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des débats
(Hansard)**

A-6

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

1st Session
44th Parliament
Thursday 30 October 2025

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44^e législature
Jeudi 30 octobre 2025

Chair: Mary-Margaret McMahon
Clerk: Vanessa Kattar

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Thursday 30 October 2025

Jeudi 30 octobre 2025

The committee met at 0900 in room 151.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Good morning, everyone. Did anything exciting happen last night?

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Go, Jays, go!

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Go, Jays! It's a great day. It's always a great day at Queen's Park, but especially today.

Thank you all for coming. Welcome to the best standing committee at Queen's Park, on government agencies—the friendliest.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Before we begin with the intended appointments, I would like to address the motion moved by MPP Pasma at the last meeting.

On Thursday, October 23, 2025, Ms. Pasma moved a motion regarding the review of four individuals being appointed to four school boards by the Ministry of Education, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. At the time I stated that I would reserve my ruling on the orderliness of the motion until we could clarify some details regarding the motion. I am now ready to provide that ruling.

The permanent order of reference, standing order 110(f) for the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, lays out the mandate of the committee. It states that the committee is empowered “to review the intended appointments of persons to agencies, boards and commissions and of directors to corporations in which the crown in right of Ontario is a majority shareholder, excluding reappointments and appointments for a term of one year or less....”

According to the procedures set out in standing order 110(f)(1) to 110(f)(13), as no agency, board or commission to which the Lieutenant Governor in Council makes some or all of the appointments is listed in the motion, and since the review of intended appointees must be done in accordance with the procedures set out in standing order 110(f)(1) to 110(f)(13) through a certificate received by the committee, the appointments of these individuals are not subject to review by the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Therefore, I must rule that the member's motion is out of order.

What I would also say is that there may possibly be an opportunity to put forth this motion at the Standing

Committee on Social Policy. All right? Thank you very much and thank you to MPP Pasma for her contribution.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MR. MICHAEL KRALJEVIC

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Michael Kraljevic, intended appointee as member, Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning board of governors.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): We will now begin with the review of intended appointees. Our first intended appointee today is Michael Kraljevic, nominated as a member of the Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning board of governors.

Michael, you may make an initial statement at your discretion. Following this there will be questions from members of the committee. The questions will start with the government, followed by the opposition and then the third party. Ten minutes will be allotted to each party. Any time you take in your statement is withdrawn from the government committee, so they're learning to be very succinct.

The floor is yours. Thank you for coming. Welcome.

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the standing committee on public appointments. It's great to be here today. I do have an opening statement, if I may.

My name is Michael Kraljevic. It's my pleasure to be invited to discuss my qualifications for consideration for a director at the Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning.

I'm a professional land use planner and land economist and have worked in both public and private sector companies for the past 40 years. I've held key positions with the federal government, with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., the Canada Lands Co. and Parc Downsview Park. I've overseen the planning and development of large-scale land development projects into new communities.

From 2005 to 2019 I was the president and CEO of the Toronto Port Lands Co., a municipal land corporation owned by the city of Toronto overseeing the development, acquisition, leasing and joint venture partnerships of all projects managed by the corporation.

While with the Toronto Port Lands Co., we developed the 500,000-square-foot purpose-built film studio the

Corus office building, the first LEED Gold office building owned by the city of Toronto. As well, we were instrumental in developing Pinewood Studios on the waterfront, a 300,000-square-foot film and media complex that anchored Toronto's film industry in the east end.

In February 2023, I was appointed the chair of the Ontario Land Tribunal, which adjudicates matters related to land use planning, environmental and natural features, heritage protection, land valuation, land compensation, municipal finance and related matters that come before it.

I'm a graduate of TMU University with a degree in urban and regional planning and a certificate of environmental management. I'm an alumnus of the Harvard Graduate School of Design, advanced manager program in real estate, where I lecture from time to time on matters related to planning and transit-oriented communities.

I was contacted by KBRS, the search consultant, on behalf of Humber College and was sent an executive brief on this role. While I reviewed the role, it sparked my interest. I looked at the ideal candidate section, and it reads, according to the profile, an "ideal candidate for this role will be one who's familiar with Humber College and has a keen interest in supporting the growth and development of the college. The candidate will be an experienced leader for various occupational backgrounds and professional backgrounds and a combination of entrepreneurial skills and key competencies essential to providing leadership, sound decision-making and oversight to the college. These competencies include a background in IT, legal, regulatory experience, marketing, communications, infrastructure, development and real estate, community leadership and governance. Government and public sector experience is also an asset."

Over the years, I've been a member of many boards and committees. I understand board etiquette, governance, committee structure, legal, finance and fiduciary obligations. Rules of procedural board and conflict of interest and code of conduct rules are all things that I've been dealing with. I'd like to use the benefit of my knowledge and experience to help the college in any way I'm able.

The college and university system is experiencing a dramatic shift due to the loss of international student applications due to federal government caps on student visas and study permits. This has caused colleges and universities who normally depend on international tuition revenue to adjust their operations and rethink their corporate strategy.

As my ethics executive, I've sought the input from Ontario's Integrity Commissioner to determine if there are any conflicts with my role and my role as chair of the Ontario Land Tribunal. The ethics commissioner determined that there is no conflict of interest and I should ensure a clear delineation between the two roles should I be appointed.

The Humber board meets six times a year, after business hours, which will not conflict with my current role as OLT chair, and as a volunteer position, I would put the time in as needed.

Thank you for the time and attention. I'll turn it back to you, Madam Chair and committee members, for questions.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thank you very much for your presentation.

We will now start with questions from the government, and you have five minutes and thirty-nine seconds. MPP Dowie.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Welcome to the committee. We've had a chance to look at your background—quite exceptional. You've held leadership roles in the public and private sectors, as well as several volunteer positions. It's truly appreciated that you gave your time to so many causes. I'm wondering if you might be able to explain to us what draws you to the governance of higher education, post-secondary education, at this stage in your career.

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Thank you for that question. I'm a product of a polytechnic; TMU University, back in the late 1980s, was a polytechnic. A lot of the colleges now are shifting gears; they're changing their direction. In fact, there's a Globe article today that suggested that George Brown College is also going to change its name to George Brown Polytechnic. So change is afoot.

I've mentioned that there are tuition issues. Colleges were used to having bloated budgets, which now I think have to be changed. I've dealt with many governance matters related to adjusting corporate strategy, and I think I could add a dimension to the board and help the college on a go-forward.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): MPP Denault.

MPP Billy Denault: Similar to my colleague here, I had a chance to look over your background and, as you indicated in your opening, you certainly have a substantial amount of experience. So my question is, how will you leverage that experience to ensure that the college continues to meet its organizational goals?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Thank you for that question. All colleges in the province are funded by the province to some degree, and I think it's important that any public money that is directed to colleges needs to be administered properly, and certainly I'll do my best to ensure that the governance model meets those objectives.

0910

From the student perspective, these colleges offer students immense opportunity, especially the college system. I've got more experience at the university level, but I've been through colleges and they offer applied science opportunities, certainly to international students. I'll apply the knowledge that I have to help the college move forward.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): MPP Cooper, welcome.

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: Good morning. You have quite an impressive background. I just wanted to ask you—the idea of bridging the gap between education and career skills is something often talked about within the post-secondary sector. What steps do you believe are necessary to better prepare our young people for meaningful careers, especially students attending one of Ontario's colleges?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Thank you for that question. Certainly, the economic situation anywhere in Canada is

difficult. Students that are graduating are having a tough time finding jobs. I think institutions like Humber College can prepare their students well to be able to go to those jobs that are available, certainly in manufacturing and applied science. In Humber's case, they've got great programs on early childhood education and nursing. I think these are the jobs that these students need to be prepared to do, and Humber offers those jobs.

I have contacts in the private sector. Drawing on some of those contacts to have mentorship programs for the students I think is important. Co-op programs are certainly important, where companies can show leadership and hire students even before they graduate. I'm happy to put my time in to move both of those forward.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): MPP Vickers?

MPP Paul Vickers: Good morning.

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Good morning.

MPP Paul Vickers: As a potential board member, you will be collaborating with a broad range of individuals who do not always see the same perspectives as yourself. How would you describe your leadership and collaboration style in a board setting?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Thank you for that question. Certainly, boards have different cultures, as any companies do. I think respect and cordiality are important. Those are the pillars of a working system, and certainly boards need to work well.

My leadership skills have always been careful and considerate, understanding and listening to the other side. But there is a mandate, and I think it's important that boards understand what the mandate is, need to support their senior managers, need to support the president and, in that way, working as a cohesive group, move the agenda forward and create a very successful college.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Robert Bailey: In those 30 seconds I'll congratulate you on your résumé, and I'll leave my question until the next round.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thank you very much. Now we will move to the official opposition. Who would like the first question?

MPP Gilmour, welcome back.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Thank you, Chair.

Welcome, Mr. Kraljevic. Thank you for appearing before the committee today. As you know, as members of the Legislature our duty is to ensure that the appointments to Ontario's agencies, boards and commissions are based on merit, integrity and service to the public and not on political affiliation or personal connection.

You've spoken quite a bit and had some wonderful questions about your capacity for the job. You're also a really long-time public official with a record of senior appointments in land use, in transit and development. Some of these appointments have been subject in the past to public scrutiny and even, dare I say, concerns. So my questions today are intended to help this committee assess

your qualifications, your independence, your commitment to the good governance at Humber College.

You're currently full-time chair, top position of the Ontario Land Tribunal, correct?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Yes.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: The public records show that the chair's salary is \$891,295 over five years. But you're receiving \$1,019,875, which is normally the pay for executive chair. Who authorized the extra \$128,580 of taxpayer funding?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Thank you for that question. The salary is equivalent to an executive chair, which is what my role is: an executive chair. I started as an interim chair as a chair level, but the former chair of the Ontario Land Tribunal was at an executive chair level. Starting as a full-time chair in February, that level was brought up to the executive chair level.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Thank you. So my understanding was that that authorization was made by Premier Ford's cabinet on March 23, 2023?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Correct.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Correct. Thank you. And how long have you known Premier Ford?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Well, we live in the same community.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: And you played high school football together, correct?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Correct.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: That's right, okay.

I just want to turn to the record now of public appointments. The Humber College board of governors is charged with fiduciary oversight and institutional performance. In October 2024, Tribunal Watch Ontario issued a statement saying that over the past few years, including the period that includes your leadership, the Ontario Land Tribunal had become a system, and I quote here—

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Chair, point of order?

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Excuse me, MPP Gilmour.

MPP Dowie?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: To my knowledge, the Ontario Land Tribunal is not why the applicant is here today, and I'm hopeful that the questions can relate to the experience necessary for this particular appointment.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: It will, yes. Certainly, I will draw it back to that.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Okay. So that it's—

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I can keep going?

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Make your comments relevant. Thank you, MPP Gilmour.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Yes, I will. This is all to past performances and to the current position.

I'm just wondering if you're familiar with the critique that the land tribunal said the system has become a place "where citizens and community groups have no right to oppose proposed development projects or meaningfully participate in" hearings. Are you familiar with that critique? And are they wrong?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: I'm not familiar with that critique, but having been in the development business for over 40 years, the development approval process is very long and complicated. There are different levels of input from community members. Certainly, at the beginning of any project, the city or the municipality that that project is contained in does have public meetings. So there are a number of areas where community consultation does occur—

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Thank you. I'm mindful of time, so I just want to move on to the next question, because I do want to get to the relevance that MPP Dowie asked me about.

In terms of moving on, in 2019, you were appointed by this government to the Metrolinx board, and the Auditor General report there has reported major cost overruns, weak contract management on the Eglinton Crosstown and raised questions about political influence. I'm wondering, during your tenure, what actions did the board take to address these concerns?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: That's an excellent question. Having been involved in the development field, certainly transit development and planning is important, and these are, again, complicated projects. Metrolinx has undertaken seven subway expansions along with corridor expansions, probably the biggest expansion of transit in the history of the province. As such, the corporate structure had to change, and it continued to change over time.

I think Metrolinx has a huge job to do and there are times when they are not meeting timelines, but I do think they're moving things along. The board has been very involved. The board meets regularly—probably weekly. This board appointment, although it was a volunteer board, only meets six times a year, so it's quite a bit different. But we did spend a lot of time to ensure that public money was spent appropriately, and I do think that the board is doing an excellent job moving transit forward in the province of Ontario.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: All right. Thank you for that. I know that we're all still eagerly waiting for the Crosstown.

But I want to take you back a little further, again, just looking at the relevancy and the connection between how you might work on this board and some of your previous public opportunities. In 2013, when the Premier was actually a Toronto city councillor—Councillor Ford—he sought to have you appointed as CEO of Build Toronto. But at that time, six Build Toronto directors resigned, they said, in protest of your appointment, and your appointment didn't proceed.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Chair, point of order?

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Sorry. All questions need to be relevant to the posting.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Yes, so they are relevant in terms of trying to make sure that we have an individual who has the qualifications and not connected to their political—

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Just show the link stronger.

0920

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I've got one more piece here, and then I'm happy to do that.

We have a situation where the Premier was, at the time, trying to appoint you to CEO of Build Toronto, but that didn't take place. Then, just before that, in 2011, as CEO of Toronto Port Lands Co., you and then-councillor Ford attempted to remove Waterfront Toronto as the lead development agency. This is a move that Toronto Life described as a "bureaucratic coup." I would like to know if the decision—the question I have here is if the decision there improved or damaged the public's trust and how you might have learned from it.

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Sorry—MPP Dowie?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: The makeup of the board at Humber is not consistent with these other organizations, and so the relevancy of these other organizations is not apparent to us.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Let me do that for you: The relevancy is that the board is a place of deep integrity, public trust, financial oversight and institutional management. I'm looking at situations where there appears to have been the perception, at least, of an erosion of public trust, and I'm wondering what our candidate has done in the meantime in terms of learning from those opportunities that would make him qualified to take this new step.

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Well, I'm happy to answer that question.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Thank you.

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Being involved in Toronto developments throughout my career, I'm fortunate that I've dealt with many high-profile projects. And when you deal with high-profile projects, you're always dealing with many different individuals. I've applied for positions and I've gotten positions on my merit. If there are individuals out there who think that I can do these jobs and move me forward, I'm happy about that.

Again, the way that these provincial projects move forward, it's important to stay on cue. It's important to rise above what's being said. Certainly, the media have their interpretation. But in all aspects of projects that I've certainly worked on, integrity and conflict of interest have always been top of mind, as they are today.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): One minute warning.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I just have one final question, and that is that, given some of the controversies surrounding your previous appointments—the critique from Tribunal Watch, the issues raised by the Auditor General, the prior public concerns about public influence—how would you reassure Ontarians that this appointment to Humber's board is based on your qualifications and not your long-standing connections to the Premier?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Well, I certainly would like to answer in terms of the Auditor General's report. All public bodies are subject to Auditor General's reports. In our case, we did go through an audit. Of the 12 recom-

mendations, certainly we're working on all of them. We've learned from the recommendations by the Auditor General, who takes a wider view. I think it's important for leaders, whether they're chairs or CEOs, to learn from these opportunities.

We are intending to implement all the recommendations by the Auditor General—

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thank you very much. That ends the questions from the official opposition.

I would just like to remind members that comments should be relevant to the candidate's qualifications for, in this case, the Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning board of governors. Thank you so much.

MPP Gates.

MPP Wayne Gates: Just on that comment that you just did: I think it is important for this committee to know the past of people that are being appointed and their qualifications and what's happened when they're appointed to other boards. I think that is relevant to this committee. That's what we're trying to clean up here, every week when we come here.

Some of those stats that she read out I wasn't even aware of, so I think it is important. I think we've got to be careful in allowing the Conservatives to shut down the question period when we believe that somebody is being appointed to a board or commission or whatever it is. We have to take a look at their past record—no different than if I had a police record running for council. I'm sure I'd find that in the paper, because it's important. I just want to make sure it doesn't become rubber-stamp stuff.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thank you, MPP Gates. First of all, "she" has a name. It's MPP Gilmour, number one. Number two, agreed, but you need to be very explicit in the relevance, which I think was lacking a bit. Okay, thank you—duly noted.

MPP Smyth, you have the floor—10 minutes.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Welcome, and thank you for being here and being subjected to all of our nice questions.

I guess in the vein of what MPP Gates was saying, we're always talking about transparency and accountability. With your appointment, do you feel that it was free from any influence of your relationship with the Premier?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Thank you for that question.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: I'll just speak loud. Yes, the red light is on. It's fine—if you can hear me okay.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Sorry, Michael. You do not need to touch the mike. They will do it for you.

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Okay, great. I learned something today.

Thank you for that question. Yes, absolutely. Humber College is in my community. I was reached out to by the reviewer. I often get calls from search companies, and in this particular case I did ask them for the scope of the position. We're all busy—I'm busy as well—but I do have a lot of time for post-secondary institutions. My children

are both products of the Toronto school system, college and university, and with respect to what's happening in the college system, they lost a lot of their tuition revenue going forward. If I can help, as a board member, in terms of ideas and coming up with alternative revenue streams, that's something that I'm good at, happy to do, and that's what's drawn me to this position.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: That's part of what I wanted to ask you as well. We know your experience, your résumé and background in land development, real estate, Metro-linx, you name it, but what specific experience do you think you have to manage a post-secondary institution like Humber?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Well, my crystal ball is telling me that I think the board is going to be struggling with ways to raise revenue and, like any college and university, they do have assets. I do have expertise in going through and understanding how to generate additional revenues and I do think part of it will be through their campus planning, looking at sustainability. Colleges also need to attract students for different reasons. Looking at projects that can bring students forward not only to teach them, but they would love to learn in a building that's a LEED green building or a forward-thinking building—these are all things that I certainly have backgrounds in that I'm hoping to bring to the board.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: And do you feel that you have the background in education, curriculum development or student governance? This is kind of what's different here. We're talking about education; you're talking about revenue. So how do you square that one?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: That's an excellent question, and you are 100% right: I don't have a background in education. But I do have a background in governance. I do have a background in finance. I do have a background in board governance. I think all these would bring expertise to the board. In my initial discussion with the CEO, I asked her, "Why do you think I can help?" And it was her that said, "Well, you've got backgrounds in these things; this is what we need. We need someone who understands campus development, new building development," and that's what they're lacking in. And it sounded reasonable to me.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: So when it comes down to it, will you prioritize, say, acquisition, development of college land over education and student needs of the institution?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Well, I think student needs have to be a priority. I think colleges are big companies with big budgets, and I think, as a board member, I would prioritize the education system of the board, certainly, and ensuring that they're moving with the times and not continuing to offer programs that are low in student turnout and changing. Sometimes a new perspective is needed, and I hope to bring that to the board.

0930

MPP Stephanie Smyth: So can you bring assurances though to the student population and faculty that you're going to be prioritizing the educational experience over

the well-being of the institution financially and the real estate interests that are associated with—and what you might find, or any pressure from government allies?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Well, I think one goes with the other. If the financial house is not in order, then it's going to be difficult to give the educational programs to the students.

There have been, certainly, funding constraints, and I think colleges and universities are smart to reach out. Across the board, the 23 colleges that are out there are changing. As I mentioned, they're changing their names; they're changing their perspectives. I think I'm good with change.

Certainly, if you're continuing down the same road and it's not adhering any positive responses then I think it's time to move in a different direction, and I think I could offer that to the board.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: You talked a little bit earlier about mandate and agenda. So what is your mandate, or what might be your agenda in this position at Humber College, and how are you coming to that mandate?

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: I hope to bring professionalism, cordiality to the board. I hope to bring perspective in terms of social responsibility—certainly new building technologies. I think these are all things that colleges should be doing, and I hope to bring just a new perspective.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thank you very much, MPP Smyth.

That concludes Michael's presentation and questions today, so thank you very much for your time and your desire to serve.

Mr. Michael Kraljevic: Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

MR. AMIT GURPERSAUD

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Amit Gursaud, intended appointee as member, Landlord and Tenant Board.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): We'll now move to the review of the second intended appointee—I didn't get to meet you ahead of time, but I'll just take a gander: Amit Gursaud is nominated as a member of the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Amit, you may make an initial statement at your discretion, and following that, as you may have seen, there will be rounds of questions—10 minutes for each party. The government's portion will be deducted from your presentation.

If you can just say your name so we understand it and can pronounce it properly and show you the respect.

Mr. Amit Gursaud: Good morning, Madam Chair and honourable members. My name is Amit Gursaud, and I respectfully come before the Standing Committee on Government Agencies to discuss my personal and professional experiences and qualifications in being considered for an appointment to the Landlord and Tenant

Board. It is an honour to be here today, and I thank the committee for its time.

I'm a strategic, dedicated and results-driven individual with a strong background in decision-making. My experiences, both professionally and personally, have given me the ability to combine sound judgment with a proactive approach, which makes me well-qualified to excel in this role. I'm able to make sound and strategic decisions under pressure and my experiences in interpreting complex legal issues, assessing risks and providing clear, concise and practical advice have consistently supported the public interest and fair and effective outcomes.

My academic background is that I obtained my bachelor of arts with honours from York University, with a particular focus on equity and social policy. After this, I attended the University of Windsor Faculty of Law and completed my legal education.

As a decisive and principled legal professional, I also bring a strong record of making informed judgments in a timely manner in a high-volume-paced environment. Most of my legal experience comes in government settings, with my most recent role being a prosecutor, both with the province and a municipality.

Combining this with my knowledge in private practice, I've gained strong skills in analyzing facts, applying the law with precision and ensuring decisions are fair, reasonable and defensible. Furthermore, I take pride in being an insightful and ethical decision-maker. I approach every matter with integrity, sound judgment and a commitment to effectively serve the public interest and uphold the highest standards of the legal profession and public service.

Apart from my legal career, my roles in working with individuals with developmental disabilities has given me a deep appreciation for inclusion and accessibility. Working with this population taught me the importance of patience, understanding and advocacy. This experience also gave me the opportunity to learn about equal opportunities and access to resources and services that certain populations need to thrive.

My athletic background has also shaped my discipline, teamwork, leadership and commitment to excellence. My athletic pursuits include playing competitive cricket, baseball and softball, and through this I have learned how to work collaboratively toward shared goals, stay focused under pressure and maintain individual integrity and fairness.

As well, volunteerism is something very important to me. By doing acts of volunteerism, it not only represents what we can do for each other but also strengthens communities, no matter what someone's background or circumstances are. I have gained perspective, empathy and a sense of purpose that connects, teaches and shows me that all these small acts of kindness bring you closer to your community and your people.

Now that I've shared some of my professional experiences, I would just like to briefly share some of my personal experiences with the committee. As a child of immigrants who gave everything up to come to Canada,

I've seen the ups and downs of hard work, sacrifice and perseverance. Furthermore, being a person of colour and coming from a low socio-economic background, I have gone through experiences that have shown me how to resiliently and effectively recognize, handle and resolve complex situations.

With this, my motivations for seeking to join the Landlord and Tenant Board are focused on all of the above. I want to be a member of the LTB as I believe in contributing to the public sector and making a positive impact through government service. The government plays a fundamental role in improving the quality of life and application of laws for its citizens, and I genuinely understand the gravity of this position and do not take it lightly.

I am truly inspired and driven to work as an adjudicator that allows me to ensure procedural fairness, impartiality and that the best interests of the people of Ontario are represented in matters that are so vital to the everyday life of residents.

This concludes my opening statement. I thank the committee for allowing me the opportunity to present my credentials and welcome any questions that the members may have.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thank you very much, Amit, for sharing your story with us.

We will now start with the government side, and you have six minutes and sixteen seconds. MPP Bailey.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you for your presentation this morning. I guess you've touched on it, but maybe you could elaborate a little bit more with the committee what your community work, your volunteer work—exactly how you've learned from it and how it will inform your work if you're appointed to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: Thank you for the question, honourable member. I think in my volunteer experiences, they have been varied, and every position that I've done has taught me something new. I believe everything that I've done in community service and volunteer work really comes from a place of knowing the value and having experiences going through having no access to resources, learning the ability that a helping hand can do. I think that really has impacted me in a way that has changed my life.

What I've learned from that is to listen, be empathetic, learn that all circumstances are different. No matter what someone looks like, no matter what they're going through, there is something that you can learn from everyone, and I think giving me that experience—or having that experience—has showed me how to approach things holistically and consider everything that's presented towards me.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thank you very much, MPP Bailey.

MPP Sabawy?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you, Mr. Amit, for coming, spending the time to be with us today to give us some background about your expertise.

I see your range of professional expertise. Can you share which of those experiences or expertise can be cross-

referenced and can help you or prepare you to work with the Landlord and Tenant Board?

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: Thank you, honourable member. I appreciate the question. It is a tough one to answer in the sense that I value all my experiences equally, in all my professional capacities. I've done a lot of things, but I think, especially working in the government, my government experience gives me the most experience in dealing with matters as an adjudicator. Because right now, in my role as a prosecutor, I do deal with the public. I do have to make very, very difficult calls, and I do manage a very heavy caseload. So being able to balance both the workload, the demands and the added responsibility of being a representative of the crown, I do realize the weight and significance that government-facing roles do have, and I think my current role with the province and now with the municipality prepares me to do that, because I do it every day.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thank you very much, MPP Sabawy.

MPP Cooper?

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: Welcome. Thank you for being here this morning.

We know the Landlord and Tenant Board has high caseload volumes. Can you tell us about your experience managing heavy caseloads? How will you ensure that you stay on top of the workload and deliver your decisions within the targeted processing times?

0940

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: Thank you, honourable member. As mentioned, I do currently work in a legal capacity for the government, so I do every day manage a very high caseload of things that come before me, whether it is planned or unplanned. Right now, in our court system, it is very backlogged and it is very busy, so every day I see the importance of being able to manage the demand of having matters heard and the demand of making decisions, both informed, and realizing the significance of them.

So what prepares me to do this in the adjudicator capacity for the Landlord and Tenant Board is my legal experience. I am legally trained. I do have my own systems of doing things, so I do have my own ways of prioritizing what's important, what has not as much importance and then working my way through meeting all my deadlines.

Right now, I do have trial courts, I do run resolution courts and I do run matters that both affect the municipality and the province. So getting those thrown at me, whether, again, it is planned or unplanned—I think being able to adapt to change is one of my strengths, and I'm more than happy to approach a challenge with open arms.

So my experience right now, and in my volunteer work as well—that's very busy; it does keep me on my toes. So being able to not only manage my professional workload but my personal workload has also shown me how to balance and handle tasks with sensitivity and time management skills.

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thank you very much. One minute and 57 seconds left. Who would like to be quick? MPP Vickers.

MPP Paul Vickers: I'll make it a quick question for you: What do you believe it takes to be an effective member on the Landlord and Tenant Board?

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: Thank you, honourable member. With time constraints, I think knowing the legislation, knowing the law, being open and being impartial, being able to allow both parties to present their evidence without any sort of restrictions and create an atmosphere where they feel comfortable presenting that and being able to make decisions on time and write in plain English make a good adjudicator as well. Avoiding the use of legalese is always helpful. You work for the people, so making sure that people understand what your decision is and how you've come to that decision would make a good adjudicator at the Landlord and Tenant Board.

MPP Paul Vickers: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thank you very much. That was very quick.

One minute and eight seconds: MPP Denault.

MPP Billy Denault: Thank you, Amit, for coming today. I guess I'll just make it a quick one: You were recommended for the process following Tribunals Ontario's competitive, merit-based recruitment process. What was your impression of the process? And maybe if you can expand on why you think you're the best candidate for the role.

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: Sure. Thank you, honourable member. Again, time constraints are going to keep my answer to a minimum. I do appreciate the process. I do know it's merit-based, and I'm very privileged and honoured to be here today for consideration. I'm very thankful that my résumé was able to impress.

But the process is a long one, and I understand why. There has to be that transparency and that sort of looking into, or investigations—using the lingo I use every day—into candidates that apply, because I can appreciate the number of people who apply.

For myself, I put my name forward, waited for some time to hear back, did the interview, did the written assessment and then I'm before the committee today. So I do very much appreciate the process, and I'm very thankful to have been a part of it and before you today.

I think what makes me stand out is my legal experience, my volunteer work and, I think, my interview. I hope my answers were suitable. But—

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Okay. That's great. Thank you so much.

Now we will go to the official opposition: 10 minutes. We'll start with MPP Gates.

MPP Wayne Gates: Thanks for coming today. I notice you were sitting here during the first half hour. I'm sure you enjoyed the line of questioning. What we're trying to do is make sure that people who come here are doing it for the right reason, have the right qualifications and are not tied or good friends or play football with the Premier. I can tell you that I've never played football with the Premier; I

just want to be clear. I want to clear that up in case any of my colleagues are wondering, with the pipes that I have.

So I'm going to ask you some questions, because I believe, when I took a look at having the opportunity to question you, that I'm very impressed with a few things about you: the fact that you're a new Canadian, the fact that going up was tough. To see the education and your success in life—I'm a firm believer that love is better than hate. And I'm sure, what you've accomplished—I just want to congratulate you, because that's what Canada is all about, is opportunity. We struggle sometimes when we're young. I grew up in poverty; I know a little bit about that. But I just want to say I'm really pleased that you're applying.

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: Thanks so much.

MPP Wayne Gates: But, in fairness, I have to ask you questions and not just pat you on the back.

So, to fall in line with my colleague, I just want to know, have you ever donated to the PC Party?

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: No.

MPP Wayne Gates: Have you ever donated to the federal PC Party?

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: No.

MPP Wayne Gates: Do you belong to a PC riding association?

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: No.

MPP Wayne Gates: Did you do this on your own? Did anybody approach you? Is it something that you had an interest in? Why did you apply?

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: I did it on my own. Nobody approached me. Why I applied is that I believe that being an adjudicator is the next logical step in my career and is something I really, really want to do. With my legal training, my background and my experience in private practice and making decisions in my volunteer capacity as well, I think that I would be well-suited for this role. I believe working with transparency, honesty and balancing pragmatics with the law is something that I can do, and I believe I would serve the LTB well.

MPP Wayne Gates: And you did talk about the fact that you worked for municipalities. What kind of cases would come up with that?

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: Right now, my current role would be a lot of provincial offences, whether it is the Highway Traffic Act—there are municipal offences as well which encompass city by-laws. There is some federal legislation that we've done as well. The airport is located in Mississauga, so when we had the Quarantine Act and we had the pandemic come in, we had to deal with all those charges. We also deal with anything related to transport in terms of structure. We deal with airport parking and we deal with various matters that may come up or may be handed down to us.

MPP Wayne Gates: I don't know about airport parking, but I certainly believe that hospital parking should be free, so if you can do anything around that, that would certainly be a winner in the province of Ontario.

For years, the Landlord and Tenant Board backlog has forced tenants and landlords to wait seven to eight months

for a hearing. What new approach would you bring to take to finally fix these delays, and why should we believe you would succeed where so many others have failed?

Mr. Amit Gursaud: That's a fair question. Right now, as a non-appointee to the tribunal, I can't speak to what's currently happening or anything along those lines, but what I can say is that with my background, with my ability to manage high-priority situations, being comfortable in high-pressure situations and being able to manage a caseload, I think I'll be effectively someone who can work with efficiency and independence. I believe that with my track record now.

With the cases that I do see and with the results that I have to prove, I believe I have a record of doing that. I think what sets me apart is the fact that I actually do it. I am in a government capacity. I am someone who has to work in the interest of the people, and I know how sensitive and how frustrating it can be for long times. Our trial times right now are long as well. I see people every day saying that they've waited a year, six or eight months to be in front of the court. So I definitely do appreciate the backlog.

In terms of when it comes to me and my role, I have experience working with those deadlines and can do it effectively.

MPP Wayne Gates: Well, I do believe that's a fair question. I'm hoping that when you get on the board—because you will; they have the majority, so they'll vote for you. But the reality is, that's what we really need for both parties, quite frankly.

So Bill 60, I'm sure you're aware of it, the Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025, aims to speed up the LTB proceedings by cutting—think about this—cutting tenants' protections, for example, slashing the rent arrears grace period from 14 days to seven and giving tenants just 15 days to seek review of an eviction order. The reason why that's important, as you know, is a lot of people—not all but some renters are just barely paying their rent and can't afford to get a lawyer, and trying to go through the process takes a long time. I don't want to answer the question for you, but I thought I'd help you.

Do you believe these measures are justified to reduce delays, and how would you ensure that speeding up cases—

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Point of order, Chair?

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Sorry, MPP Gates. There's a point of order by MPP Dowie.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Chair, the role that the prospective appointee will play is not going to be influential in policy-making at the provincial level. So I just question the relevance of the question to the applicant.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Okay. Just continue on, and let's please stay focused on the Landlord and Tenant Board application.

MPP Wayne Gates: I think that's a stretch, but I appreciate the ruling.

Do you believe these measures are justified to reduce delays, and how will you ensure that speeding up cases doesn't come at the expense of tenants' right to a fair process? Do you believe in a fair process?

Mr. Amit Gursaud: Yes, that's correct, honourable member. I do believe in a fair process. I believe in procedural fairness and practise it every day, so I'm very aware of the responsibilities in that respect. However, as a non-appointee right now—I don't want to sound like a broken record, but I can't really speak to what's happening now. But again, just maybe commenting on what really hits home for me is the inability or struggling to get by—I'm very well aware. Having gone through that myself, I'm very well aware of how tough that can be.

In terms of what would be my position as an adjudicator, and as mentioned earlier, I am able to make decisions informed and efficiently. I am able to work with high demands, and I can meet my high caseloads. Making sure that those decisions are fair and expedient would fall hand in hand with my experience.

0950

MPP Wayne Gates: This is one that really, I think, touches home to a lot of people who are renting in a lot of cases: The LTB's shift to virtual hearings and a digital-first model has created a barrier to justice for many people who lack reliable Internet, devices or tech skills, particularly a lot of our seniors who are being renovicted and those types of issues—who can't afford the rent, by the way.

Do you acknowledge the access-to-justice problem, and what will you do to make sure that moving hearings online doesn't shut out vulnerable tenants who struggle with technology?

Mr. Amit Gursaud: Again, I can't speak to what's currently happening now. I can only speak to my capacity that would be as a future appointee.

I believe that the Internet is a good tool, but there are barriers, of course, in life that might not be accessible to people utilizing the process. What I can say is that I am very appreciative of the fact that most people who come before courts and tribunals are self-represented, so anything that we can do to make resources available, more accessible, more expedient, is something I would definitely support, as well as an approach to access to justice.

Right now, in our court system as well, I find the Internet is a good tool because people can't come into courts. It does give people the ability to not undertake the expense to go into court. I appreciate the nature of the Internet and what it does already, but I believe with approaches as well—for example, we've had people calling over the phone to attend their hearings while dialled in.

While they can't see what's happening, in my role, I would make sure that whatever is not visible is heard. So making sure that whatever is being presented, making sure that the evidence brought forward is not only explained but fully understood—because without sight, it would be more difficult. So making sure that the process is streamlined and it is fair. Again, ensuring procedural fairness is something I would do as an adjudicator.

MPP Wayne Gates: Thanks. I appreciate that.

As you step into this role amid a persistent backlog and controversial changes under Bill 60, public trust in the

board's fairness and effectiveness is at an all-time low. What will you do to help restore confidence that the Landlord and Tenant Board can deliver justice both efficiently and impartially?

Mr. Amit Gurbarsaud: Thank you. I appreciate the question as well, honourable member. Again, I don't mean to sound like a broken record; I can't speak to what's happening now. But in my role, what would be my capacity—I believe I've illustrated that in my opening statement as well, with my experiences, with my ability to work with people—

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): One minute warning—actually, 49 seconds.

Mr. Amit Gurbarsaud: Thank you—and being someone who has gone through the experience of doing that, I believe, right now, I'm in a position that hopefully restores faith in the public sector. Because we get a lot of comments and I'm very well aware of the perception of crown representatives. But again, I owe a duty to the profession and the public.

MPP Wayne Gates: I just want to finish by saying I believe—and I'm not speaking for the rest of the committee—you're the type of candidate that should be applying for these types of jobs, not because you're friends of the Premier or worked on a campaign—in my last election, they have already appointed the candidate that I've already beat to an appointment.

I just want to say thank you for taking the time to apply. Thank you for doing it on your own. It's been a pleasure having the privilege to ask you a few questions. Thank you very much, and I'll just finish by saying: Go, Jays, go!

Mr. Amit Gurbarsaud: Thank you, honourable member. I appreciate that.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thank you—a little leeway in time there because you were so complimentary.

MPP Wayne Gates: Doesn't happen often.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): I know. Bring it.

Now, we're going to the third party—last but not least. So, 10 minutes to MPP Smyth.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Thank you, Amit, for being here and your interest in the Landlord and Tenant Board.

In my riding of Toronto—St. Paul's, about 68% of the population is renters. So there are really big rental issues right now, as we see with Bill 60, which our colleagues have pointed out. Access, accountability, transparency—all very, very important to us. We hear so many stories of concern with the Landlord and Tenant Board—you have touched on that—when it comes to delays, access.

We see that this government is mandating everybody back to work come the new year, and you look at the Landlord and Tenant Board, and I definitely see the advantages for some in terms of access and being able to go to these hearings online. But then, at the same time, there isn't that personal connection that you can get with people when you're all together, and maybe something could be worked out at the side before the hearing, or before you go to the board with issues.

Do you see any possibility for flexibility with in-person meetings and hearings, as well as a hybrid model for these hearings?

Mr. Amit Gurbarsaud: Yes. Thank you, honourable member. In response to that, again, I can't speak to what's currently happening within the board, but I appreciate your question because right now I work in a hybrid environment as well, where we do have in-person available as well as Zoom appearances. So in my role, if it is an accommodation that's sought, if it is within my control, I would commit to the access-to-justice issue and make sure that that person, if they need that accommodation, does get it.

I appreciate the percentages of renters, and I can appreciate the circumstances they're in as well, but, again, at the end of the day, my role as the adjudicator would be to hear both sides, make a decision grounded in law, reason and transparency, and do so expediently. So whatever means that would be, that would be, but, at the end of the day, whether it's virtual or in person, that would be my role.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: You know all the issues that renters face right now with bad-faith evictions or renovations. Where do you stand, from an empathetic point of view and also just pure, "This isn't right, what's happening with the tenants"? What's your stance on cracking down on bad-faith evictions or renovations?

Mr. Amit Gurbarsaud: Again, just sticking to my role as an adjudicator is what I would have to do: assessing each case on its merit, looking at what has happened.

In my experience as both having a humble background and being someone who has worked very hard to get to where I am today, I can definitely appreciate the realistic circumstances that go into things. But at the end of the day, my role would be to assess credibility and make those calls, assess evidence, weigh it and make a decision that's both fair but firm. That would really be my role as the adjudicator in making sure that the process is fair to both parties.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I'm not sure how aware you are of the current government's proposals that could undermine tenants' security of tenure. How might you ensure that tenants' rights are not eroded through the Landlord and Tenant Board decisions?

Mr. Amit Gurbarsaud: I believe that falls under procedural fairness as well. With my legal background and training, we were well taught about owing a duty not only to the profession but the public. And my government work has shown me the, I guess, realistic aspect of that. I see cases every day where I do prosecute them and, whether I get a conviction or whether we resolve, I do see the impacts that it has, and I do weigh it whenever I do go into something. In that capacity, I can speak to it like that: As a person and a human being, everyone's experience is different, so being able to listen to everyone and let them feel comfortable presenting their side.

Again, I can appreciate a self-represented person's sophistication with matters, so making sure that the process is explained—but I can't provide legal advice—is something I do all the time and balance a very, very fine

line, but making sure that, as an adjudicator, again, I stick to legislation, stick to what's expected of me and act fairly but firmly.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: What do you think is a reasonable timeline for decisions with the Landlord and Tenant Board? We're seeing eight-plus months. You work in the legal profession, where things take time, but what's reasonable?

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: That's a good question. I don't believe you could set a firm deadline on things. Every case is different, so it's hard to say cases should take X amount of time to resolve. Some have higher sophistication. Some have more things to consider. We see it all the time where judges or justices reserve judgment because there's so much thrown at them that they have to make sure everything is balanced fairly.

So I appreciate your question, honourable member, but I wouldn't suggest a particular number. I would say the process has to be done properly, efficiently, and done so with fair evidence review and fair balance of all considerations.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Also, what is your stance on some changes that restrict the tenant's ability to raise new issues at the Landlord and Tenant Board? Do you believe that this would impair a tenant's right to a fair hearing?

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: Again, I can't speak to what's currently happening, but as an adjudicator my role is to ensure that the persons that are representing themselves—or by representation—get a fair hearing. So whatever it takes to make sure that hearing is fair, weighing evidence, looking at both sides and making sure that the process is followed is what I would stick to as an adjudicator.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Okay. Thank you so much.

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Thank you very much, MPP Smyth. And thank you, Amit, for coming in today and giving us your presentation and your willingness to serve.

Mr. Amit Gurpersaud: Thank you so much, Madam Chair, and thank you so much, honourable members. Have a good rest of the day.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Have a good day.

All right. We will now consider the intended appointment of Michael Kraljevic, nominated as the member of the Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning board of governors. MPP Cooper?

1000

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Michael Kraljevic, nominated as member of the Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning board of governors.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Any discussion on that? MPP Gates.

MPP Wayne Gates: Recorded vote, please.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Okay. MPP Gates has asked for a recorded vote. Are the members ready to vote?

Ayes

Bailey, Cooper, Denault, Dowie, Sabawy, Vickers.

Nays

Gates, Gilmour, Smyth.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): That carries. Thank you very much.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Amit Gurpersaud, nominated as member of the Landlord and Tenant Board. MPP Cooper?

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Amit Gurpersaud, nominated as member of the Landlord and Tenant Board.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Any discussion on that? MPP Gates.

MPP Wayne Gates: Recorded vote, please.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): MPP Gates has asked for a recorded vote. Are the members ready to vote?

Ayes

Bailey, Cooper, Denault, Dowie, Gates, Gilmour, Sabawy, Smyth, Vickers.

The Chair (Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon): Wow, unanimous—the motion is carried unanimously. That's got to be a first here but hopefully not the last.

That concludes our business of the day. This committee now stands adjourned. Go, Jays, go! Thank you very much.

The committee adjourned at 1002.

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