very hard to explain to Ontarians why these changes are in a budget bill. It's even harder to explain why they're a priority at a moment like this. When you strip away the language and the packaging, the choices in this bill speak for themselves. Removing fixed election dates benefits the government. Raising donation limits benefits the government. Relaxing advertising rules benefits the government. None of these measures benefit the people of Ontario.

As a critic for ethics, accountability and integrity, I have to look at this bill not just for its policy content, but for what it signals about how this government views its own responsibilities. Public trust depends on a government demonstrating that it acts for people, not for itself. But this legislation concentrates power in the hands of the Premier and the governing party. It weakens that oversight, it removes standards and it sidelines Elections Ontario. It creates an uneven playing field.

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When a government rewrites the rules of elections in the middle of its own mandate, it invites the public to question its motives. When it does so quietly inside a massive budget bill, it invites the public to question its integrity. Elections aren't the property of a government; they belong to the people. They're a shared civic space that must be predictable, stable and fair. Fixed dates make Ontario's elections more accessible. The donation rules put in place following past scandals were designed to reduce the influence of big money. Together, these changes helped restore public confidence. This bill reverses that progress.

If a government is confident in its record, it doesn't need to control when voters go to the polls. If a government is confident in its relationship with the public, it doesn't need to increase donation limits to draw money in. If a government is confident in its democratic values, then it doesn't choose this moment, with so many urgent issues that are facing real people, to put its energy into rewriting election rules.

Ontario deserves better than this. Ontarians deserve a government that's focused on the challenges they're facing, and not its own convenience. They deserve youth employment strategies—like we proposed but was voted down, as my colleague noted—not election timing strategies. And, moreover, they deserve affordability solutions, not fundraising solutions. They deserve transparency and not tactics.

Speaker, the people of this province trust us to safeguard the democratic institutions that belong to them. It's our duty to push back when those institutions are weakened. These schedules don't strengthen democracy in Ontario; they weaken it, and they do so in a way that clearly and indirectly benefits this sitting government.

For that reason and for the sake of accountability and transparency and integrity, I can't support these provisions. Ontarians deserve elections that put them first, not the government first.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to the member from Toronto—St. Paul's for her remarks. I appreciated them.

Our understanding of changes to the election rules is that one of the consequences will be the number of advance polls going from 10 to three. Why do you think this government is trying to suppress voting in Ontario?

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Thank you for the question.

Right, it asks those questions, doesn't it? I mean, we would like to be able to ask the government that question. Everything about what's happening with this—we all remember what I called the "frostbite election" in February. How many doors did we all knock on where nobody was there? People weren't prepared; people didn't know about the advance polling, even with a full advance polling selection. Narrowing the choice narrows the ability to vote, the ability to mobilize. So those are great transparency questions.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you to my colleague from Toronto—St. Paul's for her excellent remarks today on Bill 68 and, in particular, focusing on the changes to the Election Act.

You know, I can't help but think that this PC party is more interested in winning elections than actually governing the province. We've got crises in health care—1,200 ER closures last year. We've got crises in education, where workers and students are experiencing violence. And we've got a government that doesn't talk openly about what's going on in its finances. I've talked a lot about that. But I remember, in 2018, they campaigned on reducing the middle-income tax bracket. They haven't done that. In 2025, when they called this early, unnecessary, expensive election, they certainly did not campaign on changing the election rules and giving themselves an extra year in power.

So, I'd like to ask the member from Toronto—St. Paul's why she thinks the PC Party, the government, did not campaign on changing Ontario's election laws.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Thank you for that great question. I think because maybe we'd have the opportunity—oh, wait. We had a very short election timeline in February to raise those questions and point at it, asking, "What is the gain when you limit the timelines and the scope for when you can vote? Why?" In the last election, it was a shortened writ. We only had so much time to get out and talk about the issues that were already on fire. But you could add this and maybe push it to the top of the agenda, and maybe they'd start to question. The bottom line is, they don't want the questions because they don't have a good answer.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Dave Smith: This is the fall economic statement that we're talking about. Bill 68 is about an economic statement.

There are a couple of things I'd like to bring up that weren't brought up in debate just a few minutes ago: the fact that our debt to GDP ratio dropped to 36.2%, the lowest rate in more than a decade; that servicing Ontario debt has dropped by \$1.3 billion because we had the ability to negotiate some of those bonds and bring them in at a much lower rating; the fact that Ontario's credit rating has been increased by two credit rating companies, and we are now at all four of the major credit rating agencies giving a strong AA rating; and our economy grew by \$1.2 trillion.

Yet when you listen to the opposition, it is dire straits here in Ontario. How do you reconcile the fact that Ontario's financial situation is in a better position than it has been in more than 10 years, the fact that credit agencies have said that we're going to give Ontario a credit rating upgrade, which lowers our cost of servicing debt—how do you square that with what you've actually said?

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I guess my response is: interesting you're not asking me about my portion of the debate, so thanks for that. I can say that, under this government, the debt load has reached half a trillion dollars, and also the debt per capita is expected to go up 15% with this government. So there's some facts and figures for you.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

MPP Lisa Gretzky: Thank you to my colleague for your insight into the fall economic statement that's before us.

You talked about youth unemployment, and I will say that my community of Windsor has the highest unemployment rate in the entire country, including youth unemployment. That's not something I'm bragging about, nor should, I think, the other members from the Windsor-Essex area be completely ignoring that fact.

I'm wondering if you can tell me if there is anything that you see in the economic statement that's going to help people in my community weather the economic instability that we're facing across the entire province but we're feeling much more acutely down in the Windsor-Essex area.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Thank you to the member for your question. I know that we had our own motion just on Monday about youth unemployment and measures to reverse that. And I can tell you that, as my colleague from Etobicoke-Lakeshore mentioned—a hard no from the government. They were not interested despite the billions of dollars they put aside for relief in some ways.

In answer to youth unemployment in the Windsor area and in general across this province, we've yet to see a real strategy, and anything that we've put forward has been voted against. Look, the numbers are in crisis. I know in my own riding, when we're talking about summer jobs for youth as well, we were talking about job fairs back in the summer—anything—and were told by the experts, "Don't even bother. The jobs aren't out there. Start volunteering, and then you might get some work down the road if jobs become available."

So youth unemployment is a crisis across this province. We're doing what we can to propose to this government active measures, and the hope—with this government, I don't see it.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I want to thank my honourable colleague for raising and shining a light on this important issue about our elections. Elections are the most fundamental part of our democracy, so it says a lot when we have a government which wants to bury these changes inside a fall economic statement. So, again, thank you to my honourable colleague for raising these concerns.

I heard comments—"Well, what gives us the right to do this is the Constitution." This is emblematic of this government: doing the bare minimum, meaning bare minimum standards. We should be trying to do more. We should be trying to do more to engage our democracy. We should be trying to do more to allow access to our democracy, not less—not the bare minimum.

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And we know this Premier—what's his motto again? "Don't break the rules, change the rules." Change the rules, right? That's what they're doing.

So I'd like to ask my honourable colleague: Why do you think the government is doing this? Why hide it in the FES? Why make these changes? Why make our democracy less accessible?

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Thank you for your question.

When I look back to what happened with the election of February 27, the snap election call, it destabilizes other parties, no question, with preparedness. And that's always been something that is curious to me. Wouldn't you want a really fair election? Isn't that the goal? Do you want to call an election where, "Everybody's unprepared, so we win?" It's almost like starting a track and field race and you've got three metres ahead of everybody at the beginning.

When you've been sitting in government as long as this government has—they've had years and years ahead of us. So the question is, why don't you want a fair race? Why do you want to take away equal advantage?

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Fairness isn't a priority of this government.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Thank you. Yes, fairness is not a priority. They don't want anybody else to take advantage. It's a greedy power grab.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Brian Riddell: Can the member opposite explain why their party has consistently failed to support practical, targeted relief for Ontario small businesses and people, especially when they are facing unprecedented global challenges? I find it really sad that you vote no every time we try to do something positive for the people of Ontario. Why do you feel like that?

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Thank you for the question. I think we've tabled a small business tax credit proposal three times that has been shut down by this government.

Can we talk about the Skills Development Fund and what's happening with that money? Billions of dollars—we don't know how or why, but this circular economy of our money, of the taxpayer money, Madam Speaker, has been going to strip clubs. We're looking for relief for taxpayers, but the taxpayers' hard-earned dollars go to strip clubs or friends—

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, before I start, I want to say thank you to my mentor. I love it when they say I'm doing a good job. That means I'm putting in the effort.

But we're talking today—

Interjections.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Yes. Oh, absolutely, I do remember seven years and four months and a few days back when I started the first time—oh, my God, it was so difficult. The first time I stood up, I spoke to the mike. It got my voice from back here—“What is this?” Over the years, we learn that this is the best thing that we have. When we say, we listen at the same time. And this is what we're doing here on Bill 68, the Plan to Protect Ontario Act.

I'm going to say this: I'm very proud of our government. And then I'll hear somewhere saying, “Oh, that is being biased.” No. I'm going by the data. I'm not going with the bias. I'm going with what we have done from the beginning. We have supported Ontario's workers, job creators and communities across our beautiful province, whether it is building subways, LRTs, hospitals, schools, long-term-care beds, expanding and building new highways. What are we doing? We're building our beautiful province.

Mississauga has got their fair share. We can't thank God, we can't thank the Premier enough for that. We've got the hospital, which is doing great. We have our Hazel McCallion LRT line. And we just expanded the 401—can't say thanks enough.

Madam Speaker, these are the foundations that the next generation needs in order to succeed and have good lives. It's not just for today. We want to make sure—say, as an example, when I talk about the family at my home, as a parent, it is my responsibility to create wealth not only for me but for my generations to come—my kids, my grandkids. Why? Say, as an example, it's a tough time for them. They can use a piece of these savings, the creation of this wealth, to survive, to weather that storm—or if they're in a good time, they can use this wealth to excel in life.

That is exactly what we're doing by building this infrastructure. Yes, there's a little bit of pain today, because whenever we're building anything—an example, Goreway bridge. It took 18 months to build Goreway bridge. For those 18 months, I do remember a lot of people in Malton complained. “Oh, my goodness, I have to go through Airport Road. It takes me an extra 12 minutes.”

Actually, Ranno Di was telling me last week that in order for her to go to temple, now it only takes six minutes, where it used to take 18 minutes. So I told her that's wonderful. But I'm worried about her poor husband—because

they're 12 minutes both ways now, with him, with her in the house. But that's extra time; they can have a good time together. That is short-term pain but long-term gain.

That is what we're doing—we're making sure that we are transforming our province.

Look at the data. In 2018, 7.2 million people were working in Ontario. Look at the data today: There are 8.254 million people employed. That's more than a million additional people contributing to our economy. It's no coincidence—it's the hard work; it is the policy.

In 2018, the revenue for the government was \$154 billion; today, it is \$226 billion. If you look at the Liberal math, it would have been—“Oh, they must have increased the fees. They must have increased the taxes.” No. Can you imagine—0% increase in fees, 0% increase in taxes. We were in fact lowering the taxes, lowering the fees, while making sure everybody came together, worked hard and built a better, stronger Ontario, gave back more. And we have investments of over \$230 billion today by this government, and not even a single increase in the taxes and the fees.

Interjection.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you. That definitely calls for applause for the people of Ontario, who worked hard and contributed.

We are cutting red tape, unleashing our economy, building infrastructure, creating jobs, supporting families, while keeping the costs down.

One thing I have been saying is that when there is a tough time, it is a test time. Think about when there is a storm coming up and you want to be ready. These are the times when we want to make sure we are prepared.

We are supporting those who are going to be most affected—and the storm in this case is the tariffs. As you know, tariffs and economic uncertainty are causing a lot of anxiety. It is more important than ever before that the government steps up with a plan to protect Ontario, protect its people.

In the 2025 fall economic statement, we are making sure that there is tariff support. Look at how we're doing it. We're providing approximately \$9 billion in liquidity relief by deferring select provincial administrative taxes.

Job creators are worried: “We don't know if our revenue is going to stay the same. Our expenses are already going to be too much. How do we make sure that we stay afloat?” Simple: This government is there to support them. “We'll help you to increase the revenue, but at the same time, we want to make sure we give you a hand to reduce your expenses so that you can stay afloat longer.”

WSIB rebates—issuing an additional \$2-billion rebate for safe employers to help keep workers on the job.

It's a vicious cycle: Revenue goes down. Expenses stay the same. Job creators have no choice: They have to find ways to reduce the costs or close the shop. Well, this government is making sure we are helping you to reduce the costs so that you don't have to close the shop. We're making sure we're not just helping the job creators; we're helping the communities at large—to give an example, permanently cutting gasoline and fuel tax.

We heard it a lot of times about the stickers. In a home, if there are four vehicles—\$120 times four is \$480. Yes, I

do hear it sometimes from the other side, “Oh, what a big deal it is—\$480.” Ask some of those families. Ask those families who are struggling because of the increase in the interest rate. Their mortgage rate has gone up; the cash flow stayed the same. That \$480 is a huge help for them because it’s helping them.

1010

Another thing which we are doing is providing an additional \$5 billion to invest in priority projects that drive growth and economic resilience, enhancing the Ontario Made Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit to \$1.3 billion over three years, and an additional \$600 million to provide Invest Ontario with greater stability in executing its mandate of job creation and investment attraction. These are some of the things we are doing.

As we are doing this, I want to share with you something which I do remember when we were growing up. We used to hear this song called Another Day in Paradise. I wonder: What is paradise? Paradise, technically speaking, is where there is abundance. You need \$100; if you have more than \$100, you don’t have to think. That, to me, is paradise.

What I am saying here is, if you really look across the world, look at places like the Middle East when there was no oil and the difference today, when we have oil. We’re saying God has gifted us abundance—abundance in the form of the Ring of Fire.

Today we need the critical minerals. By developing the Ring of Fire, we are able to create wealth, create that abundance, something that we can use to support the investments that are needed today to support the families in Ontario.

We talk about many things, but it’s not just saying it. When we say in order to have that \$22 billion so that we can generate for the province of Ontario to support the investments, to support these people so that we have that abundance and so that we can continue to live in paradise, we are making sure we are doing it through this fall economic statement by investing \$500 million in the Critical Minerals Processing Fund to support projects that grow our critical mineral processing capacity.

Also, to promote growth in the industry, we are looking to cut review times in half. Think about it. We need those critical minerals today. We need this support today. We need to invest today, and it takes 15 years. We can’t go in 15 years from now, look back and say, “Yes, we could have done this. We could have invested 15 years back. We could have asked for these investments just because the project took 15 years.” Those investments have gone to Australia or other places in the world. Thank you to the Minister of Energy for his innovative reforms like the one project, one process framework.

We are committed to historic investment in health care, transit, roads, highways, local communities, and it is very important to make sure we bring those investments. We need to work to make sure that we support the Ring of Fire project today, not in 15 years.

Madam Speaker, I’m going to look at the time before I move on. I don’t have much time left before the break, so I am just going to go straight to talk about our government.

We will never stop fighting for the people of Ontario. Together, we’ll protect this province and build a future we can all be proud of.

Our economic outlook and fiscal review, along with Bill 68, is essential to that plan. If passed, it will allow us to keep investing in people, businesses and communities that drive Ontario forward.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

WEARING OF PINS

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): The Minister of Long-Term Care is seeking unanimous consent.

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Point of order, Madam Speaker. Good morning.

If you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for members to wear forget-me-not pins today in the House in recognition of Alzheimer’s disease.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): The Minister of Long-Term Care is seeking unanimous consent for members to wear pins in the House today in recognition of Alzheimer’s disease. Agreed? Agreed.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

SEASONAL EVENTS IN MARKHAM–UNIONVILLE

Mr. Billy Pang: Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of hosting my first-ever autumn dim sum and concert event at a local restaurant in Markham–Unionville. About 250 residents joined together for an afternoon of delicious dim sum, warm tea and live music performed by some of our talented local award-winning musicians—and yes, I even sang a couple of songs myself. The event was a wonderful celebration of my riding’s beautiful and diverse community, bringing together our neighbours, families and friends to share in the joy of the autumn season.

Speaker, we were so honoured to welcome members of the York Regional Police, including Inspector Weick, who shared some of the YRP’s recent achievements in keeping our community safe, from new technologies like CCTV and licence-plate-scanning systems that help prevent crime, to their continued call for strong bail reform from the federal government to address violent and repeat offenders.

I want to sincerely thank everyone who attended and contributed to making this event such a success. Markham–Unionville continues to grow and thrive because of the spirit of togetherness of all the residents who call our great community home.

EDUCATION

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, parents in London and across Ontario are very worried today because of this government’s latest attack on our public education system with Bill 33. I want to thank the thousands of Londoners who have sent emails or made phone calls urging govern-

ment MPPs to vote no to Bill 33 when it comes for the final vote.

Parents and the Thames Valley District School Board know that putting a school board under supervision does nothing to improve teaching and learning in our classrooms. What it does is hand over control of our schools to an unaccountable, unelected supervisor with no background in education or knowledge of the community. It shuts out families and students. It silences the voices of parents desperately seeking help for their children with special needs. It sidelines democratically elected local trustees, whose role is to advocate for parents and the community, and it replaces them with an additional layer of bureaucracy.

The reality is, Speaker, that Bill 33 will do nothing to support students or families. It will do nothing to reduce class sizes or put more EAs into schools. Instead of ramming through bad legislation—instead of shutting down debate, skipping committee and denying the public the voice to be heard—we should be listening to parents and communities and investing in our schools.

It's time to put an end to the political games. Vote no to Bill 33.

GENE DOMAGALA

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Today, I'd like to talk about a great Beacher. There's this gregarious guy in beautiful Beaches—East York named Gene Domagala. When you meet him, you will think he is part elf, part walking encyclopedia, part geographer, part saint, full-on historian and incredible connector of people and ideas. He does everything all of the time and knows everyone under the sun. We call him “the mayor of the Beach,” because he is a legend city-wide and locally.

You will find this gem at a seniors' home, delivering letters, in a park organizing an event, at a church unloading groceries for a luncheon or on the street leading one of his historical walks. I have no idea when Gene sleeps. If he ever gives you a ride, you will be sitting with toys for holiday hampers, books for libraries, winter coats for Out of the Cold programs, and dozens of deliciously smelling baguettes and hot cross buns he has wrangled from Cobs bakery. You will wonder if you are actually in a fairytale.

Gene turned 85 years old last Friday, and you would never know it. He looks like a 40-year-old Fonzie and acts even younger. This kind soul spends every minute of the day making the world a better place.

We love you, Gene Domagala.

1020

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Steve Pinsonneault: Madam Speaker, I rise today with tremendous pride to share long-awaited and very welcoming news for my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and, specifically, the families of Forest and the surrounding area.

For years, the proposal for a K-to-12 public school in Forest remained stalled for a variety of reasons. Despite strong community support, the project faced several complex factors that slowed its progress. From the moment I was elected, I made it my mission to see this project over the finish line.

Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to share that Lambton Kent District School Board has now received approval to issue the tender for the brand new Blue Coast District School in the Forest area, a K-to-12 public school. This is a major milestone for our community. Supported by a \$74.1-million investment from our government, including \$34.3 million in new funding, the project will create 1,186 new student spaces and 49 licensed child care spaces. The new school will offer a modern, inclusive and inspiring learning environment that brings students of all grades under one roof. That means more capacity, more opportunity and more support for families across the region.

Projects of this scale do not happen overnight. I want to extend my sincere thanks to everyone involved, from government partners to the Lambton Kent District School Board and all those who contributed their time, expertise—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Mushkegowuk—James Bay.

SÉCURITÉ DU TRANSPORT ROUTIER

M. Guy Bourgouin: Une autre saison hivernale commence, et après seulement une première chute de neige, le nord de l'Ontario a déjà vécu le même scénario que d'année en année : fermetures multiples des routes 11 et 17, des accidents et des camionneurs de transport dans le clos tout le long du corridor du Nord.

Quelques semaines passées, j'ai présenté le projet de loi 49—un projet de loi qui proposait des solutions concrètes pour améliorer la sécurité de nos routes du Nord. Il visait la formation de conducteurs, la supervision de délivrance des permis, l'augmentation du personnel d'inspection et l'entretien hivernal. Ce projet de loi aurait été un vrai pas en avant pour rendre nos routes plus sécuritaires.

Ce qui est encore plus préoccupant, c'est qu'aucun député progressiste-conservateur du Nord n'a proposé un projet de loi pour améliorer la sécurité routière—aucun. Malgré qu'ils représentent les communautés ayant les routes les plus dangereuses de la province.

Madame la Présidente, ça fait des années que nous expliquons tout cela. Les maires du Nord, les premiers répondants, les conseils scolaires, les camionneurs, les syndicats et les familles tirent la sonnette d'alarme. Mais hiver après hiver, ce gouvernement refuse d'agir.

Soyons clairs : nous n'arrêterons pas. Je vais continuer de déposer des projets de loi, de proposer des solutions et d'exercer ces pressions jusqu'à ce que le gouvernement ne comprenne enfin ce que tous les gens du Nord savent déjà—que la sécurité routière n'est pas un luxe; c'est essentiel pour la vie.

Il est temps que le gouvernement prenne la vie des gens du Nord au sérieux.

ONTARIO VETERANS AWARD FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Mr. Matthew Rae: I rise today to recognize and celebrate the recipients of the Ontario Veterans Award for Community Excellence in my riding of Perth–Wellington. This is the first year Royal Canadian Legions across Ontario could nominate worthy veterans and Legion members for this prestigious award. This award honours individuals for exceptional and ongoing service to their communities, such as work to help veterans reintegrate into civilian life, supporting those dealing with ongoing mental or physical injuries, or other broader community-building initiatives.

In Perth–Wellington, I was pleased to recognize and congratulate the following individuals: Thomas Jenkins of St. Marys, Marg Heinmiller of Palmerston, Gordon Miller of Milverton, Gerry Rattray of Listowel, George Gae of Harriston and Ken Thompson of Mount Forest.

In particular, I want to highlight Marg and Gordon on receiving this award. They're both in their 100th year of life, and they're also both World War II veterans. Marg and Gordon transitioned from service to our country to a lifetime of service in their communities. We can never repay them for their service and all the work they have done to build Ontario and Canada.

Congratulations to all the Ontario Veterans Award for Community Service Excellence recipients across Perth–Wellington. And Speaker, we will remember them.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr. John Vanthof: Last week, Crawford Nickel deposit was named a project of national significance. That's great news for our area. But there's one thing about the Crawford Nickel project: Do you know how you have to get there? You get there on Highway 11. Highway 11 from North Bay to Cochrane was closed 30 times from January to September. We've got—

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: It was closed yesterday as well.

We've got the Minister of Northern Development in Timmins, we've got the Minister of Economic Development in North Bay, and somehow, we can't get that section of highway fixed or keep it open.

And it's not just Crawford; there's so many mining developments there. There's Agnico Eagle, Detour Lake, Alamos Gold. It is the engine of Ontario. The Trans-Canada Highway to get to that area of national significance needs to be a highway of national standards. It needs to be fixed, to be brought up to the 21st century so we can help drive this province.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's an honour to rise in the Legislature today to share more great news about how the government of Ontario is investing in the future of my riding, Sarnia–Lambton. Madam Speaker, the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund is an important funding

program that provides support for projects and investments to businesses, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations for economic development in southwestern Ontario.

I was very pleased to recently share with the mayor of Sarnia that the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, on behalf of the government of Ontario, is investing up to \$1.5 million from the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund in the ongoing development of the successful Sarnia Business and Research Park. This investment will help the city of Sarnia to complete the installation of servicing infrastructure for approximately 20 acres of city-owned business park. This includes completing earthworks, installing underground services such as water, sewer, natural gas and electricity, as well as installing a new access road to the property. Upon completion, the shovel-ready property will be primed for future development, supporting future job and residential growth on the east side of the city of Sarnia.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the government of Ontario and the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade for their important investment in the future of Sarnia–Lambton.

NANCY DEWAR

MPP Paul Vickers: Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of my hardest-working constituents, Mrs. Nancy Dewar. Nancy, who is with us in the gallery today, is Ontario's recipient of the 2025 Council of the Federation Literacy Award, recognizing adult learners.

The first word in the phrase “adult learning” is “adult,” and this is not a fluke. While pursuing their educational dreams, they must also manage adult responsibilities such as family lives, their jobs and the other joys of adulthood.

Nancy's journey is no exception. After years of running her own business, Nancy dealt with health setbacks that included a battle with cancer. But that didn't stop her. In fact, it ignited a passion. Wanting to become a nurse, Nancy enrolled in the academic upgrade course at Georgian College in Owen Sound, and then, just this spring, she graduated from the RPN program. While returning to school was challenging at first, it was a challenge she embraced. Nancy made the most of her college journey, even finding time to don the grizzly bear costume as the school's mascot at events.

Today, Nancy serves our community through her home care business, serving many families in in my riding.

I want to congratulate you, Nancy, and thank you for being an inspiration to adult students in this great province. Welcome to your House.

ILLUMINATE THE SEASON WITH ARCH

MPP Chris Scott: I rise as the proud member of provincial Parliament for Sault Ste. Marie to shine a light on an event that truly reflects the heart of our community. This week, ARCH Hospice will host its fifth annual Illuminate the Season, a celebration that brings holiday

cheer, music, lights and togetherness to our city, at the Machine Shop. From skating with Santa to the Cocoa 5K and Marshmallow Mile, there's truly something for every age and every family.

1030

I want to take a moment to recognize the remarkable work of ARCH Hospice and their team who, through this event, not only create joy and festive memories but also raise crucial support for our local hospice care. Their commitment ensures that individuals and families across the Algoma district receive compassionate end-of-life care at no cost. That is a gift that extends far beyond the holiday season.

The generosity of local businesses, volunteers and community members who contribute to the silent auction, craft displays and memorial tree shows the strength, kindness and heart of Sault Ste. Marie.

As we look forward to gathering from November 20 to November 23, I encourage all members of our community to participate, celebrate and support this incredible cause. Together, we can illuminate our city not only with lights but with compassion, kindness and the warmth of community spirit.

Thank you to ARCH Hospice for all the work you do.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I'd like to begin by introducing two people who are here visiting from the Hamilton Police Association—I can't find them, but I know they are here: Jaimi Bannon and Hope Paiva.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce, from the police service of Sarnia-Lambton, Detective Constable Mark Bennett and Detective Constable Ben Lane, here today from the city of Sarnia. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm honoured to introduce the Dante Alighieri Society of Toronto, which is uniting Italian Canadian organizations to strengthen Italian-language education, and supporting growing cultural and economic ties between Ontario and Italy.

As well, I'd like to welcome my two assistants, Joanna Maio and Codruta Rosca, to Queen's Park today.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'd like to welcome our friends from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, along with the Ontario School Board Council of Unions and Policing-Free Schools. Welcome to your House this morning.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I'd like to introduce sensational Steve Shier and jazzy Josh Teresinski, police officers from Sault Ste. Marie. They're here with the association today. They just met with me—and Margie Carlson from the AICO. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, I have a number of constituents here today.

First of all, I'd like to welcome all Police Association of Ontario members—a special shout-out to Ray Gordon, the new president in Guelph; Jim Turow, fleet manager;

and Matt Jotham, past president, treasurer, now PAO board member.

I'd also like to welcome Kim Passmore of Guelph, from the Appraisal Institute of Canada.

Hon. Kevin Holland: Visiting us today from Kakabeka Falls is my good friend Erin Arps. Welcome.

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: I'd like to welcome all the members of the Belleville Police Association: Greg Asimis, Valerie Brady, Anne Brennan-Walsh, Kosta Brindakis, Pat Comeau and Lindsay Elliott. Welcome to your House.

Hon. Rob Flack: I'd like to welcome the St. Thomas Police Association's Paul Tunks and the London Police Association folks here today: Gary, Gareth, Walter, Oswald and Kyle. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to welcome the Cedar Hollow Public School—Thames Valley District School Board—grade 5 class and their teacher, Sara, virtually, to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

I hope you had a wonderful tour and you learned lots.

MPP Lisa Gretzky: I'd like to welcome special guests to the House today. From the Alzheimer Society of Windsor and Essex County: Sally Bennett Olczak, the CEO; Karen Hall; Lise Dube; Jack Vanderpark; and Pauline Boyle.

I'd also like to welcome members of OSSTF District 9: Erin Roy, president; Andy Adzic, chief negotiator for teachers; and Christine Musson, communications and political action chair.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I'd also like to welcome the members who are here with the Alzheimer Society today, including the Ontario CEO, Cathy Barrick, and the Toronto CEO, Dave Spedding. Welcome to your House.

MPP Bill Rosenberg: I'd like to recognize, in the gallery, the Elliot Lake municipal contingent. They have Mayor Andrew Wannan; Deputy Mayor Charles Flintoff; director of finance, Andrew Ault; director of economic development, Steve Antunes; and public affairs, Dion Ahwai.

MPP George Darouze: It's a great pleasure to welcome councillor David Brown, or farmer Brown, as I like to call him, from the city of Ottawa council to Queen's Park today.

I'd also like to welcome Carleton constituents Gino Melito and Richard Gardner, both members of my riding association.

Also, from the Police Association of Ontario: Matt Cox, Leslie McCarthy and their colleagues.

Welcome to your House.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: We have a number of folks who are here from the Niagara police association today: Adam Kitson, Kristen Hansen, Robin Bleich, Sandy Mackay, Sarah Diamond and Scott Kraushar. Thank you so much for being here. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Today, we are wearing pins to remember those who no longer can. I would like to welcome the CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, Cathy Barrick, and all of the representatives from the Alzheimer Society of Ontario.

Mr. Will Bouma: I'd like to welcome to the House Brantford Police Association members Jeremy Morton and David Minutillo, and, watching from home, Carol Ann Sloat. Have a great day.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park the Ontario Association of Medical Radiation Sciences. Welcome.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I'd like to welcome David Opiola today and members of Catholic educators that are here.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'd like to welcome, from the Hamilton Police Association, Jaimi Bannon, Wes Wilson, Derek Donn and Hope Paiva. I'm looking forward to meeting with you this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): We have time for one more: London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to welcome members of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario: Mark MacLeod, Nathan Core, Kim Douglas, Lori Ridley, Jennifer Hillner, Sue Varley, Marnie Meloche, Scott Hardie, Dale Napier and Rob Hammond. Welcome to Queen's Park.

HOUSE SITTINGS

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Thanks, Speaker. Point of order: I'd just like to announce to the House that the night sitting scheduled for this evening has been cancelled.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning, everybody, and good morning, Speaker. I want to say how moved I am to see so many people here in the gallery today defending democracy.

Yesterday, the minister changed his tune and started blaming civil servants for his own mess with the Skills Development Fund. Up until now, he has stood in this chamber and he has justified hand-picking low-scoring applicants to that fund because they met his government's so-called priorities.

Let me just say this: It was not civil servants that were sitting in rink-side seats at a Leafs game with executives or sipping champagne in Paris with lobbyists who cashed in or raking in hundreds of thousands of dollars in political donations. It was this Minister of Labour.

To the Premier: Why is this Minister of Labour blaming civil servants when he clearly made the decision to reward Keel Digital Solutions?

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

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, that's incorrect. Our ministry officials play a critical role in safeguarding the integrity of the Skills Development Fund. Together, we've built strong backstops. Being responsible for applicant approvals, which I am, is not in contradiction with having

important stopgaps in place. It highlights the robust internal risk assessment processes we have for this program.

When that member talks about these projects, what she's saying is projects that are supporting our first responders with better training, better mental health support; projects supporting the Carpenters' Regional Council and the joint application they submitted for all of their locals across Ontario that are helping a next generation of skilled tradesmen and women.

It's not surprising they don't support them because they don't support building. They don't support building the critical infrastructure that we're building. Whether it's new nuclear, whether it's highways, roads and bridges, they vote against every measure.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Back to the Premier: This minister went on live radio and he bragged about hand-picking Keel Digital Solutions and their like. The Toronto Star, they got their hands on the government's scorecards, and they have confirmed it: Low-scoring applications like Keel received bigger payouts than the higher-scoring applications.

1040

The Auditor General confirmed that civil servants were overruled routinely by this minister and his political staff. Is the minister blaming civil servants simply because the company is now under police investigation?

Hon. David Piccini: As I said, being responsible for applicant approvals, which I am, and having a stopgap procedure in place are not in contradiction to one another, but rather speaks to the important processes we have in place.

What that member is against is supporting first responders with better training through our Skills Development Fund. What she's against, and what she's highlighted, is the Carpenters' Regional Council. Or let's talk about the operating engineers, another project highlighted in that article. Operating engineers for the cranes in the skyline—we wouldn't have any cranes if it was up to them. They don't want to build. They're against Highway 413 and they're against the Bradford Bypass.

Just this week, I was at Union Station, where we saw cranes in the air making improvements to our Metrolinx fleet. They're against those measures. They don't support our public transit expansion.

But they have an opportunity to support us with the fall economic statement, to invest in infrastructure and invest in better training. I hope they'll take that chance.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: First he's hiding behind unions, dragging their names through the mud; now he's hiding behind workers in the civil service. The one thing this minister will not do is take responsibility for the mess that he has created. I have been asking these questions for five weeks now, and the Premier doesn't even do us one and get up and answer a question.

Speaker, bills are being rammed through this Legislature. It is the donors and the lobbyists that are connected

to this government; it is the strip clubs and the numbered companies, it is the endless gift of an anti-democratic and, yes, corrupt government—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order. Order. I will ask the member to withdraw.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, I will not.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I am warning the member.

The member has been named. You will have to leave the chamber.

Ms. Stiles was escorted from the chamber.

EDUCATION

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Yesterday, student trustees elected by their peers to represent them were very clear: Students do not want Bill 33 to pass. They do not want to have their voices and perspectives shut out of decisions about their education. They do not want government appointees who ignore them. What they want is investments to support programs, provide mental health supports and ensure schools are safe.

Will the Premier listen to Ontario students and vote no on Bill 33?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: When I speak to students, what they tell me is that they want the highest quality of education possible and they want the opportunity to succeed. What they don't want is a system that puts them at conflict with their teachers, that puts parents at conflict with their teachers. What they don't want is trustees who go out into the community and sow dissension in favour of their own pet projects.

Madam Speaker, I am hopeful and I am very confident that in a very short while, Bill 33 will pass this Legislature and we will have the opportunity to once again put the Ontario education system on the right path, building on the successes of previous ministers to ensure that not only are our students succeeding, but our teachers have the resources that they need to give our students the ultimate opportunity to succeed, not only for today, but for tomorrow.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Well, if this government won't show students some respect, perhaps they'll respect parents, because they've also been very clear: In just 19 hours and despite this government's attempt to sneak Bill 33 into law without parents having any chance to say what they think about it, more than 55,000 people across the province sent government MPPs emails asking them not to support this bill. Parents don't want to lose their right to have a say. They don't want decisions to be made in the dark behind closed doors. They don't want hand-picked Conservative insiders who are paid \$350,000 a year to ignore them.

Will the Premier listen to parents and vote no on Bill 33?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Guilty, Madam Speaker: I sneakily introduced this seven months ago and put it on

the order paper. I sneakily went across the entire province and met with hundreds of parents and hundreds of teachers. I sneakily went and met with school board chairs; I met with the police associations.

I'm telling you what we're going to do. What the NDP are doing and what the Liberals are doing is, they are supporting a system that was created in the one-room-schoolhouse era. You know what has to happen? We have to reinvigorate our school system, building on the successes of previous ministers to bring our curriculum back in order.

In a very short period of time, members will be able to get up in this House and vote in favour of Bill 33. What that will allow us to do is put school boards back on track when they go off the rails. What the NDP and the Liberals want me to do is allow a board to collapse before I step in, to the benefit of parents. I won't do that. I'm going to step in earlier. We'll put boards back on track and put students, parents and teachers first.

No matter how much they whine and complain, we'll get it done for the students—

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: If this government isn't going to show students some respect, if they're not going to show parents some respect, perhaps they will show workers some respect, Speaker. Because yesterday, teachers and education workers were also here with a clear message for this government: Bill 33 is not the solution to the challenges teachers and education workers are facing; it's a distraction from the real issues. This government's \$6-billion funding cut to education means that workers are paying out of pocket for basic supplies in crowded classrooms in unsafe schools.

The minister's appointees have also made it very clear that they do not think collective bargaining agreements need to be respected, despite the fact that collective bargaining is a charter-protected right.

Will the Premier respect the people who work in our schools every single day and vote no on Bill 33?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Madam Speaker, listen, I am going to not only hope that all my colleagues vote in favour of Bill 33, I know full well that the parents, teachers and students across this province are excited by what Bill 33 allows us to do.

Not only does it allow us to bring our police back into the schools to ensure that our schools can be safer—let's talk about her own community. She talks about the supervised boards; we have a supervisor who's bringing the board back on track. She talks about trustees. What she doesn't talk about is the fact that trustees in Ottawa in the Ottawa-Carleton board—their budget is \$1.4 million. Their expenses alone were over \$440,000, and when they had an opportunity last May to do something about it, they hid the report from the people and said, "We don't want to talk about it, because if people find out how much we're spending, they will be angry with us. So let's continue to spend and let the chaos continue."

What we did is put them back on track, and we did that for parents, students and teachers—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: I was at my apartment last night and I was thinking about Christmas. I remember a Christmas when I was about seven years old and I got into my mom's chocolate chips that she had bought for baking cookies. I ate a lot—I ate a lot, guys—and then I tried to blame it on my sister. I said it was Missy. But my mom was smart; she didn't buy it. But kids learn. You learn that you take responsibility, and you don't try to blame others. Apparently, the minister didn't have the same Christmas experience that I had, and he tried to blame the deputy yesterday for the rot that is the Skills Development Fund.

My question to the minister is, why didn't he learn that lesson and why is he still in his job?

1050

Hon. David Piccini: That's incorrect. What I illustrated yesterday and what I will again illustrate today is that being responsible for application approvals, which I am, and having a stopgap and procedures in place, working with our valued ministry officials, is not in contradiction. It's something we do together to continue to strengthen the integrity of this program, something I've outlined.

Speaker, this program is supporting our first responders with better training. This program is supporting men and women in our construction sector on the front lines of building. It's supporting breaking down barriers for newcomers to receive training to enter the workforce, and we're proud of it.

I spoke about the carpenters' project. I spoke about operating engineers in my previous answer. I'll also speak about the incredible training I saw with LIUNA Local 183. I met Lewis, who's a graduate of Oaks Revitalization. Thanks to those skills, he's now paying taxes, a proud member of 183 and he's working on the Bridgecon project on Rosedale Valley Road. That's what we're doing, Speaker. We're actually building real things—

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

Mr. John Fraser: Let's think about this. The civil servants scored the project low because the company is going to buy the software from itself, which is, if any of you don't know, called an in-and-out. That's what we call that: That's an in-and-out. And so they said, "Don't do it," but the minister decided to override it—not the deputy, not anybody else, maybe the Premier, but it was the minister. I don't know why he's forgotten that he did that because his friend was lobbying for the company where he overrode the advice of the public servants.

There's something called ministerial responsibility, Minister. Why aren't you taking that now?

Hon. David Piccini: I absolutely accept that, Speaker. I said being responsible for applicant approvals is something I am. But also, having stopgap procedures and robust

procedures in place, working with ministry officials, isn't in contradiction. They work complementary. That's the value of this program.

We're continuing to improve it. We're making investments—investments in building a stronger Ontario, in nation-building at a time when we're seeing uncertain economic headwinds, when workers want to know that we're going to be able to build the critical infrastructure we need.

SMRs alone—I mean, we heard in the fall economic statement that SMRs alone, 18,000 workers. They don't have a plan for those workers. We do. We're expanding training across Ontario, investing in unionized training halls, non-unionized training, investing in our colleges, expanding our construction spots so that young men and women in Ontario can have a future, can join an apprenticeship, can build Ontario—an Ontario that they didn't build. They didn't build any long-term-care homes. They didn't build hospitals. In fact, they closed schools in communities like mine. We're building—

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

Mr. John Fraser: First of all, you don't have a youth jobs plan, so I don't think I'd be touting that you're really working hard. You're too busy on skills development and rewarding friends and insiders.

The deputy could have stood on the tracks, but he wasn't going to stop the Premier's gravy train—the gravy train that rewards insiders, lobbyists like Kory Teneycke, Nico Fidani-Diker or Michael Diamond. We could list more and more and more; you're so connected. Each time this minister overrode a low-scoring proposal, he was adding another car to the gravy train.

I'll ask the minister again: Does he understand what ministerial responsibility is, what that means? And why the heck is he still sitting in that seat as that minister?

Hon. David Piccini: Absolutely, Speaker. It means sitting around a cabinet table and talking about SMRs, talking about new nuclear and making sure I have a plan to train the workers to achieve that: the carpenters, the labourers, the steamfitters, the pipefitters, the operating engineers. That's what my role is, and I've highlighted the steps we've taken with this program to strengthen its integrity.

I take ministerial responsibility and having important stopgaps in place, working with ministry officials, is not a contradiction. It speaks to the strength of this program. Adding financial audits—something I did, integrating it into our employment management system so we can track long-term outcomes for the men and women building the SMRs, for the men and women building new nuclear, for the men and women on the front lines of our northern strategy to unlock critical minerals.

He mocked it, Speaker. He invoked his wife—all sorts of things to do anything but actually talk about the strategy for the north that's unleashing prosperity, that's going to drive a stronger Ontario that can stand on the world stage and be self-sufficient. That's the Ontario we're building, Speaker.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: I know we're not sitting tonight, because it's the Premier's skills development gala, which I guess is in Etobicoke at \$15,000 a table. That will get you some rubber chicken, a good speech, we'll say, and then you will get passage on the Premier's gravy train, that \$2.5-billion gravy train. Destination: the Premier's special \$2.5-billion friends and family resort.

Besides the rubber chicken and the good speech—or maybe it will be a great speech—is it true, Minister, that there are actually skills development applications at each place setting?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, we come to this place to talk about policy, to debate ideas to make a stronger Ontario, programs we're implementing to increase our youth registration in apprenticeships. And I'm pleased to say, Speaker, it's working. It's working for the young men and women entering our trades to build a stronger Ontario. It's working, our plan to lower taxes to attract investments.

We're not immune from economic headwinds; we're not. But what the folks of this province can count on is that we've got a Premier who will stand up for first responders, who will get tough on crime, respect law and order; a Premier who is going to build Ontario, unlock our critical minerals, build new nuclear.

They didn't have a hydro plan. It was just increase the rates on granny and on mom and dad. That was their energy plan. We're building new nuclear. We're building new SMRs. In fact, we're selling those SMRs to the world, all the while ensuring Ontario is an attractive destination for foreign investment. That's going to create jobs. That's our plan—

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

Mr. John Fraser: I think it's fair to stand up when the government is shovelling millions and millions out the door to friends and insiders and lobbyists and donors with no strings attached. I think that's a fair question, Minister.

A report in the *Toronto Star* said that the lowest-scoring applications got the highest payouts. Well, Premier, this isn't the skills development golf tournament. You don't get more because you scored less. That's not the way that life works. So obviously there's some unwritten category that we don't see the scoring on—or maybe we do. We just have to check the donor list; that's the place where we have to look.

Minister, life just doesn't work that way. The rot that is this \$2.5-billion Premier's club is something that you have responsibility for, Minister. Take responsibility.

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, it's incorrect. There are transfer payment agreements full of all of these accountability measures.

Let's talk about some of the projects he's referencing. He doesn't want to actually name them, Speaker. He doesn't want to name operating engineers; he doesn't want to name carpenters, their project that's supporting their locals all over Ontario. He doesn't want to name them because he doesn't support building. He had an opportu-

ity to put cranes in the air, an opportunity to train the next generation of crane operators, heavy-equipment operators. They didn't take up the mantle because they didn't build. They didn't build a stronger Ontario. They watched while apprenticeships declined. They pulled trades out of our high schools.

We're bringing it back. We're bringing back trades classes in our high schools. We're investing in new machinery. We're supporting new training in every corner of this province that's giving people real, hands-on experience to join a trade, a career for life. Speaker, we're proud of that, because those are the key building blocks to building a stronger Ontario.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I think we're at the point right now that if the minister said it's 3 o'clock, we'd all be checking our watch. Because it's unbelievable that the minister can say that when he gave money to a company that was already in forensic audit—so did the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and so did the Minister of Health. What the heck is going on over there?

We weren't born yesterday, and this \$2.5-billion Premier's club that has its special rewards program known as the Skills Development Fund—the members, you'll see them all there tonight: the donors, the insiders, the lobbyists, like Nico Fidani-Diker, Amin Massoudi, Michael Diamond. And he won't be giving the speech tonight, but the shadow Premier, the man behind the curtain, Kory Teneycke—maybe he's the mastermind behind all this—will be there.

1100

How does this government actually justify the people who scored the lowest doing the absolute best? Give us a good reason.

Hon. David Piccini: I sit around a cabinet table, and I look to a Minister of Infrastructure making a \$200-billion commitment. I look to a Minister of Energy building SMRs and new nuclear. My job is to make sure we're supporting programs that ensure the next generation of men and women who can work on the front lines.

The other day I was at OPG. I got the privilege to join a graduation ceremony for millwrights. Introduction to millwrighting—their pathways program is doing incredible work getting a next generation of young millwrights. I met a young lad from Port Hope, from Cobourg, from Hiawatha First Nation in my own community; they're excited to be on the front line.

We stand with these workers, and these workers stand with us. They stood with us in the last election because they know when it comes to building a stronger Ontario—massive nation-building projects that will put their members to work—they can count on this Premier and this government.

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE FUNDING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Organizations that represent Ontario college and uni-

versity students are united in their opposition to Bill 33. CFS Ontario, OUSA, CSA and OSV have all strongly urged this government to stop its attack on students and student services. They know that Bill 33 will mean the loss of vital student-run programs that students themselves have said are urgently needed, like campus food banks, mental health peer supports, accessibility services and more.

Will the Premier listen to post-secondary students and vote no to Bill 33?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government has taken another step to promote fairness, transparency and integrity across the province's post-secondary sector.

That's why, if Bill 33 is passed, we're going to require colleges and universities to make fees transparent to students and their families, so they understand detailed breakdowns on how the tuition fees are being used. As well, we're going to make sure that merit-based admissions are clearly articulated to all students. On top of that, we want to make sure that research security plans are clear and secure moving forward.

But as we always have, we're going to consult with the sector once, and if, Bill 33 is passed to ensure that the regulations are implemented in a way that does not disrupt the delivery of Ontario's world-class education and supports that students rely upon.

Speaker, unlike the previous Liberal government, we will always stand up for the students and the hard-working families—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The minister should be aware that student fees are already transparent, and that students are already admitted on the basis of merit.

Meanwhile, our post-secondary sector is in crisis: Hundreds of programs have been cut, and entire campuses are closing. Almost 10,000 jobs have been lost at Ontario colleges. Services are being reduced in academic counselling, career services and work-integrated learning. Some 80,000 domestic students won't be able to get a seat at an Ontario university because the government isn't providing the funding. Meanwhile, youth unemployment is at record highs and post-secondary students are struggling to pay tuition, rent and groceries.

Why is this government pushing ahead with bad legislation that is only going to make it harder for young people to succeed in this province?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Through you, Speaker, I'm not too sure why that member has an issue with transparency. I've heard from students; I've heard from families. They want transparency, and they really want to understand where their ancillary fees are going.

That member mentioned 80,000—let's mention the 100,000 new, funded seats that we brought online through budget 2025. That member voted against that budget.

Speaker, \$750 million went to 20,000 newly funded STEM seats, on top of \$75 million for construction-related

seats; 7,800 new seats for construction and another 2,200 new seats for nursing—a \$56-million investment, on top of the 2,600 new seats that we have for teachers.

Speaker, we're going to continue being there for the sector, but we'll continue bringing new seats online, like the 100,000 newly funded seats we just brought through budget 2025.

I wish that member would support our budget, support our legislation, because we're going to, ultimately, continue to be there for the sector and understand where the fees are being used.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: This past constituency week I had the pleasure of speaking with students, and it reminded me that people learn at different speeds and in different ways. So I'm going to help the government, and I'm going to make a few things perfectly clear for them. Training workers is good. Manipulating funding to reward donors and friends: bad. Having a clear process and priorities: good. A minister interfering to favour low-scoring applications: bad. More women in construction trades: good. Giving millions of dollars to a strip club owner: bad.

Speaker, I would like to ask the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity what kind of economic opportunity does she expect women to find in a strip club?

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

Hon. David Piccini: Let's talk about opportunity, good opportunity for young men and women of this province. People do learn at different paces, different rates etc. It's something they failed to recognize when they held the balance of power in this place. They closed schools in every corner of this province. They shut down trades programming that empowered the very women she claims to want to support.

But the reality of the matter is, we're breaking down those barriers for young men and women to enter rewarding careers. Whether it's in hospitality; a workers' training centre, where we went just the other day with Unite Here, a majority of women who we're supporting with training through the Skills Development Fund; or whether it's young women registering for apprenticeships. The fact of the matter is, stats matter, and our stats are up for young women registering as apprentices. They watched while those numbers dwindled under their leadership.

Under Premier Ford, we're expanding those opportunities, creating meaningful opportunities for young men and women—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Kanata-Carleton.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: It looks like the minister knows that this is indefensible. My question once again to the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity: How is giving tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to a strip club owner the best we can do for young women in this province?

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

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: It's very troubling, as a woman who has agency over her own body, to hear the Liberals come across and say that. It's really troubling. Sex work is work, and we shouldn't be discriminating against women and the work they have to do or choose to do in order to stay safe.

Our government is investing heavily to ensure that women have the supports and the resources to ensure that they can get work in Ontario. We just announced over \$8 million to women-serving organizations that are training women in the trades. Through the Skills Development Fund, our government funds over 58 organizations that are helping women get into jobs that pay well. We are making extreme changes because we know that when women are financially independent, women are safer. Women are a major, major impact to our economy. So I—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I think it's very disappointing that the members opposite are—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: —the work that we're doing to make sure women have opportunities and resources, something that the Liberals did not do when they were in government.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Mines. People across Ontario are worried about growing economic threats. They see rising tensions, they see tariff risks, and they see the danger that Donald Trump's decisions could pose on our workers and industries.

Speaker, our government is taking real steps to protect Ontario. We are building new reactors, we are training more workers, we are growing our clean energy leadership so we can stand strong no matter what happens outside of our borders. These are nation-building projects that protect jobs and keep our province secure.

1110

Speaker, can the Minister explain how advancing Ontario's energy leadership is helping protect workers and keeping our economy strong?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Before I recognize the Minister, can we keep the sidebar conversations down a little bit? Just lower the volume. Thank you.

I recognize the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for the question and appreciate fully that we've been doubling down on our nuclear advantage in Ontario.

It started a few weeks ago in Nova Scotia, when the Premier of Nova Scotia signed a deal with Ontario to collaborate in the development of our small modular

reactor. The next day, we were in New Brunswick, where Ontario secured a \$60-million deal to help improve the nuclear assets of that province, improving the productivity of the Point Lepreau nuclear facility.

The next week we were in Belgium, where we secured a new export opportunity with that government, turning back to nuclear power and signing on with our SMR for potential deployment in that nation and with that ally. That builds on our relationships and our contracts in place with Poland and Estonia: 24 SMRs secured to date. I know the Minister of Long-Term Care is excited about the Polish advancement.

But let us be clear. We're investing in clean tech, we're supporting the supply chain benefits, we're creating jobs and we're standing up for Canadian workers.

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

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: Thank you to the minister for his response.

Families remember the state our energy system was left in after years of Liberal mismanagement. Bills went up, investment went down and the system was pushed to the breaking point because of a failure of leadership.

Our government is rebuilding what they broke. We are lowering costs, we are improving efficiency and we are making smart choices that keep energy affordable while building the strong, reliable system people need. Families want to know that the lights will stay on and their energy costs will remain stable as demand grows.

Can the minister explain how our government is keeping energy affordable while strengthening the reliable system Ontario families depend on?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: This morning, I joined the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, the parliamentary assistant, and the associate minister to launch and expand Ontario's energy savings program. This is the largest energy efficiency program in Canadian history, the first phase of which has now already overly achieved our metric of success. We've removed 200 megawatts from the grid, the equivalent of removing a town of 200,000 people.

We have now, today, announced we're going to be expanding this program to save more money for Ontario families and ratepayers. This program is going to help reduce costs and introduce new rebates for refrigerators, freezers and laundry machines, the appliances everyday families need as we think about the holidays.

Our government is committed to reducing bills, reducing the peak demand on the grid and ultimately reducing emissions. And I think we've achieved the win-win-win outcome here that's going to save families money. They can check out saveonenergy.ca today and save money that they deserve.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Speaker, through you to the Minister of Labour and Immigration: The minister's mass rejection of all skilled trade OINP workers has left hundreds of workers and their families in crisis. More than

200 of them are here today in the galleries and outside—people who followed every rule, paid every fee, built their lives on Ontario's word.

And some of them have learned, if you can believe this, through freedom-of-information requests that the minister's senior staff already verified their documents, interviewed them and approved them for nomination before your minister rejected them anyway.

To the minister: Will this minister look them in the eyes and explain why their lives have been upended despite doing everything right?

Hon. David Piccini: We need an immigration system with integrity that supports young men and women who want to build a future here. And I recognize that when we had our allocation cut by 50% by the federal government, we had already invited folks to apply. And then when officials looked—and we look as a team at the program—in our skilled trade stream, fewer than one in two were actually continuing within that career, so we offered the opportunity for those registered in active apprenticeships to apply. They were processed and were moved through. For those who've been rejected, Speaker, they also have the employer job offer stream that they can apply through. They're still in the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program and they're able to apply through other streams, like Employer Job Offer.

Citizenship is a privilege; citizenship is not a right. This side of the House will continue to fight for a robust system with integrity, advocate for expanded allocation and autonomy from the federal government and find meaningful pathways for people who want to contribute to our economic success.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member from Parkdale–High Park.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: These individuals already have jobs and employers who are counting on them. These workers are scared. Their employers are scared. Their families are scared. And now they are facing racist backlash online and in person because of the minister's blanket statement. It is unjust, and it is profoundly un-Canadian.

To the minister: Will you commit to reinstate their applications, securing extensions to their work permits and give each worker the fair, individual assessment they deserve and were promised?

Hon. David Piccini: When officials see inaccurate pay-rolls, sudden promotions or job changes without explanation, lacking explanation for the background in which they are being trained, one in two who are staying within that specific career, employment gaps, forged employer letters, we have to take action. For those employers and those workers who have jobs—directly to answer the member opposite—we have a pathway through our employer portal that they can go through today. The employer portal is open, and they can go through that portal today.

Again, citizenship is a privilege; it is not a right. We want to make sure we have meaningful pathways for folks who want to contribute to our economy, and for those people that have active job offers and are working in a

skilled trade, there is the employment portal pathway they can go through.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Last week was so exciting with the big celebration of the 15th birthday of the Eglinton LRT. Should we start a loud round of Happy Birthday? Should we laugh? Should we cry? Should we pull our hair out?

What was happening 15 years ago: the Vancouver Winter Olympics; 200 countries signed the Paris climate agreement; Rob Ford was elected mayor of Toronto with the Premier and I; and the Queen's Park pages were not even born. Poor signals, design delays, legal battles and more have left everyone stranded on Eglinton Avenue.

Speaker, my question to the Premier: How can the gravy train work so well when the Eglinton Crosstown can't even open after 15 long years?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Madam Speaker, for 15 years, when they were in government, they did absolutely nothing to build public transit. It was this Premier who put forward a plan to invest over \$70 billion in the next 10 years. And guess what? They voted against public transit projects every single time.

The record speaks for itself, Madam Speaker: not a single shovel in the ground, delays and costly contracts like the Crosstown. We're fixing that. We're getting shovels in the ground. The Ontario Line will move 400,000 people every single day as it gets put forward.

Look at our expansion on GO Transit. Last month, 7.5 million passengers—a combined record that we've set, given the expansion and dollars that we've put into GO Transit. A One Fare policy that makes transit more affordable for the people of this province, a program that those members voted against, which puts \$1,600 back into the pockets of hard-working families across this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Beaches–East York.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: The world is watching with incredulous eyes. They cannot believe how we could have messed up a bunch of transit projects so badly.

Here is a global mobility list for us to consider: Japan's Tokaido Shinkansen, five years; Sydney, Australia's Metro Northwest, five years; Chile's Santiago Metro Line, three years; Vancouver's Canada Line, four years. At this point, the Eglinton Crosstown's ratings are so low that they could be eligible for some skills development funding, like all the other failing applicants who received enormous amounts.

1120

My question to the Premier: Will the Eglinton LRT actually open in our lifetime?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We continue to build upon our government's plan to invest in public transit, despite the opposition voting against every single one of those measures. I've never seen the opposition members come up and support these projects that we are putting

forward that are going to truly transform the way people travel across this province, whether it's policies like One Fare, saving individuals \$1,600 every single year, whether it's the Ontario Line that will move 400,000 people every single day, taking cars off the road.

The only thing those members have been supporting are policies that have made it difficult to get around this city, like bike lanes on Bloor, Avenue and Yonge, but we're fixing that. We're reinstating vehicle lanes across the city so we can get this city moving, and the province moving as well.

We're going to continue our investment of \$70 billion over the next 10 years, despite the opposition to public transit from the members opposite. We've made a commitment to build, and that's what we're going to continue to do: Get shovels in the ground, build for the future and ensure that we can get people to where they need to go quicker, faster and in a more productive manner.

WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement. Ontario's winters bring a real challenge. Families need safe roads, workers need clear walkways and businesses need open lots and timely deliveries. None of that happens by chance; it happens because of the vital contributions of thousands of dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to keep our province moving. The snow and ice workers protect our safety and support our economy.

But under the previous Liberal government, these workers faced delay, red tape and rules that held them back. Our government is working to change that and show them the respect they deserve.

Can the minister explain how our government is helping Ontario's snow and ice professionals so they can keep providing this essential service?

Hon. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the great member from Whitby for that very good question.

Under the previous Liberal government, Ontario was weighed down by red tape and delay. That burden fell very heavily on our snow and ice professionals, who were held back by slow and unnecessary rules.

These workers keep us safe on our winter roads, walkways and parking lots, and they are the best in the entire world. Their dedicated work keeps communities safe and open and our economy moving. Families, workers and businesses rely on clear roads for travel, for deliveries and for essential services.

Our government is exploring new consumer protection measures for landscape and snow and ice management services to ensure safety, quality and availability across Ontario. We're doing this in a way that respects the environment while keeping the people of Ontario safe.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you to the minister for his response and ongoing leadership.

Snow and ice professionals work hard for our province. They clear our roads in the worst weather. They keep people safe. They help our economy run. But for years, they faced too much red tape and too many delays under the previous Liberal government. That made their work harder. It made services less reliable.

Our government is taking a different path. We're cutting barriers, we're improving safety and we're making sure these workers can keep doing the job people count on them for.

Can the minister share how our government's actions are helping snow and ice professionals deliver safe, reliable services throughout Ontario?

Hon. Stephen Crawford: Thank you again to the great member from Whitby for a very important question.

Our snow and ice professionals play a vital role in keeping Ontario moving. They work long hours, often in the worst conditions, to keep roads, walkways and parking lots safe for families and businesses—their commitment and their work to support our economy and protect our communities. Deliveries arrive on time. Services continue without delay. People get where they need to go safely.

This is why our government is taking action. We are reviewing consumer protection measures to ensure landscape, snow and ice management services remain safe, reliable and available in every community across Ontario. We are doing this while cutting red tape, improving standards and ensuring Ontario's workers have the tools they need to keep us safe this winter.

WINDSOR ECONOMY

MPP Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. Windsor families are facing the highest unemployment rate in the country. Major lenders are pulling back from critical investments in Windsor projects amid economic uncertainty. Windsor families are being forced to carry the weight, while this government refuses to put forward any real provincial plan to protect workers, shore up local industry or support our economy in the face of economic instability.

Why has the Premier failed to put forward a provincial plan to stabilize our local economy and protect Windsor families from the fallout of these pressures?

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you, through you, to the member opposite for that question.

Just a little while ago, we were in Windsor giving a cheque to the mayor of Windsor for meeting their housing targets to build more homes for the people in Windsor. Of course, we're advancing work, through the work of the Minister of Health, on building a new hospital in Windsor. And of course, the interchange to get to the brand new battery plant that has created jobs for many more workers at E.C. Row—we're building highways and interchanges for Windsor.

Of course, through the Protect Ontario liquidity, we're providing liquidity supports. In fact, you might have heard the commercials about \$2 billion of WSIB rebates that are flowing right now, including businesses in Windsor.

I would submit to the member opposite: What are you doing for Windsor?

Interjections.

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

Back to the member for Windsor West.

MPP Lisa Gretzky: Developers are warning that investments are being stalled, housing construction is slowing and job creating projects are being put on hold. Windsor's workforce is among the best in Canada, but the economic climate has become so unstable that lenders, including major banks, don't feel confident backing projects in my community.

Families are being left to navigate the rising costs and job losses because this government refuses to take economic stability seriously. Just look at what's happening at Titan Tool and Die with their workers, or at Diageo, where they're threatening to pull out of our community.

When will the Premier provide a provincial plan to protect Windsor workers, restore investor confidence and ensure that local projects aren't derailed? And when are they going to address the highest unemployment rates in this province, under your watch?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Madam Speaker, we found some common ground with the opposition: We too agree that some of the best workers in North America—I'll say on the planet—are in Windsor, Ontario. So we're in full agreement.

In fact, we are supporting our auto sector. We continue to make record investments to support our workers. We're never going to tire supporting our auto workers, not only in Windsor, but in Oshawa, in Brampton, in Oakville, in Ingersoll and in Alliston. We're going to support all the great workers, not just in Windsor but all across Ontario.

But we're going to do more, Madam Speaker. We're going to make sure that the conditions are there for economic growth so that everyone can participate. That's why we're investing in nuclear and energy. We've talked about the tens of thousands of jobs that we'll create, the critical minerals that would create—including Webequie First Nation; we just announced early works to start in June, so we can bring prosperity not only to Windsor but to the north.

We're going to keep going, and hopefully you'll vote for the fall economic statement.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

MPP Stephanie Smyth: My question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Part of your ministry's responsibility is ensuring that the \$2.5-billion Skills Development Fund is managed with rigour, with fairness and proper oversight. Yet the public has now learned that numerous high-scoring and top-ranked applications were left underfunded, while medium- and low-scoring projects

were approved instead, including one ranked "poor," meaning it should never have been approved at all.

1130

And in the middle of all this questionable decision-making, the Treasury Board signed off on nearly \$10 million for a company whose owner operates a venue licensed as a strip club.

Can the president explain how, under her watch, high-ranked projects were rejected while a low-ranked project connected to a strip club owner sailed right through the Treasury Board without triggering one single red flag?

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

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, when we assess these projects, as I said, we want to make sure as we're building, as we create a low-tax environment to attract foreign investment, as we build highways like the 413 and the Bradford Bypass, we've got projects that are ready to support a next generation of workers that are going to get the job done.

I think to small modular reactors, the new nuclear plant we're building—all of these things are happening under this Premier, under this government, so Ontario can stand tall on the world stage. And not just tall but lead on the world stage: be energy sufficient; have enough hospitals to care for our next generation; have public transit that not only we can be proud of, but a public transit system for our grandkids for generation to come.

That's the forward-looking plan this Premier brought to the people of Ontario in January. He said he was going to protect them, protect our workers. That's what we're doing, and we've got training programs to make sure they can land a better job with a bigger paycheque.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Toronto—St. Paul's.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Back to the President of the Treasury Board and back on topic: This is not a one-off mistake. It raises serious concerns about whether political influence, not merit, is driving funding decisions. When high-scoring proposals are denied, when low-scoring and politically connected projects get millions, and when even a grant linked to a strip club is approved without scrutiny, the integrity of the entire review process is in question.

Will the president conduct an internal audit of the low-ranking applications to ensure funds were spent properly and explain why Ontarians should trust a system that overlooked so many higher-scoring and well-deserving projects?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, I know they don't want to get on the topic of building because they don't support it. I know they don't want to get on the topic of manufacturing because they drove out 300,000 manufacturing jobs.

Let's talk about the project that's referenced: higher-scoring projects supporting the hospitality sector. That's key—affected during the pandemic, takes the longest to recover. We've got to make sure we've got a talent pipeline for all of our key sectors. I know those aren't topics that interest her: manufacturing; automotive; building highways, roads and bridges. They oppose the 413 and the

Bradford Bypass. Where did that get them in Brampton and Peel region? Not very far.

Interjection: Nowhere.

Hon. David Piccini: Nowhere. Because those workers know, with those talent pipelines, with a plan to build, we're building a stronger Ontario for future generations and a stronger Ontario we can be proud of.

The unions that we're supporting—I mentioned them earlier. I was at the shop stewards' seminar, LIUNA 506, and we spoke about steps this government has taken to ensure healthy and safe workplaces, mandatory defibrillators, ensuring naloxone kits on sites, empowering more young women to enter the trades.

Thank you, LIUNA Canada, for your leadership to empower our next generation, because their workers know that, with this Premier, we've got a plan that's putting their workers to work.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Matthew Rae: My question is to the Associate Minister of Small Business. Ontario's small businesses are the heart of our communities, including in my beautiful riding of Perth–Wellington. They create jobs, drive innovation and keep our community strong.

But global pressures from inflation and the new US tariffs are putting them at risk. Families and small business owners are under a growing economic pressure. Donald Trump's trade threats are creating real uncertainty for Ontario exporters and supply chains.

Ontario can't afford to stand still. We need to stay competitive, protect jobs and keep costs down.

Speaker, can the associate minister please explain how our government is supporting small businesses and protecting Ontario jobs from global pressures and threats?

Hon. Nina Tangri: I want to thank the member from Perth–Wellington for the phenomenal work he's doing supporting small businesses in his riding.

Speaker, as technology continues to evolve, many small business owners struggle to keep up, whether that means adopting e-commerce platforms, improving their data management or strengthening cyber security.

Our government recognizes that digital transformation is essential for Ontario's small businesses to stay competitive and continue to grow. That's why we've renewed our investment in the Digitalization Competence Centre, or the DCC, an initiative designed to help small and medium-sized businesses integrate digital tools, strengthen cyber security and increase productivity. Our \$7.5-million investment into the DCC will help more businesses boost digital literacy, adopt new technologies and improve productivity through coaching, training and grants.

Speaker, by investing in innovation and technology, this Premier and this government are ensuring small businesses remain strong, competitive and future-ready.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I want to thank the associate minister for her response and her ongoing leadership.

Speaker, under the previous Liberal government, small businesses were buried in red tape and higher costs. The Liberal philosophy was, "If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it."

I'm proud to be part of a government that took a different approach. We lowered taxes, cut fees and helped businesses—small business, in particular—grow. But global inflation and new trade threats mean we must stay focused. Small business owners need a government that has their backs, not one that has their hands in their pockets like the Liberals and NDP did.

Speaker, can the associate minister please share how our government is continuing to stand up for small businesses and protecting Ontario?

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you again to the member for the question.

Speaker, our government continues to support small business owners through programs like the Digitalization Competence Centre. This program provides small businesses with access to hands-on expertise, funding and guidance to help them choose and implement the digital tools that will make the biggest impact.

Included in our investment is \$2.5 million to establish a new retail modernization project grant to extend programming to retail and provide small businesses with cyber security training and education, helping more businesses adopt technologies such as online payment systems, inventory management software, customer relationship management systems and AI-driven platforms.

Speaker, this is exactly how we protect Ontario's economy, by empowering small businesses with the tools they need to thrive in a modern digital world. Through investments like this, our government is building a stronger, more innovative and more resilient Ontario for everyone.

DEFERRED VOTES

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

Deferred vote on the motion for 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 Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1138 to 1143.

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

On November 18, 2025, Mr. Cho, Willowdale, 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.

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

Ayes

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

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

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 74; the nays are 40.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

WATER SERVICES

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): We have a deferred vote on private member's notice of motion number 32.

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

The division bells rang from 1147 to 1148.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Madame Gallagher Murphy has moved private member's notice of motion number 32.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Fraser, John	Pierre, Natalie
Anand, Deepak	French, Jennifer K.	Pinsonneault, Steve
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pirie, George
Babikian, Aris	Gates, Wayne	Quinn, Nolan
Bailey, Robert	Gélinas, France	Racinsky, Joseph
Begum, Doly	Gilmour, Alexa	Rae, Matthew
Bell, Jessica	Glover, Chris	Rakocevic, Tom
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Gretzky, Lisa	Riddell, Brian
Blais, Stephen	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rosenberg, Bill
Bouma, Will	Gualtieri, Silvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Bourgouin, Guy	Hamid, Zee	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bowman, Stephanie	Hardeman, Ernie	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Harris, Mike	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Bresee, Ric	Hazell, Andrea	Sattler, Peggy
Burch, Jeff	Holland, Kevin	Saunderson, Brian
Calandra, Paul	Hsu, Ted	Schreiner, Mike
Cerjanec, Rob	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Trevor	Shamji, Adil
Cho, Stan	Jordan, John	Shaw, Sandy
Ciriello, Monica	Kanapathi, Logan	Smith, Dave
Clancy, Aislinn	Kernaghan, Terence	Smith, David
Clark, Steve	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, Graydon
Coe, Lorne	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Laura
Collard, Lucille	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smyth, Stephanie
Cooper, Michelle	Leardi, Anthony	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Tabuns, Peter
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lumsden, Neil	Tangri, Nina
Darouze, George	Mamakwa, Sol	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Denault, Billy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dixon, Jess	McCrimmon, Karen	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dowie, Andrew	McGregor, Graham	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Downey, Doug	McKenney, Catherine	Tsao, Jonathan
Dunlop, Jill	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vanthof, John
Fairclough, Lee	Oosterhoff, Sam	Vaugeois, Lise
Fife, Catherine	Pang, Billy	Vickers, Paul
Firin, Mohamed	Parsa, Michael	Wai, Daisy
Flack, Rob	Pasma, Chandra	Watt, Tyler
Ford, Doug	Piccini, David	Williams, Charmaine A.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 114; the nays are 0.

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

Motion agreed to.

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

The House recessed from 1152 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Today we have the Police Association of Ontario at Queen's Park. I would like to welcome the hard-working men and women in uniform from

the York Regional Police Association: Andre Boteju, Mike Buchanan, Heath Miller, Mason Baines, Al Robinson.

Thank you to the York Regional Police Association, all the men and women in uniform, for doing an amazing job in Markham and York region. Thank you for being here.

Ms. Doly Begum: The guests are not inside the House, but they are outside. I would like to take a moment to welcome all the workers, the members of the Ontario Federation of Labour who are right outside the building. They're marching in to stand up for workers' rights, for labour rights across this province. I just want to say welcome to the OFL members who are doing their convention this—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Remember, we do not make political statements during introduction of visitors.

I recognize the member from Markham–Thornhill.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: They are not here yet; they are on the way to the gallery.

Today we welcome the special guest Thamarai Subramanian, accompanied by her son Samaran Thiagarajan Thamarai. She is a renowned poet and lyricist from Tamil Nadu, India, widely respected for her contribution to Tamil literature and film, as well as for strong advocacy for social justice and women's rights. Her work has continued to inspire so many young people in Tamil Nadu and India.

I would also like to welcome Hector Devasagayam. He is a dedicated publisher at the Tamil Mirror—he has been pushing our government's message, especially during the COVID time—with 20 years of service at the Tamil Mirror.

We also welcome Velupullai Sivapathasundram.

They are up there. Please join me in welcoming the special guest Thamarai Subramanian, accompanied by her son Samaran Thiagarajan Thamarai. Welcome to Queen's Park.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LIFE LEASES ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LES BAUX VIAGERS

Mr. Racinsky moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 71, An act respecting life leases / Projet de loi 71, Loi concernant les baux viagers.

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 briefly explain the bill?

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The bill enacts the Life Leases Act, 2025, which establishes a legislative framework for life leases in Ontario. A life lease is a written agreement that entitles a person to occupy a residential unit for life or for a fixed term of not less than a prescribed minimum period.

The act defines certain terms, and the act also prohibits a life lease sponsor from providing false or misleading in-

formation in relation to any matter governed by the act or its regulations. It introduces penalties as well as regulation-making powers, including powers to govern financial disclosures, reserve funds, meeting of life lease holders, terms of life leases and other matters necessary for the effective administration of the act.

This bill is about protecting seniors and ensuring that we have a broad range of affordable housing for residents across this province. I appreciate being able to share a bit about this bill.

1505756 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2025

Ms. Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr24, An Act to revive 1505756 Ontario Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

ACME RESTORATION INC. ACT, 2025

Ms. Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr25, An Act to revive Acme Restoration Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

1758195 ONTARIO LTD. ACT, 2025

Ms. Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr26, An Act to revive 1758195 Ontario Ltd.

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

First reading agreed to.

PEMBROKE AND AREA AIRPORT COMMISSION ACT, 2025

MPP Denault moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr35, An Act to amend the Pembroke and Area Airport Commission Act, 1992.

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

First reading agreed to.

PETITIONS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition here from some really organized, very active folks in the riding—a lot of seniors—who have been calling on the government to raise social assistance rates.

Ontario's social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising cost of living, including food and rent, which has been extremely difficult.

They have actually called on the Premier as well as the ministry multiple times, and this petition has been signed by over 230 organizations, which recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program—the ODSP and OW.

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There are small increases to ODSP that have been done by the government that have actually left citizens below the poverty line. Both they and those who receive OW are struggling to survive, and there's been cases of deaths due to homelessness, starvation.

So they're calling on the government to just recognize the reality and increase social assistance rates just so they could keep up with their basic livelihood.

This is a petition that I truly support. I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Olivia to take it to the Clerks.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Jessica Bell: This is a petition entitled, "Hands Off Our Schools."

It is a petition signed by parents, teachers, students who are opposed to the government's Bill 33, which takes away the rights of school board trustees to oversee a school board.

Many of these people are parents, former teachers. They're also concerned about Bill 33's meddling in how student unions manage themselves and run themselves. These changes could lead to essential student services like food banks, sexual assault centres, academic supports, campus radio stations and newspapers being threatened with their very existence.

They're calling for a repeal of Bill 33.

I support this petition, and I will be giving it to page Tristan.

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 19, 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 Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member from Mississauga–Malton.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I love it when I hear it: "I recognize the member of Mississauga–Malton," and I always say thank you. Thank you,

God, the supreme God, for giving me the physical health and mental health so that I could represent the riding of Mississauga–Malton. Thank you to the residents of Mississauga–Malton. Thank you for your support and for giving me the opportunity to represent. Many times, I think it's actually not even a dream come true; even I didn't even dream of this. Thank you to my extended family for your support. I would not have been here if you were not there to support me.

But today, I rise to talk about building Ontario. Building Ontario is not a single person's effort; it is a team effort. Thank you to all my caucus colleagues under the leadership of Premier Ford for working together and making sure that more people are working, we have stronger revenue, we have transformations happening in education, providing opportunity to all Ontarians.

Madam Speaker, you were not here, but I do remember in 2018, when we walked into this government. I still remember that the Premier said it's like a bankrupt company: no transportation projects, traffic chaos, schools were closing, 300,000 manufacturing jobs going away, only 611 long-term beds, no LRT, no subway, no expansion of highways.

And in order to do everything, we need money, and who's going to pay for it? Should we go back to the people, ask them for more? Increase our taxes, increase our fees to increase our revenue? This is where the leadership matters: The Premier said no, we're not going to go back and increase the taxes. We're not going to go back and make the people of Ontario suffer. We're actually going to build a better, stronger Ontario together. That's exactly what, over the last seven years, the data shows. Due to the policies of this government and the hard work of all the caucus members on this side, we have LRTs, we have hospitals, we have schools being built, we have infrastructure being built. Subways are being built. There used to be two lines going left and right, up and down; now it looks like there is something coming up.

All that has been possible because the government focused clearly on one thing: building a stronger, more prosperous Ontario. And that's how we are protecting the people of this province: through action, through policies.

Because the truth is simple, Madam Speaker: People are feeling the pressure of global uncertainty. I've heard it a lot of times: "Oh, we're trying to talk about COVID. We're trying to talk about tariffs." But when we go to the people and ask them, when we ask these questions, when they ask these words, they are not just words. They are the real troubles. They're the real problems. People are worried, and they want a government who can stand up and fight against tariffs; who are able to support and put measures against pandemics.

Tariffs, inflation and supply chain disruptions have created anxiety for workers, families, job creators. And when people say they're worried, we listen. We work together. We respond.

One of the clearest messages we heard from the people is about manufacturing. They needed help to build resilience, so that they could continue creating good-paying

jobs here at home. I talked about a global village. We are a country with 150 nationalities, 202 languages. We are a real global village. Whether it is clinical research, whether it's manufacturing medicine, whether it is doing research and innovation, we have talent. And we are the gateway to the global economy in bringing those investments and serving back the world.

That is why, to support these manufacturing facilities, our government has invested \$16.5 million through the Ontario Together Trade Fund, helping companies adopt to US tariffs, re-shore critical production and strengthen supply chains right here in Ontario. We are helping and making sure we modernize, scale up and stay competitive. The reason is simple, Madam Speaker: Our workers have talent. They're willing to work, to give back, to support, to grow, to prosper.

But it is responsible that the jobs are there. To make sure the jobs are there, that's what we're doing: We're helping those job creators to reduce their costs, managing their revenue, so they can continue to stay afloat as we weather through this storm. That is the philosophy behind our plan. When industries face challenges, we help them not only to survive, but to grow. People want predictability. They want stability. They want a government that takes real step to lower the costs and increase the revenue. That is why we expanded energy efficiency programs in the province and introduced new rebates for energy-efficient home appliances, so that the people have lower costs.

Madam Speaker, we are making sure we're saving money, lowering bills and ensuring people keep more money in their pocket. We want to do that, as we want to be building the strongest economy in the G7.

We heard from seniors, families, health care workers about the growing needs of long-term care. They told us they want more staff, better care, more support for the people. Thank you, Minister, for making sure that we're investing \$180 million to attract nearly 8,000 highly skilled nurses in long-term care. And I'm so proud of my daughter, Suvidhi Anand, who is actually in the University of Windsor and wants to be a nurse and give back to the society while earning a decent income.

These are transformational investments. It strengthens safety, improves care, ensures that residents get the dignity and support they deserve. Those seniors took care of us; it is our time to take care of them.

Madam Speaker, I see the time clock running, so I don't have much time. I'm just going to go straight. What we are doing is we are helping and supporting the Ontario municipalities by \$50 million, bringing their fund to \$600 million in 2026. We are making sure we strengthen energy security, attract investment and position our province as a global leader in the clean economy. We are making sure we compete globally. That is why our government is making sure we build a better, stronger Ontario, and I urge each and every member: Let's come together and build a better, stronger Ontario.

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The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Mississauga–Malton for your speech on the fall economic statement.

I have a question about Keel Digital Solutions. Keel Digital Solutions received \$7.5 million from the Skills Development Fund even though that company was already being audited and the audit had been sent to the OPP by another ministry, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

My question to you is, do you think that it is a good idea to continue to support the Minister of Labour, or should you be asking internally for his resignation?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, the question is about the Skills Development Fund. Is it a good idea to continue supporting the workers of this Ontario, the workers who are building this province? Absolutely.

Madam Speaker, there are so many good organizations in my riding of Mississauga–Malton; for example, the masonry council. I had an opportunity to visit them and have seen first-hand that there were youth, especially Black youth, some from my riding of Mississauga–Malton, who could not afford the training. It's a great virtuous cycle, Madam Speaker.

We as the government take a little bit of money from the budget, we invest into those students, those students get the training, they go back and work, become financially independent and start paying taxes. I always say government gets the first cut. We are able to take that money and invest back into the province of Ontario.

So, absolutely, Madam Speaker, I believe the SDF is a great way to support our workers and progress our province. I'm proud of the SDF fund and we will continue to work on that.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: Thank you to the member for Mississauga–Malton for his remarks.

In the fall economic statement, it's proposed that the HST is removed for first-time homebuyers. We're hearing from folks in the sector that are saying that doesn't go far enough in order to spur new home-building, which would also support the skilled trades workers that would be working on building those homes.

My question to the member for Mississauga–Malton is, does he think the measures in the budget are enough to help ensure that we can re-kick-start home-building, or does he think the government and the fall economic statement should go further?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for that question.

Many times, I have these remarks, and I always say, "A drop, drop, drop added can become a river and can move the mountains." Yes, absolutely. Whether it's a reduction in HST, support both from the federal and the provincial governments working together, making sure the first-time homebuyers get this benefit and reduce their cost, absolutely, this is a great idea.

But this is not the only thing that we are doing, Madam Speaker. With the help and support of the Ministry of Housing,

we are taking many more measures to make sure that we are building these homes faster at a lower cost.

I want to say thank you to the mayor of Mississauga, who has done transformational work by reducing the development charges so that those people who want to build a life, a family and have their own first home, they get all the help possible.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Thank you to the fantastic member for Mississauga–Malton on his statements and for beginning his statement by recognizing the God-given privilege it is to be in this place. It is a privilege.

My question to the member is about the Ontario Together Trade Fund. The 2025 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review outlined an additional investment of \$100 million into the fund, bringing the total to \$150 million. Could the member expand on why it's important to support our trade-impacted industries, protect our supply chains and help businesses seize the opportunities in this new situation we find ourselves in?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Before I start, I want to say thank you to the member from Wellington, which is actually not too far from our riding. Many, many times we talk about the prosperity that is coming into his riding and what a wonderful member they have chosen for the perfect timing for that.

Your question is absolutely correct. Thank you to the hard-working people of Mississauga–Malton. We actually have Shahid Mughal and Nergis Mughal in the House right now, and their son Hamza is in the trades. These are the people who are making sure that we elect a government to protect workers, businesses and community. Through the Ontario Together Trade Fund, as you said, we are investing the money to make sure that we build the capacity, enhance trained resiliency and make the necessary investments to successfully expand into the new markets by supporting Ontario businesses to pivot production.

Madam Speaker, we are positioning our economy to be more competitive, resilient and self-reliant, allowing us—not just this storm but any storm which we're going to get in the future, we'll be there to build a stronger Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I have a lot of respect for the member opposite. He's always very thoughtful and well researched in his responses. Unfortunately, he has to carry the baggage of the decisions this government makes—certainly not his fault in that sense, but this government has been the first for many things. Now we've seen food banks and people advocating against poverty coming here in droves to the chamber to fight, and we've seen requests for streets-to-home types of programs, but this government is the first to institute a homes-to-streets program, because we have never seen so many encampments. We have never seen the level of homelessness. We've never seen the food bank usage.

Why doesn't this government find space in their budgets to be able to tackle food insecurity and the lack of housing for those who need it the most?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, I want to say thank you to the member on the other side for that question. We are both champions, so maybe those kind words he said were a little bit biased, about being a champion from the same university, so thank you for the kind words for me.

You talked about affordability, but I want to add a little bit of something on which I have some data. I want to actually take the data about what we can do to lower the cost and make sure there is affordability for the people of Ontario. What we did is that we're making sure that the people on the Ontario Disability Support Program are supported. How are we doing it? The rates have increased by 20% since September 2022. It never increased for so many years, so that's why we made it—sure, we have inflation—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: Yesterday, the Premier said he thinks that the HST rebate on the cost of a new home should be for anyone who wants to purchase a new home, but in the fall economic statement it's only limited to first-time homebuyers.

My question for the member from Mississauga–Malton is whether he agrees with the Premier or not that the HST rebate should exist for all homebuyers?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, this shows the big heart that our Premier has. We have the best Premier ever.

Madam Speaker, I talk about this as a family man. I have two kids, and many times both my kids will come and they say, "I need this." I always use the simple formula that I learned from my dad. My dad said that we want to make sure—it is your job not to say yes to everything unless you can afford it, you can provide it and it is needed.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, I'm thankful to the federal government and the provincial government for taking the first step in making sure those who are buying their first home are getting help actually at a time when it's needed most.

I applaud this HST reduction for first-time homebuyers, and I look forward to many more supports coming for homebuyers.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Brian Riddell: I would just like to ask this member, who I learned a lot about in my first term—his knowledge is excellent. I would like to know more about the fall economic statement and some of the positive things, besides the HST—which I think is a great idea. I don't think, in Ontario's history, anyone has ever done anything like this.

1330

Could you elaborate a little bit more on some of the wonderful things that are—

As I said before, development will not happen in the Ring of Fire at the Frontier PAK lithium site or anywhere else without the free, prior, informed consent of the rights holders that live on these lands.

Speaker, rights holders from Treaty 9 territory across Ontario have the right and the power to say no to resource development on their lands, to say no to this government. It is time for this government to take a new approach to respect and honor treaty rights, inherent rights, title and the principles of free, prior, informed consent.

Now I'm going to share the rest of my time with the member from University–Rosedale. Meegwetich.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Kiiwetinoong for your presentation and speaking about the fundamental importance of free, prior and informed consent for all new mining and development projects taking place in Ontario.

As I'm speaking right now, I just want to acknowledge there is a protest outside being organized by workers—teachers, personal support workers, educational assistants, workers from across Ontario—and they're out there, outside Queen's Park right now, because they are very angry at what this government is doing with Bill 33. They're very angry. Bill 33 passed earlier today. Unfortunately, Bill 33 is not going to make our province better. It's not going to make our province better.

I'm here to talk about the fall economic statement. This fall economic statement is a document that is chock full of disappointment. If Ontarians were expecting progress on the issues that really matter to them—like affordability, like making sure that their kid gets a good education at school, that health care outcomes are improved and it's easier to get a family doctor, that it will be easier for them to afford groceries when they go to the supermarket or it will be easier for them to find or keep a job—then they'll find that they will be sorely disappointed by this fall economic statement.

This is what this fall economic statement is showing us today. It is a snapshot of how grim things are getting in Ontario right now. Over 700,000 people are out of work and looking for a job. In the fall economic statement, it shows that unemployment continues to rise. It's at 7.8%. This is the highest it's been in a generation. When we're looking at young people, unemployment has reached 22%—shocking.

We are losing jobs in construction, in manufacturing, in forestry, in agriculture. Doug Ford is a jobs disaster, and I'm not seeing anything in this fall economic statement that's going to take us down a better path than where we're heading right now.

What I also see when I look at the fall economic statement is that the government has thrown in the towel on fixing the housing crisis. Housing starts continue to collapse. Numbers came out yesterday from Statistics Canada, and what we see, again, is that housing starts continue to plummet. Surprisingly, housing starts in other provinces aren't plummeting. When we look at Alberta, at Manitoba, at Quebec, they do not have the same housing issues that we have here. The collapse in housing starts is a uniquely Ontario problem, created by a government that thinks just giving everything to the private sector is going

to solve our affordability crisis, even though that experiment has been tried for 25 years. It did not work then, and it is not working now.

What we've also seen in the fall economic statement is that funding to health care, when we factor in inflation and population growth, is going to be cut. When you actually look at the numbers, it looks like a \$36-million-or-so increase, but when you factor in inflation and population growth, what we will see is that the issues that we are facing with our health care system now are just going to get worse.

The issues that we have around emergency rooms closing are going to continue. Issues around emergency rooms being places where people have to wait hour after hour after hour to be seen by a doctor and to have their medical condition treated—those wait times are going to remain too long. We are seeing issues with family doctors—there being a shortage of family doctors, there being a shortage of nurse practitioners able to provide primary care. There's nothing in this fall economic statement that indicates those issues are going to be solved.

Then we also have the issue with education, which has been the topic of the last few months. It's certainly been a big topic in my riding of University–Rosedale, because what we have seen since 2018 is, year in and year out, this government has cut funding to our school boards, and it has impacted the quality of education that our children receive. It has meant that schools have less staff.

I visit all my schools at the start of the year; I check in with the administrator and the principal. I say hi and I ask them, “What's going on with your school right now? Overwhelmingly, what I hear is that there are mental health challenges; there's violence in the classroom; there are teacher shortages; there are not enough educational assistants to provide care in the classroom to ensure that a classroom is well managed and kids who are maybe having a tough day, maybe experiencing dysregulation, might be struggling on a whole host of issues get the one-on-one attention they need to ensure that the classroom remains a place where kids can learn. There are not enough educational assistants. We are seeing vice-principals being moved out of schools. Schools that used to have a vice-principal now have none at all. We are seeing teachers that specialize in one-on-one reading assistance to help kids in grades 1 and 2 catch up and learn how to read. They're being surplussed, moved out of schools.

When I look at the fall economic statement and I look at how much funding is going to be going to schools this year and next year and the year after, what we see very clearly, when you factor in inflation and population growth, is that there are going to be cuts.

Kids are our future. Many of you have children. Maybe some of you send your kids to public school. I want our kids to go to school and get the best public-school education they can possibly get so that they can reach their full potential. I think everyone here wants that. But that's not going to happen if we continue down this path of cut, cut, cut and cut. We are cutting bone; we are cutting muscle.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: My question is to the member from University–Rosedale. Earlier we were just talking about how the Premier thinks that we should remove the HST off all new homes, but, meanwhile, the finance minister, I guess, has a different viewpoint. So my question to the member is, do you know who is really in charge?

Ms. Jessica Bell: That's an excellent question from the member for Ajax. I think that's a question that needs to be asked to the government.

What I can say is, when we're talking about fixing our housing shortage, which is what you're partially alluding to, this government has just failed on all fronts to address our housing supply shortage issues. Housing starts have gone down year in and year out since this government got into power. We have been presenting practical measures to this government to increase the amount of housing that we are building and to align the kind of housing that we are building with the need that we are seeing in Ontario. That means building more affordable housing, more student housing, more starter homes for first-time home-buyers. It's not in the fall economic statement.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: My question is for the member. We increased the homelessness prevention fund by \$202 million about two years ago, and we've distributed it across 47 municipalities.

I have to tell you, I was disappointed, because when I had a briefing with my region of Peel and I asked them, "How many net new shelter beds have you created with that additional funding?"—it was about a 40% increase for the region of Peel—they were unable to actually provide me with that information.

So my question over to you is, have you engaged with your municipality, what they have done with that increased amount of funding? How many net new beds has the city of Toronto provided for their residents? We have also signed a historic deal for the city of Toronto, provided billions of dollars in additional funding. So how many net new shelter beds have been created in this municipality with all of the investments that we have made previously?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the Minister for Long-Term Care for that question. When we're talking about the government's approach to funding shelter and affordable housing, what we're really talking about is a shell game. The government moves a shrinking amount of money from one program to another. At the same time, the government has hampered municipalities' ability to have developers pay their fair share to affordable housing through the development fee process.

Developers used to have to pay a small percentage for every home they built, and that money was allocated to shelter and affordable housing. With Bill 23, the government did away with all of that. As a result, municipalities across Ontario have less money for shelter and affordable housing at a time when the need is going through the roof.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Jeff Burch: A question for my friend from Kiiwetinoong: He has a very unique riding with some very unique issues. I'm wondering if this budget addressed any of those issues, and if there are things that could have been in this budget that were not that would address some of these very unique issues in his riding.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch to the member for the question. I know we have a very unique riding. We have 31 First Nations in my riding, four small municipalities. Out of those 31 First Nations, there are 24 fly-in First Nations, so getting around the riding is very tricky.

I share that because of the cost of living, the cost of travel. For example, Fort Severn, the most northerly community in Ontario, to Thunder Bay is probably, I would say, maybe \$1,500 to \$2,000 one way. Just imagine the return.

1400

I think those are some of the things that we don't acknowledge: the cost of living, the cost of food, some of the issues that we face as First Nations—the addictions rate, but also the drugs that are coming in from gangs, and then also the policing, the safety aspect of it. These issues are sitting on the back burner of this government, and we need more help. We cannot just spin on economic development. We cannot—

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: I'll be sharing my time this afternoon with the member from Don Valley East.

Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure to be with everyone to debate the fall economic statement this afternoon. Ontario is living through one of the toughest cost-of-living moments in a generation. Families are stretched thin, businesses are fighting to stay afloat, and young people are facing the bleakest job market in decades. A fall economic statement should rise to this moment. Instead, this one is shrinking from it.

Today, I want to focus on three failures in this economic update: the youth unemployment crisis the government refuses to confront; the lack of any tax cuts or meaningful affordability relief for middle class families and small businesses; and a quiet but costly change in parallel legislation, which is removing protections on loyalty reward programs, letting them expire as a result of time, costing families real money.

This government refuses to admit it, but young Ontarians are experiencing a full-blown emergency. Ontario has the highest youth unemployment rate in Canada. It's the worst in 33 years. In fact, there are 200,000 young Ontarians who cannot find work, and they now wait almost four months on average just to land a job. That is the longest wait in nearly three decades.

Speaker, I meet young people in Orléans each and every week. They're doing everything right. They're upgrading their skills. They're working part time, trying to send out résumés. They're taking internships. Yet they're still hitting a wall.

So what does this government offer them? They're offered a Skills Development Fund that is riddled with

scandal and mismanagement, a fund where millions went to a training program operating alongside an adult entertainment club, a fund where the Auditor General found political interference and a total lack of accountability, a fund that underwent a forensic audit which uncovered irregularities so serious that the government themselves called the Ontario Provincial Police.

Madam Speaker, young people don't need more scandal; they need a job. They need an opportunity. That's what Ontario Liberals have offered. Ontario Liberals have proposed a youth wage subsidy program called the youth career fund, a \$450-million program to create tens of thousands of real, paid jobs, helping employers hire young workers, paid roles in the trades, in health care, in tech, in small businesses and in our communities—a real pathway forward, not political theatre.

Now, we don't want to eliminate the Skills Development Fund, but we want to fix it. We want the government to clean it up. We want the government to remove the minister who let this happen and restore it to what it should be: a launch pad for talent, not a playground for insiders.

Ontario's young people are in crisis. One in five can't find work, and it now takes almost the entire summer—three and a half months—just to land a job, the worst in decades. Instead of fixing the problem, the government turned the Skills Development Fund into a billion-dollar boondoggle.

Ontario Liberals have a real plan: a youth wage subsidy to create paid jobs across the province. Because young people don't need slogans like "Getting It Done;" they need an opportunity to start building their future.

The fall economic statement offers nothing—not a single tax cut for middle-class families; families hit with higher mortgage renewals, families hit with higher rent payments, higher grocery bills, higher utility bills—including the cost of electricity in Ontario—and rising municipal property taxes because this government continues to download to our cities and towns.

What does this government offer families? Nothing. Not one income tax reduction, not one break from home heating or hydro, not one measure that makes everyday life more affordable.

Small businesses, they're facing higher tariffs, higher borrowing costs. They're facing shrinking margins. They too get no meaningful support from the government.

Now, the government claims that Ontario is open for business, but talk to small business owners in Orléans and Ottawa and across the province, Madam Speaker, and you'll learn a different story. That's why Ontario Liberals have proposed a plan. We've proposed income-tax cuts for middle-class families. We've proposed taking HST off home heating and hydro bills. We've proposed small-business tax relief to help small business owners keep more of their money in the business or hire our friends and neighbours at their shop. This is real affordability—not bumper stickers, not slogans, but actual relief for families and small businesses.

The fall economic statement gives middle-class families nothing—no income tax cuts, no HST relief on home

heating or hydro, nothing for small businesses struggling to hire new employees. That's why Ontario Liberals put forward practical, responsible tax relief and a responsible and practical youth employment strategy: because we are focused on what matters most.

In parallel to the fall economic statement, there is another change that is potentially even more dangerous. The government is removing Ontario's consumer protections on loyalty reward points. Right now, loyalty reward points cannot expire because of the passage of time. With the government's legislation, your grocery points, your travel points, your credit card points—points that families rely on to make ends meet in tough times, sometimes to buy Christmas presents, sometimes to top up the grocery bill or the bill at the pharmacy, some used maybe to visit family in an emergency or over the holidays—government wants to allow corporations to simply wipe them out. This change makes life more expensive at a time when Ontarians are already stretched to the limit.

Ontario Liberals brought in the protections for loyalty points, and it is astonishing to me that this government wants to get rid of them—potentially an absolutely enormous tax increase on Ontario families. Ontario families have worked hard for those points; they deserve to keep them.

So, the fall economic statement is a missed opportunity: no plan for young workers, no relief for middle-class families, no support for small businesses and a quiet rollback on consumer protections and the elimination of people's hard-earned reward points. Ontario deserves better. Young people deserve better. Families deserve better. Small businesses and entrepreneurs deserve better.

That's why Ontario Liberals are fighting for an economy that works for everyone, not just insiders, not just those at the top, not just those who have access to the government, but for families, for young people, for those who are building our province.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member from Don Valley East.

1410

Mr. Adil Shamji: It gives me great pleasure to rise in this important chamber to discuss the issues that matter most to our constituents and the people of Ontario. On this occasion, I rise to discuss the fall economic statement.

The fall economic statement in the fiscal cycle of a Legislature or Parliament should be a pretty momentous occasion. It is an opportunity to reflect on the fiscal year to date, to identify and realign the government's priorities, and to take concrete action that meets the moment of the challenges that a province or a country face. The fall economic statement of this government and that Minister of Finance regrettably missed the moment entirely.

Now, when I first arrived at this Legislature in 2022, coming from a full-time career in emergency medicine, I felt pretty out of place. As a physician in a Legislature surrounded largely by lawyers, economists, business people and career politicians, it felt as though someone with a background in critical care or intensive care may not necessarily fit in quite so well.

Well, I can say, as I reflect on this fall economic statement, it feels like I belong here, because everything in this province has become an emergency. Whether it is the state of our health care system, the state of education, the state of housing, whether it's home care, or the things that matter most to Ontarians, it certainly is apparent that everything has fallen into a state of disrepair and crisis.

Let's reflect a little bit on that. Let's start with housing. No one can deny that, in this province, we face pretty tough economic headwinds—not just in this province, rather, but across the entire country. And yet, for some reason, Ontario remains the only province that is, by far, dropping the ball on making sure there are enough homes for everyone in Ontario.

Consider this: Every other province in our confederation is building more homes this year than last, or they're stable. Only Ontario is building fewer than what we built last year. And not just by a small shot: We have a double-digit negative percentage in housing starts compared to the same time last year. The last time I looked at it, it was negative 18%. I'm sympathetic to concerns that interest rates were high. I think there have now been 10 interest rate drops in the last roughly year or so—or, rather, 10 quarter-percentage drops, at least 2.5%, if my memory serves me correctly. Yet the homes that the Premier promised would pop up across the province like mushrooms simply aren't materializing. In fact, they're disappearing.

This fall economic statement had an opportunity to do something about that. It had an opportunity to take bold action. Instead, what we got was a half measure, a proposal to rebate the HST on new homes for first-time homebuyers. But that is a solution that every other province in the country will get to enjoy, despite the fact that they are performing to a vastly superior degree on home-building starts relative to us.

We have a uniquely exceptional crisis here in our home-building sector, and that demands a uniquely exceptional solution. As I've said now, as the Ontario Liberal caucus has said now for some time, what we need to see from this government, what we should have seen in this budget, is that there should have been an HST rebate on new primary residences for all homebuyers. This would, for example, successfully allow senior citizens to be able to downsize out of two- and three- and four-bedroom homes, now that the children have moved out, and move into condos, for example—opening up more family-style and sized housing for people who are trying to move up the housing ladder. This is not something the government was interested in doing.

They could have eliminated the land transfer tax for first-time homebuyers, for not-for-profits and for seniors. This government was not interested in that.

They could have made sizable investments so that we can eliminate development charges, which are easily adding \$100,000—close to even \$200,000 in some cases—to the cost of new homes. But this was not something the government was interested in doing.

That's not to say that this government, in the fall economic statement, is afraid to invest—or rather, to spend money; I dispute whether many of these things are investments, but there's certainly a lot of money being spent.

We're going to see a deficit that is, I believe, in excess of \$13 billion this year, despite a government that is actually collecting record taxes this year as well. The high-tax Tories collect more tax this year and under this Premier than any other in our province's history. And yet they try to go around telling us that they are reducing costs for Ontarians.

But if you're trying to access health care, good luck with that because, in fact, people are being asked to spend more than ever before. They're being asked to spend more to access virtual primary care, despite the fact that it is medically necessary care that is supposed to be covered under OHIP. They're still being forced to take out their credit cards if they want to access virtual primary care providers, and this government is not doing anything to reign that in.

Ontario patients are still being asked to pay with their credit card for medically necessary care at certain nurse practitioner-led clinics that aren't funded by the province. I celebrate the work that nurse practitioners do. I believe that they should be treated the same way that family doctors are. And when they provide equivalent medically necessary care, it should be covered by one's OHIP card, not the credit card. We'll always stand up for that and for including them in our health care system.

This is a government that has made life more expensive for the people of Ontario, and the fall economic statement has done nothing to address that.

And then, of course, it's hard to ignore the people who were outside this Legislature earlier this afternoon who are concerned about the state of our education system. Of course, I am as well. Our education system that continues to be funded, as it has been for the last seven years, below the rate of inflation, resulting in out-of-control class sizes and increasingly complex classes where there isn't the right mix of educational assistants and special needs workers to support the kids who are there. Ultimately, we're seeing crumbling school infrastructure because we can't get the repairs and the maintenance in place to ensure that students and educators have the support that they require.

Against a backdrop of such a profoundly unimpressive track record on some areas that are of major importance to the people of Ontario, how is it that this government still manages to rack up—

Interjection.

Mr. Adil Shamji: No—an over-\$13-billion deficit. How do they manage to do it? Well, they spend so much to achieve so little by doing things like spending \$2.5 million on a Skills Development Fund, which in principle could be a good idea, but which has been tarnished by this Minister of Labour's mismanagement of the program and tarnished by every single Conservative member in this house who has stood up to defend that Minister of Labour.

In an affordability crisis, an unemployment crisis, a housing crisis, a health care crisis—all of this Premier's and this government's creation—how is it that this government can justify spending millions upon millions of dollars supporting friends and family? Because that's essentially who it is: friends and family who operate night-clubs and strip clubs, friends and family who send generous invitations to attend fancy Parisian weddings and offer glass seats at Maple Leafs games. And for those individuals, those friends and family of the Premier, the Minister of Labour and some members in this chamber even right now, Christmas sure came early.

Christmas is supposed to be about friends and family: the friends, family and people of Ontario. Instead, all this government has to offer are minuscule handouts that they hope can appease all of us who are suffering in Ontario, as their friends and family get off with millions and millions of dollars.

So does the fall economic statement meet the moment? Not even close, and I urge the members across—you may not be able to say this; I know that the members across are handed their speaking remarks from the people in the back. I know that they won't be able to publicly speak out against the disaster that is this fall economic statement. But I hope that behind closed doors, in your caucus, members, you'll call out the Minister of Labour. You'll ask the Premier, "Why isn't more being done to support health care, or housing, or education or the environment?"

1420

And I look forward to working with every member in the House on delivering the things that Ontarians are asking for. But I would remind all members in the House what they're asking for. I will remind all members in the House that what Ontarians are asking for is not a \$50- or \$100-billion tunnel under the 401. They didn't ask for booze in convenience stores one year early at a cost of \$1.9 billion. They just want a health care professional, like a nurse practitioner or a family doctor. They want a home that they can afford. They want to have confidence that they'll be able to pay their rent next month. This government is not interested in doing that and this fall economic statement does not deliver that.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank the member for his remarks.

We talked quite a bit about affordability in this House. We do that. I know the member opposite did as well. But one of the things that our government did was reduce the WSIB premium rates to the lowest level in 50 years, saving employers approximately \$150 million annually and, in addition, returning \$4 billion in surplus to safe employers through the WSIB rebates, recognizing those who've maintained a very strong health and safety record. So these measures are helping businesses reinvest in their operations, retain workers and grow Ontario's economy.

Can the member opposite advise if they will support this bill, given that these are responsible, pro-business meas-

ures that reward safety, protect jobs and strengthen Ontario's economic resilience?

Mr. Adil Shamji: I thank the member from Thornhill for that very thoughtful question. Of course, I'll support small businesses and, of course, I will support workers. It's why I stand on this side of the House alongside my colleagues and say that small businesses need more tax incentives; they need more tax credits. It's why we've called for a halving of the small business tax rate, and it's why I'm perplexed—despite your remarks, and I believe that you want to help small businesses as well—that your government won't support us in cutting in half the small business tax rate.

As it relates specifically to your question on WSIB: I want to see the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board insurance scheme be as strong as possible. It's why, again, those of us on this side of the House have stood up and said, "Let's make sure it applies to everyone, including people who work in retirement homes." Again, this is a government that has voted against that. So let's make the WSIB the best it can be, and let's make sure—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member from Humber River–Black Creek.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I want to thank the two members that spoke. They spoke well, as always.

The facts about the SDF feel kind of like a movie; but the kind of movie where you would question the plot as being even realistic at all, because it's the type of thing you can't even imagine would happen: millions and millions of dollars shoveled to their friends. There was a guy that got training funding but had no one to train. He just put it all, I guess, in his pocket. God knows where that money went. Who knows, right?

You have examples of people who were picked, bottom of the pile to the top, and then those applicants are being questioned by the OPP and flagged by other ministries. You just can't make it up, and yet here we are. This is happening.

So my question is, why is this minister still minister? Who's protecting him? Why does he still continue to be in this role, following such a litany of embarrassment?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Clearly there are enormous problems with the way in which the SDF is being managed. Now, it should be a good program. I went to All Pro Electrical in Ottawa last week and spoke to the owners of the company and four of the members who are participating in the SDF program there. By the way, they didn't use a lobbyist to get any money; they qualified on their own, on their own merits. And for the workers at All Pro, it's doing an amazing job.

But as you rightly pointed out, it's how the government is managing the program. It's too often who you know is how you're getting the cash. It's owners of strip clubs and the examples that you've put forward. It makes me feel like this might be part of the government's actual strategy to attract Hollywood back to Toronto, because this could make for a really good movie. Imagine a wedding where people are coming with envelopes of cash to give to the bride. It's kind of like the opening scene of the Godfather,

really, so we could turn this into a really made-in-Ontario, made-in-Canada—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question? I recognize the member from Beaches–East York.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's always great to see you in that chair.

My question is to the member for Orléans. We all know the high rate of youth unemployment right now. It's certainly a different time, different situation from when we all grew up, when jobs were aplenty. Anyone could get them. You could get multiple jobs in a summer. It was great to boost your confidence and your pocketbook.

The Liberals just proposed this youth career fund the other day, which is kind of based on the federal Canada Summer Jobs Program. We had young people in the chamber keen on it. It was logical, economical, smart policy, but yet this government did not support it. Why do you think that is?

Mr. Stephen Blais: It really baffles my mind why this government doesn't want to support teenagers and young people up to the age of 30.

I got my first job delivering the Ottawa Citizen when I was in grade 7, and I've never not had a job since then. You're absolutely right: It was easy in the 1990s and 2000s to get a part-time job as a young person.

I have a teenager at home, and I'm exposed to many teenagers as a result. These are some awesome kids, and last summer one of my son's friends went to 50 different small businesses in Orléans and still couldn't get a basic student part-time job at local shops, at the grocery store packing groceries etc. Clearly there is a problem.

What we proposed would have helped small businesses hire young people specifically to pack the groceries, to work the counter, to work on digital advancements etc. so that we can give them the start so they can save for university and have a little—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: I stand here today, Speaker—all we've heard today is about the SDF fund. I've sat here quietly, and it bewilders me, when our government has put out such a terrific fall economic statement. One of the things that is a highlight in there is what we're doing about Operation Deterrence and crime-fighting.

In January 2025, our government has taken bold action to protect Ontario's borders and communities with over 39,000 hours of ground patrols, 2,500 hours of aerial surveillance and more than 41,000 vehicle inspections. We have seized illegal firearms, drugs and stolen vehicles and disrupted human trafficking operations.

Can the member opposite tell us whether they support these efforts to secure our borders and keep dangerous criminals off our streets?

Mr. Stephen Blais: I absolutely support the efforts of the federal government to make our borders stronger. In fact, I was with Minister McGuinty just last weekend congratulating him on some of his work and investments as Minister of National Defence.

If you were listening to my remarks, in addition to speaking about the disastrous SDF, I also talked about how this government wants reward points to expire. They want your residents who accumulated points at Shoppers Drug Mart or Petro-Canada or any number of other reward programs to simply be allowed to lose those points because of the passage of time. That will be one of the highest tax increases in the history of our province.

In terms of fighting crime, this is the government that just made it harder for the police to enforce our laws in our communities. Instead of the police investigating crime and going out and catching bad guys, they're now going to be at the corner doing speed traps in front of schools and other sensitive areas of our community. Those cops should be out finding bad guys, not catching mom and dad who are having a bad day or in a rush trying to get to school.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

MPP Catherine McKenney: My question is for the member from Don Valley East. You'll recall that the government closed the consumption and treatment sites across the province, one in my riding—using false and misleading statistics, of course—and then promised to put in HART hubs, which, in addition to the consumption and treatment site, would have been a good addition.

1430

But in the fall economic statement, as far as you can tell, with your experience, is the funding there to adequately meet the needs of people with severe addictions, homelessness, to be able to pull people out of homelessness, connect them to mental health and social supports?

Mr. Adil Shamji: In short, the answer to that question is no, and this is a problem that could have been foreseen. When the legislation was brought forward, it was promised that there would be HART hubs galore and adequate treatment beds and all of these kinds of things. None of those things—well, a very small number of those things have materialized. Most of them are functioning in an immature state. In a number of cases—for example, when I hear about HART hubs that are functioning right now in Toronto, some of them consist of nothing more than literally a sign on a door, in some cases, just offering the same non-HART hub services that they were offering before. So this is a government that's very happy to make lots of announcements about the things that they say—

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

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I am pleased to be responding to Bill 68 today, and while I support its title, Plan to Protect Ontario, I don't see much in the bill that will address the many issues that I continually hear from my constituents in Haldimand–Norfolk. And once again, I see many missed opportunities by this government.

There is no doubt that the families in my riding and right across this province are suffering. And I don't see this government addressing key issues like affordability for families. I don't see this government addressing unemployment, especially for our young people, like we've heard this afternoon, who tell me that they don't see a

future in this province for themselves. Instead, once again, we see the prioritization of developers and private interests.

While this government and its education minister tinker with education by going after what I call the low-hanging fruit, I don't see a concrete action plan for the public services like education and health care. As usual, there's a lot that looks good on paper and makes for tasty government sound bites, but we don't see investments that make sense for our businesses and industry. There is lots of talk about protecting steelworkers, but the steelworkers at Nanticoke in my riding don't feel they are included in that statement.

There were some good things in the fall economic statement for the business community, as the member from Thornhill alluded to, namely the \$30-billion tariff relief package and the return of the WSIB surplus funds to eligible employers. But this government could have taken further steps, like lowering the small business tax rate from 3.2% to 2% and raising the threshold to access that rate from \$500,000 to at least \$700,000 and then indexing it to inflation—a missed opportunity. The minister could have also raised the Employer Health Tax exemption threshold from \$1 million to \$2.25 million to match Manitoba and index it to inflation, as well—another missed opportunity for this government and for our business community. Missed opportunities like these make it harder for our businesses to hire more of our young people, hire more staff, expand operations and keep prices affordable for their customers.

Some \$400 million through the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund to help rural and small communities build vital infrastructure: That includes roads and bridges. And I'm sure you are all tired by now of me talking about the Argyle Street bridge in Caledonia. It sits waiting for this government to take action, and we aren't sure why this government doesn't take action. A woman was actually kicked out of her home, the toll house, where she also operated a home-based business. She was kicked out in 2019. This government kicked a woman out of her home in anticipation of the bridge being reconstructed; it's now 2025—crickets. This poor woman could still be in her home because nothing is happening with respect to the reconstruction of the bridge. And yet, the Minister of Transportation and the finance minister, they stand up and they boast that they are getting shovels in the ground, they are building roads, bridges and whatever else. It seems to be a fable, though, in my riding. What are they waiting for, a national headline? This bridge was deemed in a state of deterioration many years ago. This is the government of the day, and they've got to get it done. So continuing to boast about pledging money to build and not building doesn't quite cut it for the people in my riding.

It's the same story with long-term care. On one hand, this government says they are working to keep people in their own homes longer. That seems like a really nice thought—and it is, if the supports actually existed to keep people in their own homes, but they don't exist. The \$2.1 billion to long-term care new builds—that reads great in a

headline and sounds good on the 6 o'clock news, but the truth is, long-term care is not being built in this province. The planned 64-bed expansion at Edgewater Gardens in Dunnville in my riding has been paused indefinitely due to a funding shortfall. The project has not been built and the current provincial funding level is considered inadequate to cover the construction costs.

In March 2021, the Ontario government announced that Edgewater Gardens was allocated 64 new long-term-care spaces as part of a plan to create a 128-bed home in a new build. Last year though, the expansion project was paused before construction had ever begun. The home's management cited that the current construction costs exceed the amount of provincial funding approved at that time. Administration in my office have gone through the proper channels to attempt to resolve this funding shortfall, because we desperately need these beds—no answers, no support, no beds.

The same is true down the road in Norfolk county in Port Dover, where the community was told a new facility would be built. Dover Cliffs was set to grow from 70 beds to 128. I've recently learned that there will be no expansion any time soon because the new owners of Dover Cliffs are prioritizing other projects. Where is the accountability for the community? Is there no process, no timeline for these operators to be held accountable?

This is why this government, with smiles on their faces, talks about keeping people in their own homes. They have to keep them in their own homes because long-term-care homes are not being built.

Back in 2023, the Convenient Care at Home Act was before finance committee—hundreds of amendments, none of which were adopted. I brought forward one that I thought was the most significant to fixing home care in this province, and that was to ensure the wages of all those working for client providers would be paid comparable to those doing the same work within long-term care or in hospital settings. Here we are two years later, Speaker, and the sector is nowhere on the path to recovery. A tree cannot stand if its roots are rotten. The roots, Speaker, are the workers. So we can throw another \$1.1 billion over the next three years to expand home and community care services, supposedly to increase home care values and ease pressures on our emergency departments, but—I can tell you for free—it will not work. It sounds good, but it will not work. It won't work until those working in the community are treated and compensated the same as those doing comparable work in our health care institutions.

This government is continuing to throw good money after bad, so it's no wonder we keep kicking the can down the road when it comes to balancing the books, and thus making it more and more difficult for families in this province.

Last week, the nurse practitioners were here at Queen's Park. I know they get a lot of lip service when they come. Why aren't we putting our nurse practitioners to work to their fullest scope? When is this government going to admit that nurse practitioners can easily provide relief to a strained health care system by expanding primary care

access, managing a wider range of patient needs and helping to address doctor shortages? Everyone knows this needs to be done, so why isn't the government getting the job done?

The member from Eglinton–Lawrence was boasting about crime and border security. My riding of Haldimand–Norfolk is ground zero for contraband tobacco, on par with places like El Salvador. We know tobacco is one of the most common illegally traded goods in the world. In Canada, about six billion contraband cigarettes are sold each and every year. In the spring 2019 budget, this government was set to take aim at the contraband problem. But we've allowed it to flourish in this province, which has created problems for many other provinces across the country. We are to blame.

Anyway, spring 2019 budget: We were to adopt Quebec's model, which has seen contraband incidents drop to about 12%. Just before the budget went to print, it was pulled—interesting, to say the least. You can imagine my disappointment that contraband was not included in the fall economic statement. I'm hoping for better in the spring budget.

Just to paint the picture, Ontario has eight or nine full-time officers working on the file and we are spending about \$3.8 million on the illicit program. By contrast, Quebec spends about \$15 million with about 60 full-time officers. This is why their incident rate sits around 12%, and ours here in Ontario hovers around 50% or higher.

Legitimate businesses like corner stores are impacted. Unfortunately, contraband tobacco is a threat to public safety because the illegal market is fuelled by organized crime, who are also in the business of drugs, guns and human trafficking.

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I've worked on the contraband file for over 25 years, and despite all of the intelligence we have, the problem has only worsened in this province, where the government seems to turn a blind eye. By not addressing the contraband problem in this province, there is a loss of about \$750 million in tax revenue. I would suggest that this government use some of its revenue from the tobacco lawsuit, which rings in at about \$7.1 billion, to increase enforcement so we can recoup the \$750 million in lost tax revenue.

Speaker, last but certainly not least, there's nothing new on the agriculture file in the fall economic statement. This government talks about tariff-proofing Ontario, and I maintain that one of the best ways to do that is to invest in our farm families and to expand agricultural food processing. Keeping processing local for things like beef and pork reduces immediate tariff exposure and gives Ontario more bargaining room and domestic market resilience. I am sure all of the members present this afternoon have heard in the past few days from some of our top agriculture organizations hosting their lobby days that we need to make these investments.

While this government waited until a day or two before the 2025 winter election was to be called, a \$100-million

boost to the RMP has become too little, too late for farm families.

Speaker, the fall economic statement is nothing dynamic nor damaging, but I think this—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I thank the member from Haldimand–Norfolk for her remarks. I've had the pleasure of going to the member's riding a few times over the years, and it feels like home in many ways. I know that there are pockets of industry—pockets of smaller communities that have a factory or a manufacturer.

Part of the bill includes the expansion of the Ontario Made Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit, or the OMMITC for short. In the past, some of the economic development programs have supported the reshoring of work from the purchase of equipment. This tax credit expands that opportunity to purchase equipment that will allow for us to repatriate some business and drive innovation.

My question to the member opposite is whether she's in support of practical, targeted relief for small businesses like the manufacturers in her riding, especially during these unprecedented global challenges.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

I will support items that actually help industry and small business or business of any size in my riding of Haldimand–Norfolk, but what we found in the past is that you have to jump through hoops to actually qualify for some of these programs. And industry and businesses tell me that while they look good on paper, they don't qualify because they're not big enough or they don't qualify for A, B or C. So I'm hoping that this is all good news for everyone in my riding.

I will add, one of the things that I am regretful for is the support of my steelworkers out at Nanticoke. This government continually talks about supporting steelworkers in this province, and yet my steelworkers don't feel it, largely because there's an MZO on the table right here at Queen's Park that is impeding business or can impede business at the Nanticoke industrial park. I would hope—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to my friend from Haldimand–Norfolk for her presentation. It's a beautiful part of the province.

I'm sorry to hear that there's such difficulty in getting things done by this government in the riding; I can relate. Do you think that it's due to the fact that they're not paying attention to the riding or because you keep defeating them in every election that you run in?

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I appreciate the question.

I would hope that the safety of the people of Haldimand–Norfolk would not be played politics with. Safety should never, ever be jeopardized because somebody is playing politics with a riding and its member. It is disheartening. We have asked for meetings at ROMA, at AMO, to meet with the Minister of Transportation on some very significant transportation issues—not only the

Caledonia bridge, but we've got a very dangerous situation at Haldimand Road and Highway 6 in Caledonia, just a few miles down from the bridge—and we have to chase the minister down in hallways at AMO or ROMA in order to try to get a response.

Just sit with us at the table, tell us what the hold-up is and maybe we would be sympathetic, but it doesn't happen.

I would hope that politics is not being played with the people of Haldimand–Norfolk because of who they chose.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk. I know your area because I went down to visit it, and visit you, this summer and it's gorgeous—Lake Erie—a beautiful place to live and work and play and swim.

I know how well-loved you are, and all of us should know that because, I believe, the last election you won by 21,000 votes and it's the first ever in the history of Canada for an independent to get re-elected, to be elected twice—so people do love you.

I hear you talk about the Argyle bridge, the abandoned gas wells, jobs, all the time. Your passion for your community shows. What would you have expected to see in this fall economic statement?

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Thank you very much for the question. And I don't know how I'll fit my head through the door after that, but anyway.

I would have expected—you know, the member from Orléans was talking about support for our young people. And I think, largely, a lot of us do this job because we want a better future for our young people. There are a lot of missed opportunities, as I spoke about in my 10 minutes.

But I continually hear about our young people facing unprecedented challenges. Mental health struggles rising each and every day, driven by rapid changes in technology, the isolation of government-mandated lockdowns during the pandemic and the overwhelming pressures of growing up in an uncertain world.

Instead of addressing these issues head-on, this government leaves some of our agencies and our societies hanging, saying, "Hey, we're going to make you wait until year-end in order to give you more funding." There's no proactive planning in this province for some of the agencies taking care of our most vulnerable people.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Earlier today, we saw the government push through a bill that takes away the rights of communities like yours to have a say in their local schools, despite the fact that students and teachers and education workers were here just yesterday saying that the real challenges that they need to be addressed in schools is things like the lack of funding for—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of

this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, please continue the debate.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Continue.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you.

What teachers and education workers and students were saying is that they actually need funding for mental health supports and for more EAs to ensure that there are safe schools, but this fall economic statement didn't add a single penny to our schools.

Does the member from Haldimand–Norfolk think that a government that was actually concerned about the well-being of our kids would have invested in mental health and more caring adults in our schools?

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I actually spoke about this two weeks ago. I believe that this government—I'll first say that the one thing in Bill 33 that I can condone is merit-based decision-making, but this government should take its own policy and apply it everywhere where they are making decisions, appointments and different boards.

But I think we are going after low-hanging fruit with respect to education. I don't think that the majority of members across the way understand what is really transpiring in classrooms across this province. They are in chaos. I get calls from parents. I get calls from EAs and educators all the time.

Schools are out of control, and I don't see anything that we are doing in this House that will actually improve the outcomes for students and for educators and families in this province.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: We learn a lot about each other's ridings when the members get up and speak in the chamber. Since 2022, I've heard you almost every other day speak about the Argyle bridge and how dangerous it is, and how you're worried about the safety of your residents. Now I'm hearing about a woman who was displaced from her home near it.

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So I'm wondering if you can tell me why you think this government is dragging their heels on repairing something that is so vital for the safety of Haldimand–Norfolk.

Interjections.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I wish I could hear what the member opposite is talking about the mayor of Norfolk county.

Anyway, the people of Haldimand county feel very abandoned by this government with respect to the Argyle Street bridge. The lady who was kicked out of her home continually comes to my Facebook page and asks why she would have been kicked out of her home when this government was so concerned about that bridge in 2019 to kick her out of her home. And here we are, 2025, and not one bit of work has been done on that bridge.

The only work that's actually being done is MTO monitoring it to make sure that we can still send vehicles

over it safely. So it's shut down a few times a year or a few times a month sometimes for the ministry to actually deem it safe so that we can send traffic across it. That is not comforting to the people who are travelling across that bridge, especially with their kids in the back seat.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: My question is to the member of Haldimand–Norfolk.

This is the fall economic statement and we're talking about the entire province of Ontario. All I have sat here and heard is about her own riding and what she can do. So tell me, in your opinion, what you would do to get economic prosperity—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Interjection: Through the Speaker.

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Response?

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Well, if the member in front of me here doesn't understand that our work here actually has to do with our communities, good luck being re-elected next time is all I say.

I stand here in this House, and I fight for the people of Haldimand–Norfolk because they're the ones who sent me here. But I also know that the issues in Haldimand–Norfolk are not unique to Haldimand–Norfolk—

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

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: I will be sharing my time with the government House leader.

Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak on our government's fall economic statement, A Plan to Protect Ontario, supporting our competitive, resilient and self-reliant economy by investing in infrastructure, key public services and much more.

Protecting Ontario has many facets to it. It's also about protecting seniors, protecting our workers, infrastructure and our long-term-care system. The impact of US tariffs on the global economy has created uncertainty and certainly changes things for many sectors in Ontario, leading to higher costs and less stability than in previous years. During this time, we are taking action to protect our province and make sure we don't lose the great progress we have made in building up the long-term-care system that Ontario families rely on.

Under the Ministry of Long-Term Care's previous program, the construction funding subsidy introduced in 2022, we achieved the largest construction of long-term-care projects in a single year. And we plan to build much, much more, investing \$6.4 billion to meet our target of 58,000 new and upgraded beds across the province.

That is why, this past summer, I introduced the new capital funding program, the largest and most generous building program of its kind in Canadian history. Speaker, no other province, no other jurisdiction is doing what we are doing.

In August, I broke ground on the very first recipient of the construction funding program in the riding of Gengarry–Prescott–Russell at Maxville Manor, which will be upgrading its 122 existing beds and adding 38 new beds.

But the world has changed since then. Interest rates are higher. The cost of building materials has increased. Economic uncertainty has thrown a wrench into plans to develop and redevelop long-term-care homes.

That is why we have introduced the new capital funding program. Not-for-profit homes like Maxville Manor will be eligible for higher upfront funding amounts than for-profit operators to help address long-standing concerns that non-profit homes have trying to access the financing they need to move forward with construction.

Speaker, I've been so busy as the Minister of Long-Term Care. I've criss-crossed the province. I've visited at least 64 homes, and I've held 38 announcements, including in beautiful Beaches–East York. Just a few days ago, we visited St. Clair O'Connor.

I can tell you that we currently have over 100 capital projects. That means we have over 100 projects in various stages of construction. This is incredible news. I have to say, maybe with a little bit of humour, that sometimes I feel like Oprah because I say, "You get a long-term-care home. You get a long-term-care home. You get a long-term-care home. Everyone gets a long-term-care home."

This is great news for all of us because after 15 years of neglect, underfunding, literally zero investment into long-term care and very few new beds being opened, this government is finally funding long-term care.

And the capital funding program, which is the new funding program, is helping us get projects closer to the finish line. Where previously some projects were struggling because of financial viability, now the government has committed and is funding up to 85% of eligible capital costs for both for-profit and non-profit providers as well as our municipal partners. We need every single type of provider at the table.

With the help of the construction funding program, we are now seeing a lot more movement in the capital projects. This is really, really important because we have seniors that are on our waiting lists, and we need to ensure that every senior that needs access to a long-term-care home, whether it's in Toronto, in Ottawa, in Mississauga or in the north, does have access to a long-term-care bed when they become eligible for such. Moving these projects forward is really important.

We are also giving operators more money up front upon substantial completion. This is helping operators get better financing.

We are a very nimble and flexible government, and we listen to the feedback. So every iteration of our capital funding program is better than the previous one. First, we had the construction funding subsidy in 2022. Then we had the second version of it. Now we have the capital funding program, and we're continuing to listen to operators and members from all sides of the House on how we can make next year's iteration of the capital funding program even better.

This year alone, I have a list here of how many ground-breakings myself and my two amazing parliamentary assistants have done. We broke ground on 22 projects this year alone. This represents about 3,000 beds that will come online at varying rates. It could be two years. Usually, that's the average that it takes to construct a long-term-care home. This is great news for the province of Ontario.

That is why we decided to highlight the capital funding program in the fall economic statement: because we also want to promote the program because maybe there are some communities that have not been building but want to build. So I encourage all members to speak to your local long-term-care operators, to your municipalities and see. Maybe they want to actually put in a request for allocation for licences. I highly encourage that, because this is the time to build Ontario.

This is the government that is building Ontario, not only roads, bridges, schools, critical infrastructure but, of course, also hospitals and long-term care. It's really exciting to be the Minister of Long-Term Care.

I also want to highlight some of our recent achievements, and these are incredible achievements. Recently we have achieved our direct-hours-of-care target, where now, on average, every resident in a long-term-care home in Ontario is receiving four hours and five minutes of direct care per resident per day.

Interjections.

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Absolutely.

In order for us to achieve that goal, we have hired 16,000 additional health care workers. Whether they're PSWs, nurses or allied health care professionals, 16,000 more health care workers have been hired into the long-term-care sector since we put this target in legislation.

As a result, I have announced this year that we are making that staffing investment permanent to the tune of \$1.92 billion. We're not just talking the talk; we're also walking the walk. We are spending the money in order to maintain this staffing contingent and those additional 16,000 workers to the tune of \$1.92 billion.

Another very exciting announcement that we made together with my colleagues the Minister of Health and the Minister of Colleges and Universities, very proudly funded by my ministry to the tune of \$56 million, is an expansion of nursing seats in the province of Ontario. It was a very emotional moment when I stood in front of those cameras with some of my nursing mentors and colleagues cheering me on. I was able, as a nurse, to make an announcement that the province will be expanding to the tune of 2,200 more seats for registered nurses, registered practical nurses and nurse practitioners. Again, we are not only building the beds and building the homes that we need for our beloved residents and seniors, but we are also making the investments into staffing to make sure that we do have qualified human health resources to staff these beautiful homes when they begin opening.

One more thing that I would love to highlight—which is one of my favourite programs, actually—is the Community Access to Long-Term Care program. It's a pro-

gram that we are currently piloting at three different sites. One is at Peel Manor in Brampton, the other one is Wellbrook Place in Mississauga and the third one is St. Joe's in London. The Community Access to Long-term Care program is allowing seniors who live in the vicinity of a long-term-care home to actually come into the long-term-care home and obtain some services. This could be a clinical service, this could be maybe a shower—they need help with showering and personal hygiene—or podiatry. Podiatry is a big thing for seniors, and they really need support with that. Or maybe it's just to share a meal with their peers, with other seniors. Whereas during the pandemic, long-term-care homes tended to be closed off on themselves because we were protecting seniors and ensuring that COVID didn't get in, now we want to change the narrative and we want to open up long-term-care homes and invite the community and other seniors in the area in to actually come and get access to some services and benefits and actually improve their quality of life—because we say “aging in place.” That's very important and we are doing everything we can to support seniors to age in place, but it also sometimes means aging in loneliness, and so through a program like Community Access to Long-Term Care, we'll be fighting that social isolation for our seniors and ensuring that they have a place close to home where they can go and it's this beautiful hub of activity that peers can enjoy, seniors can enjoy, and the community can come in and thrive.

So these are some of the exciting things that we've been doing and funding through the Ministry of Long-Term Care. I'm really excited for the future. Currently, as I said, we have over 100 capital projects, and I look forward to receiving more applications, because we are steadily progressing towards our goal of 58,000 new and redeveloped beds. We will continue building on that progress, and we need help from each and every single member in this House to bring forward your projects. We'll be considering them, and we'll be building more long-term care for our incredible seniors.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to join the debate of Bill 68, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

I do want to thank the Minister of Long-Term Care. She's right; she is so busy with all of the long-term-care improvements that she's making. She was in my riding of Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. She made a tour of the G. Tackaberry and Family Home in Athens, which we're looking forward to opening in the new year. We also did the sod-turning for Arch Wellington House in Prescott, which is a project that was actually mentioned in the fall economic statement. And I can't wait to get her back into Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes for the opening of Sherwood Park Manor, and I can't wait for us to be able to turn the sod at Carveth Care home in Gananoque.

I did extend the debate when it hit six and a half hours, but I do think Bill 68 is a very important bill for us, and in that regard, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Mr. Clark has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1504 to 1534.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Mr. Clark has moved the 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 69; the nays are 25.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): The House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, November 20, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1537.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,

Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Allsopp, Tyler (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Cerjanec, Rob (LIB)	Ajax	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Jeux
Ciriello, Monica (PC)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Cooper, Michelle (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	Oakville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises et de l'Approvisionnement
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Darouze, George (PC)	Carleton	
Denault, Billy (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence
Fairclough, Lee (LIB)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Firin, Mohamed (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Leader, Third Party / Chef du troisième parti
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gilmour, Alexa (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Gualtieri, Silvia (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Hamid, Hon. / L'hon. Zee (PC)	Milton	Associate Solicitor General for Auto Theft and Bail Reform / Solliciteur général associé responsable de la Lutte contre le vol d'automobiles et de la Réforme relative aux mises en liberté sous caution
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé des Forêts et des Produits forestiers
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines
Lennox, Robin (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
McKenney, Catherine (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Deputy House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement et de la croissance économique du Nord
Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security / Ministre des Collèges et Universités, de l'Excellence en recherche et de la Sécurité
Racinsky, Joseph (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire Economic and Community Partnerships / Ministre responsable des Partenariats économiques et communautaires pour le développement du Cercle de feu
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Rosenberg, Bill (PC)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Chris (IND)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smyth, Stephanie (LIB)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises

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