

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 47-I
INTERIM

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N^o 47-I
PROVISOIRE

1st Session
44th Parliament

Thursday
4 December 2025

1^{re} session
44^e législature

Jeudi
4 décembre 2025

Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly
Greffier : Trevor Day

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Hansard Publications and Language Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Journal des débats et services linguistiques
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 4 December 2025

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 4 décembre 2025

The House met at 0900.

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

Prières / Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Now, a moment for reflection.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECT ONTARIO BY SECURING AFFORDABLE ENERGY

FOR GENERATIONS ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO EN GARANTISSANT L'ACCÈS À L'ÉNERGIE ABORDABLE POUR LES GÉNÉRATIONS FUTURES

Mr. Oosterhoff, on behalf of Mr. Lecce, moved third reading of the following bill:

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

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

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank you, Speaker, for indulging me this morning as we have our debate on the third reading of this bill—a piece of legislation that I know has already been before the House a couple of times, that has had an ample opportunity for many members to speak and to participate and to share their perspectives on this legislation.

I want to thank those members who have already participated in our discussion and have also ensured that the perspectives of so many parts of the province have been represented.

I want to also acknowledge the excellent work of the parliamentary assistant the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore and his incredible advocacy and work on this legislation.

I want to also recognize the parliamentary assistant from Scarborough Centre for his work.

I also need to acknowledge Minister Stephen Lecce, who is an absolute champion, this week alone, doing incredible work to build out our energy security, to build out partnerships globally when it comes to securing good deals for Canada and supporting jobs and economic growth.

I want to acknowledge their participation in building out this legislation.

Speaker, if passed, the Protect Ontario by Securing Affordable Energy for Generations Act will support the much-needed expansion of Ontario's energy system. It will limit our reliance on foreign resources, and it will drive economic growth.

We know that Ontario needs to prepare for a massive increase in energy demand while at the same time powering the strongest economy in the G7. As we all know, protectionist measures by the United States have created uncertainty and disruptions. We have seen that we are currently at a 26% lower trade level since the start of the year, and economists say that the Canadian GDP could shrink by up to 1.27% by 2027. This means that we need to rethink how we are allocating our energy to support jobs and build up the economy. We need to make sure that we are allocating our energy in a way that is responsible and that is recognizing, particularly, the emergence of new technologies, rapidly growing demand from data centres, and new and emerging industries that are also choosing electrification. This demand, if we do not act, could in fact outpace grid upgrades. It could create potential reliability issues and even create delays for connection of new industry and jobs.

When we look at places in other parts of this continent that have failed to take action—you look at British Columbia, California, Texas, the Netherlands, Belgium, other places across the world, that are recognizing that there is an enormous challenge and that they need to take action to address that challenge.

It builds on the work that we've seen from our own Independent Electricity System Operator, who has signalled that we could see a supply gap by the end of this decade.

That's why we've taken action. It's why we brought forward the LT2 program, the long-term procurement project, which is securing 7,500 megawatts of power. Why do we need so much power, 7,500 megawatts? That's the equivalent of 7.5 million homes—a massive amount of power. Why do we need so much power? Well, there are a few reasons.

One, we have had population growth here in the province of Ontario. We are one of the most rapidly growing jurisdictions in North America. I think it was last year, 2024—at one point, Ontario was growing faster than Texas and Florida combined, two of the fastest-growing jurisdictions. When you talk to Americans, specifically, they talk about the growth that's happening in those states. Ontario is growing faster than both of those states combined. We see that there will be more than a million new homes, so 15% growth in our population, by 2035, and an

anticipated demand of six terawatt hours, or 9% of new electricity demand, just for this growing population alone.

But it's not just the existing growth that's coming; it's also the shift to electrification. We see households and industries choosing more and more often to make decisions that are in the best interests of our environment and also of our economy. We are seeing electric vehicle adoption taking over, as we see more than a quarter million new vehicles here on Ontario's roads today, with that number expected to substantially increase, to the tune of 20 terawatt hours, or 31% of new demand, by 2035—again, a massive amount of new demand in just a decade. Speaker, 2035 might have seemed like a long time just a few years ago, but 2035 is less than a decade away now. We're coming up to the turn of this year, into 2026, and it's something we have to think about as we prepare for that.

So what does that all mean? It means that with the growth of industry, the growth of population, the growth of demand, we will need some 18,000 anticipated megawatts of nuclear capacity alone by 2050. And this is also how we achieve our net zero targets without penalizing hard-working families, without putting the cost of climate action, without putting the cost of reducing emissions, in a punitive way, on the backs of working families.

This is really where we have a strong differentiation between our approach and the Liberal and NDP approaches, which really say, "No, we need to whack people over the head with reducing emissions. We're going to make it as expensive as possible to drive a car. We're going to make it as expensive as possible for that industry to be able to procure power." We say no. We say we are going to take a reliable, affordable, sustainable approach that's driven by energy security and that, frankly, recognizes families and industries that are foundational to our province's success need to have choice; they need to have options when it comes to the types of energy resources that we have in our system.

We know, through our modelling, that by 2050 we will have an over 99% emissions-free grid without needing to take some of the punitive measures that the opposition members continually bring up as their solution. How do we do that? Again, it's by building out that robust energy ecosystem that we have.

In Ontario, we have such a unique strength. When I talk to folks from other jurisdictions and they realize that we have 50% nuclear, 30% hydroelectric power, some 12% renewables, and then an additional form of natural gas as an insurance policy for, depending on the day, about 10% of the grid, so that you have a really robust form of energy supply—what does that do? That's economic and competitive tension that creates savings, at the end of the day. It keeps costs lower by forcing all of those players to compete with each other. We're in a day-ahead market here in the province of Ontario, where the day before that power is needed, over 90% of it is required to be registered and to be sold. It's sold in the day-ahead market. That means all of those different resources are competing with

each other, and that's keeping costs down from where they would otherwise be.

In fact, I believe it was the Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario who estimated that because of our focus on competitive procurement, because of Premier Ford's desire to see the energy sector—one that's driven by the economic tension, which keeps costs down—we'll have, by the end of this decade, energy costs that are 23% lower than they would have been under the Liberals' plan. A 23% delta is massive, when you look at those cost savings running into the thousands of dollars for families here in the province of Ontario. One of the ways that we're different from what we saw under that plan and one of the reasons why our plan is going to keep costs 23% lower than they would have otherwise been is what we saw last week—we saw an historic announcement from Minister Lecce, joined by other members of our team. The previous Liberal government said that they were going to close Pickering, and that, frankly, was heading in the wrong direction. We, on the other hand, made a commitment: We're going to extend the life of Pickering, which powers 2.2 million homes. It's going to create over 30,000 jobs, \$41 billion in economic growth, and keep 90% of the supply chain benefits in Ontario. That's massive.

Not just Ontario, but Canada as a whole has built up a really robust, a really meaningful supply chain for the nuclear sector. I know you, Speaker, understand that better than some, when it comes to the value of those supply chains.

0910

I think of places in my own riding. Talking to Spencer Fox, talking to Niagara Electric—there are so many people, so many skilled workers, especially, in the labour force. I think of Jonathan White from the Power Workers' Union, who lives in Vineland and I've met with a number of times.

These are folks who are spread out across every corner of our province who have helped to build a really remarkable supply chain. To keep 90% of that spend here in Ontario is really, really substantial.

We're also calling on the federal government to designate the nuclear project in Wesleyville as a nation-building project to build the largest nuclear power plant in the world. This, again, is just an opportunity that we have when it comes to a site that's designated, that has capacity, that has potential, and we're calling on the feds to come alongside.

We saw Minister Lecce just return this week from meetings in the UK and Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, we signed a deal with the Bulgarian government to sell Ontario's nuclear expertise—and be able to bring those profits back to Ontario. It's a display of our government's leadership and commitment to nuclear excellence.

In this legislation, as we look, again, at that massive increase in demand that we're going to be experiencing over the coming decades, we have to make sure that we're also prioritizing and being smart about the demand side. We can't just talk about supply. Supply is very important—again, building out that robust supply ecosystem is

crucial—but we also need to be smart about how we're dealing with demand. An example of this would be how we can prioritize the good data centres—the data centres that deliver measurable benefits to local economies, to local communities, and to our province.

Speaker, I've heard from some folks who have misunderstood comments in the past and seem to think that we think all data centres are bad. No—absolutely not. There are important values that data centres provide to certain parts of the economy. But I think we have to also recognize that not all data centres are created equal. There's a big difference between a bitcoin cryptocurrency chugging away, sucking up a lot of juice and not providing a lot of employment benefit or benefit for the innovation economy in Ontario. We need to be cognizant about the risk that that kind of mega facility presents to the grid, to ratepayers, and to our entire ability to attract talent into other areas. That's very different than cloud-based services that support start-ups in the KW corridor, for example, or data centres that provide compute for the Kanata–Carleton area, where we have a massive and growing tech sector.

Not a lot of people know this, but next to the Silicon Valley, Ontario has the second-highest concentration of tech workers in North America. Of course, everyone knows Silicon Valley and its place in the world when it comes to its capacity.

Ontario has a lot to offer as well, but we need to make sure we're prioritizing those data centres that are most effective, most efficient and, frankly, that offer the highest value to our economy.

These are the kinds of measures that this legislation really allows us to build upon.

There's more, but I know I have a number of colleagues who are going to be speaking to this legislation. So I'm going to allow them to go through some of the components of this legislation that, for example, speak about the value of made-in-Ontario products and how we're changing the structure to prioritize buying made-in-Ontario, buying made-in-Canada, and ensuring that those economic benefits and expertise stay right here.

But I do want to acknowledge, again, that this is a crucial piece of legislation that demonstrates our government's commitment to not just thinking in four-year cycles, but thinking in generational cycles; not just thinking about what's best for the next election, but thinking about what's best for my children, for our grandchildren and for so many others who have yet to be born.

With that, I will cease my contributions to this legislative debate this morning, and I will allow other members, who I know have a great deal to say as well, to participate.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is a pleasure to say a few words today about the Protect Ontario by Securing Affordable Energy for Generations Act.

I come from northern Ontario. There are many, many electrical dams in my riding. On the Wanapitei River, two major dams—I think they're at over five megawatts for each of them. If you look at the Vermilion River—I live

close to the Vermilion River—there are three hydro dams. They are all over my riding, and yet, the power supply to the people I represent in Nickel Belt is terrible.

If you look at Gogama, last week, the week before, the week before that, we averaged at least three power failures. Every single week, we have power failures. I have an apartment here in Toronto. I have plugged in a clock, I think, 18 years ago, and it has never gone off because you don't see this here. In northern Ontario, where we produce a ton of electricity, we see this all the time.

Mattagami First Nation has a huge transmission line that goes through their territory, and yet the band had to buy generators for every single home and every single business on Mattagami First Nation. Why? Because we have to deal with power failures all the time.

Northerners pay the highest price for electricity, yet we produce electricity that gets transmitted all the way to down south, where people down south—nothing against people who live in southern Ontario. But we live in northern Ontario, we produce clean green energy through a lot of power dams, and yet the infrastructure to bring this to our homes so that we have reliable energy has not been maintained for so long that all of us face power failures all the time. I have a generator in my garage. Mattagami First Nation bought generators for every single one of their residents, every single one of their businesses because the electricity distribution system has not been maintained.

I will bring you back to when Hydro One used to be a public entity. It was owned by all of us. It was there to make sure that electricity was considered a public good.

The Wynne government decided to privatize Hydro One. Well, they paid a high price for this. They lost the election, came back and did not have party status for two elections in a row. Why? Because they privatized hydro.

What this bill is doing is further privatizing our electricity system. Now the government will get to decide who gets to connect to the grid and who doesn't, who makes enough donations to enough PC members so that their business can be connected to the grid.

In my riding, I have the second-highest and the third-highest users of electricity. Glencore—sometimes second, second or third. Their smelter operation is driven by electricity. The more rocks you melt to be able to get the nickel, the copper, the gold, precious metal and everything else out, the more electricity they use. They have no problem being connected to the grid.

Iamgold, another mine that opened up in my riding—everybody knows what they mine. Iamgold—I'll give you a hint. They mine gold. At this point, gold sells for \$4,000 an ounce. Let's just say that they opened up at a good time. Well, they did not have electricity, because in my riding, although we have big transmission lines, nobody is connected. They needed 44 kilometres to connect to the grid. It didn't even take a year—they had all of the environmental assessments; the line was built. They get all of the electricity they need—but Biscotasing, Mattagami First Nation, Gogama, Westree, Shining Tree, Indian Lake? They're all in the same area. Biscotasing is actually on a generator. They are not even connected to the grid. Get

this, Speaker: Between Sudbury and Timmins—that's not that far away—we still have communities that rely on generating stations to have electricity. Yet, the mine, which is really close to Biscotasing, across the street from Gogama, got all of the power that they needed. There is nothing wrong with this. I just want everybody else to also have access.

I have a lot of problems with giving this government more power to decide who will get to connect and who won't get to connect, if you are a high user of electricity.

0920

My riding is called Nickel Belt. Why? Because most of the nickel mines, except for one, are in my riding. You go down to a little community like Levack, and there are seven active mines that mine all the time, that need a ton of electricity in order to go. Is this because this has been an NDP riding for the last 58 years? Does that mean that they won't get to connect to the grid; that only people who make donations to this government will get to connect?

Those worries are real. The more power we give to this government, the more they use the resources of the taxpayers to help their friends, their donors, the people who are well-connected. I'm worried.

Do I care about the mining sector? Absolutely. Most of the people in my riding either work in the mining sector or depend on the mining sector to make a living. Are there opportunities to do more? Yes, absolutely. There are explorations going on throughout my riding.

Right now, copper is selling better than nickel. Nickel is at about USD\$7 a pound. That's about where profit margins start to get pretty thin. Copper, on the other hand, is going up. We have lots of opportunity to mine copper. It tends to be a little bit deeper. It tends to require a little bit more infrastructure. It needs electricity. And now the government will get to decide whether the electricity needed for this to happen will take place or not.

I would encourage them to look at the decisions that the Liberal government made, to look at the decisions to privatize electricity.

Electricity is a human good. If you don't have electricity, it's almost impossible in this day and age to set up a home, to set up a community, to set up a business, to open up a mine, to open up a camp. We need electricity. And now we bring more uncertainty for business, for people, for communities, as to how they will be able to gain that electricity.

It's hard to convince people who live in my riding, who face at least three power failures every single week, that this government is really committed to securing affordable energy for generations to come. Who are we kidding here? This is 2025. I guarantee you that today or tomorrow, there will be a power failure in my riding. There's a good chance it will be at my house. There's a good chance it will be in another community. It happens all the time. It doesn't have to be that way. It was never that way when hydro was a public good, when hydro was owned by the province, which made sure that we had equitable access.

Big parts—sure, the huge transmission is still owned by Hydro One, but the delivery is not, and what we see is old

infrastructure that needs to be maintained. Really, how hard is it to send a bunch of people underneath the line to cut the trees so they don't fall on the hydro line when there's a storm, when there's snow? Are you surprised that there's snow in northern Ontario? When I left, I had about three inches; now my husband says we're at five inches of snow all over the ground in my backyard. But there have been feet—I don't know how many centimetres that is, but anyway, that thick of snow in the northern part of my riding. Are you surprised that some of the branches fall on the power lines that haven't been maintained? The solutions are easy.

Why is it that in Quebec they send—mainly young people—people with chainsaws every summer? They follow the transmission lines and they follow the power lines, and they cut the trees and they clear it. This way, they don't fall on the power lines.

None of this is happening in my riding, so that means every time we have a storm and a branch falls, we have power failures.

The government needs to take the responsibility. It is not by leaving the door wide open for preferential treatment that you will reassure the people of northern Ontario that you are taking your responsibility seriously—because right now, nobody believes you.

Even the hydro ombudsman—when the power goes off and comes back on, it often creates problems. I will talk about the last time that happened in our house. The fridge, the hot tub, the television, the coffee maker, the furnace; basically, everything that had been off for many, many hours—the power came back on, went back, came back on, went back, and it killed all of my electrical appliances. That happens all the time. So you put in a complaint and say, “Because the power went off, came back, went off, came back, I had to pay \$700 to change some kind of a board in my fridge for the fridge to work again.” I forget how much it was for the furnace. It was \$250 for the hot tub. I ended up buying a new coffee maker—\$100; television—\$400. Anyway, you submit all of this, and you say, “This happened. It happened to me, to my neighbour, to my neighbour on that side, that side.” And we get, “No. It has nothing to do with hydro. You don't get compensation. You don't get anything.”

Try to build trust in our hydroelectric system. The Liberals decided to privatize it. We are paying the price for that privatization.

When you put a bill forward like Bill 40 that leaves the door wide open to preferential treatment, we know what that means for northern Ontario. That means we will be the losers. That means that a system that we cannot count on right now, because we have power failures all the time, will get worse, not better. I don't accept that.

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

Mr. Ted Hsu: I am appreciative of the opportunity to stand up and speak to third reading of Bill 40, but I'm disappointed that third reading debate is being truncated, that it's only going to last two hours—only 36 minutes per recognized party—and that there are not going to be any

questions and answers after our interventions. That's unfortunate, because I think this place works better when we do ask real questions and we do get real answers.

Committee is a place, as things work right now, where you can have back-and-forth discussions and where you can discuss new laws in detail before they get passed and you can try to understand them, on behalf of the people of Ontario.

I want to start off by giving an example of why committee is so important and why the government should not assume that everything is perfect and that it doesn't need to put a bill through committee. This is especially pertinent right now, because there is a government motion that's going to be debated later today that is fast-tracking another three bills to third reading without going to committee stage.

Some of the members in the Legislature were actually present in Timmins when Bill 71, in the last Parliament—some of the people here today. Bill 71 was the Building More Mines Act, and we went up to Timmins to hold committee hearings. It was a very nice trip, actually. On April 5, 2023, the minister came to testify. When it was my turn to ask the minister, I asked the following—and I'm just going to read this into the record because I think it's important. "The first question is about section 18(1). There's a line in the legislation that says"—and this is about restoring the land after mines close—"The condition of the land with respect to one or both of public health and safety or the environment following the remediation is comparable to or better than it was before the recovery." That sounds okay, but the problem is, there is an "or" in there.

So what I said in committee was, "My question for the minister is, the way it's worded now, you could have public health and safety or the environment"—one of those two—"be worse as long as the other one is better." I didn't believe that was really the intent of this government. They may be bad, but they don't want to make public health and safety worse or the environment worse, do they? "So my question is, why don't you just say 'both public health and safety and the environment' in that line of the legislation?"

0930

So, during this committee meeting in Timmins, I had the opportunity—because I read the bill in detail—to point out to the minister, with the ministry official sitting beside him, that there seemed to be this drafting mistake. And I wanted to ask him, "Did they really mean that you can make the environment better but make public health and safety worse, after you close the mine? Did they really mean that you can make public health and safety better, but it was okay to make the environment worse when you close the mine?"

I will note that at that committee meeting in Timmins, I did witness the ministry official quietly advising the minister that indeed this was a drafting mistake.

And to confirm all of that, on April 18, the Standing Committee on the Interior—which was considering this bill, Bill 71, in the last Parliament—met again for clause-

by-clause consideration of this Building More Mines Act. I tabled that amendment to fix this serious drafting error and, lo and behold, the government put forward the same amendment. The member for Essex, who actually moved this amendment, said, "I move that section 18 of the bill be struck out and the following substituted"—I won't read the whole thing. What the government decided to do was put in the following language regarding remediation of lands where mining occurred—and the amendment from the government said, "such that the condition of the land with respect to public health and safety and the environment following the remediation is comparable to or better than it was before the recovery...."

The point is that the government had a drafting error. It was pointed out in committee—and I know that because the minister didn't realize there was a drafting error. The ministry official quickly realized that there was a drafting error and that wasn't the intent of government. And the government confirmed everything by putting forward their own amendment to change an "or" to an "and," which substantially changed the meaning of the legislation. In fact, there were two other places in the bill where that correction had to be made. And the member for Essex moved the amendment, on behalf of the government, to fix Bill 71.

At the end of it all, I followed up with the following, which I just want to note in this debate for those who are listening: I said at the committee on the interior, "I also just want to say for the record that I'm happy the government has put forward this amendment which corrects a defect that came out during questioning of the minister in our meeting in Timmins, because the bill, as written, would have allowed one of either public health and safety or the environment to be worse after the mine closure. So I'm happy that the government is bringing forth this amendment, and I would be withdrawing my amendment if this one passes." And of course—well, maybe I shouldn't say "of course"—we're very fortunate that the amendment did pass and that the government's legislation was fixed.

This is the sort of thing that can go wrong if we get into the habit of skipping committee—and I think "habit" is the right word here, because it's not one or two bills that have skipped the committee stage. I think we're up to about 20 now—20 bills this year—where the government has decided that they are so perfect that we don't need to go to committee stage to look at the details of the bill.

Partisanship aside, I don't trust myself to be perfect the first time around on anything, let alone the government. I don't know how many people in Ontario really trust the government to get things right the first time.

This is the sort of thing, if you adopt the attitude that you want to avoid criticism and "We're right and they're wrong, and this is all partisan, and they're the bad guys and we're the good guys"—if you're not open to criticism in order to improve, then you're not going to do very well. You're not going to be serving the people of Ontario as well as you could. So in the debate this afternoon on the government motion to have Bills 45, 72 and 76 skip com-

mittee and go directly to a truncated third reading—I hope people keep that in mind when they debate this this afternoon.

The government motion establishing the rules around the committee allowed for only two hours of debate over amendments to the bill. So we only got to debate amendments to the bill between 9 and 10 in the morning and 3 to 4 p.m. in the afternoon. The government motion allowed for proceedings to go on until midnight, in fact, that day, and we are operating currently under rules where the House does sit until midnight, so that's not particularly strange. But for some reason the government only wanted to have two hours of debate—well, discussion, question-and-answer, any kind of discussion—about the details of the bill. So at 4 p.m., according to the government motion, no more discussion was allowed, and only votes were allowed.

What happened, even though we had plenty of time left in the day, is that the amendments which the government put forward—and so, in fact, this is another example; Bill 40 is another example where the government said, “Oh, I guess we're not perfect; we'd better put forward some amendments.” We never got to discuss the government amendments. The government amendments weren't even read out; they were simply voted on. So we never got to ask, “Well, what's the rationale for these amendments?” Why didn't you put them in originally? You had all summer.” The Premier even delayed the return of elected MPPs to this Legislature by several weeks—from the beginning of September to the end of October. The government had all this extra time, and still they didn't get this bill right—I'm not expecting them to, but at least let's talk about it. If you had all that time to write this bill, what was the rationale for putting in these amendments?

And it's too bad; I think this PC government thinks they don't have to explain themselves if they conveniently shut down elected MPPs.

Finally, let me get to the bill itself, because there are some things that I want to say.

I'll start with schedule 3, section 6. It gives the CEO of the Ontario Energy Board the power to set internal procedural policies. It confuses me, because isn't a chief executive officer who's responsible for running something—aren't they supposed to be able to set internal procedures? It just doesn't make sense. So at committee in the hearings, I asked the ministry official, “Why do you need to do that? What's the purpose?” All they could say was, “Well, we have to do it for clarity. We have to make things clear.”

It's ironic; this PC government is so insistent on clarity in this one case—inscribing in the statutes of Ontario that a CEO should have the power to set internal procedures. How shocking—because you'd expect any CEO to have that kind of power. You've got to wonder, is it because the Ontario Energy Board, when it tried to do its job of protecting consumers from stranded fossil fuel assets, caused this government to panic and put through a whole bill that was dedicated to overruling an OEB decision, at the behest of particular businesses?

I need to point out that the PC members of the committee of the interior voted down my amendment to have more transparency around these internal procedures of the OEB.

0940

So now the government says we need to have more clarity about the internal procedures, the power of the CEO of the Ontario Energy Board. Why not have more clarity in other parts of Bill 40?

For example, why not have new clarity about these new mandates for the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Energy Board? They're being given this new mandate to also support economic growth.

The IESO is supposed to have the primary mandate of making sure the electricity system runs. You flick your switch, the electricity goes on—that's the IESO who's taking care of that.

The OEB is supposed to have the mandate of protecting consumers. You open up your energy bill—and who's got your back that you're not being charged too much? That's the OEB. That's their main job.

Now they're supposed to have the job of supporting economic growth, but if you're going to write it in, if you're going to inscribe it in the statutes of Ontario, why not get it right?

Why not put something like real per capita GDP growth? Inflation can increase nominal economic growth, but it doesn't really increase productivity. You could have population growth, which increases economic growth, but that doesn't increase the standard of living; it doesn't increase something that we call productivity.

I was sorry to hear the poor PC MPPs were given, by their government, something to say which was not true. They were told to say that economic growth and productivity growth are the same thing. And I don't fault them, because they were given things to read out in the committee.

Productivity growth is the thing that really improves the standard of living, especially in the long run. It's the thing that really will increase wages, allow you to demand higher wages. It increases quality. It decreases costs. So it's the most important thing when it comes to bringing down the cost of living, making Ontario's economy more competitive. Productivity growth is what will really protect Ontario in this new era of tariff wars. And this PC government doesn't seem to want to admit that it needs to fight that war.

Working more hours—that gives you economic growth, but it doesn't always make life better. If you think, “Oh, I'll just work more hours” at the factory or the plant—certainly, you get more income, but it doesn't always make your life better.

Another thing that often happens, especially here in Canada, is, you get a surge in commodity prices—it could be oil, it could be gold, it could be wheat. That can give you economic growth. But that sort of thing never lasts. It has fooled Canada over and over again, in our history, into not investing enough into other sectors of the economy. It has caused Canada to lag in innovation, in increasing

competitiveness, and in productivity growth. We have a history of this. So that's another thing that can cause you to think you have economic growth. But your economy is not getting healthier.

Lastly, in this bill—I want to talk about taxpayer subsidies of electricity. This bill allows the PC government to get more money from the taxpayer to subsidize electricity bills. Sometimes you have to do that. Maybe you want to protect low-income people from high costs or spikes in energy costs. Sometimes you have to say, “No, ratepayers shouldn't pay for that. Taxpayers should take that responsibility of protecting people who are more vulnerable.” But this subsidy is getting big. If you look at the annual budget for the energy ministry, it's over \$6 billion now, and it could get higher.

This bill allows the PC government to ask the Legislature for more money for generators, for transmitters, for distributors. So where do we draw the line? We have to draw the line somewhere. If the PC government energy minister wants to spend even more money that way—it may be justified, but don't the people of Ontario deserve to know why, especially through their elected representatives? No, that was also voted down by the PC members of the interior committee.

Just to conclude: This bill is too vague. It gives too much discretionary, unaccountable executive power to the Ford ministers. It leaves a lot to regulations—and in this sense, I think I'm in essential agreement with my colleague from Nickel Belt. It leaves a lot to regulations, and it misses the opportunity to give thoughtful, high-level guidelines to the regulations that will set the actual rules. It just opens things up to a pay-to-play government and a pay-to-play economy. That, we know, is not healthy. It's a disturbing trend with this PC government. Stakeholders who have the money to pay to play may not worry, but it should worry average people.

I think that future generations will rue the darkness in which Ontario democracy has been allowed to decay.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm honoured to rise today to debate Bill 40 at third reading.

I find it very interesting that the government has the words “affordable energy” in the title of this bill, because they're making our electricity system less affordable as we speak.

In November of this year, just in the last month, they've jacked up electricity prices by 29%, due to the policies of the Ford government. They've tried to hide that in the fall economic statement by increasing the hydro subsidy that the Liberal government brought in prior to 2018. I remember, in the 2018 election, the Conservatives railed against this expensive hydro subsidy which I think, at the time, cost taxpayers—sorry; the Conservatives railed against the Liberal one because it cost taxpayers like \$5 billion; that's now up to almost \$7 billion.

I asked the Financial Accountability Officer to do a study of who benefits the most from this subsidy, and, lo and behold, it's the wealthy. Millionaires, billionaires and

people with six-, seven- and eight-figure incomes disproportionately benefit from the government's hydro subsidy. Why? Because—it's kind of common sense—they use the most electricity.

I just want to ask the members opposite why you're putting forward energy policies that jack up prices by almost 30% and, according to the IESO's own estimates, are going to significantly go up over the next decade, and then turn around and spend billions of dollars subsidizing electricity prices for the wealthy.

This is at a time when the government says we don't have money for health care and our hospitals are taking out lines of credit to meet payroll. They say we don't have money to build deeply affordable housing at a time when, tragically, 81,000 people are experiencing homelessness. They say we don't have money for our schools at a time when they're experiencing a \$1,500-per-student cut, which is leading to hardships in our schools and in the education environment. And yet, they have the money to subsidize hydro rates for the wealthy, while they're increasing hydro rates.

So what's causing the increase? Well, primarily, it's the increase in nuclear power.

I just want to be clear: Ontario Greens are not opposed to nuclear power. We support rebuilding Darlington and Bruce, providing long-term, reliable power for decades to come. About half of our grid now is supplied by those nuclear units.

But let's look at what's happening with SMRs right now. For the four SMRs this government is bringing forward—the estimated cost to them in 2022 was \$4.8 billion; that cost has escalated now to almost \$21 billion.

No wonder electricity prices are going through the roof already and are going to continue to go through the roof. The government is choosing high-cost sources of generation, rather than looking at where the entire world is putting their energy dollars: wind, solar and battery storage, because they are now the cheapest sources of electricity generation anywhere in the world. But Ontario is missing in action.

I find it interesting that the government—and I listened to the minister's speech earlier this morning—says, “Do you know what? We want to be independent. We don't want any foreign interference into our electricity grid.” Guess what technology these SMRs are? Oh, US-based technology. They chose a US technology over Canadian technology, and now they're locking us in to having to buy enriched US uranium in order to power those SMRs. I don't know why they're doing that, especially at a time when the Trump administration is economically attacking the province of Ontario and the country of Canada.

0950

They're also ramping up gas plants, which will increase electricity prices as well, because gas and nuclear are three to 3.5 times more expensive than wind, solar and battery storage, according to the IESO's own data.

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm using IESO data. I hear the minister heckling me over there. I know the facts hurt. I

know the IESO's facts hurt when you're making decisions that are going to increase electricity prices for Ontarians. I know that hurts, because it's going to hurt politically.

They may continue to try to hide it, but then that's going to take money away from health care, education, housing, and a whole bunch of other things. So they've got some tough choices to make over there.

Ramping up gas plants means making us even more dependent on fossil gas from the US, because about 70% of the gas going into these gas plants is from the US.

So I don't see what's affordable about Bill 40, and I don't see what's protecting us from the threat of the US in Bill 40. I don't get it. I think the facts say otherwise.

Not only is ramping up gas plants going to increase electricity prices, but it's also going to make our grid dirtier and less competitive.

When the current government was elected in 2018, Ontario's grid was 96% clean, emission-free, one of the cleanest grids in the world. I've heard the industry minister say over and over again that part of what has enabled Ontario to attract investment, especially EV battery manufacturing investment, is the competitive advantage Ontario's clean grid provides the province. I just met with Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, I believe it was yesterday or the day before, here at Queen's Park, and they told me that for some of their big plants, their competitive advantage is that Ontario has a clean grid.

So what has happened to that grid in the almost eight years that the current government has been in office? It has gone from 96% clean to only 84% clean—a 12% decrease in what is our competitive advantage in attracting global capital. It's only going to get worse. According to the IESO's own estimates, we're going to see a 400% increase in climate pollution on Ontario's grid because this government is ramping up gas plants. Instead of using them as peaker plants—maybe there just in case of an emergency, which would be an acceptable thing to do—they're running a lot of these plants 24/7.

In Toronto, the Portlands gas plant is the largest single source of climate pollution and toxic air pollution in the city of Toronto. As a matter of fact, builders have had to change their building plans because they can't build tall buildings with the windows being able to open, because the air around the plant is so toxic to people.

When I met with the manufacturers, they were saying that that's going to hurt them, especially internally, within their corporate networks—of attracting capital investment to Ontario—because their companies want to invest in decarbonization.

Ontario is losing our competitive advantage of a clean grid because of the policies of the current government—which, by the way, will increase prices, making us less competitive doubly.

The other thing that the increase in gas is doing—this is a little bit complicated, so I'm going to try to explain it. The association of major power producers brought this to my attention when they were here this week. When electricity prices go up, it's driven by the price of gas, because that's the most expensive electricity that's being

bought on the market. So when the price goes up, that increased price applies to all sources of generation: nuclear, wind, solar, whatever. In a sense, we're actually paying an industrial carbon tax on emission-free electricity right now.

I would encourage the members opposite, especially the minister, to do a directive to the IESO to say, "When you look at the market price of electricity, make sure you don't include the full price of gas, because that full price is transferring carbon pricing onto emission-free electricity, which is never designed for that." We should make sure we have the competitive advantage of clean electricity and not have the industrial carbon price applied to it.

I want to close, in the final couple of minutes I have, to say to the members opposite that the government's energy policies, driven by Bill 5 and Bill 40, are giving an unfair advantage to gas producers. They've changed the rules in the LT2—the long-term energy procurement process—to favour gas generators, which is going to increase climate pollution. And they're doing it at a time when the green energy transition—the economy for the green energy transition—is now worth \$8 trillion. Some \$2.2 trillion is being invested in the green energy transition just this year, just in 2025 alone—double what's being invested in fossil fuels.

So this government is ramping up investments in fossil fuels, ripping up renewable energy contracts, at a time when the rest of the world is going in the complete opposite direction—why? Because investors want to invest in the lowest-cost sources of electricity. But, for whatever reason, this government doesn't want to do that. How does that hurt Ontario? It means we're missing out on the opportunity to have our fair share of that \$2.2-trillion investment this year, to create good-paying jobs right here in Ontario, to diversify our economy, to diversify our export markets. At a time when we want to become less dependent on the US, this government is making us more dependent on the US in our energy sector because, for whatever reason, they're just ideologically opposed to the lowest-cost sources of electricity generation: wind, solar and battery storage.

So I want to say to the people of Ontario: Let's put pressure on this government to invest in renewables so we get those investment dollars here, so we create good-paying jobs in Ontario, so we lower electricity prices, so we lower the emissions profile of our grid to make it more competitive, so we can attract more investment in manufacturing in Ontario to create even more good-paying jobs and, all at the same time, reduce climate pollution and help us meet our climate obligations.

Unfortunately, in the fall economic statement, this government cancelled climate action. We can have win, win, win if you would end your opposition to low-cost renewables.

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

Ms. Jess Dixon: I'm grateful to have the chance to rise today in support of Bill 40.

Ontario is entering this period of extraordinary opportunity. We're living through one of those moments in history when global economic pressures, rising energy demands, changes in technology, demographic growth are all converging at once. Really, we are in a pressure cooker, and the question isn't whether or not the pressure is on—it is—but whether we, as a province, will respond in a way that ultimately strengthens Ontario's competitive advantage, protects affordability, and secures prosperity for the families and employers who depend on us to plan ahead. In my view, Bill 40 is part of responding to that.

Across every major sector we have here—manufacturing, housing, agriculture, transportation, mining, tech—we keep hearing the same message, which is that Ontario needs more energy, it has to be delivered faster and with long-term certainty.

The global economy is clearly reorganizing itself around clean electricity, secure supply chains and advanced production. Jurisdictions like Ontario that can offer reliable, low-emission power at scale are going to be the ones that are able to attract investments and jobs; jurisdictions that don't will ultimately find themselves falling behind, regardless of the other strengths that they have. So we have a huge advantage here. We're not starting from scratch. We already operate one of the cleanest electricity grids in North America. We have world-leading expertise in nuclear power. We have the engineers, we have the tradespeople, we have the researchers, all of whom have skills that are recognized internationally. We also have environmental and labour standards that give investors, particularly foreign investors, confidence. We have a global economy that is choosing Ontario precisely because of those strengths.

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The purpose of Bill 40 is to build on that foundation, to make sure that our energy system is ready for the scale and pace of demand that we're already seeing under way. When we're looking at the growth expected—I think I've heard four and a half cities the size of Toronto being added to the grid, theoretically speaking, as far as the amount of power needed, which aren't abstract numbers. That's reflecting real projects that are already breaking ground or under application—electric vehicle and battery manufacturing, clean steel production, semiconductor fabrication, critical minerals processing, our large-scale agri-food operations, and then, of course, the increasingly heavy demands of artificial intelligence and cloud computing as well.

I think, really, that's where the urgency becomes clear and the need to react and the need to have bills like Bill 40 becomes clear. If we're looking at traditional data centres, they would draw fairly modest amounts of power, 10 or 20 megawatts, whereas today's AI-driven facilities are drawing on hundreds. The IESO is getting connection requests over 750 megawatts at a single point. I know that there are a number of active data centre applications that I think, put all together, represent more than 2,300 megawatts of demand. Without us planning for that, those large loads

could absorb capacity that we need. I think that Bill 40 is a clear response to that.

Again, when we look at the concept of data centres, for example, we don't want to discourage innovation or investment, but we do want to make sure that if Ontario is going to be supporting those large loads of energy, it's also aligned with Ontario's broader economic and strategic priorities. When we talk about data centres—it's prioritizing those that create high-quality jobs, support domestic data hosting, strengthen our digital sovereignty, contribute to local economies, and ultimately make sense within the overall planning framework of our province.

I think it's also important to say that this isn't just an energy conversation. It is, at its core, a competitiveness conversation. When we look at why this bill matters, we need to look honestly at the global landscape that Ontario is operating in. Around the world, there are jurisdictions whose energy systems and economic models look very different to ours. Some rely almost entirely on high-emission coal, not because it's sustainable or responsible, but because it's cheap and available. Some of these jurisdictions have environmental rules that may exist only on paper but are never enforced. Many others operate with health and safety and labour standards that fall far, far short of what we would ever consider acceptable in Ontario and in Canada.

We know that there are places where communities live alongside heavy industry with no protection from pollution, where kids breathe air that would never meet Ontario standards, and where industrial waste product is not treated in any way that safeguards human health. On a global economy scale, those jurisdictions can appear cost-competitive on a spreadsheet, but ultimately those savings do come from somewhere, and generally, when we're speaking about those other jurisdictions, they're coming from compromises in safety, from reduced oversight, from degradation to the environment, and ultimately from the well-being of those people in the communities.

I think it's very clear those are costs that Ontario has never chosen to off-load. Really, we've built a different type of economy here, grounded in clean energy, in having stable and predictable institutions, transparent rules, and a clear and consistent commitment to public safety. When you look at our environmental standards, they have meaning. They're meaningful, and they are enforced. We have expectations around workplace safety that protect people on the job—consequences for non-compliance. And ultimately, we created a community where communities expect industry to be responsible and accountable.

What's interesting in this global economy that we're seeing is that these are not in any way becoming barriers to competitiveness; they are becoming an attraction. They are becoming part of why international companies are coming and investing here—because they know, with Ontario, what they are getting. They know that they can plan long-term, and they know that, ultimately, their investment is supported by stable institutions and by a clean grid. I think that what this is about is really focusing in on that. When we are looking at those global companies

in automotive, batteries, AI computing, agribusiness—whatever—they're looking for jurisdictions where we know that the lights stay on, where the grid is reliable, where the electricity is clean, and where their own internal commitments as corporations around climate, around sustainability, around human health and well-being could actually be met.

Ontario is one of the few places that can really meet all of those expectations, again, with that incredibly clean electricity grid, with our environmental standards, with our institutions that people can trust—environmental standards that reflect science and common sense—in communities that accept growth but also know that it has to be responsible. Those advantages don't always appear in the headlines, but they are very important. They matter when companies are deciding where to put a facility, ultimately.

I think another thing to talk about here is that the more production, the more innovation, the more data processing and the more manufacturing that we can host here in Ontario under our clean grid, under our safety standards and under our environmental protections—it's not just better for our province, but ultimately it is better for the world on a global scale. Every EV battery that's built here is one that wasn't built on a coal-heavy grid someplace else. Every tonne of clean steel that we produce here in Ontario is a tonne of steel that didn't have to be produced in a place without our environmental rules. Any AI data centre that comes to Ontario and our non-emitting grid is a data centre that's not drawing from a system that's creating pollution or relying on unsafe power sources.

In other words, we benefit by making Ontario competitive—not just by attracting that investment to Ontario, but really, I think it's also about getting to benefit from that and doing our share globally. When companies build here, they are building on a clean grid, and they are operating in communities that value safety and human well-being. Ultimately, they're contributing to an economy that takes those benefits and reinvests in education, in health care, in public services, and not simply profits that are extracted and spent or sent someplace else.

I think that's part of the reason why Ontario and Canada remain one of the most attractive places for immigration. It's because we take investment in our province, because we take jobs, because we take our economy and we do reinvest it into people and into the things that matter.

I think that Bill 40 really strengthens that position. By embedding economic growth directly into the mandates of the IESO and the OEB, it's ensuring that the decisions that are shaping our energy future are aligned with what I would say are the opportunities and the responsibilities of a changing global economy—the one that we are currently in. It says that when we build transmission lines, when we approve new generation, when we evaluate the large-scale connection requests that we're seeing, we're doing so with a really clear understanding of the long-term impact on affordability, reliability, housing, industrial development and, ultimately, the environment as well. To me, instead of lowering ourselves to compete with jurisdictions with weaker standards, it's about carrying forward and investing

in what makes Ontario strong, which is our clean power, our predictable governance, our safe workplaces and, ultimately, our communities that will always put people first.

For that reason, I will be very proud to support Bill 40.
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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It's always an honour to be able to rise on behalf of the residents of St. Catharines, and actually all of Niagara—families in St. Catharines, seniors who built our communities, and young people just getting their start, all of whom are feeling the pressure of rising costs every single month.

When we talk about affordability in Niagara, we must talk about energy. Hydro bills, heating bills, delivery charges—everything keeps going up. Residents across Ontario and Niagara are tired of being squeezed. This is why I have been so clear publicly about what is happening. In fact, I've said directly to the people of St. Catharines: "Families are being squeezed every single month—hydro bills, heating bills, delivery charges—and Bill 40 doesn't make life more affordable. It gives the government more power and less accountability while giving families absolutely nothing." That message resonates because it's the truth.

This is why we are debating Bill 40, the Protect Ontario by Securing Affordable Energy for Generations Act. However, despite its promising title, there is nothing in this bill that actually secures affordability for people across Ontario or for the families and seniors in St. Catharines and Niagara. People want power they can rely on and a bill they can afford. They don't want any surprises, and they do not want decisions being made in backroom deals.

Last year, I introduced a practical and targeted home heating bill—something that would have delivered real, immediate relief for people across Ontario. It would have helped seniors stay warm without sacrificing groceries. It would have helped families who were choosing between filling the tank and filling their fridges. However, once again, this government voted it down. They had a chance to help seniors, they had a chance to help Ontarians, and they walked away, thumbing their nose up at seniors all across this province.

And now, a year later, they arrive here in this House with Bill 40, a bill that grants the government new powers but offers no relief to people facing high hydro and heating bills right now. Instead of delivering affordability, it delivers uncertainty—uncertainty for families, uncertainty for businesses, uncertainty for the entire Niagara region. This seems to be a pattern, doesn't it? I ask the people at home.

Speaker, one of the most concerning parts of Bill 40 is how it lets the government decide who connects to the grid without clear rules or, again, no transparency criteria. That opens the door to political interference and special treatment. This song goes on and on and on, doesn't it? Are you following along? Here, once again, we see political interference and special treatment for the wealthy donors.

This is exactly why I've warned publicly: "Bill 40 lets the government decide who gets connected to the grid with no clear rules. Our greenhouse growers and local businesses could be pushed aside, while energy-hungry crypto operations jump the line. People in Niagara already pay some of the highest electricity costs in all of Ontario. We need affordable, reliable energy that puts families first, not insiders." This is not a hypothetical. In Niagara, our greenhouse growers, who produce food for families across this province, are already worried that they're going to lose access to the power they need. These growers know exactly what happens when decision-making isn't transparent: The productive sector gets left behind once again.

Bill 40 also weakens the Ontario Energy Board—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm sorry to interrupt the member.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

ANNUAL REPORT, FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COMMISSIONER

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: the 2024-25 annual report of the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario, from the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ECUMENICAL MEETING IN ISTANBUL

Mr. Aris Babikian: The recent meeting between Pope Leo XIV and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is not only a religious and spiritual milestone but also an emblem of the values that resonate strongly with Canadian society. The occasion underscored the universal need for peace, dialogue, and the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms—values that are steeped into Canada's social fabric.

During his journey, Pope Leo also met with Sahak II, Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, and travelled to Lebanon to advocate for peace throughout the Middle East, and to emphasize the necessity of religious freedom for all, regardless of their faith.

A key part of Canada's identity is its strong support for religious, cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as the protection of human rights. These values should guide Canada's decisions at home and its actions around the world.

The example set by the Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarch serves as a beacon for all nations to nurture service and sacrifice in pursuit of a more harmonious society.

In this spirit, all Canadians, and especially those of Catholic and Orthodox heritage, celebrated this historic event, reflecting a shared hope for lasting peace and understanding.

VOLUNTEERS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, the holidays are upon us, but for many in our community, the festive season brings more worry than joy.

That's why I am so grateful for the efforts of Londoners to support those in need.

Every year, the Hyde Park Lions Club and Hyde Park BIA partner with sponsors like Oxford Dodge to host the Hyde Park Santa Claus Parade, collecting essential food items for our community.

The Old South Community Organization, OSCO, organizes its annual Christmas in the Village and tree sale to raise thousands of dollars for local causes.

I want to thank the local faith communities that host free meals and collect donated food—like Springbank Catholic Family of Parishes, St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church, and Byron United Church, or the Muslim Soup Kitchen, the Halal Food Bank, and the Guru Nanak Mission Society.

I want to recognize the local businesses that offer drop-off locations for the Business Cares Food Drive or the BGC London Coats for Kids, and the countless non-profits that provide such vital supports, like Northwest London Resource Centre, the London Food Bank, Ark Aid, Mission Services, the Salvation Army, LifeSpin—the list goes on.

These organizations—their volunteers, donors and staff—are making the holidays just a little bit brighter for those who are struggling. Let's support their efforts.

And to all residents of London West, best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Today, I speak to an important report by the Ontario Ombudsman titled *Lost in Transition*. It highlights a crisis of care for adults with a dual diagnosis—those with both a developmental disability and mental health conditions. The complexity leads to no other option than long stays in hospital—or, sadly, dysregulation can lead them to corrections versus care. There's nowhere else to be safely cared for. And it represents 36% of time that patients stay in hospitals—for people waiting for care elsewhere. We can do better.

Mental health partners—mental health hospitals and supportive housing providers—showcased a solution recently at Queen's Park. Ricky, who stayed for years in hospital, was transitioned to a purpose-built house with the supportive care supports he needs to live a fulfilling life. Cross-government collaboration made it happen. We need to spread this model across Ontario. It will be better for people like Ricky, and it will open up beds for overcrowded hospitals to provide care for others.

Happy holidays to all in our community. Although the holidays are a time of joy for most, for others it can be challenging for their mental health. If you or someone you care about, who you're concerned for—please be sure that

they're aware of 988, a 24/7 crisis line available to provide support.

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HOLIDAY EVENTS IN BRAMPTON EAST

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: As we enter the holiday season, I want to take a moment to recognize the community celebrations that bring families across Brampton together at this time of year.

Recently, I had the opportunity to join residents at the annual Brampton tree lighting and Miracle on Main Street celebration, presented in partnership with the Tiger Jeet Singh Foundation and Peel Regional Police. This event has become a major tradition in our city. It transforms downtown Brampton into a festive gathering place with live entertainment, family activities, and a strong sense of community spirit. It was so wonderful to see so many residents come together and officially launch the holiday season. It's events like this that highlight the strength, diversity and unity that define Brampton.

I'm proud to support initiatives that bring people together in a positive and welcoming environment.

As we move forward in the coming weeks, I want to wish all Ontarians, and especially the residents of Brampton, a very merry Christmas and happy holidays.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Last year, I introduced motion 163 to stop corporate landlords from installing paid parking meters at rental housing properties, a predatory practice that forces tenants and their guests to pay outrageous fees simply to visit their own homes.

In my community of St. Catharines, this issue is hitting people especially hard. Many of the tenants being targeted are seniors or individuals who rely on frequent PSW visits. Some PSWs have now stopped working in the buildings with paid visitor parking because they have to accumulate hundreds of dollars in parking tickets—tickets that come directly out of their paycheques. As a result, seniors are being cut off from the essential care they rely on to live safely and independently.

Instead of strengthening protections for these renters, the government has passed Bill 60, which fast-tracks evictions, weakens tenants' rights, and hands even more power to corporations and landlords already gouging vulnerable residents.

Some 36% of households in St. Catharines are renters—more than one in three—facing rising housing costs, and now additional financial penalties just to host visitors. This is totally unacceptable.

This government must stop prioritizing corporate landlord profits and start standing up for seniors, families, workers—

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

AGRI-TOURISM

Mr. Matthew Rae: Speaker, it's hard to believe that next Wednesday, December 10, is the first anniversary of my private member's bill, the Growing Agritourism Act, receiving royal assent. The Growing Agritourism Act was and I believe still is the first piece of legislation that addressed limited liability for agri-tourism operators in all of Canada.

Over the past year, I have heard directly from many, many agri-tourism operators across Ontario about the Growing Agritourism Act and how it is protecting their investments and helping them grow their businesses even more. It has provided certainty for farm families to make significant investments in their operations, and continues to provide peace of mind to those operators as they bring more visitors to their farms.

I want to quote Darlene Downey: "As both a farm operator and chair of Agritourism Ontario, I've seen how the Growing Agritourism Act has empowered our sector. It gives operators the clarity to innovate and invest, while ensuring families can enjoy safe, authentic farm experiences that celebrate Ontario agriculture."

Speaker, as we approach the Christmas season, I encourage all members in this place to visit an agri-tourism operator in their local community.

I know that Meghan, Arthur and I look forward to going to a local Christmas tree farm this weekend to pick out our family Christmas tree.

I encourage all members to support local this Christmas season.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Sandy Shaw: There are thousands of children in southern Ontario living with progressive life-limiting and life-ending illnesses, but it's shocking to learn that many Ontarian children and their families cannot access the care they deserve.

Just like many other regions in Ontario, there is no dedicated pediatric hospice in Hamilton.

Gratefully, folks are working hard to change that—to build a children's hospice in Hamilton that will embrace children, families and caregivers throughout their journey. Keaton's House-Paul Paletta Children's Hospice will provide the care, comfort and connection these families deserve close to home.

Dr. Dave Lysecki from McMaster Children's Hospital, a pediatric palliative care specialist, said, "There's a common misconception that pediatric palliative care is only for the dying. But really, it's about living fully, right up to the last moment and supporting families to live fully and carry the memory of their loved one with them."

The CEO of Kemp Care Network, Danielle Zucchet, said, "The impact of caring for a dying child has an inordinate, long-term effect on their families." In fact, Keaton's House is named in honour of Danielle's young son.

This will be a place where these young patients and their families can find joy, live well, and create lasting memories.

I have shared in this House the loss of my sister Nancy Rose. I know that a place like Keaton's House would have provided the comfort that my parents, my sisters and my brother would have needed as we went through that terrible loss.

Access to hospice and palliative care for children should be the highest aspiration of any community. And I know we will make this happen in Hamilton.

HOLIDAY EVENTS IN CAMBRIDGE

Mr. Brian Riddell: It's true: Santa Claus was seen in Cambridge and Ayr, Ontario, and it fills me with the holiday spirit.

Each year, I'm grateful for the chance to take part in the Santa Claus parades in both Cambridge and Ayr. They're special moments for families, especially children.

Nothing can dampen the joy of the holiday season, not even a thunderstorm. The Cambridge parade marched through the pouring rain, and the resilience of our community really showed. The streets were filled with thousands of smiling faces and loud cheers.

The Ayr parade, on the other hand, was a scene from a Christmas storybook. Fresh snow covered the streets, giving the whole event a magical atmosphere. We handed out candy canes and dog treats, and seeing the kids' faces light up or a dog's tail wag faster kept me smiling the entire time.

I want to thank my volunteers for braving the storm in Cambridge and making sure every child received a candy cane in Ayr, even if we had to slow down the parade a little bit.

As we head towards the holiday season and the end of this session, I want to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a very happy holiday season.

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Mr. Dave Smith: Snow is falling, and as we just heard from my colleague from Cambridge, Santa Claus parades are well under way, and some of your neighbours have put up their Christmas decorations.

So what I'd like to talk about today is something that we refer to as the Griswold Awards, named after Clark Griswold from the movie *Christmas Vacation*.

Every year at Christmas, we're asking people to nominate someone in your neighbourhood who has gone above and beyond to spread Christmas cheer. You know the ones I'm talking about—those homes where, when they turn on the lights, the Darlington nuclear plant groans and has to ask Niagara Falls to send more water over the Falls just to produce enough electricity.

Last year was our biggest year, with a few hundred nominations; this year, I am hoping for even more. I know that some of last year's nominees—there was a Facebook page dedicated to their efforts, and I fully expect some are

going to up their game and do even more. In fact, I can think of one in particular who has already told me she's going to add to her display because she got some great ideas from the others on Facebook.

If you decorate for Hanukkah or Kwanza or anything else—those count as well.

What we're looking for is anyone who celebrates the festive season, decorates the outside of their home and wants to include the entire neighbourhood. Let us know who they are so that we can celebrate with them by giving them a certificate on behalf of the province of Ontario.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

Hon. Steve Clark: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding private members' public bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding private members' public bills. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Steve Clark: I move that, notwithstanding any standing order or order of the House relating to the following bills:

—Bill 38, An Act to proclaim the month of September as Ethiopian Heritage Month;

—Bill 22, An Act to proclaim Ontario University Athletics Week;

—Bill 31, An Act to amend the Marriage Act;

—Bill 66, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month;

—Bill 67, An Act to proclaim Hospitality Workers Appreciation Day; and

—Bill 26, An Act to amend the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act; and

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That when the order for second reading of Bill 38 is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That, upon receiving second reading, Bill 38 shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called the same day; and

That the order of the House dated June 5, 2025, referring Bill 22 to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy be discharged and the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That the order of the House dated October 23, 2025, referring Bill 31 to the Committee of the Whole House be discharged and the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That the order of the House dated December 3, 2025, referring Bill 66 to the Standing Committee on Social Policy be discharged and the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That the order of the House dated December 1, 2025, referring Bill 67 to the Standing Committee on Heritage,

Infrastructure and Cultural Policy be discharged and the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That when the orders for third reading of Bill 22, Bill 26, Bill 31, Bill 38, Bill 66 and Bill 67 are called, 17 minutes shall be allotted to debate on the motion for third reading of each bill, with five minutes allotted for members of His Majesty's government, five minutes allotted for members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted for members of the third party, and two minutes allotted to the independent members as a group.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding any standing order or order of the House relating to the—

Hon. Steve Clark: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Dispense? Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

HOUSE SITTINGS

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

Hon. Steve Clark: I'd just like to advise the House that the night sitting scheduled for this evening has been cancelled.

WEARING OF JACKET AND PIN

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Simcoe–Grey on a point of order.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I seek unanimous consent of the House to wear my Olympic jacket and an Ontario University Athletics pin today for the purpose of third reading of my private member's bill this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Simcoe–Grey is seeking unanimous consent to wear his Olympic jacket and pin. Agreed? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Stan Cho: We have a famous influencer in the House who influences millions to be hungry through his account @insta.noodls. It's my honour to introduce Clement to the Legislature this morning.

Clement, welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Zee Hamid: I'd like to introduce my constituency staff who are attending here today: Myra Pervaiz, Affan Khan, and Karen Baring.

Welcome.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'd like to introduce some parents who are here from Heydon Park Secondary School today: Kamala Kalsi, Paulet Slyfield, David Wallace, Jennifer Reid, Tola Reid, Chris Reid, Jennifer Brooks, Michelle Orchard, Maja Rehou, and Melana Janzen.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Aujourd'hui, j'ai l'honneur de vous présenter deux « Locals » de Unifor. Local 89 : président Alex Dumais, Cindy Richard, Heather Petty-piece. Mais aussi du local 256 d'Unifor, Luc Paquette, qui est le président, et aussi Roland Lepage de 256. J'ai aussi à vous présenter de la fondation de Sensenbrenner Hospital, Mireille Dubosq.

Welcome to your House.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'd like to welcome the family of page captain Emery from York–Simcoe to the House today: father Craig Warner, mom Jamie-Lee Warner, grandmother Arlene Warner, brother Evander, and aunt Avril Edwards. Welcome to Queens Park.

MPP Tyler Watt: Je [*inaudible*] Renée Couture, une bonne amie à moi et la présidente de l'Association libérale provinciale de Nepean, à Queen's Park. Bienvenue à votre maison.

Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam: I'm happy to rise today and welcome my good friends Claude Nembhard and Ryan Xavier from Ontario Basketball. They both are doing incredible work across the province, expanding access to basketball to the next generation. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Parsa: Joining us today for the very first time is Judith Csikasz.

Welcome to Queen's Park. I look forward to meeting with you after question period.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I am pleased to be able to introduce Stephen Yardy, my amazing campaign manager, riding association president and friend.

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to welcome to the House Stephanie Soltermann, a resident of the beautiful riding of Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I would like to welcome my special assistant Ana Kraljević and her partner Dominik Kabala to the Legislature today. Thanks for being here.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Today, I'm pleased to welcome Phil LeBeau and a former staff member of mine, Scott Ramsay, from Munitions and Precision Logistics. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I'd like to introduce my constituent and the PA announcer for the Toronto Maple Leafs, Mike Ross.

Welcome to your House.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I'd like to welcome Willow McEachern, my constituency assistant, who has come all the way down here from Thunder Bay–Superior North. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to welcome the Rev. Dr. Susan Eagle and members of the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition.

This morning, the members from Ottawa West–Nepean, Nickel Belt, and London–Fanshawe and I had a great opportunity to chat with you.

Thank you for all the work that you do.

QUESTION PERIOD

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Premier.

Sault Ste. Marie is bracing for 1,000 workers to be let go from Algoma Steel. The community cannot handle 1,000 more job seekers.

The Premier is saying to 1,000 people that they are going to lose their jobs, and apparently that is just a sacrifice he is willing to make.

The Premier handed \$100 million over to the big bosses with no strings attached.

Let me be clear: Is the Premier okay with 1,000 people losing their jobs in Sault Ste. Marie?

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

Hon. Victor Fedeli: The \$100-million loan that our government provided was critical to saving as many jobs as possible. They are open today because we put the \$100-million loan in. In the CEO's own words—they simply could not survive without the financing that the government provided. They are here today to fight for tomorrow, and we are fighting along with them.

We are working with them to create new line for plate steel, as countries around the world are looking for new steel. We are working with them because we're investing \$200 billion in infrastructure. Those I-beams should be and will be made in Sault Ste. Marie.

So today, the \$100-million loan that we invested kept them alive long enough now to fight the future—and that's what we'll do together, with them.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: So \$100 million spent to lose 1,000 jobs—that's what I call a bad deal. And 1,000 people, 1,000 families are the casualties of that terrible deal. The Premier keeps saying he had nothing that he could do about it.

But I ought to say I feel like the Premier gave up a long time ago. It was him and his government that reduced Canadian content requirements for transit projects from 25% to 10%. He is the one who set us up to be more vulnerable than ever to a tariff and a trade war.

Back to the Premier: Why are you undermining these workers and our manufacturing sector just when they needed our help more?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Bill Slater, the president of Local 2724, said they knew these layoffs were coming because of the introduction of the electric arc furnaces, which will make Algoma more efficient and able to hire more people later. But President Trump's tariffs accelerated those losses.

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A \$100-million loan is invested that kept the company alive. They're there today, open today because of that \$100-million loan.

We are going to join them in fighting the fights of tomorrow—where we can put this plate steel line in.

Think of the European Union spending almost \$2 trillion more on defence. Nobody in the world has enough steel to supply for that. That's why they're going to need Algoma.

We'll be there when they hire. Once we build that new line in Algoma, we'll be right beside them as they hire people back into Algoma to fight those fights.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, to know that this government was working behind everyone's backs to ship good manufacturing jobs to other countries—is a complete betrayal of Ontario workers. And now, in the middle of a trade war, it's like the Premier has left us exposed, and he's okay with that—he's like, "The Titanic is sinking, but we saved a few people."

Well, my goodness. You saved a few rich people.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: You handed over \$100 million with no strings attached. And 1,000 families are looking at losing their jobs now, right before the holidays.

The Premier made a choice. He decided to sacrifice 1,000 jobs in Sault Ste. Marie.

How can the Premier justify such a terrible deal: losing 1,000 jobs for \$100 million?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I'm going to say it one more time: A \$100-million loan kept them open. They're there today because that money was put in.

Speaker, the member opposite should have a very serious read of the Buy Ontario Act, which, sadly, they're not supporting. It ensures that Ontario-made steel is prioritized in all our government procurements.

We've been very clear from the start: Every major project in this country should be built with Ontario-made steel. That includes pipelines, shipbuilding, and every major infrastructure project.

We are investing \$200 billion in infrastructure.

Algoma should be and will be—with our help—building I-beams. All of that will be used in bridges and roads and construction in Ontario—with Ontario-made steel, and new Ontario employees when these lines are built, because they survived today.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, Speaker, they didn't survive; 1,000 people lost their jobs.

Anyway, Ontarians are actually struggling to make ends meet. The cost of basic groceries is rising every day. We know it, because we're putting groceries back on the shelves at the checkout counter. And we know that a record number of people are visiting food banks.

Families are doing everything right, but they just can't seem to get ahead under this government. It is about choices that this government is making—and they're making the wrong choices. They chose their friends and their insiders over and over and over again, instead of Ontarians.

Can the Premier explain why he has decided to put his insiders and his friends ahead of working people when handing out the Skills Development Fund?

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I think I heard the word “affordability” in there.

I think about the \$12 billion that we announced in the fall economic statement—putting money back in the pockets of the hard-working people of Ontario.

Where was the Leader of the Opposition and her members on her team when we cut the gas tax? Did they vote for or against?

Interjections: Against.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: And when we made it permanent, did they vote for or against?

Interjections: Against.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: When we had the one integrated fare, saving \$1,600 for transit riders, did they vote for or against?

Interjections: Against.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Madam Speaker, time and again—the Highway 412 and 418 tolls: Did they vote for or against?

Interjections: Against.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: It was a trick question.

Madam Speaker, the bottom line is, this government has been working since day one to make life more affordable for the hard-working men and women of this province.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, I understand why the Premier doesn’t want to get up and answer these questions.

This was a fund that was meant to connect people to good-paying jobs. It was supposed to grow our workforce. Instead, where does it go? Your family dentist, your favourite nightclub owner, your campaign manager—your friends—campaign insiders. Those are the only people this government is working for, while Ontarians, including those 1,000 people who got pink slips in Sault Ste. Marie, are paying the price.

When is this Premier going to stop holding the line and fire his Minister of Labour?

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

Hon. Doug Ford: Madam Speaker, the only person who should get a pink slip is the Leader of the Opposition.

All I can tell you is, there are 1,080,000 more people working now than when we inherited the bankrupt company from the Liberals and NDP.

You talk about 1,000 people that we—we’re saving their future, actually, as they get ramped up, and they’re going to come back to have a good-paying job.

Madam Speaker, 55,000 people, last month alone, had gainful employment because of our policies, because we reduced the burden of taxation off the backs of people and the backs of companies to create opportunities.

My Minister of Economic Development is travelling all around the world, and every single time he comes back, he has pages of multi-billion dollar investments. That’s what the world is seeing. We’re open for business. We’ve been talking with our great Minister of Finance—no matter if it’s pension funds or other funds. They’re saying that this is the greatest place—

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Manufacturing jobs are at the lowest levels we’ve seen in this province since 1976.

This Premier thinks he can pull the wool over people’s eyes.

They are so brazen that they don’t even manage to change up the cast of characters who benefit from their decisions.

People are getting really tired of watching the Premier’s circle of elites get ahead while they are falling further and further and further behind every day.

We have seen what you get with this government. They only help the people who help them.

What is it going to take for this government to start paying attention to what regular Ontarians actually need?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, you’ve heard the story before, many times, that under the Liberals, we saw 300,000 manufacturing jobs leave the province.

Now we know that we have one million more people working in Ontario than the day we got elected. And if you look very carefully at the statistics, there are more people working in manufacturing today than the day we took office. In fact, in the last four months alone, 25,000 new manufacturing jobs have been created.

I understand your number that you’re twisting, but if you look at where that number comes from, it’s because we’ve added 85,000 AI jobs, we’ve added 400,000 tech jobs—we’ve added jobs in all kinds of sectors, including 25,000 new jobs in manufacturing in four months alone.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. John Fraser: My question is to the Premier.

Yesterday, my daughter forwarded me the Minister of Education’s letter to parents. The government never ceases to amaze me. It is probably the most pathetic thing I’ve read and seen in a long time.

After almost eight years in government, they’re going to hire—get this, folks—a two-person panel to fix the problem that they created. Eight years of larger class sizes, eight years of starving special education, eight years of ignoring the mental health crisis that’s in our schools—and the Minister of Education’s solution is a two-person panel.

We don’t need a two-person panel. We just need more qualified adults in our schools to help our kids.

When is the Premier going to make that happen?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member from Markham–Unionville.

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you for the question.

Our government is restoring accountability in an education system that for so long was allowed to drift without direction or responsibility, while the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, closed over 600 schools. We are taking a very different approach. Instead of walking away from communities, we are investing \$23 billion over the next 10 years to build, repair and modernize schools so students can learn in safe, high-quality environments.

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We've been clear from day one: Students come first. That means making sure every dollar is spent where it belongs: in classrooms; not on waste, dysfunction or political games that have plagued too many school boards for years.

So while the opposition continues to defend the status quo and failed trustees who waste money, we will continue restoring the accountability and building an education system focused on student success.

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

Mr. John Fraser: That wasn't even a semblance of an answer.

We don't need a panel. We just need more adults in our schools.

Anybody can tell you that class sizes are too big. They starve special education. There's a mental health crisis in our schools that the government is just walking past. Schools are not safe places to learn or to work.

The solution is simple: more qualified adults in our schools to help our kids, with smaller class sizes, with special education needs, with mental health supports—all to fix the problem that they made.

When is the Premier going to stand up for kids and make that happen?

Mr. Billy Pang: Madam Speaker, parents expect an education system which is focused on student success, not one consumed by chaos and mismanagement.

When trustees waste public money or ignore their responsibilities, we will not hesitate to act. Waiting years for accountability is not acceptable for the families who need answers now.

At the same time, we are making historic investments to improve learning environments across Ontario: record core education funding increases of up to \$30.28 billion—more than \$23 billion over the next 10 years to support school construction, renewal and improvement.

My message and our ministry's message is simple: We are putting students first and restoring accountability in every corner of the education system.

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

Mr. John Fraser: Speaker, I'm proud of our record: learning to age 18, higher graduation rates, smaller class sizes, full-day kindergarten, a government that actually cares about education.

But we're not talking about us. We're talking about you.

Yesterday, the Minister of Education said small class sizes are really not important in student achievement and success.

Give your head a shake. More kids, less time. Read my lips: More kids, less time—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The government House leader will come to order. The member for Niagara West will come to order.

Mr. John Fraser: There are only so many hours in the day.

So when will the Premier do the simple math and make sure we have enough adults in our schools—qualified adults—to take care of our kids? When are you going to stand up for kids? Get out of your seat.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize—

Hon. Doug Ford: Excuse me, Madam Speaker.

Read my lips: You closed 600 schools—600 schools. You fired thousands of teachers.

We've hired 9,000 educators—9,000. We spent \$16 billion on building new schools across the province; \$3.6 billion to build 139 schools.

You voted for it—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Doug Ford: You voted to close 600 schools, fired thousands of teachers. That is hypocrisy at its best—at its best.

Madam Speaker, we're setting—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): You have to withdraw, Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw.

We ended up adding another \$2 billion to education, financing up to \$39 billion.

They had never seen that their entire lives. They destroyed the school system. That's what they did.

We're improving—we're actually teaching kids about STEM. You want to teach them about every wacko thing—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Folks, I'm going to start—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Ottawa Centre will come to order.

I'm going to start naming people. The next person I have to call out will be named.

I recognize the member for Orléans.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and merry Christmas, Premier.

On March 27, the Premier met privately with the CEOs of Loblaws and Metro. Five days later, he met with the

CEO of Sobeys. And just weeks after those closed-door meetings, his government introduced a bill that would open the door to reward points expiring once again—a change that no Ontario family asked for, a change he didn't campaign on, a change that doesn't protect anyone other than big corporate interests.

Families are already getting crushed by high food prices. The last thing they need is a government opening the door to giving the grocery giants power to strip away their reward points before Christmas.

Madam Speaker, can the Premier explain why, immediately after meeting the grocery giants, his government introduced a law that would let them claw back reward points?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement.

Hon. Stephen Crawford: I have a recommendation for that member. There's a great book out there that you should read. It's called *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*. I suggest you read that book because it tells a story about kids who tell falsities, and later, when there is a real emergency, people don't listen to them.

I've been very clear in this House over and over, day after day, telling you that the rewards points are not going to be touched—full stop.

We're bringing in more consumer protections to support the people of Ontario.

Speaker, we will be bringing in more protections so that people, if their points are cancelled, if there's a dispute, now have a dispute resolution. The company involved will be forced to get back to them and rectify the situation or to at least let them know why the points have expired. That is more consumer protection that sits on the books today.

You need to support this bill.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: I have a book recommendation for the Premier: *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.

Madam Speaker, the legislation is crystal clear: Cabinet can meet, in secret, and write regulations that allow reward points to expire. There is no public vote; there is no debate in the House—just a quiet, closed-door cabinet meeting with the Premier's ministers, where they can open the door for companies to wipe out a family's hard-earned reward points.

So I'll ask again: Why is the Premier giving himself the power to take away the protections around reward points for Ontario's families if he's not planning to use them?

Hon. Stephen Crawford: Again, the member opposite has to recognize that your claims are totally out of touch with reality. If there are any secret meetings, then I don't know why we're discussing it in the House—it's clearly not secret. There are no secret meetings.

We are bringing in legislation to support consumers. We are bringing in more protections for consumers.

And if we want to talk about all the great things we've done for consumers in the past, I can certainly touch on that.

The previous minister, who sits two seats away from me—the Minister of Infrastructure currently, the Minister of the Environment—did a great job in bringing consumer protections to this province. We banned NOSIs, which was a great success for the people of Ontario. We brought in Bill 194, strengthening cyber security protections.

Speaker, we've done a lot for consumers. We're going to continue to stand up for consumers.

I would hope the opposition would stop crying wolf and support this bill.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: Madam Speaker, I can tell you, the opposition, and I'm sure the media, are very happy to learn that cabinet meetings will now be open to the public.

Families don't need clever talking points. They need the truth.

Stop the obfuscating. Stop the spinning. Stop the closed-doors process—

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: I withdraw.

Give Ontario families a straight and clear answer.

Madam Speaker, to the Premier: Will you commit right now that you will not use this new cabinet power to allow companies to let reward points expire with the passage of time? And if you won't commit to it today, tell us why.

Hon. Stephen Crawford: Again, I am committing in the House, as I have for the last several days, that we are not touching the expiry of rewards points—full stop. I don't know what the member doesn't understand about that.

1100

Let's talk about affordability. Let's talk about all the issues that the Liberals have voted against.

You voted against cutting the gas tax and saving the people of Ontario money. You voted against the low-income tax credit to support low-income families. You voted against the One Fare pass, which helped commuters every single day. You voted against the ODSP inflation increase and 5% one-time increase. You voted against freezing driver's licence fees. You voted against licence plate sticker fee reductions—which we eliminated. You voted against dropping the tolls on the 412 and the 418.

When we talk about supporting the families of Ontario getting through these tougher times, this government stands with the people—unlike the government which talks a big game and doesn't deliver.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier.

Parents from Heydon Park Secondary School are here today in the Legislature. They fear that their school is going to be closed because the TDSB has informed them there will be no enrolment of kids in grade 9 and now grade 10. They've had no answers and no explanation as to why. Heydon Park is one of the very few schools that focuses on special education, helping our most vulnerable kids.

Can this government work to keep Heydon Park Secondary School open?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, the minister, the parliamentary assistant, the government have been very clear: Everything we're doing in the education system for that school or every other school—it's all about putting students, parents and teachers first; it's putting real accountability and real results. The minister has stood in this place, in regard to the supervisors, the review that they're doing—everything is about strengthening the system.

I appreciate the fact that there are members from one particular school here today.

Everything we're doing, regardless of where you live—whether you live in the GTA or any other corner of Ontario—is all about ensuring that school boards have the opportunity to succeed.

The minister stood up and talked about accountability, talked about transparency, the reasons why trustees were removed.

At the end of the day—no matter whether it's this school or any other school—it's all about putting parents and the classroom first.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for University–Rosedale.

Ms. Jessica Bell: This issue is very important. I'd really like the Premier to answer this question.

Every school board is not being set up for success. They have seen massive funding cuts under this government year in and year out.

Special education is seeing the worst cuts. We just got the EQAO results yesterday, and it shows that our schools are failing our kids who are in special education. They are not meeting learning outcomes in math, in reading or in writing. Properly investing in schools like Heydon Park, a school that specializes in special education, is the answer.

To the Premier: Can this government commit to keeping Heydon Park Secondary School open?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Markham–Unionville.

Mr. Billy Pang: The facts are clear: Every single year our government has been in office, we have increased education funding—including a more than 36% increase to special education funding that has helped hire over 4,000 additional educational assistants to support the most vulnerable learners.

But increasing funding alone isn't enough when the school board trustees continue to fail students. We have seen examples across Ontario where mismanagement and infighting have diverted attention away from the special education and classroom supports. It is unacceptable.

We will continue to invest, continue to support teachers, and continue to hold school boards accountable so that every dollar we invest goes to supporting students in the classroom.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Ted Hsu: I want to go back to classrooms. I know we're all worried about what's holding kids back. That's what the minister says he's worried about. We're all worried about that.

This week, there was a parents' forum in my riding of Kingston and the Islands, and one of the things they talked about—maybe it's evacuations. This is when a kid becomes violent and we have to move all of the students out of the classroom for one or two hours before they can come back. It happens about once per week, on average, in my riding. Maybe that's disturbing education.

Another thing that came up in the parents' forum: Many of the little kids are seeing that something is going to happen, and they try to prevent problems; they try to prevent things from escalating to violence. People are generally good, and even the little kids know when something is wrong, and they try to fix the situation. People are basically good.

You're spending money on a lot of things. Minister, why can't we have more adults per student in our schools?

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you for the question.

To address rising violence in our school communities, our government has increased funding for school safety initiatives to the highest in Ontario history—including more funding to hire psychologists, social workers, child youth workers, and educational assistants. They are adults who enhance direct service for students.

The rise in school violence also coincides with the short-sighted decision by many school boards across the province, starting in 2017, to end the school resource officer program in schools.

This is why our government has introduced measures that will require school boards to work with police services to develop school resource officer and youth engagement programs that will help foster positive relations between students and law enforcement while making schools safer.

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

Mr. Ted Hsu: You know this is not working.

At the same parent forum that we had in Kingston and the Islands, we had some educational assistants. One of them just showed everybody the scars on her hands from students—little kids—gouging them. They're suffering physical as well as verbal abuse. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. I know the minister realizes this.

What's going to happen? Our kids are about the same age—the Minister of Education and I. What's going to happen to all these little kids who are violent in the classroom and disrupting the education of everybody because there are not enough adults to supervise them? What's going to happen when they grow up? What's going to happen to our society when all these kids grow up?

I really want a good answer from the minister. Why won't you increase the adult-to-kid ratio in our schools right away?

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you again for the question.

As I mentioned earlier, those short-sighted trustees removed adults from schools—they are police officers. A short-sighted decision made by school boards to remove school resource officer programs has made schools less safe for students, and teachers as well—the adults. The teachers are adults. When they remove the school resource officers, even the adults are in danger.

We need to remove politics from the classroom and focus on policies that will help keep students and teachers safe.

Working with police officers through the student resource officer program helps build relationships between youth and police—activity promotes positive behaviour and creates a culture of mutual respect that will help keep students and teachers safe.

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Laura Smith: My question is for the hard-working Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Amid global economic uncertainty and the trade disruptions caused by President Trump's tariffs, Ontario must look to new ways and new markets to grow our trading relationships. The supply chains many Ontario businesses have long relied upon are shifting, and with that change must come a proactive strategy.

A few weeks ago, I had the very great privilege of attending the first Ontario Together Trade Fund recipient announcement in my riding of Thornhill. This fund is a key pillar in the \$30 billion in tariff relief and supports our government has put forward to protect Ontario workers and businesses.

Speaker, can the minister please tell the House more about how our government is protecting businesses and workers across this province?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, we have a \$150-million Ontario Together Trade Fund that is enabling businesses to make investments to reshore supply chains, diversify export markets, and bolster interprovincial trade. It was great to be with the member from Thornhill a couple of weeks ago to celebrate three companies in her riding. Together, we announced three of the first eight recipients.

Burnco Manufacturing, a great steel fabricator there—\$8-million investment, 75 new jobs, 215 jobs protected. They're now going to be able to reduce dependence on the US market and support Canadian suppliers.

Heali Medical, a health producer in her riding—a \$5.7-million investment. They will reshore production from China.

Letar, an aircraft/telecom component maker—a \$2.8-million investment. They are establishing a facility and reshoring their operations from the United States.

Together, we're protecting Ontario.

1110

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

Ms. Laura Smith: It was great to join the minister to announce these important investments in my riding.

Ontario manufacturers have literally built our province into the economic powerhouse it is today. From steel and aluminum to lumber and critical minerals, Ontario is known around the world for producing the goods the global economy depends upon.

But amid growing uncertainty and shifting export markets, small and medium-sized Ontario businesses, the backbone of our economy, are feeling the pressure to adapt and compete.

Speaker, can the minister please share why it's so important that our government launch these programs, like the Ontario Together Trade Fund, to help these businesses succeed in a changing global economy?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: We stand at a very defining moment for Ontario's economy, with President Trump taking direct aim at very specific sectors.

The Ontario Together Trade Fund is helping Ontario businesses protect jobs, grow our trade capacity with others, and stay competitive amidst all this uncertainty.

We announced the first round of the OTTF. Those eight companies that we announced are investing \$120 million. That's the confidence that these companies are showing in the province of Ontario. We are making a \$16.5-million investment in those projects. They are creating over 300 new jobs in Ontario and protecting 1,200 jobs.

This is a once-in-a-generation threat that we are fighting together to protect Ontario.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

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

Speaker, don't ever let anyone tell you that miracles can't happen, because, after these many long, difficult years of construction and delays, the Finch West LRT is finally opening this Sunday. We're all happy about it.

But it hasn't been an easy road for the people along Finch, and I think they deserve something special on day one—something to help them celebrate and to thank them for their patience.

Will the government work with the city of Toronto to ensure that rides on the Finch West LRT are free on opening day, this Sunday?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I'd like to remind the member that, as part of the Toronto-Ontario new deal, we are covering operating expenses for the Finch West LRT. That was a commitment we made as a government, as part of the Ministry of Finance's deal with the city of Toronto, including record and historic investments into the city of Toronto—billions of dollars to support the construction of public transit all across the city, and millions of dollars in support to make transit more affordable—like launching programs like One Fare, with the extension of that just two days ago for an additional two years, saving commuters over \$1,600 a year.

We're committed to continuing our investments into public transit. Thankfully, we've got a government that wants to build and get these projects done, unlike the

members opposite, who have voted against continuing construction on the Finch West LRT—

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Speaker, the opposition votes against the government's budget because it's so full of bad things. In fact, if the minister actually read his own budget, he'd vote against it too.

When the Toronto subway Line 1 extension opened in 2017, rides were free for all to enjoy. Historically, it has always been this way, so why not now? The people along Finch have endured years of nightmare traffic and even worse during the construction of the LRT. They deserve a break, and that important gesture would be a sign of respect for their patience and a big draw on day one.

I ask you again—no excuses; let's get it done: Will you work with the city of Toronto to ensure that rides on the Finch West LRT are free on opening day, this Sunday?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Madam Speaker, I'll ask that member, who is an MPP in Toronto, to look at the deal that the government made with the city of Toronto with respect to transit funding and operational funding for lines like Finch and Eglinton, as well as the historic investments that we've made.

That member's record on public transit and that party's record on public transit is, unfortunately, very disappointing, whether it is the Finch West LRT that they voted against, the Eglinton West extension that goes into that member's own riding that he voted against, or the Scarborough subway extension.

For 15 years, the Liberal government ignored the people of Scarborough.

But we're investing in places like Scarborough. We're building the Ontario Line that's going to move 400,000 people every single day. We've got record investments into public transit.

It's a shame that the NDP and Liberals don't support public transit.

Madam Speaker, we're going to continue to work towards delivering these projects.

Finch West is a huge milestone, and we're excited for the people of Finch who would like to ride —

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

WATER QUALITY

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Water is a human right and was officially declared as such by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010. Everyone is entitled to safe, accessible and affordable drinking water.

And yet, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks is refusing the Auditor General's recommendations in a recent report to analyze our current lead-in-drinking-water standards. At present, Ontarians are being exposed to double the Health Canada level of five parts per billion. Officials at the ministry met back in 2021 to discuss reducing the province's lead level of 10 ppb to the federal standard of five. Apparently, consultations were in

the works. However—surprise, surprise—nothing is happening.

My question to the Premier: When will he clean out his ears, listen to experts, and give children in Ontario safe drinking water?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I thank the member for Beaches–East York for the question.

I can say, on behalf of our government, that we're proud of the fact that Ontario's drinking water is among the safest and most well protected in the world. The numbers speak for themselves:

—99.9% of drinking water tests from municipal residential drinking water systems meet the drinking water quality standards;

—99.6% of drinking water test results from non-municipal, year-round residential systems meet the standards; and

—99.7% of drinking water tests from systems serving facilities such as schools and health care centres meet the standards.

Our comprehensive legislation and strong monitoring, reporting and enforcement systems ensure that our drinking water is always held to Ontario's highest safety standards so people can always feel confident when they turn on their taps, whether at home, in the workplace or at school.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Speaker, we all know—or at least I thought we did—that lead is a neurotoxin which makes its way into our drinking water when pipes and plumbing are corroded. It is especially harmful in our vulnerable populations, including children, resulting in reduced IQ, neurodevelopmental problems in adolescence, and other health risks, like cancer, kidney harm, and cognitive decline in adults.

On June 11, 2021, an analysis by the Investigative Journalism Bureau at U of T revealed that 9% of all lead tests in Ontario schools and daycares exceeded the federal safety guidelines of 5 ppb.

My question to the Premier: Why will you not lower the provincial safety level for lead, like British Columbia and Manitoba already have, and keep children in Ontario safe?

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: The member should know that once again, Ontario is leading all other provinces. Ontario actually has the most comprehensive provincial testing regime for lead in drinking water in the entire country.

We require every fixture used to prepare food or provide drinking water to our children in schools, private schools and child care centres to be tested for lead. Lead testing was required to be completed by 2020 for elementary schools, for child care centres by January 1, 2022, and then for secondary schools the same day. The facilities are also required to flush the plumbing on a daily or weekly basis, depending on the most recent results from fixture testing. Where lead exceeds the drinking water quality

standard, facility owners, such as school boards and owners of private schools and child care centres, must take immediate corrective actions to protect users and our children.

1120

BAIL REFORM

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: My question is to the Solicitor General.

Families in my riding of Mississauga–Erin Mills tell me they are deeply concerned about repeat violent offenders being released back into our communities, only to commit more crimes. They want to feel safe, and they are looking to their governments for action to strengthen public safety and hold offenders accountable.

Our government has been working hard to address these very important concerns.

We added 300 new officers to Peel Regional Police.

Just last week, we introduced the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act, 2025. This legislation includes bold measures that build on our ongoing work to protect communities in our province.

Speaker, can the Solicitor General tell the House how this bill, if passed, will help protect victims and keep dangerous and repeat offenders off the streets?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: It was an honour to rise in the House last week and to table the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act.

I want to thank my friend for standing up for his police service, the Peel Regional Police service, every day. It's a flagship in Ontario. And that member is an example of someone who understands what it means to have a great police service.

Madam Speaker, the member is correct; we came forward with a bold bill—but it is not new to Ontarians because it talks about protecting Ontario. We made a fundamental announcement, as part of this bill, that for the first time we're going to insist that there be a cash security deposit for people who are leaving our jails, as determined by the courts, and the reason is because we want a deterrence. We want these people to understand that you're not part of the 99.9% who want to be lawful; you're people who need to put up a deposit so you don't do it again.

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you to the Solicitor General for the important update.

Public safety is a top priority for families in my riding of Mississauga–Erin Mills.

For too long, the broken bail system has allowed violent and repeat offenders back on the streets, even within a few hours, putting families at risk and wreaking havoc in our communities.

Speaker, our government is saying enough is enough. We are demonstrating leadership and delivering on a promise to fix the broken bail system and hold offenders accountable.

Could the Solicitor General provide further details on what measures our government is taking to protect Ontario communities and crack down on criminals?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I'm proud to be part of a government, led by Premier Ford, that protects Ontario.

When the associate minister and I went to Kananaskis for the FPT meeting, we advocated for the federal government to move forward with meaningful bail reform. Do you know what, Madam Speaker? I think they're listening, because they tabled some bills that I hope get passed.

Madam Speaker, when we said we were going to be unprecedented in building more spaces in our correctional system, we were, and we're transparent about it. We said we would have 1,000 new spaces in the system. We're going to exceed that. In Thunder Bay, in Niagara—we're going to do it in Quinte. We're going to do it out in Kemptville. We're going to do it in Brockville. We're doing it in Toronto. These 1,000-plus spaces will ensure that if somebody breaks the law—guess what? I've got room for them.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

MPP Lise Vaugeois: The Lakehead Region Conservation Authority manages what is the largest watershed in Ontario. They do an incredible job dealing with flood control, have a great organization, and issue permits within five days.

The government has the absurd plan to merge the Lakehead authority with the Lake Huron authority that's completely unconnected to our northern watershed and 1,600 kilometres away.

Will the Premier stop this amalgamation and keep the LRCA as a stand-alone conservation authority?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I thank the member for the question.

I can assure this House that with our plan for the transformation of conservation authorities into several regional watershed-based authorities, no community will be left behind. What is not changing is the funding model. What is not changing is the municipal governance model. What is not changing is the ability to pursue the core mandate. That means protecting people and property from natural hazards. That means flood prevention. That means watershed protection that is essential. And that means sharing resources equally across Ontario. So just as no community currently served by a conservation authority will not continue to be served by a conservation authority, no community will be left behind, because we will have that sharing of resources, that sharing of technology, that updating of mapping which is essential to the fulfillment of the core mandate of conservation authorities.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: The minister appears to be breaking something that isn't actually broken—certainly not in northwestern Ontario.

Our local communities contribute significantly to the management of our regional conservation authority. The government's plan will merge us with 80 other communities in southern Ontario. Talk about a red tape disaster and a crushing of local control.

People in the north do not need anyone from southern Ontario telling us how to manage the place where we live.

I ask again, will the Premier stop this amalgamation and keep the LRCA as a stand-alone conservation authority? Yes or no?

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: What we're going to do is continue to consult and listen to all those who have valuable input to give on the reform and amalgamation of conservation authorities—and that's because the current system is not working. Conservation authorities are applying standards inconsistently. They are applying service standards inconsistently. So it's not working for farmers. It's not working for builders. It's not working for homeowners. It's not working for municipalities—some have four or more conservation authorities with uneven applications of standards and uneven service standards. That must stop, so conservation authorities will fulfill their core mandate better and more effectively and protect Ontario more than ever. We can do both.

We can protect the core mandate of conservation authorities by building for tomorrow.

PROVINCIAL DEBT

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: This week's Auditor General's report showed that once again this government is not in compliance with the Fiscal Sustainability, Transparency and Accountability Act—the debt act. The Auditor General found that for the sixth year in a row “the province has not outlined the specific ... actions it ... will take to implement the debt burden reduction strategy.” The finance minister brags about one finding of the Auditor General but doesn't dare mention this one. For six straight years, the government has broken the debt law. They've added over \$100 billion in debt, and the Auditor General says they have no plan to reduce it.

Through you, Speaker, to the finance minister: Will he finally accept the Auditor General's findings that he has no plan to reduce the debt, and will he commit today to coming up with one?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Well, I think we're going to have to have a class in fiscal management.

Interjections.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Yes, you know this very well, so be careful, B. You know this very well—that we have the lowest debt-to-GDP in over a decade. That is the fiscal measure.

This member also knows very well that our party has gone out every 90 days to tell the people of Ontario how we're doing with their money.

When they were in power, eight times out of 14, they didn't even go out—they didn't even issue a press release. How's that for disclosure and transparency? In fact, they

increased the debt-to-GDP. They raised taxes. And guess what? They got credit rating downgrades.

This government has cut taxes, increased the economy to \$1.2 trillion, and got credit rating upgrades. That's how you do it.

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

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Speaker, I'll take that as a no.

This government says they respect the Auditor General, but they ignore her when she has pointed out every year, since 2020, that this government is not in compliance with the debt law.

While the finance minister crows about credit agency upgrades in 2024, he neglects to mention the downgrade. In 2025, Moody's downgraded the positive outlook it had on the province's rating because the debt is climbing, and this finance minister has no plan to change that. By 2028, this government will be spending \$1.5 billion more, according to their own records, on interest to pay for their rising debt. And do you know what they're going to cut? Funding to our justice system—putting community safety at risk.

1130

Back to the finance minister: Will he admit that his neglect to manage the debt is hurting the people of Ontario?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: There you have it, Madam Speaker. That's why, when they were in power for 15 years, the economy went down and the debt went up. That's what the taxpayers got. They got a raw deal from the previous Liberal government.

Coming from the member opposite, she knows much better than that—that our interest expense to revenue, which is the measure that the credit rating agencies look at, is the lowest in 40 years. We're saving interest on debt, as we speak. It is the lowest in 40 years, and this is what really matters—including the lowest borrowing costs of any province across the land, so that we are putting more money back into businesses' pockets, consumers' pockets and not giving it out to bond holders. The member opposite knows that fully well.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Brian Saunderson: My question is for the energetic Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries.

Ontario's industries, like Honda and Pilkington in my riding of Simcoe-Grey, play a critical role in our economy, driving production, manufacturing, innovation, and the movement of goods across our province.

Yet, rising global instability, including unjustified trade actions from Donald Trump, is creating unprecedented uncertainty for our industries. Without affordable energy rates to support day-to-day operations, these pressures could lead to lasting negative impacts on our economy. Our industries need the confidence that their energy costs will remain stable so that they can continue to invest, grow and compete right here in Ontario.

Can the associate minister explain how our government is protecting Ontario by providing affordable energy rates for our industries?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank the member for his advocacy and the work on behalf of job creators in his riding.

He's absolutely right; we know the cost pressures and the Donald Trump tariff threats that industries in the province are facing.

It's why we recently announced a massive expansion of the Save on Energy XLerate Program, from \$5 million to \$15 million in capital project grants for industrial actors that are seeking to reduce their energy costs. We want to help them save money every month on their bills, and one of the ways that we're doing that is providing funds for up to 75% of capital expenditures that will help them reduce their energy consumption, that will help them save on their monthly bills, and will also help the grid as a whole—because we know that the cheapest form of generation is the generation that you don't have to create, the generation that you don't have to build.

It's just another way that we're reducing costs for rate-payers every month and also reducing costs for the system as a whole to keep costs down and protect jobs in the industry—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Simcoe—Grey.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you to the associate minister for his response and for coming to my riding to meet with one of my manufacturers, Pilkington, to look at how they could stabilize their energy costs.

Speaker, Ontarians remember the damage that Liberal policies caused our industry sector. Industries and rate-payers were left with a tab for reckless policies that made doing business in Ontario next to impossible. With skyrocketing energy bills, a weaker energy grid and a depleting workforce, too many of our industries were forced to close their doors—like Nacan starch in my riding, and also Alcoa Wheels.

We now know that the actions our government is taking to protect our industries and jobs is working—providing them with the affordable, secure and reliable energy that they need to thrive.

Can the associate minister tell the House how our government is strengthening Ontario's energy system and protecting jobs and workers?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: Whether it's industries in your constituency—to the member—or in every community in this province, we are committed to keeping costs down for those businesses. One of the ways that we've done that is through competitive procurement, competitively re-contracting contracts that the Liberals had signed—which were so expensive that it was costing tens of billions of additional dollars for ratepayers—at a 30% discount, which has realized some \$23 billion in cost savings for the people of this province. It's a massive amount of money that's being saved for ratepayers. But we're not done there.

That's why, again, that XLerate program, providing up to \$15 million in capital grants, is a way that we're able to

continue investing in our industries and continue to help them save money for the jobs that they support. We know how crucial that is.

When you look at the projects that are being funded, it's such a contrast with the Liberal approach, where they said, "No, we're going to chase 300,000 manufacturing jobs out of this province. We're going to cause a 300% increase in hydro rates." That's not our plan.

Our plan is driven by competitive procurement. It's driven by a desire to keep costs down and support industries and jobs in this province.

FIRE SAFETY

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: To the Premier: Earlier this year, tenants at 275 Bleecker Street had to be evacuated in the dead of winter because of an e-bike battery explosion. This 21-storey high-rise building in St. James Town is home to over 500 constituents. It took one exploding e-bike battery to injure 19 people and put everyone's housing at risk.

Last month, as temperatures in Toronto dropped below zero, another building in my riding, located at 140 Carlton Street had another e-bike battery explosion, this time displacing 450 constituents.

The Toronto fire chief has called e-bike batteries "the largest growing fire safety risk in the city." The number of e-bike battery fires are up over 1,200% since 2020.

When will this government recognize e-bike fire hazards and do something about it?

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

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: We take fire safety very, very seriously in this province, and the member knows that. I appreciate the question.

The Office of the Fire Marshal has been dealing with ensuring that each fire service understands the responsibilities—that they need to respond to a lithium-ion battery fire. This is a serious matter.

Homeowners have a responsibility too: to understand the risks of treating your cellphone or other items with lithium-ion batteries—with protection as well.

At the end of the day, when it comes to our fire safety, I want to thank our fire services across the province. I want to thank the fire associations—the OAFCA, the OPFFA. These are the front-line people who go every day and respond to fires.

What the member spoke about is a serious issue. This government takes it seriously. And I'm very grateful to the Office of the Fire Marshal, who leads by example.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Toronto—Centre.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Temperatures are below zero and expected to stay this way for the rest of the winter.

The displaced tenants at 140 Carlton had previous warnings to the landlord. Despite those warnings—they addressed that there was overcrowding and unsafe battery storage—the tenants said there was "no enforcement, no inspection, no follow-up, and no accountability."

I tabled a motion calling on the government to introduce new rules to stop the sale of unsafe products and to update the building and fire codes. We cannot accept vague answers.

Is this government truly going to prioritize human life and safety, and if so, which month or which day can we expect those new e-bike rules to be brought in?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Again, when it comes to taking fire safety seriously, it is our government. It is working with our great Deputy Solicitor General. It is working with the Office of the Fire Marshal. It is listening to our stakeholders with the associations—the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs and the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association.

What the member stresses is something that we all have a responsibility to ensure that we take precautions—and I might add, especially in this holiday season, check your fire extinguishers; know where they are. Check to make sure that you have a smoke detector. Make sure you have a plan of escape; God forbid there's a fire. Everybody, especially in the holiday season, should be extra vigilant.

When it comes to fire protection and fire safety, this government will continue to lead by example to help protect Ontario.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Under standing order 59: This afternoon, it's the government's intention to debate government motion number 12, followed by a third reading debate of Bill 40, Protect Ontario by Securing Affordable Energy for Generations Act, followed by consideration of six private members' bills, followed by private members' notice of motion number 39, in the name of the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

Depending on the debate on government motion 12, it's the government's intention to have third reading debate on two government bills on the afternoon of Monday, December 8.

On Tuesday morning, we'll kick off a debate on Bill 75, the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act, followed by the afternoon, when we'll have third reading debate on Bill 46, the Protect Ontario by Cutting Red Tape Act. That evening, we'll have private member's business in the name of the member for Burlington.

On Wednesday, we will have third reading debate on eligible PR bills, followed in the afternoon—again, it's the government's intention to have third reading debate on a government bill. The private members' business that evening will be in the name of the member for Spadina–Fort York.

On Thursday, December 11, in the morning, we'll have second reading debate on Bill 75, the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act. The afternoon is to be determined.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Ottawa South has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to the question given by the PA to the Minister of Education regarding schools. This matter will be debated on Tuesday, December 9, following private members' public business.

MEMBERS' BIRTHDAYS

Hon. Steve Clark: I'd just like to take this opportunity to wish the member for Essex and the member for Oxford a happy birthday.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Kingston and the Islands has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to the question given by the PA to the Minister of Education regarding classroom violence. This matter will be debated on Tuesday, December 9, following private members' public business.

And, pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Orléans has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to the question given by the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement regarding loyalty reward points. This matter will be debated on Tuesday, December 9, following private members' public business.

There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

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

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent for two minutes to be allotted to the independent members as a group to respond to ministerial statements today. Is it agreed? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I rise today to welcome Dana Perovic, who is a resident of Etobicoke–Lakeshore and has been doing a lot of volunteer work in our office. She'll be joining us in the gallery shortly.

Ms. Doly Begum: I'm very excited to welcome and introduce members and organizations of the Ethiopian Canadian community. Some of them will be joining us later for the debate of the bill to proclaim September as

Ethiopian Heritage Month. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the organizations who have championed this bill:

—the Ethiopian Association in the GTA and surrounding region, especially their board of directors;

—Saint Mary Cathedral-Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church;

—the Ethiopian Canadian Muslim Community Association and the Nejashi Islamic Centre; and

—the Ethiopian Evangelical Church.

I also want to recognize and thank a few individuals who have worked tirelessly to bring this bill forward: Eskender Mekonnen, Selah Getahun, Liben Gebremikael and the countless other members who have emailed and supported this bill.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated December 4, 2025, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Michael Parsa: This Saturday will mark 36 years since the tragic shooting at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal. On December 6, 1989, a gunman took the lives of 14 women and injured 13 others. The horror and gender-based intent of this act of violence shocked Canadians and led to December 6 being declared as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

Every year, we in this House have paused to honour the memory of each of the 14 women who were tragically murdered by reading their names. I will do so again today: Geneviève Bergeron, age 21; Hélène Colgan, age 23; Nathalie Croteau, age 23; Barbara Daigneault, age 22; Anne-Marie Edward, age 21; Maud Haviernick, age 29; Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, age 31; Maryse Laganière, age 25; Maryse Leclair, age 23; Anne-Marie Lemay, age 22; Sonia Pelletier, age 28; Michèle Richard, age 21; Annie St-Arneault, age 23; and Annie Turcotte, age 20.

This day is an opportunity for members of this House and every single Ontarian to honour all women who have experienced gender-based violence. But even as we look

back, we must look forward to a society where all women and girls are safe, valued and empowered.

Our government has been very clear: We have zero tolerance for gender-based violence in any form. Everyone has the right to live in safety, with dignity and free from the threat of violence, and we're backing up these words with action—action in every community across our province by providing supports to victims and survivors, raising public awareness and holding offenders accountable as we combat gender-based violence in all its forms.

At the heart of our efforts is Ontario-STANDS, our action plan to end gender-based violence in our province, backed by an investment of \$1.4 billion. Through this plan, we're making targeted investments and collaborating with communities and front-line agencies right across Ontario. We're funding local services so that survivors and their dependants can find support in their communities and access safe spaces to heal and rebuild their lives. Through early intervention and education, we're raising awareness, protecting communities and helping to prevent violence before it happens. And we're holding offenders accountable through the justice system.

Early last month, the amazing Associate Minister Williams and I announced that our government is investing an additional \$27 million to expand shelter spaces to protect survivors of gender-based violence and strengthen the Family Court Support Worker Program. All of this work is part of our government's plan to protect Ontario by improving access to services and supports.

In this case, the funding will help increase access and accessibility at emergency shelters across the province and help victims and survivors navigate the Family Court system. It will provide survivors with a safe place to heal and rebuild their lives.

Ontario shelters serve more than 12,000 women and dependants each year, and this new investment will support capacity at over 65 emergency shelters right across Ontario, including those serving rural, remote and northern communities and Indigenous-led shelters to ensure space is available where and when it is needed.

The funding will also help increase access to the Family Court Support Worker Program right across our province. Family Court support workers help victims and survivors of domestic violence understand the Family Court process, prepare for proceedings and access community referrals.

Our government is also protecting young people and vulnerable communities by investing \$345 million to renew Ontario's five-year anti-human trafficking strategy to 2030, the largest investment of its kind in our country.

The events that took place 36 years ago this Saturday created a call to action across our entire country. From coast to coast to coast, changes were made and continue to be made to better provide victims and survivors with support and justice. Currently, our prevention efforts start much earlier than before, with key educational supports for men and boys especially. In schools across Ontario, this means mandatory learning in every grade that teaches elementary students what healthy relationships look like.

Speaker, we must continue to speak out. We must continue to take action. Let us continue to protect people at risk from gender-based violence so that all women and girls can live with dignity, free from intimidation and the threat of violence.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I am honoured to join my colleague the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services in marking this very solemn day in our country.

December 6 marks the anniversary of the tragic attack at l'École Polytechnique in Montreal, when a gunman targeted and killed 14 women and injured several others. The day is observed as a solemn moment of remembrance, honouring the victims and reinforcing the victims and reinforcing the commitment to end gender-based violence.

Thirty-six years later, this savage, misogynistic and horrifying act has not receded from our view or memory. The memory of this tragedy becomes more vivid every year as we vow to never forget those 14 women, sacrificed to a dark and terrible vision that saw women as an enemy and a threat.

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Reflecting on and remembering the victims and their families acts to recharge us in a spirit and action to continue our work to put an end to violence against women. We know that supporting victims and survivors and persecuting offenders gets us only so far in reducing violence against women. To truly break the cycle, we must recognize that financial independence helps women leave abusive relationships.

That involves acknowledging that abuse can take many forms, including economic abuse. This form of abuse can include controlling a victim's access to money or assets, limiting their access to school or a job, making a victim sign documents against their will or forcing a victim into debt. That's why our government is going to continue to champion women's economic and social opportunities.

We're investing more than \$41 million over three years in the Women's Economic Security Program and the Investing in Women's Futures Program. These two flagship programs help low-income women increase their financial security by equipping them with the skills, the knowledge and the experience needed to find a job or start a business. In addition to supporting women's participation in the workforce, these programs are crucial to helping prevent gender-based violence, because building a woman's economic independence enables them to leave abusive relationships and supports their recovery.

Speaker, increasing the number of racialized and Indigenous women in the workplace is a win-win for the women involved in the province as well. But these programs are also grounded in the harsh realities facing survivors of gender-based violence as they go about rebuilding their lives. They offer wrap-around supports including housing, access to child care and counselling.

The minister—our amazing minister—mentioned our four-year action plan to reduce gender-based violence and end gender-based violence, and I'm pleased to say that momentum is building. Through the action plan, Ontario is investing approximately \$98 million over three years in 85 new community projects across the province that focus on building safer communities, stopping gender-based violence before it happens and helping survivors to recover and rebuild their lives.

By standing together against gender-based violence now, through decisive action plans, prevention, empowerment and supports, we are making systemic change by connecting services like child protection, policing, health care, justice and education supports, so they all work together to identify risk early and support survivors effectively.

Reducing this violence is a collective effort and, in that regard, I am grateful for the partnership our government enjoys with the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council, or IWAC. I'm very proud of this council. IWAC is a key partner in helping us engage First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities in violence prevention efforts. The council also plays a critical role as a partner in implementing Pathways to Safety, which is Ontario's strategy in response to the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

We will continue, Madam Speaker, to continue these supports and continue these initiatives and see them through, while expanding supports through Ontario's Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. And we will continue to speak up about the reality of violence against women, while actively listening to and learning from survivors' experiences.

Today, as we remember the lives that were cut short, we remain committed to creating an Ontario free from violence for women and girls, because we know that when women succeed, Ontario succeeds.

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

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Every year on this day, we rise to remember the 14 brilliant young women murdered at École Polytechnique and honour their lives, all of them lost to femicide. Thirty-six years ago, 14 women were separated from their male classmates, lined up and shot for the crime of being a woman in a place where a man did not believe they belonged. And yet, even in the face of that truth, even with the killer's own words in his pocket naming feminism as the enemy, it took 30 years for the city of Montreal to officially acknowledge what had been obvious: that this was an anti-feminist, misogynistic terrorist attack, a femicide.

That delay—those decades of hesitation, the softening of language, the sidestepping of truth, the depoliticizing the horror—didn't happen by accident. It happened because naming violence against women has always made people uncomfortable, because to name it is to admit that it is structural, that it is ongoing, that it implicates every single one of us in this House.

History repeats itself over and over again. When 10 people were murdered on Yonge Street, eight of them women, Toronto held a massive vigil. For seven days after that, they held the vigil. The Prime Minister attended; 10,000 people came. I was put on the organizing team. The city congratulated itself on pulling together something so quickly, so beautiful. And then the next day someone from the violence-against-women sector said something to me that sent a chill through my spine. She said, “We are more unsafe today than we were before you planned that vigil, because you didn’t name it. You didn’t call it misogyny. You didn’t say ‘femicide.’” And she was right. We didn’t. Even though the killer had already declared his motives on social media, he had already aligned himself with the violent incel ideology, we stayed silent. We said we were waiting for the police investigation to tell us what we already knew.

Life in the aftermath of École Polytechnique and now leaves us daring not to speak the killer’s motive aloud. We are complicit in the face of femicide far too often.

Speaker, this is the very same silence that has followed missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Their families have not waited just years but generations for this country to acknowledge the scale of the loss. We remember the women of Renfrew whose deaths led to 86 recommendations, most of which we have not yet acted on.

We remember the 43 women in Ontario who were killed this past year, and when today’s House business is done, the women and the gender-diverse members and our staff, we will go about our lives knowing that the wrong look, the wrong man, the wrong moment in time could end our lives. We have seen it in Quebec; we have seen it on Yonge Street. We will continue to walk to our cars with our keys between our fingers and our cell phones at the ready, because misogyny will claim many more precious lives in the next year to come.

So it is not enough, Speaker. It is not enough to say the names of the dead with tenderness, with reverence, out loud in this chamber. Our ritual in this chamber must be paired with the responsibility of Legislatures, because our remembrance alone will not keep the people and the women of Ontario safe. This government, through its choices, has the power to fully fund, to fully implement the preventative strategies. But it continues to deprioritize women’s lives, which is why the galleries were full last week for my member’s motion and why it hurt so much, as a blow, to see it voted down. With over 37,000 women turned away from overfull shelters last year and forced to return to their abusers, I think we can all agree that this province is not doing enough. It is not doing enough.

1320

Speaker, our remembrance today cannot just be ceremony; it has to be a promise. It has to be a guarantee that today we will hear the names and the voices, and they will ask us to name the epidemic, fund the solutions, stop the killing. Let’s do this in their honour.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I’m deeply grateful for the opportunity to rise today and remember the 14: the young women who were killed at École Polytechnique 36 years

ago just because they were women in what was considered a man’s profession, engineering.

Speaker, my daughter is an engineer. I think about her today. I think about all the friends I have who are engineers. I remember that day myself because I had just graduated in business, and I was beginning to see how, even though I had grown up with three brothers, the world treats women differently outside of their homes. And I was so shocked that this had happened in my lifetime in Montreal.

Speaker, I also want to give a shout-out to Andrea Hazell, our critic for transportation, small business and women, because she is doing amazing work in Scarborough and across Ontario with groups who are advocating to end violence against women—groups who are on the front line, doing this work every day in shelters and in policy areas.

I want to give another shout-out to an organization who I did some volunteer work with before getting into politics, the Women’s Centre of York Region. They’re a not-for-profit, one of many across this province, who work tirelessly, day in and day out, to support women and their families who have experienced violence, to help them break the barriers, overcome the challenges of trauma and abuse, and build brighter futures. That’s what we want, Speaker. We want that for all of our daughters, all of our sisters, all of our mothers.

These kinds of organizations do amazing work. They stretch every dollar they raise to help women and their families. We owe all these organizations a debt of gratitude for the work they do, not just today, not just in memory of the women killed 36 years ago, but to support the women who are facing that violence, day in and day out.

Violence against women is not another policy discussion—it’s a crisis. It’s one of life and death, and it reaches every part of our province, devastating families, communities and perpetuating generational harm.

In Ontario alone, there were over 139,000 victims of intimate partner violence in 2024. That’s a lot of women, Speaker. The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, OAITH—who was recently at Queen’s Park—releases an annual femicide list and found that, in 2024, a woman died to femicide in Ontario every six days.

From victims and survivors, we hear that experiences of intimate partner violence are complex, they’re personal and they’re terrifying. While each experience is unique, all victims and survivors agree that only by listening to them can we understand the scale of this crisis, the barriers that prevent people from seeking help, the ways our systems continue to fail them and what we must do, most importantly, to move the dial on this issue.

You know, Speaker, several submissions on the recent committee report on intimate partner violence called for explicit survivor representation in governance and decision-making. While the report outlines leadership roles, it does not mandate survivor-led seats or statutory oversight—a gap highlighted by another great organization doing work in this space, the Barbara Schlifer Commem-

orative Clinic. Survivors' voices must guide the path forward to end violence against women.

Speaker, stakeholders are asking for clear, focused plans grounded in lived experience. They want empathy, they need urgency, and they need a government that's prepared to respond every day to the realities they face every day.

As we consider these recommendations, we must acknowledge that, while meaningful steps are outlined, there are some gaps between what's proposed and what survivors are consistently calling for. These are the people who know this issue because they've lived it. It's not just one; it is thousands and thousands of women's voices who are feeding that work.

One example is the continued reliance on Ontario's mandatory charging framework. While the report notes the need for improved consistency, survivors and front-line advocates emphasize broader systemic issues, uneven training, variable enforcement and the ways that these gaps can compromise safety.

Speaker, we must do better at how we educate our young men, how we educate them about the equality that their sisters are deserving of. We need to all do that together every day to end violence against women.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Today I'm honoured to rise and speak to recognize the Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women.

Thirty-six years ago, 14 women were killed at l'École Polytechnique for no other reason than that they were women. They were victims of misogyny and toxic masculinity. That was 36 years ago.

Yes, we've learned a lot and done a lot, but we need to work harder to build a safe and equitable society, because we do see a dangerous rise in toxic rhetoric from some in the alt-right, leading to more attacks, more hate and more radicalization, no thanks to Trump.

In 2023, a young man in my area entered a gender studies classroom at the University of Waterloo. He stabbed three women. Before his attack, he posted his manifesto online on Discord. It's the same threat but a new weapon.

We are behind in putting in protections against this kind of radicalization. As a school social worker, I meet young people who experienced violence in their first intimate experience because more young people are being exposed to toxic pornography before their first kiss. Studies indicate that by 2024, over a third of 16-to-34-year-olds will have been strangled, slapped or spit on without consent during sex in the past year.

I think of our sons, daughters—our children—and I worry about what they see online. One in five young men 16 to 29 have a favourable impression of Andrew Tate. No one is born with hate in their hearts, but these algorithms steer them toward radicalized ideas that support misogyny and hate.

There is a cost, so we need to keep investing in young people's mental health. We need legislation to get rid of deepfakes, we need funding and research about pornography addiction, and we need more good education to help

young people think critically of what they experience online.

And, please, let us hold these billionaires accountable—the pornography industry, social media platforms that exploit and profit off this moving of the needle in a more hateful and violent direction.

Let's do this in memory of the 14 women. Let's commit to action today and every day.

PETITIONS

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I'm just going to reach beside me for my petition here. I rise, and I want to thank the members of Parkdale–High Park for this petition.

In Parkdale–High Park, there is an individual who works in the violence-against-women sector at a shelter. She can no longer keep her job because she was making \$19 an hour—to ensure that the women in her shelter are safe from a man who might be coming to attack that shelter. It is not enough, Speaker.

We know that there were 37,000-plus women last year who were forced to go back to their abusers because the shelters were full.

1330

This petition here asks that the official opposition's plan, the motion I put forth a week ago to end gender-based violence by investing in the social infrastructure that we need, by bolstering women's economic security and by improving the services that women need in the community when they are facing violence—that that plan gets implemented.

I fully support this petition. I thank the people who signed their names to this, and I will sign my name to it as well.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I have a petition from folks in Guelph Wellington called "Silent No More." Over 700 people have signed a petition raising concerns about the fact that funding for people with developmental disabilities, specifically through Community Living, has been frozen for years. As a result, it's a real cut—a cut that's leading to reduction in services and the selling of group homes and other supports for adults with developmental disabilities.

They're calling on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take immediate action to increase funding to Community Living agencies in line with both the cost of living and the needs of developmentally delayed adults.

I fully support this petition. I will sign it and ask page Anna to bring it to the table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank Sally Palmer, who has been very active in getting these petitions signed to raise social assistance rates. I also want to thank the members who have signed this petition and would like to raise awareness about what's going on.

We know that in Ontario, social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising cost of food and rent, which has been continuously increasing: \$733 for individuals on OW and \$1408 for ODSP.

An open letter has been sent, with 230 organizations that signed, to the Premier recommending that social assistance rates be doubled for both OW and ODSP. Small increases to ODSP have still left these citizens below the poverty line. Both they and those receiving the frozen OW rate are struggling to survive at this time of alarming inflation.

Research has shown outcomes from the 2017 to 2019 Ontario Basic Income Pilot which showed that providing people with stable and more adequate income led to improved health and employment outcomes.

I fully support this petition, Speaker. The petition is calling on the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP. I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Manaswini to take it to the Clerk.

LIFE LEASE HOUSING

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I rise today to submit a petition signed by community members of mine in the town of Aurora, specifically to support and pass the Life Leases Act, 2025. The purpose of it is to create a fair and transparent legislative framework for the guidance of life leases. Life leases are written arrangements that entitle a person to occupy a residential unit for life or for a prescribed time.

Currently, these life leases do not have a legislative framework. Unfortunately, there are bad actors out there. This is why we need to be able to have this framework to promote fairness, stability and consumer protection across Ontario.

I sign my name to this petition to support my constituents in Aurora, and I give this to Anna.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, this is a petition from a number of residents in my riding in Guelph raising concerns about the fact that we are experiencing the worst housing crisis in Ontario history, which is leading to a number of tenants being evicted and a record number of people experiencing homelessness in Ontario.

These petitioners are asking the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reinstate rent controls and increase tenant protections in order to preserve the existing affordable homes that are in Ontario and to keep people housed.

I fully support this petition, will sign it and ask page Emery to bring it to the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Steve Clark: I move that pursuant to standing order 50 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 45, an Act to make statutory amendments respecting the transfer of jurisdiction within The Regional Municipality of Peel and the appointment of Deputy Provincial Land and Development Facilitators; Bill 72, an Act to enact the Buy Ontario Act (Public Sector Procurement), 2025, to repeal the Building Ontario Businesses Initiative Act, 2022, to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to the installation of certain signs and to amend section 10.1 of the Legislation Act, 2006, with respect to certain provisions of the Protecting Condominium Owners Act, 2015; and Bill 76, an Act respecting the adjustment of the boundaries between the City of Barrie, the Township Oro-Medonte and the Township of Springwater;

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

That no deferral of the second reading votes on the bills shall be permitted; and

That if a recorded division is requested on the second reading votes on the bills, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes; and

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

That when the order for third reading of Bill 45 is called, two hours shall be allotted to debate with 36 minutes for the members of His Majesty's government, 36 minutes for the members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, 36 minutes for the members of the third party and 12 minutes for the independent members as a group; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill 45 without further debate or amendment; and

That when the order for third reading of Bill 72 is called, two hours shall be allotted to debate with 36 minutes for the members of His Majesty's government, 36 minutes for the members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, 36 minutes for the members of the third party and 12 minutes for the independent members as a group; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill 72 without further debate or amendment; and

That when the order for third reading of Bill 76 is called, two hours shall be allotted to debate with 36 minutes for the members of His Majesty's government, 36 minutes for the members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, 36 minutes for the members of the third party and 12 minutes for the independent members as a group; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill 76 without further debate or amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The government House leader has moved government notice of motion number 12. I recognize the government House leader to begin debate.

Hon. Steve Clark: I just want to go in order to the three bills to impress upon the House the need for time allocation and the need for speedy passage of all three. I'll start in numeric order with Bill 45, which we refer to as the Peel region transition.

People in Peel have been waiting for clarity, and this legislation delivers it. It ensures that Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon have the certainty they need to plan, to budget and to build strong communities.

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The Peel Transition Implementation Act, 2025, will, if passed, transfer regional roads and related stormwater infrastructure on July 1, 2026, and waste collection services on January 1, 2026. These timelines give municipalities and the residents the confidence they need that services will continue both smoothly and on schedule. The transition strengthens local control, gives municipalities both the tools and the authority they need to manage their own infrastructure to support local priorities and to provide high-quality services to taxpayers. Having this legislation in place now ensures that the municipalities meet the deadlines set in law, reduce the uncertainty for staff and for their residents and help to keep those local projects on track.

Our government has worked very collaboratively with all four Peel municipalities. The Ontario Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator continues to support a smooth and orderly transition with the province, covering all of the land facilitation costs. Ultimately, this is about helping Peel plan better, to help support long-term growth and to give residents the confidence that they can move forward without delay.

Bill 72, our Buy Ontario Act—we contend as a government that Ontario workers and businesses can't wait. Time allocation ensures that Bill 72, the Buy Ontario Act, passes without delay so that tax dollars can start supporting Ontario jobs and products immediately, not foreign competitors. Global uncertainty demands swift action. With US tariffs and economic volatility, every single day counts. Time allocation guarantees that Ontario's \$30 billion in annual procurement at home stays at home and strengthens our economy when it matters most. We want to avoid costly delays in major projects, so by prioritizing Ontario and Canadian goods while maintaining that value for taxpayers, time allocation prevents procurement

bottlenecks and keeps those big infrastructure projects on track.

Accountability starts now. Strong compliance measures, both audits and penalties, must be implemented quickly so that local businesses have a fair shot at government contracts without waiting months for legislative gridlock. Harmful tariffs are creating uncertainty. Time allocation accelerates Bill 72's protections, safeguarding manufacturing jobs and ensuring that every single public dollar helps Ontario families.

Finally, Speaker, through you to the Legislature, the Simcoe county growth and boundary adjustment, which is Bill 76, acknowledges that Simcoe county needs to grow and that people want to live in the community of Barrie. This legislation unlocks much needed land so that families can live in the communities they love.

Barrie has run out of developable land, even as its population grows rapidly. The lands that we're talking about in Bill 76, in Springwater and Oro-Medonte, have remained unused. We need to transfer them to Barrie to support job creation, home building and long-term economic strength in the region.

Speaker, I want to acknowledge the 18 months of negotiations that have been led by the Ontario Provincial Land and Development Facilitator. But Speaker, it became clear that we have no more time to delay. The minister extended deadlines originally set for September 2025, but the runway has literally run out. The municipalities were close, and this legislation takes the best elements of those discussions and finally moves them forward. Having this legislation gives more certainty for residents, for those municipalities and the development community ahead of the 2026 municipal election, ensuring that the boundary adjustment takes effect on January 1, 2026.

Speaker, the transfer of the 1,673 hectares of land will unlock up to 8,000 homes while leveraging Barrie's existing service and capacity, making housing delivery faster, more efficient and more affordable.

This change supports major economic and transportation investments, including the Barrie GO line expansion and the Bradford Bypass, helping create jobs and strengthen the entire region.

Folks, Barrie is a regional hub for employment, for transportation, for education and health care, and aligning its boundaries with its growth needs will benefit all of Simcoe county.

Just to close, Speaker, the Ontario provincial land and development facilitator will continue to work with those local municipalities to support an orderly transition, including ward boundary adjustments and phased-in property tax changes, ensuring clarity for residents and businesses.

These three bills are a priority for our government, and that is the reason, Speaker, for the time allocation motion on the three of them.

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

MPP Alexa Gilmour: It is an honour to rise on behalf of the people of Parkdale–High Park, and I have to admit,

I'm having a little déjà vu between this moment in time and my first session as a newbie MPP, when I rose at the end of Bill 5. This déjà vu feels a little more like eating a bad meal and having indigestion yet again.

Speaker, this is actually the second time in the last couple of weeks that I've risen and stood in the House in response to very irregular government processes. The last time was when the IPV committee report—a motion was being put before the House that it would be written by one member of the government, and that is, as you know, highly irregular because, traditionally, the Assembly staff writes the report, brings it to committee and that allows to ensure that there are no biases, that evidence isn't put forward as something that is actually more propaganda. So this is really troubling to be rising yet again, two weeks later, to say—the people of Parkdale–High Park keep asking me, “What is the most surprising thing that you have discovered as a new MPP?” And I keep saying, again and again, “It is the way in which this government is eroding our democracy. It is the way in which your voice and mine is being silenced.” And time allocation motions do exactly that.

Without the ability to take this to a deep and thorough debate that involves all the voices of all the people elected by this province; without going to committee where the experts come, where the people of Ontario bring their deputations, this government erodes democracy and the possibility of bringing truly strong legislation that would be the best for the people of Ontario. And I've got to wonder, what is going on with this government? Is this government really that arrogant as to think that they are the only ones who have the right answer? Are they that arrogant to think that they are the only ones who know best?

When I actually look out there, if they're not consulting with us in the opposition in meaningful ways, and it doesn't appear, through committees, that they're consulting in meaningful ways in their own party, then who is really creating these bills? What small group of individuals? Is it cronyism? Is it authoritarianism? Well, we don't know, Speaker, because there's no transparency. There's no accountability. There's no fair process. The Auditor General has said as much.

But here is the thing: We in the NDP, with our leader and our members, we are not going anywhere. We will do everything we can to protect the people of Ontario, to ensure that their voices get in by whatever means are possible, because this country and this province is still a democracy and must remain so.

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I will share the sentiment of my colleague of déjà vu. Yes, this is the third time-allocated motion just this fall, and it's a demonstration that the government is disregarding, over and over again, the process—the democratic process—and the representatives of that democracy.

Since the beginning of this Parliament, in March, the government has introduced 23 bills, and I think the num-

ber is telling: 23 bills. And it used time allocation on 19 of them—19 out of 23, including those captured in this motion. Of those 19, 12 were time-allocated just since we returned this fall. Of those 12 bills that were time-allocated this fall, only two have been sent to committee—only two. Most concerning of all, not a single bill has passed this fall without time allocation. Can you imagine? This is not a sign of confidence or strength, if that's what the government is trying to imprint. It's actually a sign of fear and weakness.

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Time allocation motions are not inherently bad. They are a tool: a tool that, when used appropriately, can keep the Legislature efficient and prevent gridlock. But when they are misused, as this government has done, applied to every bill and used as a shortcut to avoid committees, to avoid hearing from the people of Ontario, time allocation becomes a tool for silencing.

When all you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. This government sees expansive time allocation as the only way to push its legislation forward. If the government was so proud of its legislation, it would use the time to have people talk about it, to bring it to committee, to make their legislation even better. But no, they got it all right the first time. Committees should be where we focus on the intricacies of legislating, not where partisan grandstanding takes over. They should be where organizations and individuals speak directly to the Legislature about the laws that will shape their daily lives.

But once again, as they have done consistently, this government has decided it knows better and is totally uninterested in hearing from the people of Ontario, the people they should be representing. Why? Because they know their agenda is actually unpopular. They know millions of Ontarians see these changes and feel worried for their future and their children's future.

This government wants to keep operating in the shadows while distracting Ontarians with shiny objects. This government treats every issue, every point of conflict or disagreement—which is the whole purpose of democracy, by the way—not as an opportunity to improve legislation or represent Ontarians better, but as an unwelcome trap.

It is the height of arrogance to believe they can govern without genuine consultation or input. If the government were truly concerned with efficiency and expediency in this House, they would seize every opportunity to be here, debating bills and doing the work Ontarians have elected us to do. Instead, they delayed the start of the fall sitting and cancelled every night sitting except one. These are not the actions of a government trying to get things done; they are the actions of a government afraid of accountability, afraid to make decisions in the open.

And this pattern doesn't stop here. They have undermined school boards and their local decision-making authority. They have overridden municipalities' ability to shape the communities they know best. Their proposed changes across sectors reveal an alarming anti-democratic instinct and a deep discomfort with dissent—any dissent. They are sending a very clear message about what they

believe. For a party that claims to care about reducing red tape and shrinking government, that message could not be more inconsistent.

Speaker, democracy is not an inconvenience. Accountability is not optional. Debate is not a hurdle to be avoided. It is the foundation of our responsibility to the people of Ontario. When a government uses its majority not to strengthen our institutions, but to weaken them; not to listen, but to silence; not to collaborate, but to control; it is our duty to call it out, because every time they shut down debate, avoid committee or sidestep public scrutiny, it is Ontarians who lose their voice.

Let me be clear: This Legislature belongs to the people of Ontario, not to the government of the day. As long as they continue to erode transparency, cut out public input and treat democratic norms as disposable, we will continue to shine a light on it.

Ontarians deserve better. They deserve a government that respects the House, respects the public and respects the principles that make democracy work, and we will keep fighting until they get exactly that.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in the House and debate the issue of the day. I'm not really happy to be debating time allocation—

Interjection: Again.

Mr. John Vanthof: Again.

Usually, when I start a time allocation debate, I whip out a whole bunch of quotes from the current government House leader when he was opposition House leader about how terrible time allocation is. It's similar to the House leader from the third party; he had the same kind of points. I could do this; I could whip out all those quotes. It's obvious that either the government House leader didn't believe them then or he doesn't believe them now, so why quote something that is actually fiction? It must have been fiction, or what the government House leader said now was fiction, and we will get into those issues in a while.

Before I do that, I believe it was Tuesday evening, and the leader of the Green Party and the member from—I know him as Paul Vickers. Please don't call me out; we've been friends for years.

Interjection: Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. John Vanthof: Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

We attended a fireside chat—there was no fireplace, but it was a fireside chat—with the Advanced Agriculture Leadership Program, an incredible program. We have a graduate in our ranks, Lisa Thompson, the Minister of Rural Affairs. She will tell you all about it. It's a great program. There are people from farm groups, people from agricultural lending organizations, people from agri-food supply. I believe it's a two-year program. These are heavy hitters. These people know their jobs and they're learning how to advocate for their sector.

They were here on Tuesday for question period. And you know what, Speaker? They really liked question period. They were energized by question period. But they asked us some really interesting questions, and one of

them was, “Do you talk to each other?” And it was a serious question. Because we can obviously yell at each other, but do we talk to each other? My answer was, “On a personal basis, yes, we do.” I respect everyone here who has been elected. We're all elected for a reason. I've had incredible conversations with the majority of you, and I hope you feel the same. I try to be as genuine as I can here. But I think, as a group, we don't talk, because continuous use of time allocation is evidence of that.

I've been here for a long time—

Interjection: How long?

Mr. John Vanthof: Some would say too long. Some would say far too long.

But when I got here—I believe the government House leader has been here longer than I have and he can validate what I'm about to say—we actually used to have House team meetings and we actually knew a week, two weeks, sometimes a month in advance what the government wanted to put through. They weren't always friendly, but we actually had those meetings, and it would go something like—it didn't always go like this; I'm not going to create a false picture of this. I was a watcher back then because I was deputy whip. I just sat and watched.

1400

So there were five bills. The government said, “We want this one, this one, this one, and we need those ones.” And the reply from the opposition would be, “Well, you know what? We can live with this one. This one, we hate, so we're going to pull out the stops to fight this one. But this one we will let go through the House. We have to debate it.” We would kind of know what was going on.

Sometimes, sitting here, and I listen to the Premier tell me that I don't know how to run a business—and I throw barbs; I get barbs. He knows I can run a business. But I will tell him that he could never run a board meeting, because I've been at a lot of boards and I've been a municipal councillor. Municipal councils don't always get along and boards don't always get along, but I have never been at a board meeting where you don't know what's going to be debated at the meeting until the day before. And that happens here lots of times. You wonder why the opposition gets oppositional? Because of that.

Could it be that the government members don't know what's going to be debated the day before? Well, that is an even bigger problem. If that's the case, then it's complete mismanagement on the other side. I don't know; I have good relations with most of you, and I don't expect you to tell me that. But the fact that many days, we don't know until the day before or that we have to ask, “So what are we debating tomorrow?” or “What are we debating today? What are we debating in half an hour?”—if that was at any reputable business, board or council, you would just walk out. It's just ridiculous.

So when the Premier tells me that I don't know how to look at a payroll—I built a business from the ground up—I counter that he couldn't run a board or a charity. Quite frankly, he cannot run a Legislature and doesn't respect the Legislature, because that is ridiculous.

You know something else that used to happen here? When I was younger, the government of the day would send us an email in the morning to tell us, Speaker, which ministers were not going to be there that day. And if the Premier was going to be late—to tell us so that we could ask to stand our leads down. Because governments understood that the Premier of the province is an incredibly respected position, and as the Premier of the province, he or she should be accountable to the leaders of the opposition parties. That is true democracy. They would actually send us an email—send us an email. And you wonder why things used to be more respectful?

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, but it was—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm sorry, Speaker. I like clicking my pen. If it bothers them, I'll put my pen down. You broke my concentration.

That is how you run a credible organization. You expect that all the members of your board might not agree with you, but if you try to circumvent them, it gets worse. That's what you're doing on a continual basis.

This is an incredible democracy, an incredible system, but it is easy to slowly lose the credibility of the system. In the years, I've been here—and it will be, yes, 14 years in a couple of months—this system has changed incredibly. Many who have just been elected think this is always the way it's been, and it isn't.

Is time allocation a tool? Absolutely. The government House leader, if he could come back and debate this, he would say that the NDP was actually the father of time allocation. I'm not going to deny that.

And there have been bills here that we abhor that you would have had to use time allocation for: Bill 124, Bill 33. There are ones that you would have to, because we would fight them, and we'll still fight them. But there are many bills that—it's either mismanagement, incompetence or just plain laziness or arrogance: "We'll just—you know, committees are a pain in the ass." Pardon me. Committees are—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member will withdraw.

Mr. John Vanthof: I respectfully withdraw. But that is the feeling that I get from the government.

So, actually, how it should work and how it used to work: introduce a bill at first reading—great. It passes first reading. I think, in my time, there's only one bill that didn't pass first reading that I can remember—and the Clerks' table is welcome to correct me if I'm wrong—since I've been here, when the former Liberal government tried to sell Hydro One. I think we voted against that in first reading, but I stand to be corrected. I've been corrected lots of times; it's not good for my reputation. But usually, first reading is an automatic.

Second reading: You debate it until you run out of speakers. So you poll our party; the third party can poll the government: "I want to speak to this," and, "Fine." So second reading is more extensive.

Then when it goes to committee, that's when the public and experts can weigh in on the bill, and that's when you get to make changes, when the government, who have the power, say, "You know what? We didn't think of this, and we're going to amend the bill, or we're going to accept an opposition amendment"—because, believe it or not, in days of yore, when my hair was brown, government actually accepted opposition amendments. And you know what? In the long run, it was harder to beat those governments, because when I would go out on the campaign trail and go, "This government is the worst thing you've ever seen," and when the government member would go, "But John, we put forward this bill, and we accepted your amendment. How can you say we don't listen to the people?" it was much tougher.

This government has been very lucky in that you could use COVID, and you could use Trump. You've had some lucky breaks. But for those of you who have never served in opposition, you really don't get that.

When it goes to committee is when you make bills better. You still have a majority. You are going to have the right to put your agenda forward, but you're assuming that only your side or only your staff—and I have a lot of respect for the Conservative staff, just to let you know. I'm waving to you too.

But you're assuming that no one else has any ideas, or that someone that is actually in the sector that you're changing the law for has the ability to say, "Wait a second. Have you thought of this?" And that comes up in committee, and then you make the changes, and then we go to third reading.

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Quite frankly, if you actually run the Legislature correctly, third reading doesn't need to be very long. You know why? Because nothing can be changed at third reading. Let's be serious: Nothing is going to change in the bill at third reading because the amendments are made between second and third.

But when you eliminate the part that makes amendments, you're hurting yourself. Some of you are saying, "What proof do you have of that? What proof do you have that we've used time allocation in areas that we shouldn't have?" Okay, I'll give you one: Bill 45. Isn't that the one about Peel? Well, you time-allocated the first one. You know, the dissolution of Peel and then the dissolution of the dissolution? You time-allocated that one.

If you had taken some time with that one, maybe some of the things that you're trying to fix with this one would have been identified: "Hey, you know what? A lot of our employees are going to leave if we do this, so maybe we should back off and do this." Right? The government House leader talked about how Peel region was waiting for clarity. While waiting for clarity, they time-allocated a bill to dissolve Peel, then they introduced another bill: "Oh, I guess we don't dissolve Peel." They created a secret advisory board, and now they're time-allocating another bill about Peel because the municipality is "waiting for clarity." Good God. This all could have been avoided. It

all could have been avoided. I just—I really don't understand.

So again, what is it? Why does this government refuse to actually use the Legislature for the good of the people and, quite frankly, for its own advantage, to manage the Legislature—you have the power to manage the Legislature—so that you don't end up with these time-allocated bills? Because time allocation isn't a success.

There are bills like Bill 33 and Bill 124 which you had to rescind. I believe you have the record for rescind—what's the word for rescinding bills? When one has to rescind, like—you rescind once. What do you do? Rescissions? I don't know, is there even a word for it? Like, you guys need a whole new word.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, I think it's five—correct me if I'm wrong, but five major pieces of legislation you've had to go, “Oops.” I guess either the courts, or the people or somebody had to say, “Okay, this is dumb. This is more than dumb.” Now, that is a failure of your management of the Legislature. Because all kinds of people in the Legislature told you that Bill 124 wasn't going to make it. What did you do? Pushed it through.

In the long run, you're only hurting—actually, you're hurting the people of Ontario, but you're hurting yourself. I don't know how else to try and make you understand.

Can you imagine, Speaker, a question period where the Premier and the two opposition leaders actually had a fulsome debate every question period? Can you imagine? That used to happen. Can you imagine? It happened with every government except this one—every government, every one. Every one in the 19—I was going to say, “1,900 years I've been here”—every one in the 15 years I've been here. And if you want to look further back, go ahead. But it doesn't happen now. We all know this. Tell me that that wouldn't be better; tell me that it wouldn't be better.

It might not be better—obviously, the government doesn't like question period. I get it. That's why you shorten your sessions so much. And that's also another reason why you have to use time allocation: Because you don't like question period and you don't like accountability, you just shorten it and then rush stuff through. You know so much better, right? And as a result, you end up with flawed legislation, and you end up with missed opportunities.

I'll give you another example. I can't remember the bill—but this has nothing to do with time allocation. Buy Ontario Act has to go through as quickly as possible because people need to be able to fight the threat from Trump. I don't disagree with that, but why, when the government changed the procurement specs for public transit from 25% Canadian to 10%—and Trump wasn't there then. Why wasn't that an issue? Now it had to happen yesterday, but when everyone brought it up in the Legislature—“Why are you doing this?” I might have my numbers wrong, but something like that.

It wasn't an issue. But now, “Oh, this had to happen yesterday because we need”—well, we needed to “buy Ontario” then too. It just made sense. Do we want to be “fortress Ontario” in a trade environment? No. I get that. I

don't think tariffs help anybody, but do we also want to support our own industry? Yes.

Again, with the Buy Ontario Act, the initiative, the principle, is supportable. But wouldn't the Buy Ontario Act be better if it was actually brought to committee and we had people who deal with interprovincial issues, deal with international issues? Somebody might say, “You know what? This part might cause some trouble. Do you think you can change this part?” It might take a couple more days. It might save millions of dollars. But no, this government, despite how great their staff is—some of their staff—they don't seem to register that.

Now, I am sure when people say “Well, you know, the government doesn't consult,”—the government consults. I'm not saying the government doesn't consult. But there's a very strong message that the government only consults with like-minded people. When you do that, you always get the answers you want to hear, but sometimes they might not be the right answers.

I tell this story all the time when people come to my office to lobby. Lobbying is not a bad thing. It isn't. I have never—I might get in trouble for this, but it's okay. It would be my first time; it's okay. It's parliamentary; don't worry, Speaker.

When I first got elected, I had someone come in my office. I can't remember what the issue was, but they made sense and they wanted my support—they wanted a letter of support. It made sense. “Sure, I'll write a letter.” I wrote a letter of support, and out it went. I'm not going to tell you which because you'll find it. I'm looking at the Conservative staff who are looking to bury me.

Then two days later, someone else came in my office and said, “That is the stupidest idea. Why did you write the letter?” They put forward their reasoning, and they made sense too. No one has ever come into my office with a bad idea, but there are always two or three sides to the issue.

I think the current government is guilty of only looking at one side on a lot of issues. By eliminating committee, it's becoming even more dangerous that you're not listening to the other side and actually changing your legislation, improving your legislation, so it actually works—works better. You're missing that each time you do time allocation on bills where you don't need to do it. Do you need to sometimes? One hundred per cent.

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There are bills that we abhor, that the people of Ontario some day will end up—it will be on their list of reasons why they no longer will support the Ford government. But even a broken clock is right twice a day. Some of your legislation we support, and we have.

I am going to switch gears a little bit here, Speaker. My extensive notes have kind of run out.

I always get a kick out of—and it's become a little bit less now. I've noticed that this messaging has stopped: “the previous Liberal government, propped up by the NDP.”

When the Liberals had two majority governments, the opposition Conservatives voted with the government

almost as many times as the NDP did. Saying that we propped up the majority Liberal government is like saying I'm propping you up, and I'm not. I walk away; you're still going to be standing. You're not even—I don't want to be unparliamentary. I'm looking for a way to say this parliamentary. You're fabricating the facts to yourselves. You are saying this message so often you believe it yourself. It's not the case. It's just not the case—I respectfully withdraw immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Yes, thank you. Carry on, carefully.

Mr. John Vanthof: I am trying.

I am about to call for a five-minute moment of silence for the death of democracy—no, I'm not. No, I'm not going to do that to the table.

That actually happened once. When I was first elected, myself and at that time MPP Jonah Schein—Jonah is a great guy; incredibly funny—were listening to this and he looked at me, and he said, "This is"—I can't say that word—"I'm going to call for a moment of silence for the death of democracy." And he stood up in his member's—you know how you have the question-and-answer period? I will give credit where credit is due: I like the question back-and-forth after every speech. That's a huge improvement. Kudos to—I believe it was—Minister Calandra at the time.

But anyway, back then it was basically five member statements. So he gets up and calls for a moment of silence for the death of democracy, and it caught the table a little bit off guard. At that time Jim Bradley, who we had a tribute for—an excellent representative of his community; he was the dean of the Legislature. I will never forget this: He was reading the newspaper in that corner. He looked up and he was about to heckle, but how do you heckle in a moment of silence? You could hear the laughter coming from the lobbies and after a minute, Jonah said, "Thank you," and sat back down. I have a feeling they changed the rules. Anyway, sorry for digressing, but we could, and I hope you do. We could—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: I think we're having a good discussion now. We're laughing together—and this is a serious job. I get it. The government's got a lot of responsibilities. I get it. But in the drafting of legislation, you also have a responsibility to use committee, when you can, to actually make your legislation better. And, believe it or not, the opposition will be less oppositional when the system is actually working. I was here.

It's not all sunshine and roses; I'll admit to that. But, like any business—I am sure that almost everyone here has been on a board—and every board I have ever been on has had fractious issues. And the way it gets really, really fractious is if you have four people go behind the scenes, behind the backs of two other people, and go, "Blah, blah, blah." That's when it blows up, and that's kind of what this place now feels like.

We get it, you're the government. You have the ability—you won the election—you have the right to put forward your agenda. You don't have the right to, on purpose, put

forward poorly crafted legislation. I don't think there's anyone who is going to dispute that much of your legislation is poorly crafted. If it wasn't—and for the members from Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon: If this legislation, if the legislative process was so great under your government, you wouldn't have had to ram a bill through and then dissolve that bill and then start over again with another bill, and now, all of a sudden, after that transitional board, from whom no one has ever seen the report, introduce another bill. That is not well-crafted legislation. That seems almost reactive. Like, "Oh, there's a problem. Let's throw it out and start again."

Quite frankly, if that was in any other venue, I think people would look at it and go: "That is incompetent—just plain incompetent." And the people sitting in this Legislature, the people I work with, quite frankly, aren't incompetent. They aren't. Our staff aren't incompetent, regardless of what party. You don't get to this level of politics—it doesn't matter in what part of the system you're in, elected staff, anywhere, or legislative staff, you do not get here by being incompetent, everyone here. But, somehow, some of the legislation that's crafted here is very crude and incompetent.

And, quite frankly, that lies in the hands of the government because they have control of the agenda of this place. And I sincerely believe that every one of us believes in the process, believes in this place. There's a reason we all ran, that we all sacrificed, that we all, last February, knocked on doors and froze off our fingers to stand here. And that's why I'm really disappointed that we have to do speeches—that I have to do, or attempt to do—like this. You could do so much better. You could still get your agenda through.

You believe different things than we do. Basically, you believe that the private sector is king of all, and we believe that essential services are better delivered publicly. That's our biggest—I think that's our biggest, right? Now, we should be debating that instead of debating this, but we're not. You're forgoing the committee process. You're just throwing it out, and it is to the detriment of all Ontarians.

1430

We look at other places—"Oh, my God. How could they let things like that happen?" We're not to that point, but the same thing is happening here. We're not using this place like it should be used. On Remembrance Day, we honour those who fought and died for our democracy, and we all honour those, but I'm not sure that they fought and died so that the rules come from the Premier's office and they don't listen to anybody else. That's what's happening here. We all know what's happening here.

The Premier has a right to be the Premier. He won the election. He was leader of the party that won. I've got no problem with that. But he doesn't have the right to force through bad legislation or not to be accountable in this House to the people of the province. He doesn't have that right, and by misusing that right, eventually, he will lose that right.

But what I'm more afraid of is that people won't remember when a Premier actually stood in his place and answered questions from the leaders of the opposition.

They will think, “Oh, that never happens.” That is the way it’s supposed to happen. That’s the way it happens in true democracies, and it’s not happening here.

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

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I have, I guess I would say, the displeasure now in my very short career so far as an MPP to speak to time allocation for a third time. I have the pleasure and, I’d say, perhaps a bit of a displeasure of having to go after the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane again because he’s such a great speaker and he can speak without being able to see his notes, which I find hard to do.

But I also learn a lot from him every time that he gives one of his speeches on time allocations. I guess, to see that silver lining in every situation, that is the silver lining: to be able to learn from members of this House who have been here longer than I have and have more experience in this House than I have. But we don’t get that when we time-allocate. We don’t get that full debate, that full understanding, the full respect and understanding of this institution when we rush things through the door so quickly that we actually don’t have the time to learn from one another.

The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane brought a great point up. He talked about past governments; that in his 19 years of being a member, he has only seen it get worse and worse and worse, and more so under this government.

Although, as I said, I’m a new MPP—this is my first term—I actually consider myself very much a product of this Legislature. My first full-time job was here, just around the corner, when I was 21 years old. I spent over a decade running around these hallways. They used to call us “the kids in short pants,” telling the ministers what to do, what to say, what not to say.

As a young staffer here at Queen’s Park, what was always told and reinforced to me is that we have the utmost and ultimate respect for this place because the 124 people that sit here, whether or not they’re from your party, were elected by the people of Ontario. So this chamber should never be seen as a roadblock or something to be blown through and demolished on the way to accomplish an agenda. It should be seen as a place where we convene as Ontarians to discuss ideas.

Then, if we’re really smart as a government—and I’ll admit, past governments, we were not always smart. But if we want to be a smart government, when we have an agenda, when we have ideas, it’s to our own benefit to make sure that those bills come before this place, come before committee, to have a fair hearing, because if we believe in what we’re putting forward, if we believe in what we’re saying to the people of Ontario, then we shouldn’t have to hide behind time allocation. In fact, having a full debate, having members from opposing parties speak to your bill would only enhance it and make it better.

Talking a little bit about history there, I also think about what is the history of this place in itself. The Ontario Legislature, of course, we’re modelled on the Westminster

parliamentary system, and the fundamentals of the Westminster system means that you should have a government sitting there, that you should have an opposition sitting here, where we actually discuss and we engage, where we dive deep into bills and legislation. We don’t just stand there for two seconds, throw it on a table, then walk away and say, “Merry Christmas. Enjoy your candy canes.” That’s not how the Westminster system was made, it’s not it’s meant to proceed and that’s not how it should be happening here.

So I spent a little time while I was sitting here to do some research. I wanted to understand what is the actual origin of time allocation in the Westminster system. What is the origin? How did it come about? I looked it up, and please correct me if I’m wrong, but my research tells me that before the 1800s, there was no formal process to end debate in the Legislatures. Why time allocation came about in the 1800s in the UK was because Irish nationalists tried to bring the House to a crashing halt, where no business could get through because there were bills being put forward to limit the ability of a free Irish state.

Think about that: At that time, time allocation was brought forward by a government who worried, from their perspective, about national unity, whether or not Ireland should be free, whether or not home rule was a good idea. They decided to bring time allocation forward because people felt so strongly about this issue, so passionately about this issue that they were ready to bring the entire government to a grounding halt before they would ever allow those bills to be passed.

But what are we using time allocation for now? Are these bills so urgent, like issues of national unity, that you need to force them down our throats, shut down debate in the Legislature, don’t allow debate at committee, do not allow the people of Ontario to come before committee and to have their say? Speaker, I don’t like it when people use these slippery slope arguments, but all I can see is that this entire slope is just sliding down like crazy here.

The reason why we’re using time allocation today—and I will repeat this; I said this last time: There is a time and place for time allocation. I don’t believe that time allocation shouldn’t be allowed. In fact, it was introduced in the 1990s, not by this party, not by that party, but by the NDP. So you can see it’s a consensus amongst all parties that there is a time and a place to use time allocation, but it’s not a tool that you should use—my colleagues, how often was it used?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Nineteen times already.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Nineteen times already—

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Out of 23.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Out of 23. We haven’t even sat for an entire year yet, and 19 times out of 23, time allocation has been implemented. What does that say to the people? What does that say to your constituents? It’s beyond belief.

Every time I stand here—again, this is the third time I’ve stood here to talk about time allocation—I tell myself, “Don’t get worked up. It’s not worth it. Don’t get too excited. They’re not listening anyway. This is just a

circular debate, right? I'm going to be back here for a fourth time, a fifth time, a sixth time, a seventh time." But every time I do stand up in here to talk about it, I do get worked up, because I think about why I ran in this election. I think about the people who sent me here, and it really makes me mad that I have to stand here and debate whether or not we should have time allocation rather than debating Peel transition implementation, debating the Buy Ontario Act, debating the Barrie — Oro-Medonte — Springwater Boundary Adjustment Act. Why can we not discuss that? Why is it not permissible for this government to allow us to have an open discussion on these issues?

The common refrain from the government, of course, is always, "Well, we received a record mandate from the people of Ontario." Did the people of Ontario tell you to come here and ignore the rest of the people of Ontario who also voted in that election but not for you? Did those people who gave you a majority say, "Ram it all through. Don't have debates. Don't have committee hearings. Do whatever you want. We don't care about good legislation. We only care about expedient legislation"? I just cannot believe for a second that anyone would ever, ever believe that.

1440

I am just quickly going through my notes here because, again, this is something I have spoken on too many times. I actually have a standard speech now for time allocation. That's how regular this has become that my staff and I have a standing speech for time allocation to speak to it, and then we just kind of bring in what new piece of legislation you're using this time allocation for. That's absolutely absurd.

This really speaks to a long-term democratic risk to our society and to our institution. Again, it's that slippery slope where we normalize a lack of debate. You can see that really happening as we go along here. As I said, I started working here about 17 or 18 years ago when I was still young and I still was hopeful and what not, and that's not how this was. We had, obviously, separate parties. We fought hard elections. But never did we look at each other like "you're the adversary" or "you're the problem." That's all I can see when I look at time allocation: "The opposition, you are the problem." You can see it also in question period. It's this sense from the government of "How dare you question us on this? How dare you not just agree with us and go along with it?" That's exactly, exactly the message that time allocation sends as well. "Just trust us. Don't ask a question. Sit down, be quiet. Let us do the work that we want to do."

Frankly, Speaker, it is unacceptable. With that, I will take my seat.

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

Pursuant to standing order 50(b)—

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I was standing.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I called it three times. I'm sorry.

Pursuant to standing order 50(b), I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Clark has moved government notice of motion number 12 related to the allocation of time on the following bills: Bill 45, An Act to make statutory amendments respecting the transfer of jurisdiction within The Regional Municipality of Peel and the appointment of Deputy Provincial Land and Development Facilitators; Bill 72, An Act to enact the Buy Ontario Act (Public Sector Procurement), 2025, to repeal the Building Ontario Businesses Initiative Act, 2022, to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to the installation of certain signs and to amend section 10.1 of the Legislation Act, 2006 with respect to certain provisions of the Protecting Condominium Owners Act, 2015; and Bill 76, An Act respecting the adjustment of the boundaries between the City of Barrie, the Township of Oro-Medonte and the Township of Springwater.

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

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Vote deferred.

PROTECT ONTARIO BY SECURING AFFORDABLE ENERGY FOR GENERATIONS ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO EN GARANTISSANT L'ACCÈS À L'ÉNERGIE ABORDABLE POUR LES GÉNÉRATIONS FUTURES

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 4, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Continuing debate, I recognize the member from Etobicoke—Lake-shore.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I appreciate the opportunity to rise today and speak about Bill 40, the Protect Ontario by Securing Affordable Energy for Generations Act, 2025. While this presents like a forward-looking plan to expand Ontario's energy capacity, support economic growth and secure reliability in the face of surging electricity demand, and in many ways it is, I must raise serious concerns about the implications of this bill—concerns that affect consumers, municipalities and the integrity of our energy system.

Before getting into the details of the bill, I am going to echo the comments from my colleague the member for Kingston and the Islands that he made this morning in this chamber and in committee—and, actually, with what just played out in front of me in this House. This bill, like so

many other bills this session—Bill 33, Bill 60—have been the subject of a time-allocated vote. These are important bills—those ones especially; I heard a lot about Bill 33 and Bill 60. This has meant that these bills have been rammed through this House and committee without being meaningfully scrutinized, discussed and debated in the way that a bill should be amended and finalized in committee.

I can't believe that we just even further shortened the last session when we are debating time allocation. As a new MPP, I find this quite shocking, actually. It's not what I expected when I ran for office.

Anyhow, if this bill is about transparency and long-term planning, I'm not quite sure why the members opposite are rushing through this legislation that will impact our energy sector in so many ways. Saying that, I will share my debate now.

First of all, I'd like to speak to the bill's politicization of energy agencies. In schedule 1, amendments are made to the Electricity Act and particularly to the independent electricity system. Bill 40 embeds economic growth as an objective for both the Independent Electricity System Operator, the IESO, and the Ontario Energy Board, which concerns me in a few different ways. The primary mandate of these independent agencies has always been reliability, fairness, protecting consumers. Now, we're imposing political and economic objectives. The government risks turning our regulators into tools for fulfilling its political priorities, rather than being the guardians of public interest.

Another issue with incorporating economic growth without elaborating on it is that the goals about economic growth are pretty subjective. It consequently shifts the IESO's purpose from protecting consumers to a divided purpose where they're now also responsible for alignment with government initiatives. We also know that this bill will enable the government to pursue energy goals by overruling the OEB, and we've seen this as well before with Bill 165.

It's also concerning that the CEO of the Ontario Energy Board will be able to decide internal procedures. These bodies are intended to be independent and at an arm's length from government. It's exactly why it's called the Independent Electricity System Operator. It defeats the purpose of these regulators if there's a partisan or government influence on how they operate.

The second issue I want to talk about under Bill 40 is the government now has the power to gatekeep data centres' connections to the grid based on economic priorities. This gives the minister and the IESO the authority to decide who benefits from Ontario's energy resources, creating a system where politically or economically favoured companies have preferential access. I'd like to be sure that we could safeguard against those kinds of things. Governments can have experiences where they will actually do this.

But we cannot overlook what is happening over here at the same time—what we're learning through the Skills Development Fund, the way that decisions have been made. I participated this week at public accounts. It's very,

very clear to me that there has been independent advice that has been given in a structured, systematic way to the minister. And those staff who did that work and gave their recommendations—it was very clear that individual choices were made and directed by the minister, overriding those recommendations.

The reason why I've worried about this all along, why I've been upset by it all along, as somebody who has worked in the public sector most of my career, tried to use taxpayer money in fair, transparent ways, is that I've seen my trust eroded in that process. Now we're talking about something even bigger. That was \$2.5 billion; this is about the use of our energy in the province.

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What we're seeing is that, actually, we're setting this up so that preferential access will be given to the companies that maybe have the best connections again, and that worries me. I think it should worry all of us. I actually think it should worry all the members opposite, given everything that you've seen, everything you've learned. Anybody who participated at that committee meeting on Monday should be concerned with setting up the same conditions for it to happen again in this bill.

Third, I'd like to speak to how this bill impacts ratepayers and consumers. Despite the bill's promise of affordable energy, Bill 40 exposes Ontarians to significant financial risks. Payments to generators, transmitters and for hydrogen projects will be funded by the Legislature or passed through to consumers via deferral or variance accounts. There are no explicit consumer safeguards to prevent these costs from increasing electricity bills for Ontarians. A lot of people have talked about this. In practice, this shifts financial risk from corporations to Ontario's taxpayers and ratepayers.

Again, with a little bit of time for discussion at committee, maybe we could understand all of this a little bit more. Maybe we could actually make some useful amendments that would make sure that the protections that taxpayers and ratepayers need are going to be there.

Next, I'd like to speak on how this bill expands hydrogen and nuclear expansion without necessary guardrails. While innovation and clean energy development are critical, Bill 40 expands IESO's mandate to support hydrogen and nuclear projects without clear emission reduction targets, timelines or accountability measures. There's a real risk of costly projects that may not deliver measurable benefits for Ontario families or the environment.

Again, I need to comment on this. This is a bit of a trend that we see, isn't it? We don't set measurable outcomes. We don't set transparent accountability mechanisms, and here we are: We're going to do this once again.

I would urge the government that if this bill passes—again, we're saying today, "We're passing this through. We're pushing it through." If you're going to go this direction, please include these things. This is about good government and how you need to manage this, and this is extremely important to everyone in this province.

Fifth, I want to talk about how this bill also removes the requirement for municipal elector assent on public utility

projects, which erodes community input and local democratic oversight. Again, coupled with the centralized planning from the minister and cabinet, this creates a top-down system that sidelines municipalities and citizens, raising questions about whose interests are actually being prioritized.

I've talked a little bit about this, but I'm going to raise it again. Another concern is that Bill 40's impact will be determined through future regulations, many of which have not yet been drafted or publicly released. As I mentioned, the integrated energy plan that underpins this bill has not been made public, leaving citizens and municipalities in the dark about how the government intends to manage costs, manage timelines and manage performance.

I hope that we'll have a chance to see these. Certainly, if it's going to be in regulation, we'll be keeping a close eye. We'll make sure that people are sending their comments at that time. It's becoming even more important with all this time allocation and all this rushing through of legislation that the citizens of Ontario, the people that care about these issues, are going to watch closely for when these regulations come out and that they send their comments. Make your voices heard. Talk to your MPPs directly.

I'd also like to touch on data centres, because we know through this bill that the energy planning authority will be able to determine which data centres and industries will get the power first. I'd like to know: What are the objective criteria that will determine those decisions? How will the government ensure there is fairness in choosing which data centres and industries are powered first, rather than deciding through political fairness?

Again, we've seen this before. We've seen it with the greenbelt. It happened. We've seen it with the Skills Development Fund. It happened—actually, to the tune of \$742 million. That's what happened there.

Now we're talking, again, about how we are going to be making the decisions around who's actually going to get access to the energy, through our grids, for data centres. We know, with the coming changes that we will see through AI and other changes in the way we do our business, that energy is going to be important. I completely agree with the discussion that that is the case, and we need to make sure that we can support ourselves here in Ontario in that. But setting up systems where, if you've got favouritism with the current government, you've got connections with the current government, that's going to determine whether you have access to the energy you need to run your data centre is pretty concerning, I would suggest.

With that, I want to make a couple of more comments on the time allocation, where we find ourselves. My colleague just mentioned here today that 19 of 23 bills have been time-allocated. I know that we passed six of 10 in the first session, but now we're at 19 of 23 bills going to time allocation. We all understand what that means. That means that there is no chance for you to come and talk to the government at committee if you care about these issues. There's no chance to consider an amendment

to create even better legislation where we might need it. But—

M^{me} Lucille Collard: It's already perfect.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Oh, yes: "We just feel like it's already perfect."

I don't know about you guys, but I, myself, try to do good work. But I've learned over the years that it's better with more input from people, especially people who really, really know the subject matter.

Bill 40 may appear as a visionary plan for Ontario's energy future, but it prioritizes political objectives over reliability, fairness and affordability. It exposes ratepayers to higher costs, undermines independent oversight and grants the government successive power to favour selected industries.

Like my colleague that I listened to this morning, the member for Kingston and the Islands, had referenced, this bill is written in vague language that leaves out a lot of regulation and is missing the opportunity to incorporate thoughtful, high-level guidelines to these regulations. We will be watching closely for those regulations. There's a lot of power that we are handing over in this bill—no pun intended. We must ensure that ratepayers, communities and independent regulators retain their voice in energy planning. For these reasons, I will not be supporting this bill moving forward.

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

MPP Monica Ciriello: It's an honour to stand up here and speak to Bill 40, the Protect Ontario by Securing Affordable Energy for Generations Act. I want to start by thanking Minister Lecce, Associate Minister Oosterhoff and PA Cuzzetto for their leadership on this legislation and moving it forward.

This legislation is about one simple goal: keeping power affordable and dependable for the people of Ontario. It's about ensuring that our province, not foreign governments or short-term politics, decides how we build, use and secure our energy.

1500

In my community of Hamilton Mountain and right across my city, people haven't forgotten what happened under the previous Liberal government. Hydro bills soared, poor contracts were signed, families were paying hundreds more every year, and businesses were pushed to the edge. That was the result of an energy plan driven by an ideology, instead of by common sense. Premier Ford and our government were elected to fix this mess. We stabilized the rates, restored transparency and we rebuilt confidence in Ontario's grid.

Now, Madam Speaker, Ontario is growing again, and that means we must plan ahead. Electricity demand is set to significantly increase by 2050. New industries from EV manufacturing to advanced computing are changing how much energy we use and how quickly we will need more of it.

That's why our government launched Energy for Generations, Ontario's first 25-year integrated energy plan. It coordinates every part of the system—electricity, natural

gas, hydrogen and more—under a single long-term strategy. Its focus is straightforward: keep costs low, maintain reliability, protect energy independence and build capacity for the future. Bill 40 puts that vision into action.

This bill ensures that Ontario's energy regulators, the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Energy Board, consider economic growth when they make decisions. That means that when new generations or infrastructure is planned, the question isn't just about technical feasibility; it's whether those projects help build homes, create jobs and attract investment. In Hamilton Mountain, where manufacturing and housing are quickly expanding, all of that matters. Reliable energy is what local employers need to grow and give families the confidence to put down roots. For too long, energy planning ignored that reality. Bill 40 puts growth right where it belongs: at the centre of all decision-making.

Another key part of this legislation deals with large electricity users, particularly data centres. Ontario already has more than 100 of these facilities, and new proposals keep on coming. Together they represent 2,300 megawatts of demand, enough to power more than two million homes. Under today's rules, utilities must connect every qualified project, regardless of how much power it uses or the value it brings to the province. That approach isn't sustainable. Bill 40 gives the government the authority to regulate those connections. Large projects will have to apply for approval before connecting to the grid. Each application will be reviewed based on clear criteria, jobs created, economic benefit, data security and local impact. It's a measured, common-sense approach that will support innovation, but will make sure that the power supply is there for housing, manufacturing and essential services first.

The bill also strengthens our ability to buy and build here, right at home. It gives utilities flexibility to prioritize Canadian suppliers when they procure materials and equipment. The Ontario Energy Board will still review costs for fairness, but this change lets us invest in our own workforce and our own technology. That's important.

Ontario's energy system should be built by the people who live here, who work here and who pay taxes here, not by foreign companies with other agendas. This keeps jobs right here in Ontario. It shortens supply chains and protects our critical infrastructure.

We've seen what happens when government neglects responsibility. The Liberals and the NDP left us with unaffordable bills, hollowed-out industries and a fragile grid. This bill represents the opposite approach: planning ahead, putting Ontario first and making sure every decision serves the people who live here and who work here. That's what Bill 40 stands for. It's why I urge the honourable members of this House to support this legislation so we can move forward together.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: *Remarks in Anishiniimowin. This report will be republished to add the transcribed remarks once available.*

It's always an honour to be able to speak in this place on behalf of the people of Kiiwetinoong.

First off, Speaker, this morning I was scrolling on Facebook. I saw my sister's update from home, in Kingfisher Lake. My sister is an amazing sister, but also an amazing daughter, because she's the one that looks after our mom in Kingfisher Lake. And I was laughing at her update. And then, one of the things she said—this is her update: "Mom is very talkative again but only speaking in English." It was just so amazing because she doesn't speak English, but she's speaking English. So hi, Mom. If you're listening, I'll just say I miss you and we love you. I just thought I would share that.

But also, Speaker, I want to acknowledge some people before I do my—I'm going to go for about eight minutes or so. This fall, I was able to spend some time with friends, spend time with family, hunting and being on the land. Some people from, again, Lac Seul First Nations—I was on their homelands—came for a visit to my camp. It's always a good time to be with them. Last week, or a couple of weeks ago, I acknowledged some people, but I wanted to acknowledge other people that I missed the previous time: Paul Sr., Paul Jr., and Paul the III—they're all Lildeers. So hello, the three Pauls. But also I wanted to acknowledge these three young girls, three young women, that came to visit me: Crimson, Cadence, and Canina Kejick. They were struggling, they had just lost their mom a few days before that, when they came to see me, so I just wanted to acknowledge them.

Again, it's an honour to be able to, again on behalf of Kiiwetinoong, to stand and speak on Bill 40. I know that energy and hydro is an important issue to people I know in far northern Ontario, not only them but rural Ontario who pay the highest cost for electricity.

The first thing I remember about electricity, growing up, is I remember going to school—which was run by the federal government at that time—and also the teacher residences were the only ones that had electricity through diesel generators. But us First Nations people that were on the reserves in the communities, we had no hydro yet.

Eventually, probably around 1982, I remember the community starting their own—buying their own diesel generator. And, I remember, they built their own poles and, next thing you know, we have hydro. It's 1982.

Around the same time, a few years later, maybe around 1986-87, all of a sudden, they do this brush clearing. It was like they were building an airstrip—an airport that we can actually land on the ground because we only had docks for floatplanes and on skis in the wintertime. So that was 1987. I remember coming home from high school, all of a sudden, I'm landing at the airport. It was so new.

Around 1994, there was this big project happening. This project was a water and sewer project. Next thing you know, I have running water in my home. It was so intense. It was so new to me growing up—1994.

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But before we had proper electricity for that water and sewer project, we had to get Ontario Hydro to come in and

do an upgrade: to basically build a new diesel generating station to power the whole community and to power the bigger buildings, but especially the water and sewer system. That was 1994-95. We had running water in Kingfisher Lake. We had running water in homes.

A few years ago—maybe three or four years ago. Ever since that time, we had the Wataynikaneyap project, the light that gives life, where we had a system going up north—there was a big loop that happens, and we were part of the provincial grid. It is one of the good things that this government did, to keep that project going, where you have a number of First Nations working together, doing proper consultation. I remember going up there to my home First Nation when they turned on the power to be part of the provincial grid.

Everybody is so dependent on it. We are so dependent on electricity nowadays. But I remember growing up, along the Pipestone River, we didn't care about power. We didn't need the power.

I know that there are many ways to talk about the issues addressed in the bill. I'm going to go only for a couple of more minutes, but I want to start with some words of caution. We cannot discuss legislation on data centres in 2025 without talking about the rise of artificial intelligence. The use of this technology has led to a rise in new data centres, which use large amounts of energy to run their servers and even more water to cool the equipment down. It is so important that we ensure that there are adequate water regulations in place to monitor, to ensure that industrial operations like data centres do not contaminate or harm the waters—our waters.

I say that because we need only think of Grassy Narrows, where the impacts of mercury poisoning from decades ago continue to affect the health and the well-being of community members who live there. Grassy Narrows is still waiting for and demanding justice from Ontario. We cannot let this happen again.

I wanted to speak for about eight to 10 minutes, but I know that those are some of the things I wanted to talk about—one thing at least I wanted to talk about.

I'll close off with this: I recommend that everyone making legislation and making regulations about AI in Ontario reads the Chiefs of Ontario's report called First Nations and Artificial Intelligence, which talks about the many risks with AI as well as some of the benefits.

Anyway, I will conclude my piece on it. Meegwetch for listening.

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

MPP Paul Vickers: It is a pleasure to rise in the House and speak during the third reading debate on Bill 40, Protect Ontario by Securing Affordable Energy for Generations Act.

Speaker, our province is at a pivotal moment. Energy demand is set to rise dramatically over the coming decades, driven by population growth, electrification, new technologies and expanding industries. We need a modern legislative framework to meet that demand, one that ensure electricity remains affordable for families, supports

investments and job creation and enables a reliable, clean energy system. Bill 40 does just that.

Around the world, countries are grappling with unstable grids, rising energy costs and the pressures of decarbonization. But here in Ontario, we're taking a different path, one grounded in clean power, reliability, affordability and energy independence. Bill 40 ensures Ontario has the power it needs to grow, while protecting families and businesses, and securing our energy future for generations to come.

We're entering a new energy era. AI data centres and advanced manufacturing are transforming how much power we use and how quickly we need to produce more. Electricity demand in Ontario is forecasted to increase exponentially by 2050. Meeting that growth responsibly requires planning, foresight and discipline. We're acting today so that Ontario never faces an energy shortage tomorrow.

Not long ago, energy planning in Ontario was guided by ideology, not reality. Under the previous Liberal governments, propped up by the NDP, energy decisions were made in short-term four-year election cycles. They were politically driven and costly. The former Liberal government signed sweetheart deals for intermittent sources at up to 10 times the going rate and locked families into paying the price for decades. The result? Skyrocketing hydro bills. Families were forced to pay an extra \$1,000 a year.

That was the Liberal legacy: runaway costs, lost jobs and a system on the brink. But in 2018, the great people of this province trusted our PC government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, to clean up the Liberal mess.

Bill 40 is about more than righting the wrongs of the past; it's about building Ontario's energy independence, and that's what this bill is doing. We're changing the ways data centres connect to the energy grid, as the current approach is unsustainable. This legislation ensures that large-load energy connections are assessed not only for technical feasibility but for economic and strategic value.

This bill takes a major step forward by formally enshrining economic growth as a core objective for both the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Energy Board, ensuring that every major planning decision for our electrical system considers how it supports jobs, investments and long-term prosperity for Ontarians.

I was at committee when the Liberals and the NDP signalled that economic growth should not be the standard guiding our system planners. From the outset, we have been clear: Supporting jobs and attracting investment for Ontarians is our top priority, and enshrining economic growth as an objective reinforces that commitment. With Bill 40, we are securing Ontario's energy independence, ensuring we never again sacrifice affordability for ideology or long-term prosperity for short-term politics.

1520

The choice before this House is clear. We can return to the failed Liberal energy experiments of the past, where politics trumped prudence and Ontarians paid the price; or we can stand for stability, responsibility and growth. Or we can vote for Bill 40 to secure a stronger, self-reliant

Ontario. I urge the members of the House to choose the latter.

Let us rise up to the challenge. Let us protect our workers, empower our industries and secure our energy future—not just for today, but for generations to come.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: As I rise today, I want to take a moment to congratulate Film London and the London Economic Development Corp. on the upcoming holiday film, *Very Merry Mystery*—which was shot entirely in London.

Broad Films is a production company which oversaw filming during an unseasonably warm July, making everything appear like a winter wonderland. It truly was Christmas in July. Broad Films co-owner Kelly Peckham told Norm De Bono of the *London Free Press*, “We have the locations and local talent to pull off major filmmaking here. It’s a huge boost to our industry and great training for our crews.” This film brought \$600,000 to the local economy.

I want to thank Andrew Dodd, director of Film London, for helping incentivize production with Neshama Entertainment. He told the free press, “They were more willing than other companies to hire as many locals as they could. It’s a big win for the city.”

Film London is LEDC’s film business concierge. On the website filmlondon.ca, you’ll find a carefully crafted and expertly curated hub, designed to help creators find everything they need for commercials, features, short films and more—whether it’s an experienced crew and talent, location scouting assistance, liaising with the city for permits, connections with local vendors and services, studio space as well as promotional assistance.

I’m very much looking forward to seeing London landmarks like King’s University College, the Elsie Perrin Williams Estate, Woodholme Manor and Wortley Village shine on the screen. For those who want to watch, *Very Merry Mystery* will be broadcast on the Oprah Winfrey Network and HBO Max.

Congratulations to everyone on a successful venture.

As we look at Bill 40, a bill that is, again, being time allocated from this government—where they’ve moved the guard rails and changed where the goal posts are—it brings me back to what the entire nature of energy is and should be in this province. I think to Sir Adam Beck, an MPP from London, whose principle, “Power at Cost,” was “*Dona naturae pro populo sunt*” in Latin: “The gifts of nature are for the public.” It seems that we have strayed so far away from that principle.

When you consider that it was the Harris government that broke up the transmission and the delivery into Crown corporations—there was a system that used to be studied by the Harvard Business School. And yet, because of political meddling and because of wanting to reward insiders, it ended up being a fractured system—a fractured system that was unfortunately privatized by the Liberal government.

If you look at Liberals and Conservatives, it seems as though they seem to be completely in league with one another when it comes to destroying our energy system. They failed to treat our energy system as a public good. They didn’t recognize what Sir Adam Beck tried to instill in this province.

The access to clean and affordable energy is something that drives industry. It provides warmth and support for our homes. But instead of protecting and promoting publicly owned power, both Liberals and Conservatives have prioritized private profit, political expediency and short-term gains over the long-term interests of Ontarians. It’s deeply concerning.

In Bill 40, it seems as though there is yet another system whereby the government is setting up this opportunity for them to reward insiders, to reward their donors, to really sort of gamify the system of energy within this province. This bill lets the government decide who gets hooked up to the grid and who gets bumped to the back of the line. I mean, if anyone has listened to the absolute disaster that is the Skills Development Fund and how the minister has been hand-picking low-ranking applications based on whether or not they donated to the Conservative Party or whether they’ve hired lobbying firms connected to the Conservative Party, this should make everyone deeply concerned, because when the rules aren’t clear, I don’t think anyone would say that they can trust a Conservative government to make sure that people are treated fairly, equitably and decently. It’s easy for the wrong people to get special treatment, to get to the front of the line. That’s where you end up with friends of the government always hearing that “yes” word, and everyone else gets, “Oh, sorry, no room.”

I also worry that—Ontario is set to become quite a destination for data centres, and this would allow the government to basically pay data centres’ electricity bills with public funds. As CUPE has pointed out, data centres housing AI servers not only occupy a massive physical footprint; they also take in millions of litres of water in order to cool their systems. It’s also quite shocking and jarring to think about the enormous amount of energy that is required. In doing so, they’re also going to emit tens of thousands of tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, and they don’t really create that many jobs. As a result of the potential of their energy use, they could actually drive up energy costs for other users. This is something that the government should be entirely concerned about. But yet they seem to be, again, gamifying the system of Ontario politics to make inroads for their select few.

I think about the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance. They also could be deeply affected by this. Good businesses could lose out on power while these energy hogs—these crypto miners, these data centres—could drain the grid.

This government has not produced clear rules, and I don’t think this “just trust us” approach has worked at all in the past number of years.

Not only that, but the government hasn’t told anyone what their what their big energy plan is going to cost. Families don’t go out and buy a washing machine not

knowing what the price tag is going to be. Nobody makes a purchase of that kind. So why does this government expect that people are going to buy into an energy plan or an energy strategy without knowing what the actual costs are?

People in rural and in northern Ontario already pay a disturbingly high price for electricity. They can't afford more decisions like this government's, that seem to be made on a whim. Again, energy has to serve people, not just the people who profit from it.

It has also been said that this Bill 40 is about removing democratic guardrails. It's been said too that it will make it easier for this government to cut some of those sleazy backroom deals with powerful corporations.

Howard Hampton said in 2015, "What we've witnessed in Ontario in the last 20 years has been piece-by-piece privatization of the hydro system without anybody considering where we're going to end up and how much this is going to cost in terms of hydro bills, lost jobs and lost economic opportunity."

The story is still the same 10 years later: that we are seeing further privatization and profitization and just ripping up what was a once proud system to benefit just a few people. The Liberal and Conservative consortium is alive and well in the province of Ontario when it comes to the destruction of a public good, which is our energy system.

Speaker, again, what this government needs to do is—it should be listening to people. It should be travelling these bills, not time-allocating, not moving the guardrails, not making things benefit themselves. Speaker, I am shocked that there aren't enough avenues for this government to find profit for their friends and that they seem to just always find yet another.

1530

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? Further debate? Further debate? Seeing none, pursuant to the order of the House dated November 6, 2025, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Oosterhoff has moved third reading of Bill 40, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to energy, the electrical sector and public utilities. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Third reading vote deferred.

ONTARIO UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS WEEK ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LA SEMAINE DES SPORTS UNIVERSITAIRES DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Saunderson moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 22, An Act to proclaim Ontario University Athletics Week / Projet de loi 22, Loi proclamant la Semaine des sports universitaires de l'Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Simcoe—Grey.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: It's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature today to speak to third reading of Bill 22, Ontario University Athletics Week, 2025. If passed, this bill will declare the first week of October each year as Ontario University Athletics Week to recognize and celebrate the incredible story of the athletes and coaches that compete across our great province in university athletics. This will make Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to do so, something we can all be proud of. And what a great story our university athletes and coaches have to tell, a story about their dedication, their commitment and their journey, both collectively and individually—a journey of the pursuit of excellence, of learning life lessons and of personal growth, a journey that will shape them during their university careers and long after.

Speaker, I want to introduce some important guests in the gallery today: Gord Grace, CEO and president of the Ontario University Athletics, or OUA; and two of my Olympic teammates and Western University rowers, John Houlding, a two-time Olympian, and Harold Backer, a three-time Olympian. These two were my crew mates with Rob Marland and Terry Paul in 1988. And all of those teammates, Madam Speaker, were OUA athletes—and also my own son, Cole Saunderson, an exceptional athlete in his own right.

I know my parents, Bill and Meredith, are watching at home. Meredith was a varsity basketball star at the University of Toronto and won a provincial championship in 1954. Bill played on the Trinity College Jennings Cup champion intramural hockey team in 1956.

And of course, my beautiful wife, Susie, who is also watching at home, was a varsity cross-country skier at the University of Western Ontario, where we met—proof that some of the greatest benefits of sport happen off the field.

I'd also like to recognize varsity athletes in this Legislature on both sides of the floor.

On the government side, our Minister of Sport was a university football standout for the Ottawa Gee-Gees, leading them to a Vanier Cup in 1975 before a Hall of Fame career in the CFL, winning three Grey Cups.

Our Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development played varsity soccer for four years at the University of Ottawa in goal and coached the team for another five seasons.

From the NDP caucus, the member from Waterloo played varsity water polo at Carleton University, in goal, and tells me her nickname was "the Wall."

From the Liberal caucus, the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore was a varsity swimmer and water polo player at McMaster University. Impressively, after that, she was a member of Canada's women's rugby team, competing in the World Cup in 1998 in the Netherlands. Two of her sons are excellent swimmers, and one is also a varsity swimmer.

Speaker, it is said of aging athletes that the older we get, the better we were. I invite any member of the House to test this adage by approaching any of these members to ask them about their glory days in sport.

The underlying premise of this bill is to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of our current university athletes and their coaches. You may ask yourself: What is the legacy that we are recognizing? Simply put, it is one of excellence. One simple metric is just to look at the number of OUA athletes that competed at the Olympic Games. Having done a quick search, over 525 university athletes have represented Canada at the Olympic Games. This does not capture national team athletes who competed at world championships, Pan Am Games, Commonwealth Games or world student games.

And that's just one metric, Madam Speaker. The other more compelling metric is the power of sport to build individuals and to build communities. Our universities are uniquely equipped to do both; as educational institutions, this is, in fact, their mandate. They are in complete alignment with this metric.

By some background, the OUA program with its 20 member universities, has over 10,000 athletes for this year competing in 22 sports across the province, fielding over 500 teams. That is an incredible accomplishment.

When I spoke with Shannon Thornton, from Ontario Tech University, she provided me with an impressive statistic, which I think speaks volumes to our university athletes: She tells me that 40% of OTU's student athletes are Academic All-Canadians, meaning that their grade point average is a minimum of A-. I am told that this statistic is indicative of athletes across this province.

Speaker, while sport builds individuals, it also builds communities. It has the power to inspire and unite us and lift us up together. We saw that in 1972 and most recently with the Jays in the World Series.

It is important that we continue to honour and recognize the importance of our university athletes and coaches and the power of our university sports to create the leaders of the future and unite our communities.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to thank the member from Simcoe-Grey for bringing forward this motion to declare the first week in October University Athletics Week.

I want to welcome to the House the Olympians who are here. Congratulations, and thank you so much for being here, everybody.

This is such an important bill. It is time that we celebrate the important role that university athletics play in developing athletes, in developing phys ed teachers that go to our high schools and develop another generation of athletes but also that actually develop Olympians and some of the finest athletes that our country has ever produced.

I'll take a moment just to celebrate some of those contributions. On the 2024 Olympic team, Claire Scheffel

from the University of Waterloo was a synchronized swimmer. Kate Current from Western University was a 1,500-metre and 3,000-metre runner.

The 2020 Olympic team: Pierce LePage from York University was a decathlete. He was the 2023 world champion and a member, as I said, of the 2020 Olympic team. Kylie Masse from the University of Toronto won silver medals in the 100-metre and 200-metre backstroke in the 2020 Olympics.

I want to go back in time a little bit here, but there's an athlete that—I think many people will know his name: Bruce Kidd. Raise your hand if you happen to know Bruce Kidd's name. Okay, so everybody involved in sports or who's old in the room knows who he is.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thanks.

Mr. Chris Glover: Yes, I should have warned you. I apologize. I'll withdraw that unparliamentary language, Madam Speaker.

He was part of the U of T track team, and he was involved in 18 senior championships in Canada, the US and Britain. He won the gold and bronze in the 1962 Commonwealth Games. But I think his greatest lasting legacy is he is the founding dean of U of T's faculty of kinesiology and phys ed. That faculty has created generations and generations of athletes, of coaches, of trainers, of phys ed teachers in our schools, so really, kudos to Bruce Kidd. I think this motion will give an opportunity to celebrate contributions to Canada's athleticism for people like Bruce Kidd.

1540

I will say also, though, that we need more than just recognition events. We need funding. We need dollars to follow these recognitions. TDSB—at our schools, we need funding so that they're not cutting sports teams. When I was in high school—and I count myself as one of the old guys in the room here—every high school in Oshawa, where I went, had a football team. Now, very few schools can afford to have a football team. That is a real shame, because it's a whole generation of kids that are not getting that opportunity. The sports teams—even getting a bus to take the kids after school to the different athletic competitions is a strain.

The TDSB last year faced a \$58-million funding shortfall. They were debating whether to close 33 of the school pools and laying off 86 aquatic instructors. This is such a shame, because out of these pools come athletes. For example, Penny Oleksiak: She won four medals at the 2016 Olympics, and she swam in those TDSB pools. That's where she learned to swim.

On the post-secondary front, Ontario has the lowest per capita funding of any province in the country. It's \$10,000. The provincial average is \$16,000. The highest is Newfoundland, at \$30,000. So we've got the lowest level of per student funding of any college and university system in the country.

One of the fallouts of this is that students pay some of the highest tuition fees and face some of the highest student debt levels. When I was in university—and I know

I'm going back to the old guy—it was possible to make enough money in the summer to pay your tuition and living expenses for the year. That's no longer possible for young people, and it should be possible. Many, many students are working part-time or full-time jobs while going to school full-time, and it means they don't have the opportunity to take part in sports. That's really unfortunate, because it means that we're not developing that generation of talent.

So kudos to the member for bringing forward this motion to celebrate our varsity athletes and athletics. I ask the government: We've got to increase funding for our education system—our schools, our colleges, our universities—so that they have the wherewithal to actually develop another generation of athletes in this province.

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

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I'm pleased to stand today again to debate this bill to celebrate Ontario University Athletics Week in October. I do want to say thank you to the member from Simcoe—Grey for bringing this forward—an impressive previous Canadian athlete, a varsity athlete. It's great to see your teammates and welcome them here as well. I have to say I love that you're wearing your Canadian rowing jacket today here in the Legislature.

Also welcome to Dana Perovic, who is—I almost said in the stands—in the galleries today, who is a previous varsity basketball player from the Laurier Golden Hawks and lives in my riding.

Of course, I was fortunate to represent the McMaster Marauders, as has been said, in swimming, rugby and water polo.

I'm glad that this bill has been tabled, because it recognizes that varsity sport is important in Ontario. I believe that sport is particularly important for young people, especially today. It teaches all kinds of healthy lifestyle habits: exercise, how to train, how to eat well and, probably the most important for life, how to be a good teammate.

Last weekend, I was at Guelph University to watch the Dean Boles university regional swimming championship. My son Justin was competing for Carleton. In varsity swimming—it's pretty special—you always start with the relays. The cheers were booming, the energy was high, all were supporting each other and across the competitors there were congratulations.

Now, my son spends 20 hours a week training, in addition to his studies as an aerospace engineer. Plus, he does charity work with the team, and they find time for fun. Varsity sports are so healthy, not just to create athletes but to shape young people and ready them for the rest of their lives.

My only hesitation in this bill is that we've just got to do more to celebrate. This is our first step, and we are going to do even more. We need to value sports as part of our education system in high schools, in public schools, and in universities and post-secondary. Sadly, we know,

as these systems are pressured and pressured, the things that go first are the sports. We need to find a way to keep our kids here for their varsity sports and stop losing our athletes to US universities.

Economically, there are benefits too. The OUA themselves have done a great study of this, and it shows that the revenue sources from ticket sales and other sources in varsity sports in Ontario is \$132 million. Sports at universities are primarily funded through student fees and donor funds, but the impact on the local economy of varsity sports is anywhere from \$303 million to \$637 million. It's quite an investment, so it's good for lots of reasons.

I do want to talk about women in sport. Canada has some outstanding teams and varsity teams seed that success. In hockey and swimming, everyone knows—Summer McIntosh must be one of the most famous women in the world right now; an amazing athlete. But you can't forget—and I have to say it—the Canadian women's rugby team. In June, we were anticipating the World Cup. How many of you watched the game? I got some hands here. Wasn't it phenomenal to see them beat the New Zealand All Blacks and then to be in the finals in England?

Again, as someone who played in the 1998 World Cup, for me, what this also reflected was progress. I couldn't believe the athleticism we saw. I couldn't believe the fans we saw. There were over 81,000 people that came out to watch women's sport at that Rugby World Cup in Twickenham. Imagine all the local businesses—imagine all of it. The Canadians were funded much less—I think they had a GoFundMe to be able to compete—but England and New Zealand women are now being funded professionally.

This is important as well, going back to what does this mean for our future: 94% of women in C-suite positions have played sports; 56% of them played varsity sports. This tells you that if we are investing in people, we are investing in sport, they will go on to be the leaders for all of us as well. You learn all the skills you need: hard work, how to receive feedback and just do something better, and teamwork.

Lastly, we cannot forget colleges, and I need to do a shout-out to the Humber College Hawks—the men's soccer team just won the Canadian college championship. So that will be our next bill, is to figure out how we recognize them as well.

Let's pass this bill, let's celebrate the 10,000 OUA athletes and let's cheer on our kids.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Saunderson has moved third reading of Bill 22, an Act to proclaim Ontario University Athletics Week. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

PROVINCIAL PARKS
AND CONSERVATION RESERVES
AMENDMENT ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES PARCS PROVINCIAUX
ET LES RÉSERVES DE CONSERVATION

Mr. Dowie moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 26, An Act to amend the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 26, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur les parcs provinciaux et les réserves de conservation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I rise today with pride to support Bill 26, the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Amendment Act, 2025, a bill that represents progress, vision and a commitment to the people of Ontario.

For generations, our provincial parks have been sanctuaries; places where families gather, friends explore and communities connect. But Ontario is changing. Our towns and cities are growing, and with that growth comes new needs.

1550

Bill 26 ensures that our parks grow with us. This legislation modernizes the act by introducing new park classes: parks designed for the realities of today and the opportunities of tomorrow.

Urban class parks will bring nature into our cities, improving access to green spaces for millions of Ontarians. The first Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park will give residents a protected space for hiking, cycling and outdoor exploration right in their own backyard. No long drives, no barriers—just nature where people live.

Adventure class parks will unlock new possibilities for recreation: rock climbing, mountain biking, kayaking, snowmobiling—activities that attract visitors, boost tourism and support local businesses. Charleston Lake Provincial Park will lead the way, showcasing Ontario's breathtaking landscapes and creating new economic opportunities for communities.

And we're not stopping there. Bill 26 gives Ontario the flexibility to create new parks and new park classes as needs evolve, because conservation cannot be static.

Bill 26 delivers real benefits to Ontarians. It supports accessibility by reducing travel barriers and bringing green spaces into urban communities; tourism by promoting outdoor recreation and attracting visitors from across Ontario and beyond; well-being, encouraging physical activity and strengthening our connection to nature; and economic growth, supporting local businesses and creating new opportunities for communities.

It's not just about parks; it's about people. When Ontarians walk our trails, paddle our lakes or watch their children explore the outdoors, they develop a deeper care for the environment. That connection truly strengthens communities and reinforces our shared responsibility to protect Ontario's natural heritage.

Speaker, here's the choice before us today: Do we cling to the status quo, or do we embrace a future where every Ontarian, regardless of where they live, can experience the beauty of nature without barriers? Do we want to leave behind a legacy of missed opportunities, or a legacy of parks that inspire, connect and endure?

Let us choose progress. Let us choose accessibility. Let us choose a stronger, greener Ontario. And, together, let's leave a legacy that future generations will truly thank us for.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'd like to say to MPP Dowie: I agree with your words, but I'm here standing before you to say that your government does not have a good reputation when it comes to protecting nature in the province.

When it comes to protecting habitats for endangered species, we know that this government has done nothing but water down protections for species and their habitats. We know this is a government that tried to take the green-belt and develop it. And now we have a government that's meddling with conservation authorities, despite assurances from MPP Graydon Smith when I was at committee; he said that they weren't going to amalgamate conservation authorities. In fact, here we are with this government amalgamating conservation authorities without any clear rationale or clear proposed outcomes.

Let's just look at Ontario Place. We also know that the government went ahead and razed Ontario Place. There's nothing left. It looks like a strip mine. You didn't do an environmental assessment on that. And now, I was just talking to the member here—we now have coyotes running feral in Spadina–Fort York and it probably has everything to do with the fact that you just took away a habitat without understanding what you're trying to do.

So, with that in mind, I also want to say that all Ontarians love our provincial parks. I love our provincial parks. I've visited many of them; in fact, I have that nerdy little booklet where you put your sticker in it and I collect them. I have to say, so far, Awenda Provincial Park has been one of my favourites. They're beautiful, and everyone loves them. Everyone wants to see them protected. Everybody wants to see them enhanced.

I know that this bill was generated from your desire to see the Ojibway urban national park in the Windsor area, and that's commendable. Caldwell First Nation supported this. Many people supported this.

Unfortunately, this bill has put schedules in here that really just raise the hackles on the back of your neck when it comes to what this government does with power that's given to them. In this act, you have put in there—as is per usual with this government—in section 1, number 9, a clause that says that you are able to redesignate parks as “adventure class parks,” “urban class parks”—and then this blanket clause that allows the government to redesignate “Such other class of parks as may be prescribed by the regulations.” You are giving yourself the authority to change the designation of provincial parks without public consultation. People love the provincial parks. How is it

that you could do this, give this power to the government, exempt yourself from the responsibility of consulting people when it comes to making significant changes to provincial parks?

If I may say, the MPP has assured me that he understands this responsibility. Anyway, in committee he assured me of that. But it's not you. If I take you at your word and I'm assured that you take this responsibility seriously, you have put in the power not just for this government but for future governments to make changes. While I take you at your word that you will not reclassify important, ecologically significant areas of the park, this power resides forever and ever with this government and with future governments.

So while we support this bill, it's with significant reservations and a significant leap of faith—I don't know why I would have any faith in this government—that you will continue to respect and protect provincial parks. You have not shown to be a government to respect any area of significant habitat, species at risk, wetlands. They're not top of your list, but I will take you at your word that this bill will actually improve our provincial parks, and I look forward to seeing what the MPP has said is going to happen come to fruition.

Thank you for my time here today, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A reminder to all members: We must refer to each other by title or riding—that's it. Thank you.

Further debate?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good afternoon, everyone. It's always a pleasure to rise in this House, this time, of course, to speak about parks with Bill 26—provincial parks and conservation reserves—by the member for Windsor–Tecumseh, also known as my favourite member across the aisle. So I'm thrilled to speak on this bill.

One of the best things about this bill was that it actually went to committee—shocking, I know. We're not used to that, but it was fantastic. That's the bar. It's such a low bar, that it actually went to committee of all the bills proposed this session. I'm thrilled with that.

At committee, because that's where you hear the voices of Ontarians—just the need for us to go to committee on every bill—we heard from many people. I wasn't there for the whole time—I'm sorry—but the time I was there, it was very scintillating.

The Association of Consulting Engineering Companies of Ontario were there, and they were very supportive of this bill. That was for many reasons, but they wanted more inclusivity and accessibility in the park system, which I agree with. We would all be in a better frame of mind if we got the heck outside—as they say, take a hike—and got into nature. We know the benefits of forest bathing—shinrin-yoku in Japan was very important. There are doctors around the world, especially in BC, who are piloting giving nature prescriptions to get people outside, which is so important. So any more access to parks is a fantastic move.

1600

This association of the engineers, they are also very big on building resilient infrastructure—which I've spoken about a lot in this House, given we're in a climate emergency, so I'm all about that—nature-based solutions, minimizing ecological damage and preventing erosion. So I loved all that.

Then we had the Ontario Conservation Accelerator. I did not know them, so I was pleased to meet them and hear about all the great work they're doing to support and fund things in parks.

Then we had the township of Uxbridge. I think it was the mayor, and he was thrilled to hear about this. He's also, I think, involved with Conservation Ontario, and he's wanting us all to come out to Uxbridge to get into the trails out there.

Then last but not never least, we had Mike Fisher, the president of Friends for Ojibway Prairie. He was fantastic. He allayed any fears I had—not that I would have fears with this member, but collectively across the room, I would. He allayed a lot of my fears because he has much integrity, is worried about ecological integrity, and is committed to protecting our lands but allowing them to be open for everyone to enjoy.

I want to thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. I know he has been working on this a long time. Anything green and to promote nature and our health and well-being, I can absolutely get behind.

So thank you very much. I'm looking forward to this passing.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Dowie has moved third reading of Bill 26, the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Amendment Act, 2025. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

MARRIAGE AMENDMENT ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE MARIAGE

Mr. Rae moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to amend the Marriage Act / Projet de loi 31, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le mariage.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Perth–Wellington to begin the debate.

Mr. Matthew Rae: It's great to rise today, colleagues, to talk about something that I didn't realize was so popular until working with the member from Peterborough–Kawartha, or God's country—sorry, Speaker—and bringing forward this piece of legislation to this House, Bill 31; and the interest from my own constituents around the

ability for MPPs, if this bill passes, to perform marriage ceremonies, similar to how we perform commissioner of oaths already in the province of Ontario. I just want to thank all my constituents that have reached out about this and others across Ontario.

As some of us know, the former member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound was here yesterday for the Speaker’s party, and he’s terming it the “Bill Walker bill.” I know many colleagues in this place are looking forward to the potential opportunity of this bill passing and to be able to provide this service, free of charge, to our constituents. I never thought people would want this lovely face at their marriage ceremony performing their marriage, but apparently, it is something individuals are interested in taking advantage of.

I think it really is just another way we as MPPs can give back to our ridings in our roles as members of the Legislative Assembly in this place: to be able to perform those ceremonies on those very happy days for those individuals and having that opportunity to be there to celebrate with them and their friends and family as well.

Again, if this is passed, this would not be for life for MPPs; it’s only for MPPs when they are serving in the assembly, with a bit of a grandfather clause because, as we all know, elections in our system can happen at any time and the good people of our riding may kick us out the next day. So, obviously, we want to ensure that those who may have asked us to perform a ceremony can still use our services for a small period of time.

I know many in the government and opposition are very excited with the potential of this bill becoming law, ensuring that we, again, can give a little extra to our constituents—a little extra service, ensuring that we’re there for them on their happy day.

I know some members may choose not to offer this, and it’s totally fine. You have to opt into it, if this bill passes. It won’t be automatic, colleagues, so the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane will not be able to automatically marry someone—

Mr. John Vanthof: That’s a good thing.

Mr. Matthew Rae: It’s probably a good thing, colleagues.

But I know many of you are excited about this potential bill passing—I am hopeful that it will pass, if it’s the will of the House—and to be there to support our constituents in some of their biggest life decisions.

I will concede the rest of my time for my other colleagues in this place.

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

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Well, this is right up my alley. Welcome to the club. My kids are fond of going to complete strangers and telling them that their mom has married a lot of people, and there’s always a surprised look until I say, “to each other,” because I have, since 2011, been an ordained minister, and one of the great privileges of that is to be able to join people in marriage.

Of course, Parkdale–High Park has a long tradition of MPPs who have the capacity to join people in marriage.

Two MPPs prior to me would be the Reverend Dr. Cheri DiNovo and, of course, as you know, Cheri was the first person to perform a same-sex marriage, between Paula Barrero and Blanca Mejias, in September 2001. So the very first same-sex marriage came from Emmanuel–Howard Park.

Similarly, I’ve had the great privilege of marrying people like Rob and Jen at the top of one of the towers in downtown Toronto; Dwayne and Jordan up in farm country; and Dayna and Stephanie on Centre Island, who are about to have their first baby. So, welcome to this wonderful, incredible opportunity.

I will say, though, unlike commissions of oath, which is simply a signature, there is a little something more hefty and weighty to being involved in joining two people in not just a legal contract but, many times, it’s a spiritual contract, depending on that faith tradition they’re part of.

One of the things I like to say is that moment in time is a touchstone for the rest of their lives. So if you are going to be the officiant, I hope you will look to create with them the tools that they’re going to need for the good days ahead, but also the rough days ahead. What is that piece of poetry or scripture or song that, when they hear it 10 years later and their marriage is struggling, they remember why they were joined by you on that day? What else do they need to have in that ceremony? Is it a special uncle who exemplifies a quality relationship? Is it their child—I’ve had ring bearers be the dogs that are the couple’s favourite pets.

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I do encourage those of us who are thinking about taking this role on and opting in to think about what it means to be the one who invites a couple to think about those 20 minutes, 30 minutes or one hour not just as something to do so they can get to the party later, but a time capsule, a moment in time to keep their marriage thriving.

The other thing, of course, that I would hope we would consider is that those who are opting in would opt in with the full knowledge that marriage equity in Ontario is between all people of marrying age, be they any gender and marrying any other person that they so choose. I really do hope that this piece of legislation requires us to be in compliance with Ontario’s laws when it comes to 2SLGBTQ equality.

Speaker, I think the other thing I would really say with the time that I have left is that if we’re going to move into this space—because, you know, MPPs, we don’t have enough to do on a weekend and all the rest—let’s look at what that Marriage Act does to the people of Ontario. By that I would think about those who are on OW, those who are on ODSP, when you marry them, they lose some of their benefits, they have less money and I think we as a government should really think seriously about doubling OW, doubling ODSP because we know that they shouldn’t be penalized for falling in love and getting married.

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

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I just wanted to say to the member from Perth–Wellington that you're right about how popular this is. At the last reading of this bill, I was talking about being asked by my daughter to marry her coming up in June. I'll take the member from Parkdale–High Park up for any of her help in performing the ceremony. Also, I got a request to marry somebody on December 23, so I was probably bothering people in both of your offices to find out what the status of things was. So it is very popular. Sadly, I won't be able to marry this person on the 23rd of December.

I think it speaks to opening up opportunity here for people to be married in rural and urban areas. I know that the purpose of your bill was to try to do that, try to accomplish accessibility for everybody to an officiant. I think that is an excellent thing to do. I also appreciate retaining that authority for that limited time period after leaving office because you just never know what can happen.

While this bill might seem to be a procedural adjustment, it really shows an opportunity to strengthen the connection between elected representatives and the communities that we serve. I really like that because suddenly people will actually maybe become a little bit more engaged in what we do. You get to know them, and they find out, oh, so MPPs do this but they also do all kinds of other things. We can help people understand and really positively shape the public's expectations and also show the access and the choice that they have and the convenience that we're providing for Ontarians with this. I think the broader context is really important as we consider this proposal.

Of course, as we've been hearing, the profound significance for people that marriage holds across Ontario, whether it's rooted in sacred tradition, grounded in secular celebration, partnership and love—it's an important milestone. The role of government is to uphold a system that's fair, accessible, inclusive and functional for everyone, regardless of geography, economic circumstance or belief. And in that spirit, Madam Speaker, Bill 31 has that potential to enhance options for couples seeking civil ceremony in both urban and rural communities.

When we contemplate amending the Marriage Act, our responsibility is to determine whether the change improves experiences for Ontarians. In this case, allowing MPPs—individuals who are often deeply connected to their communities—to officiate marriages can offer couples a meaningful choice while preserving the integrity of the overall system. For couples in rural or remote areas where officiants can be limited, this does increase the access and reduces travel burdens as well, and it can also lower the costs associated with securing an officiant, especially in those regions where the options are few.

It is true that members are frequently approached by constituents hoping to have their representative join them in marking this joyful milestone. These relationships matter, and this bill acknowledges that reality in a thoughtful and practical way. It allows members to respond to those requests without creating unnecessary barriers while

still maintaining the clear responsibilities and expectations associated with public office.

The provision allowing former members to fulfill commitments for up to 12 months after leaving office is also very pragmatic. It respects the trust that couples place in their elected representatives when planning ceremonies months in advance, and it prevents couples from being disadvantaged by circumstances that could be outside of their control.

We should continue to examine any remaining barriers in accessing civil ceremonies and listen closely to communities and service providers about how the system could be improved, ensuring that every Ontarian, wherever they live, whomever they love, can access a marriage process that's dignified, affordable and meaningful. That really has to remain a priority.

For these reasons, I believe Bill 31 can make a positive contribution to our legislative framework and to the lives of the people we represent.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: Dearly beloved, we're gathered here today to celebrate the fact that MPPs might be able to perform marriage ceremonies after today, and what a great thing that is.

First, I have to thank the member for Perth–Wellington for agreeing to let me be the second on this bill as well. When we first started talking about it, it was because of Bill Walker and the work that he had been doing. And Madam Speaker, had we passed this a couple of years ago, I would have loved the opportunity for someone from Peterborough to bridge that gap with Oshawa and perform the ceremony for you. I know that we would've taken heat in both sides because I would've worn a Petes jersey while I was doing it.

This is one of those things, though, that I've had a number of people reach out to my office about over the last seven and a half years, asking if I could do this. I see it as one of those things that is a great opportunity, for us to extend that service to so many people. There are a number of municipalities that do not perform civil ceremonies. There are barriers, at times, getting to a justice of the peace or a judge because of the distances.

But all of us represent all of Ontario, and it gives that opportunity, then, for those people who don't want to have a religious ceremony to have a civil ceremony in a way that works for them. And really, when it comes down to it, isn't that what we're supposed to be doing as MPPs, doing things that work for our constituents, helping our constituents share in those great moments in their lives?

So I really hope everyone says yes to this when it comes to the vote in about eight seconds.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Rae has moved third reading of Bill 31, An Act to amend the Marriage Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

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ETHIOPIAN HERITAGE MONTH
ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE ÉTHIOPIEN

Ms. Begum moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act to proclaim the month of September as Ethiopian Heritage Month / Projet de loi 38, Loi proclamant le mois de septembre Mois du patrimoine éthiopien.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

MPP Begum has moved second reading of Bill 38, An Act to proclaim the month of September as Ethiopian Heritage Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is ordered for third reading.

ETHIOPIAN HERITAGE MONTH
ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE ÉTHIOPIEN

Ms. Begum moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act to proclaim the month of September as Ethiopian Heritage Month / Projet de loi 38, Loi proclamant le mois de septembre Mois du patrimoine éthiopien.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Scarborough Southwest to begin debate.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you very much, Speaker, and welcome to our guests in the House that I actually introduced earlier this afternoon. It is an honour to rise this afternoon as we debate the Ethiopian Heritage Month Act, a moment that is deeply meaningful to me and so many Ethiopian Canadians across Ontario. This bill celebrates a civilization and people that stretch back thousands of years and recognizes the contributions of the vibrant Ethiopian community, which has strengthened our province for decades. We are proud that 40,000 Ethiopians make their homes in communities across the country, especially in Ontario.

Speaker, 10 years ago, I had the privilege of travelling to Ethiopia for research and learning about the grassroots projects, especially in education and agriculture. From Addis Ababa to Mekelle, I fell in love with the warmth and hospitality of Ethiopia and of its people. And it is now almost a decade later: We all have the chance to celebrate the same richness with the Ethiopian Canadian community here in Ontario. This fills me with joy and gratitude.

The community chose September because it is the month of celebration, unity and gratitude for Ethiopian communities. It is when Enkutatash, the Ethiopian New Year, is celebrated with music, prayers and gift-giving. It is also a month of profound spiritual significance, marked by the Meskel festival and Irreechaa Waaqeffanna—did I pronounce that right?

I want to thank the countless organizations and the community leaders, many of whom are in the gallery today and who have worked so tirelessly throughout this entire process of this bill, and the advocates whose dedication brought us to this moment.

I also want to take a moment to thank all the members of this House, especially the government and my co-sponsor and my colleagues, who have strong Ethiopian Canadians living in their community, for your support for this bill and for standing up with the Ethiopian Canadian community. Today is a profound and joyful day. By proclaiming September as Ethiopian Heritage Month, we honour the remarkable history and help ensure this rich culture continues to thrive for generations to come.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I am thrilled that my neighbour—literally my riding neighbour—from Scarborough Southwest has brought forth this amazing bill.

And I want to recognize—I'm just going to take a little bit of my colleague's time—to recognize super Selah Getahun, who is my resident from beautiful Beaches—East York. I met him just after he arrived from Ethiopia and COVID hit, if you can believe that; that was the welcome to Canada. But he was out and about safely and that's how we met. He is executive director of the Ethiopian Association in the GTA, which is located in beautiful Beaches—East York. I am thrilled to support this, as it goes through later, hopefully.

MPP Mohamed Firin: I would like to thank and acknowledge the member for Scarborough Southwest and the member for Toronto Centre for bringing this bill forward. I want to thank the members for introducing the bill, An Act to proclaim the month of September as Ethiopian Heritage Month.

Speaker, I am proud to rise today in support of this bill. This is more than a symbolic gesture; it's an opportunity for this Legislature, its members and the people of Ontario to acknowledge and celebrate a community whose presence, resilience and contributions continue to enrich every part of our province.

Heritage month celebrations play an important role in strengthening our communities. They bring people together, honour generations that came before us and provide a meaningful space to teach, learn and reflect on cultural history and traditions. They help us understand who we are, how our stories shape us and how those stories continue to influence our day-to-day lives, our politics, economy and society.

While Ethiopians began migrating to Canada in the 1960s, larger waves of migration began in the mid-1980s. The diverse and vibrant culture of Ethiopia is a testament to its rich history and unique heritage. Ethiopians have long been known for their hospitality, kindness and respect—values that align closely with the principles that we hold as Ontarians.

Today, Canada is proud to be home to over 40,000 Ethiopian Canadians, many of whom have chosen Ontario as their home. The greater Toronto area, Ottawa, Kitchener–Waterloo, London and Windsor are known to be cities that have become home to vibrant Ethiopian Canadian communities.

Ethiopian Canadians have brought with them a deep cultural heritage and have made significant contributions to the social, cultural and economic strength of our province. By proclaiming September Ethiopian Heritage Month, we are creating an opportunity that will be dedicated to educating the people of Ontario about the struggles, achievements and lived experiences of Ethiopian Canadians within a society that values freedom, democracy and self-determination.

This bill ensures that our province formally recognizes the important contributions Ethiopian Canadians have made and continue to make to our social, economic, political, religious and cultural fabric, and to Canadian society at large. Ethiopian Heritage Month will serve as a chance for Ethiopian Canadians to celebrate their customs, traditions and proud history, while sharing that heritage with all diverse communities from across the province.

By passing this bill, we hope to preserve the traditions for future generations, while also fostering understanding, unity and cultural appreciation.

This bill reflects a province that embraces diversity, celebrates cultural heritage and recognizes the contributions of all communities that call Ontario home. It supports our ongoing commitment to fostering resilience, unity and growth within our communities, while uplifting Ethiopian Canadians across Ontario.

I'd like to give a special shout-out to Selah at the Ethiopian Association in the GTA and surrounding regions, his entire board, led by their president and board chair, Meseret, and the Nejashi Islamic Center as well, which is in my riding.

On behalf of all members on this side of the House, we are proud to support the proclamation of September as Ethiopian Heritage Month. Again, I thank the members opposite for their work in bringing this forward and for being champions of the Ethiopian community.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm thrilled to rise today to speak to the third reading of the NDP bill, Ethiopian Heritage Month Act. I'm very proud to be sponsoring this bill with my friend and colleague the MPP from Scarborough Southwest.

Ethiopian Heritage Month is about celebrating Ontario's history. Since the 1960s, Ethiopian Canadians have

settled in Ontario in significant numbers, sharing deep cultural roots, their resilience, their art, their music, their cuisine and so many other contributions that we enjoy now in Ontario.

Many members of Ontario's Ethiopian community call the riding of Toronto Centre their home. We have events like the East African Experience in Regent Park, and I have the distinct honour of working with many organizations that have strong connections to Ethiopia, including African Centre for Refugees in Ontario Canada, Africans in Partnership Against AIDS, Wanasah and Mothers of Peace. All these organizations bring us together through advocacy, education and service.

This past September, I participated in Ethiopian Canadian Day celebrations at Christie Pits Park. I want to thank those hosts for showing me around, bringing me so close and welcoming me so warmly. I heard the music and the vibrancy, I saw beautiful clothes, and I saw the youngest babies and wisest elders come together to celebrate a heritage that's so rich and a community that's so strong.

September is a meaningful choice. It is a time of spiritual reflection and renewal. This bill reflects those values. Let's honour that legacy and together, all members of this House—I urge all of you to support this bill. Let's make September, ongoing and forever, Ethiopian Heritage Month in Ontario.

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

Mr. Adil Shamji: It's a privilege to rise in the House to discuss this bill that proposes to name September Ethiopian Heritage Month.

There are many reasons I'm proud to speak today. I think it's a great idea, first of all. I will also say that my family comes from east Africa. My parents are from Uganda and Tanzania. My wife is from Kenya. I don't have any family in Ethiopia, but our friends, our neighbours, are Ethiopian, and that has allowed us an opportunity, some insight, into the immense social, economic and cultural contributions of this incredible nation and culture.

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And so, my family feels a kinship to Ethiopia. But what I'd like to convey today is that all of us should feel a kinship to Ethiopia, because we're all a little bit Ethiopian. Many of you will have heard of Lucy. Lucy is an early hominid belonging to the species *Australopithecus afarensis*. She walked our planet 3.2 million years ago, is one of our early ancestors and provides the earliest evidence of our ancestors walking on two feet. Lucy is a part of our history. Lucy was discovered and walked our planet in Ethiopia, and if she's a part of us, if she's Ethiopian, then we're all Ethiopian.

As we consider, before the House, making September Ethiopian Heritage Month, as the member from Toronto Centre said, this is about recognizing a part of Ontario's history, but it's actually about recognizing a big part of our history.

But of course, Lucy is not the only immense contribution that comes from Ethiopia. Another one of special significance to me in particular is that Ethiopia is the birthplace of coffee, without which I could not do the work that I do to represent the constituents I have the good fortune of representing.

Applause.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I must say, I'm impressed that people clapped for coffee, but not for Lucy.

And of course, I think, as we contemplate Ethiopia's contributions to Ontario's history and our species' history, it's also noteworthy to recognize that Ethiopia has the largest number of UNESCO World Heritage sites in the world, which speaks to its cultural and historical significance.

Of course, there are many Ethiopians who call Ontario home—over 40,000 of them—and every day we bear witness to their many contributions and the many ways in which they enrich the fabric of our great province. It is for all of those reasons, and so many more, that we, on this side of the House, are so impressed with our Ethiopian neighbours and are so proud to support this legislation moving forward.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I'm proud to stand in strong support of Ethiopian Heritage Month here in Ontario, and I want to thank my NDP colleague the member from Scarborough Southwest for her leadership in tabling this important bill, as well as the member from Toronto Centre.

Ethiopia is home to a great culture that spans thousands of years, and its people are respected around the world. There are over 40,000 Ethiopian Canadians and growing, and their valuable contributions enrich our great province every day. I want to thank everyone who made this possible, including the Ethiopian Association in the GTA and surrounding region; the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Canada's Saint Mary Cathedral in Toronto, who were also instrumental in passing my bill that successfully established Orthodox Christian Week in Ontario; the Ethiopian Canadian Muslim Community Association; Nejashi Islamic Center; the Ethiopian Evangelical Church; and many others.

I hope you will all join me in proclaiming every September as Ethiopian Heritage Month in Ontario.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

MPP Begum has moved third reading of Bill 38, An Act to proclaim the month of September as Ethiopian Heritage Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

KIDS' ONLINE SAFETY AND PRIVACY MONTH ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LE MOIS DE LA SÉCURITÉ ET DE LA PROTECTION DE LA VIE PRIVÉE DES ENFANTS EN LIGNE

Madame Collard moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 66, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month / Projet de loi 66, Loi proclamant le mois d'octobre Mois de la sécurité et de la protection de la vie privée des enfants en ligne.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Ottawa–Vanier to begin debate.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I do want to start by thanking again the member for Orléans for putting his name to this bill and for using his ballot spot to bring it forward. I know he didn't do it only to do me a favour; I know he also believes in the importance of taking action to protect kids from the dangers they face online. As a father and a deeply engaged member in his community, I'm sure that he's been having these same conversations.

We are all aware that the digital world, while full of innovation and opportunity, also exposes young people to very real dangers. Online safety is not abstract, and parents rightfully worry about what their children might be seeing or experiencing when they are online, out of sight.

The negative impacts are not only to our kids' mental health, but to their physical health as well. Too many kids spend hours immobile in front of their screen instead of playing outside with friends, building memories and developing healthy habits. Young people themselves tell us they feel overwhelmed. They know they're in trouble, but they are fighting a powerful opponent—addiction—and they should not have to fight that alone. We need to help them.

This act does something meaningful: It creates dedicated time and space for awareness, which is absolutely essential. This bill also sends a clear message to technology companies: safety matters. We must demand stronger protections and greater transparency from the platforms that shape children's lives. This last point is crucial, Speaker, and it is likely where legislators can have the greatest impact. We can create rules to limit addictive design practices, and I really hope that the government is going to look into this and go beyond raising awareness.

The Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month Act is an important step. It ensures that every year we pause to ask: Are we doing enough to keep our children safe? We can act, we can lead and we can unite around the simple truth that nothing—and I say nothing—matters more than the safety and the well-being of children in Ontario.

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

Mr. Brian Riddell: I rise today for the third reading of Bill 66, the Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month Act, 2025. The bill seeks to proclaim October as Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month in Ontario, raising awareness

about the importance of digital safety for children and encouraging parents, educators and communities to prioritize online protection.

As we consider this bill, it's important to recognize that Ontario is already a national leader in cyber security awareness and action, especially when it comes to protecting our youngest citizens. By proclaiming October as Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month, we reinforce our commitment to digital safety, encouraging online and ongoing dialogue and ensuring that every year we renew our focus on protecting children online.

Awareness is not a one-time event; it's an ongoing responsibility. Our government has already placed strong legislation and programs in place to safeguard children's data privacy and well-being. Bill 66 complements our existing efforts, amplifies the visibility of cyber safety initiatives and reminds us all—government, parents, educators and industry—that protecting kids online is a shared priority and responsibility.

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For these reasons, I am pleased to support the aim of Bill 66. Let us use Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month as an opportunity to renew our commitment to digital safety, to empower parents and educators, and to ensure that every child in Ontario can navigate the digital world confidently and safely.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? I recognize the member for Spadina-Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker—

Interjections.

Mr. Chris Glover: I got at least one round of applause here.

I want to thank the members from Orléans and Ottawa-Vanier for bringing forward this Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month Act. It's an important piece of legislation, and certainly the NDP will be supporting it.

The online world can be a source of cyberbullying, online grooming, exploitation, trafficking. Those are just some of the dangers that children may encounter when they're using online resources. They can find things that are inappropriate. There are sources of exploitation, of extremism, of training for offenders. But there are also safety measures.

I've got just a couple of minutes, and I'll talk about some of these. For example, it is very common on sites like YouTube Kids that accounts that seem to be for kids that produce bright, colourful content actually have inappropriate themes and foul language. Unless you're watching carefully, you just don't pick up on those things. So kids can be exposed to things without the parents being aware of them.

There's also a case of extremism where extremists were recruiting in Thunder Bay, where a 13-year-old Thunder Bay youth was charged after an alleged online plot to commit a violent school attack. According to the Thunder Bay police, they determined that the youth had been communicating online with another person who was believed to be outside of Canada. The conversations they had were

to conspire and counsel each other regarding an attack on the school. The police believed that if they had not intervened, this attack would have happened on the school.

There's another company called Roblox. Roblox has a number of lawsuits against them. It's a popular online game that's been used by teens. It's got a huge, massive younger player base, and this can be as young as six years old.

An Iowa family is suing them—it's part of a multi-million-dollar gaming suit against the company—because a 13-year-old girl was trafficked and sexually abused after a predator on Roblox groomed the child and abducted her from her grandmother's home in May, according to the legal petition for that court case.

There's a 12-year-old from British Columbia who recently sued the platform, alleging its games are addictive, manipulative and financially exploitative, leading the boy to developing "anxiety, depression, irritability and mood swings," according to the CBC.

Children are also using their parents' money. They're being asked to share financial information. So they get their parents' credit card, they're asked to put the information online and then the parents are getting ripped off. There are a lot of terrible things that happen online.

A director of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, Jacques Marcoux, said that while some youth may appear to be more vulnerable than others, the reality is that "just about all kids are potentially vulnerable to these tactics." He talks about how there are experts who are doing this. It's not just some amateur or somebody working alone. There are actually manuals online that get exchanged in offender communities where they discuss the tactics about how to exploit children in detail. They know exactly what steps to take and how to identify kids who might be easier to groom.

There are also a number of safety measures that are being taken. I want to give a shout-out to some of the organizations like Protect Kids Online, which was created by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection; cybertip.ca; Be Internet Awesome, which is a program run by Google; and, of course, the Kids Help Phone, which is even more relevant in today's social media world than before.

I also want to encourage the government to take a look at my colleague from Waterloo's motion to investigate the harmful impacts of social media on children and youth, to investigate the addictive nature of social media platforms and to clarify the responsibility of social media platforms. This is an important motion from my colleague from Waterloo. It's before committee in this Legislature. I hope the government will call it up in committee so that we can have that important discussion and start developing regulations to protect our children.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: I would like to bring the conversation back to where I think families in Orléans and across Ontario are living it and having it, and that's around kitchen tables, in the minivans on the way to practice and in the constant negotiations every parent has with their

children over screen time. Because for modern families, the Internet isn't new technology. It's the backdrop of childhood; it's where kids are living. And every parent I speak to, Madam Speaker, tells me the same thing: They're doing their best, but it feels like the ground keeps shifting under their feet.

Bill 66 creates one simple but powerful tool, and that's space—a moment every year where parents, schools, community groups and governments can pause, take stock of what our kids are facing online, the good and the bad. The concerns we hear from families are real. Kids are being pressured in group chats at 11 o'clock at night. Algorithms are pushing extreme content before children are even aware of what it is or what it means. Strangers are trying to make contact on gaming platforms like Roblox and Minecraft or Fortnite. This is what modern childhood looks like.

What Bill 66 does is bring everyone to the same table, not to point fingers, not to impose new costs or new rules, but to make sure parents aren't left to navigate this alone, to make sure children know their rights and to make sure that we keep pace with technology that is evolving faster than any family possibly can. Because protecting kids online shouldn't be about fear. It's about giving families confidence. It's about giving children the chance to grow up with all the benefits of technology without being exposed to the worst parts of it.

I know, Madam Speaker, if there is one thing every member of this House can agree upon, it's that we need to be putting our kids first and that they deserve that level of care.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question. Madame Collard has moved third reading of Bill 66, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

HOSPITALITY WORKERS
APPRECIATION DAY ACT, 2025
LOI DE 2025 SUR LA JOURNÉE
DE RECONNAISSANCE
DES TRAVAILLEUSES ET TRAVAILLEURS
DE L'INDUSTRIE DE L'ACCUEIL

Mr. Hardeman moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 67, An Act to proclaim Hospitality Workers Appreciation Day / Projet de loi 67, Loi proclamant la Journée de reconnaissance des travailleuses et travailleurs de l'industrie de l'accueil.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Oxford to begin debate.

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I rise today in strong support of my private member's bill that designates February 23 as Hospitality Workers Appreciation Day in the province of Ontario. This bill is simple in structure, but significant in purpose. It recognizes the people who enhance experiences across the province every single day, often without fanfare, without thanks, and it's time we change that.

1650

Ontario's hospitality workers often go unnoticed and unappreciated. They are the first to greet visitors and the last to close the door at the end of the shift, still giving their all when most have called it a night. They serve meals, care for guests, guide tours, support festivals and events, and showcase the very best of Ontario. There are more than 426,000 hospitality workers across accommodation and food services alone. Representing 5% of Ontario's workforce, their reach is far and wide. Their impact is real. Their contributions deserve recognition. Behind every memorable meal, every comfortable stay, every celebration and every milestone stands a worker who makes that moment possible.

This bill acknowledges their commitment, their skill and the pride they bring to their work. It also sends a clear message: Hospitality is not temporary or transitional. It's a profession that builds careers, strengthens communities and drives economic growth.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to Danny Murrell, an industry leader whose partnership has been essential in advancing this initiative. His story reflects what hospitality offers at its best. As an immigrant, he found his first foothold in this sector. He built stability. He built a future. And today, through his company, Harrison Staffing, he champions ethical, empowering employment that lifts workers and strengthens the industry. His insight helped shape this bill so that the voices of front-line workers are not just included, but central.

Speaker, this bill arrives with the strong support of the people who know the industry best. The Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association, the Greater Toronto Hotel Association, the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, Smart Serve Ontario, Restaurants Canada: The leading employers across the province have all endorsed this bill. They see first-hand how important it is to attract and retain talent. They know how essential it is to lift the people at the heart of their business. Their message is clear: Recognizing workers is not symbolic; it's strategic. It helps build pride in the profession. It encourages Ontarians to support local restaurants, hotels, tourism operators, arts and culture events and small businesses of every kind. It strengthens an industry that is vital to our economy and essential to our identity.

February 23 should be recognized as Hospitality Workers Appreciation Day in Ontario. Ontario should not lag in recognizing our own workforce. By passing this bill, we will align ourselves with the growing movement to highlight the efforts behind experiences we value.

Speaker, Ontario's hospitality workers do more than serve. They support the well-being of communities across the province. They help families celebrate life's most sig-

nificant milestones. They welcome newcomers. They boost tourism and local economies. They create the warmth and connection that keep people coming back.

This bill is about gratitude, yes, but it's also about recognition, retention and respect. It honours the work being done today and helps build the workforce we rely on tomorrow. I ask all members of this House to join me in standing with Ontario's hospitality workers. Let us give them the appreciation they have long earned. Let us pass this bill and create the Hospitality Workers Appreciation Day on February 23. Thank you so much for this opportunity.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's an honour to rise to speak to Bill 67, Hospitality Workers Appreciation Day. I'd like to congratulate the member from Oxford—aka, to me, known as Uncle Ernie—on his birthday. Happy birthday, sir.

And we are in full support of this bill. I fully agree with everything the member said. I don't think there's anyone who hasn't experienced a time when a hospitality worker has made your day. Whether you know it or not, they are the ones who make your day.

And I'd like to put out a special recognition to some of the hospitality workers here, specifically in the cafeteria, in the dining room. Those people make our day, and they are a great representation of the hospitality workers across this province. And yes, they work a lot harder than many of us know, and they are what makes this province great, from your—oh, and I'm sure one of the reasons that the member for Oxford put forward this bill is so he can thank every person in every Tim Hortons in Oxford county.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: See? I know his habits.

But the one thing I would like to say, seriously, is every day should be Hospitality Workers Appreciation Day—every day. But this bill makes it—the fact that we're talking about it here, the fact that it will be recognized every February, will remind people. Their jobs aren't always easy. Sometimes they deal with people who aren't friendly, and they still try to turn their day around. That's a skill. In our jobs, we don't always make people happy, and sometimes we try not to make people happy—specifically, sometimes, the other side. But people in that sector always, always do.

And I would be remiss if I didn't pay a bit of a tribute to my favourite hospitality worker. There is a very cute waitress at 28 on the Lake, in Temiskaming Shores. She's a cute little redhead with a Dutch accent, who happens to be my wife, Ria. She's a server there. She loves her job.

For some reason, people—and that's something I didn't realize—tell servers their whole life stories. It's amazing. In some ways, they're almost counsellors, because the same people come in to see the same smile. I've learned so much. And I've learned, from my wife's job—and it's across the sector—how much work goes into running a restaurant, to serving, to—farmers work hard. I'll tell you,

it's easier to run a dairy farm than a restaurant. It just is. There's a lot going on.

And with that, I'd also like to recognize—there's a lot of people throughout, but I would be remiss if I didn't recognize some of the people Ria works with: Julia, Julie, Kerry and Cindy. There are many more servers at that restaurant, but those five hang out, and we got to eat at Cindy's house a few nights ago. It was great.

We're really happy that the member, my uncle—I would say he's my favourite uncle, but there might be other uncles watching—but he kind of is.

Congratulations on putting forward this bill and recognizing one of the great people who make this province great: the hospitality workers.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I am pleased to rise to support the member from the centre of the universe—Oxford, I'm told, is the centre of the universe—and his private member's bill. Thank you very much for bringing it forward.

Yes, we absolutely need hospitality recognition day, but also, as the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane said, it should be every day, and we need to do more on that front to support hospitality workers, so paying them well, tipping them well, being nice to them and patient when there are busy times in the restaurants. And it would be great if they got benefits and the stability that that brings.

1700

Last night we enjoyed—some of us maybe enjoyed it more than others—the Speaker's party. Thank you to the Speaker. But think of the hospitality staff, our staff here who worked so hard to pull that off, trying to precariously carry the trays in amongst the crowds.

I can't say enough to commend super Stephanie Duffy, who works in catering. She's the catering queen here—we all know how she runs the receptions and events seamlessly—and terrific Tyler Ing, who feeds our souls every day in In Camera.

There was—I don't know how many people—1,300 people came through security yesterday, many of them for the party. Then all in a blink of an eye—it was like there were magical fairies here, waving a magical wand—it was cleaned up, and you never knew anything went on there. So thank you to our staff for that.

Of course, the youth career fund opposition day motion that we, as the Liberals, put forth would also help our youth get into the hospitality industry, which we know is so important. Many of us had those jobs, which taught us confidence, put money in our bank accounts, taught us life skills. I've told you before my antics as a waitress and how it didn't work out so well at the Royal York and at the Château Laurier. And I was remembering another place, in Collingwood, the Cranberry village—I'm not sure if I was ever on the schedule again to waitress there. But then I went on to scoop ice cream at Swensen's, so it worked out there. These are jobs that anyone can get, whether

you're a youth or an adult, and they're fundamental to our growth and our livelihoods.

I also want to thank the business improvement associations, who do great work supporting all our retail strips, our great shops and restaurants and cafes. I have a few in my riding. I have the Danny BIA, along the Danforth, obviously; and then Danforth Village BIA; and then we have the Beach BIA. We don't have a BIA in Kingston Road Village, but they have a little community association that combines residents and businesses, and it works out famously.

If you want to go for some sausage rolls or the world's best cinnamon buns, which are grilled in butter on both sides, I could bring you some. If you send bills to committee, I would bring you some. That is at Courage Foods, which is run by James, on Kingston Road.

Bhojan Ghar, on the Danforth, has amazing momos. If you want to come for some Tibetan dumplings, I can meet you there, and we can talk about the environment.

Also, Bodega Henriette has some, what are called, cowboy cookies, and I'd never heard of them before, but I love them. They just mix everything under the sun in those cookies. Believe you me, they're tasty. I could treat you to a cookie if you want to bike there with me. That would be great.

And Seb's Cappuccino, the most affordable cappuccino in town, on the Danforth: You can brush up on your Italian. I don't think they ever close. If you wanted to join me there, we could have a nice discussion about speed cameras over a latte.

So, what more can I say about this bill? It's fantastic. Ernie and I—

Interjection.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Sorry. The member from Oxford and I get along very well. We agree with term limits.

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

Hon. David Piccini: I just want to thank the member for introducing this bill. He was unable to join me with Unite Here Local 75 today, but I want to pass along a thanks on behalf of those members and president Guled Warsame.

I just want to highlight Daisy, whom I met today: 44 years' service at the downtown Hilton. When she's not fighting for her members as a shop steward, she's standing up for the people of Jamaica, running a charity to support the folks of Jamaica. That tells you the heart of who these people are.

Daisy, we see you. We value you. Thank you for the work you and all the hospitality workers of this great city do.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Hardeman has moved third reading of Bill 67, Hospitality Workers Appreciation Day Act, 2025. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): And happy birthday to the MPP for Oxford.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Essex on a point of order.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: If you seek it, Madam Speaker, I believe you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Essex is seeking unanimous consent to see the clock at 6. Is it agreed? Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' SURVIVOR SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Mr. Ric Bresee: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should explore eligibility criteria under the Constable Joe MacDonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund to include the availability of post-secondary scholarship funds for eligible family members of full-time, part-time, on-call and volunteer public safety officers whose deaths have been attributed to duty-related illnesses, as well as deaths directly in the line of duty.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Ric Bresee: I rise today to speak on a matter that touches every corner of this province—that is the lasting costs carried by those who serve to protect us. Not all who put themselves in harm's way wear the same uniform, serve the same hours or work for the same paycheck, but they share a common thread: When duty calls, they answer. And when duty causes illness, their families often answer too—quietly and without necessarily the recognition or support that they deserve.

Speaker, I'm asking my colleagues today to support the following motion: That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should explore eligibility criteria under the Constable Joe MacDonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund to include the availability of post-secondary scholarship funds for eligible family members of full-time, part-time, on-call and volunteer public safety officers whose deaths have been attributed to duty-related illnesses, as well as deaths directly in the line of duty.

Before I get to the rationale behind this, I want to talk about two remarkable men, one to remind this House of this fund's namesake and the other to explain why a change is needed.

Constable Joe MacDonald was a proud Sudbury regional police officer whose life was taken far too soon in 1993 during what began as a routine traffic stop while he was on general patrol. He was 29 years old—a young husband, father and an officer just beginning what was looking to be a lifetime dedicated to service.

Those who knew Joe described him as a leader who carried himself with honour, showed fairness and believed in his community. Joe was the kind of officer who saw his job not only as enforcement but as protection—the kind rooted in compassion and responsibility. He was the officer people called when life went sideways because he was known to step forward when others stepped back.

His death shook the province, reminding Ontarians that public safety is not an abstract concept, but a responsibility carried out by real people in unpredictable moments at great personal risk.

In 2002, the public safety officers' survivors scholarship fund was renamed in his honour. The Constable Joe MacDonald Memorial Scholarship was designed to give the children and the spouses of fallen public safety officers a path forward, ensuring that tragedy would also not mean the end of opportunity. The fund carries a vow from Ontario; that is, that when a public safety officer loses their life in service to this province, their family and their children will not walk alone in the aftermath. The province will invest in their future in a meaningful and tangible way.

1710

Since its creation, the fund has assisted families with support for tuition, textbooks, living expenses and school-related expenses following a line-of-duty death. It remains a steady reflection of the province's appreciation for service, sacrifice and duty, honouring families by helping them build a future not defined by loss but supported by community recognition and care. Madam Speaker, we may not see every personal story from this fund, but we see its purpose clearly: stability in the midst of grief—a signal that service-related loss deserves more than symbols; it deserves support.

That brings me to the second man whose story helped lead to this moment today. In 2023, a firefighter walked into my constituency office. His name was Captain Peter Hayes—Pete. At the time, Pete was battling colorectal cancer, a disease that his doctors tied to the exposures that he encountered during more than 43 years of public safety work. He had 41 years with provincial corrections and 30 years with Greater Napanee fire and seven years with Stone Mills fire services.

Pete believed deeply that service-related cancer should be recognized in the same way for all firefighters, regardless of age or classification. He raised that issue with honesty and with clarity. While Ontario had begun expanding definitions and coverage for work-related illnesses through the Working for Workers legislation, the enhanced eligibility criteria for his own support did not reflect those expanded definitions at the time—not because his illness wasn't duty-related, but because the eligibility rules, until recently, placed age-based limits on that access.

Captain Hayes lived to see those age-based exclusions removed for firefighters seeking presumed diagnosis coverage. That was progress—real progress. But tragically, on August 21, 2025, Captain Peter Hayes passed away, his illness attributed to duty-related exposures.

Pete Hayes had spent his final years not stepping away from service, but stepping deeper into it. He took on training and mentorship roles, guiding young firefighters, preparing new recruits and helping shape safer response long before the sirens ever sounded. His life reminds us that occupational illness can be just as duty-caused, just as lethal and just as devastating to families as sudden tragedy.

Madam Speaker, if I may speak on a personal note for a moment, this is not an abstract policy conversation for me. My father served as a firefighter and my son now serves as a firefighter as a young father himself. Like many families in Ontario, we know what it feels like to watch someone you love walk into the smoke, onto the highways and into unknown situations, trusting their training, their team and their equipment, but never completely forgetting the risk.

When I talk with firefighters, police officers and corrections officers across Hastings–Lennox and Addington and beyond, I see my own family in theirs. I see parents kissing their children goodnight after a shift, spouses quietly doing the emotional heavy lifting at home and children who grow up understanding the word “duty” long before most of their peers.

Yet while Ontario broadened coverage for duty-related illnesses, legacy support for the families has not kept pace in every aspect. It's not hard to imagine a scenario that speaks to a police officer who spends his years responding to a chemical incident, later developing a disease tied to repeated exposure, or a corrections officer who breathes poor air quality and chemical agents in confined spaces over decades. In each of these cases, we know there are long-term health impacts. In some cases, with certain cancers for firefighters, we already recognize that link in presumptive legislation. When those illnesses become fatal, the loss for their families is no less connected to duty than a single tragic incident on a roadway or at a fire scene.

Madam Speaker, this House has already acknowledged that certain cancers and illnesses are so tightly linked to public safety work that their origins must be presumed to be occupational and duty-related in nature. We acknowledge the dangers of smoke exposure. We acknowledge the dangers of toxin exposures. And yet we have not fully explored whether this same understanding extends into the legacy supports that we offer families when illness itself removes an officer from duty before duty ultimately removes them from life.

The fund we are asking to explore expanding today is critical, because families feel the weight of loss the same, regardless as to whether the illness was fast or silent, rostered or cumulative. We know that this concern is not held by families alone. We have already heard from fire service leaders and municipal partners who understand the realities of duty-related illness and who support examining this gap. They recognize that when we send people into

dangerous situations on behalf of the public, we assume a responsibility not only to those individuals but to the families who stand behind them. Their letters and their conversations have been clear to me: The principle behind this fund is sound, and it's time to ensure that its reach reflects what we now know about occupational disease.

This motion does not ask for automatic eligibility today; it asks for an exploration. But it asks for that exploration urgently, because duty-related-illness losses leave children without a parent, without a household anchor and often without the support for programs designed around sudden duty instead of prolonged duty.

Essentially, this motion asks whether criteria could reasonably evolve to include post-secondary scholarships for those safety officers whose deaths have been attributed not only to immediate line of duty incidents but also to duty-caused occupational illnesses. These families deserve the same opportunity for post-secondary scholarships. They deserve that fairness, not measured by the clock of service but by the cause of sacrifice.

Families who lose a parent or a breadwinner to occupational illness carry the same grief, the same household destabilization and the same absence of support systems. Loss is loss, regardless of how quickly or slowly it arrives.

The motion before this House seeks to close that exploration gap responsibly but urgently so that a child who loses a parent to duty-caused occupational illness is treated with the same understanding, access, consideration and compassion as any other service-related loss.

Madam Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues—on behalf of real families like mine and like many of theirs, on behalf of Joe's unfinished legacy of protection and on behalf of Pete Hayes—to support allowing this motion to proceed so that we can discuss these inclusions thoughtfully, urgently and with fairness.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate this opportunity, and I want to thank the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington for bringing this motion forward. I think it's a very thoughtful motion. It's one that I believe everyone in this House should have no difficulty supporting, and one that reflects the reality of those who actually put their lives on the line for us on a daily basis.

I'll relate just two things. One, I had a visit—if it wasn't this week, it was last week—from the Ontario professional fire fighters, talking about the deadly occupational health and safety hazards that they face from exposure to chemicals: a very high incidence of cancer, a very high incidence of aggressive cancers. I think everyone in this room would understand the logic that you may not die at the site of a fire, but you may die from that site of a fire in the years to come. And so recognizing that those losses—as you had said, loss is loss—are equally valid makes complete sense.

The other thing I want to talk about briefly is the whole question of trauma and its impact on people's mental health and their ability to continue living. I'm a member of Legion Branch 10, Todmorden, in my riding and a

number of years ago, they started a memorial every October called Heroes of Suicide. It is a commemoration of people—veterans from the Armed Forces, first responders, police—who have mental health problems that were engendered by the experiences they'd had on the job that led them to commit suicide.

1720

It is always a very moving and sad evening, but a very vital one. I'm glad that my branch recognizes this issue. I'm very glad that the member has brought forward to this House the idea that we should be recognizing it concretely in changing the approach that we have on this survivor scholarship.

I would hope as well, Speaker, that we invest in the mental health supports for those who are in these fields and that we would invest in the pre-emptive medical action for those who are exposed to toxic chemicals. That's a debate for another day. But the debate for today, I think, is very straightforward. I'd urge everyone in this House to support this motion. And again, I thank the member for bringing it forward.

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

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Good evening. I'm honoured to rise today in support of this motion brought forward by my colleague the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington. This motion speaks to something deeply important: how we recognize the sacrifices made by the men and women who dedicate their lives to protecting our communities. Every day across Ontario, our public safety officers, firefighters, police officers, paramedics and corrections officers put themselves in harm's way so that the rest of us can live in safety, and they do so with remarkable courage and professionalism.

As a government, we have consistently demonstrated our great appreciation for people who wear the uniform. Through the series of Working for Workers bills, we have made significant and meaningful improvements to the definition of work-related illness and the rules governing presumed diagnosis. These changes have ensured faster, more compassionate support for public safety officers facing serious illnesses that stem directly from the hazards of their work. These steps have been highly impactful and have shown that when it comes to supporting those who protect us, we take action. And those actions matter. They build trust, they demonstrate respect and they remind officers and their families that their government stands with them, not only in words, but in meaningful policy that improves lives.

Speaker, the motion before us today builds on that commitment. It asks us to take another thoughtful step forward toward fairness and to ensure that our recognition of sacrifice extends to all who have given us so much.

It was inspired in part by the story of firefighter Peter Hayes, who was a volunteer firefighter for more than 30 years in Greater Napanee and Stone Mills. Throughout his long service, he battled countless fires, trained new recruits and served as a mentor and a leader within his department. He was someone younger firefighters turned

to for guidance, someone who embodied dedication and integrity. His decades of service shaped the next generations of firefighters and strengthened the departments that he served.

Tragically, he later faced another kind of battle, this time with colorectal cancer linked directly to duty-related exposure. This is the unseen cost of public safety work. These illnesses are not sudden, but develop over time. They reflect the cumulative toll of service: years of exposure, stress and risk. And on August 17, 2025, firefighter Hayes lost that battle.

His story is heartbreaking, but not unique. Public safety officers face not only immediate dangers, but also long-term health risks as a result of their service. Behind every uniform is a family that serves alongside them: spouses, children, parents, all of whom feel the impact when illness or tragedy strikes. These risks can shape a lifetime. Too often, their families carry tremendous burdens after their loss—emotional, financial and practical burdens that no family should have to shoulder alone, especially when the illness or death is linked directly to years of service protecting the people of Ontario.

This motion asks the government to explore expanding the eligibility criteria for the Constable Joe MacDonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund. This is a thoughtful and measured request, one rooted in fairness and compassion. Currently, this fund provides post-secondary scholarships to the spouses and children of officers who die directly in the line of duty.

The proposed change would consider extending eligibility to include families of full-time, part-time, on-call and volunteer officers whose deaths are attributed to duty-related illnesses, not just those who pass away during an active incident. This reflects reality. Sacrifice does not only occur in a single moment, it can occur and does occur over many years. Recognizing that is an important step forward toward justice for these families.

This is a compassionate, thoughtful and responsible step forward. It reflects our values as a province and our commitment to fairness. By exploring this expansion, we can help ensure that a public safety officer's death, whether sudden or the result of a long-term occupational illness, does not create additional hardship for their children. We can ensure that their son or daughter still has the opportunity to pursue a post-secondary education without facing overwhelming financial burdens or barriers.

This motion has already received strong support from fire services, municipal partners and public safety associations across the province. Their letters emphasize what we all know to be true: that honouring our fallen means supporting the families that they leave behind.

Speaker, our public safety officers stand with us every day. This motion is an opportunity for us to stand with them and with their families who bear the weight of their service. It's an opportunity to demonstrate once again that Ontario values courage, service and sacrifice, not only in moments of crisis but long after.

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

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'm pleased to rise today in support of private member's notice of motion number 39 from the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington. This motion calls on the government of Ontario to explore eligibility criteria under the Constable Joe MacDonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund so that the families of full-time, part-time, on-call and volunteer public safety officers can have access to post-secondary scholarship funds when a loved one has died either directly in the line of duty or due to a duty-related illness.

Madam Speaker, this is a good idea. It is common sense. It is something that all of us in this House should be able to agree on. It reflects a priority that many of us have heard in our meetings with organizations across Ontario, including the Police Association of Ontario. We all understand how important it is to take care of first responders and to support their families during the most difficult moments imaginable. That has always been my own priority, and it is a priority shared by my entire caucus.

However, I must also say this: The way that this government is approaching this important and serious matter does not demonstrate urgency. It is not efficient, and, frankly, it is not respectful of the time of members or of the families who are waiting for certainty and support. Right now, the government is effectively doing this twice, and neither approach is ideal.

First, the government has introduced Bill 75, the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act. Buried inside this large omnibus bill is one schedule that touches on the Constable Joe MacDonald survivors scholarship fund. In that schedule, the minister is given the power to grant the scholarships and to set out who may be eligible.

Madam Speaker, if that were all that this bill did, we could have a straightforward conversation, but that is not all Bill 75 does. This bill is seven schedules long. It contains a range of provisions, some of which have serious concerns; some for which there may even be reasons to oppose that legislation.

1730

What the government has done is they've taken a good idea in addressing this important scholarship and wrapped it inside a series of ideas that may have serious concerns. They have muddied the waters. That is not the right way to honour the brave men and women who put their lives on the line for all of us.

First responders and their families deserve to feel the gratitude of every member in this House. Instead, this bill, Bill 75, makes them an afterthought. Within that bill, they are the third priority, not the first.

This approach also removes our ability as an opposition to stand up clearly and vote in support of those who keep us safe. Instead of presenting a clean and focused bill—and again, I'm talking about Bill 75, which addresses this scholarship—the government has tied the scholarship to unrelated and potentially problematic schedules. The result is that members cannot simply vote yes for the very people that this motion is meant to support.

Madam Speaker, why not do the obvious thing? Introduce a government bill—a government stand-alone bill, entirely on its own—that deals only with this scholarship for this scholarship fund. Bring forward a bill that allows every member of this House to vote in favour and demonstrate our shared respect for first responders and their families; a single, focused piece of legislation that would send a powerful message that the sacrifice of first responders is our priority. Instead, we have a symbolic motion or government legislation that wraps this and muddies the water in a whole series of other potentially worrisome schedules.

Next, the government has now brought this motion forward this evening, and I want to be clear: I do applaud the member across for raising this issue. But the appropriate minister already has the power to address this issue in stand-alone legislation. If the minister truly wanted to make these changes, a bill could have been written to include them from the start. Instead, what we have is this separate motion and that separate vague bill that touches on a wide range of issues, some of which are problematic.

In my view, the better path is simple: Introduce one single, clear bill that establishes the Constable Joe MacDonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund in legislation and specify directly that it applies to the families of full-time, part-time, on-call and volunteer public safety officers. That is all that needs to be done.

So, Madam Speaker, I will support this motion because I fully support the establishment and expansion of this scholarship fund, but I also must say that the government has done a poor job of delivering it. Public safety officers and their families deserve clarity, they deserve respect, and they deserve a single piece of legislation that unequivocally provides this support in the event of a tragic loss.

Their service is clear, and our responsibility to them should be equally clear.

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

MPP Bill Rosenberg: I am pleased to rise today in strong support of the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington in his thoughtful private member's motion.

This motion speaks to something deeply important to all of us in this House: recognizing the extraordinary service, sacrifice and quiet courage of the men and women who protect our communities every single day. It also speaks to the responsibility we carry as a government to stand with them, not only in the moments of crisis on the job, but in the moments that follow.

Speaker, many of us have heard the story of firefighter Peter Hayes. Peter spent more than 30 years serving his neighbours, first in Greater Napanee and later with Stone Mills township. He wasn't just a firefighter; he was a mentor, a trainer, a steady hand guiding young recruits. He shaped next generations of fire service in his community.

But Peter also carried the invisible risks that come with this calling. As we know, firefighters face exposures that can lead to serious, often deadly, illnesses long after a fire has been extinguished. Peter bravely fought colorectal

cancer, but under the rules at that time, because of the age restrictions, he did not qualify for the enhanced supports many other firefighters receive. Despite this, he kept serving, kept leading, kept giving back.

Sadly, Peter passed away August 17 of last year. His loss is felt not only by the family but by the entire public safety community across eastern Ontario.

Speaker, over the past several years, our government has made meaningful, concrete progress to better support the people who keep our province safe. Through our Working for Workers legislation, our government has expanded the presumptive diagnosis framework so that more public safety officers, including volunteer firefighters, receive the help they need when facing work-related illness. We did this because we believe that the people who run toward danger should never have to fight the system when they need support. But our work is not finished.

What the member of Hastings–Lennox and Addington is proposing today continues that important direction. The Constable Joe MacDonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund is a program that has helped many families, spouses and children whose loved ones have died in the line of duty to access post-secondary education without carrying a financial burden. This motion asks the government to explore expanding the eligibility criteria so that the families of full-time, part-time, on-call and volunteer public safety officers, people like firefighter Hayes, can access this support when duty-related illness leads to their passing, even if it does not happen during an active incident. Speaker, this is a reasonable, compassionate and responsible request. It reflects our values, it reflects our record and it reflects our commitment to the people who protect us.

When a police officer, firefighter, paramedic or corrections officer steps forward to serve, their whole family steps up with them. Their children grow up with the knowledge that their parent may face real danger. Their spouses carry that weight every time the pager goes off, and when illness strikes years later, those families carry that burden too. By exploring this expansion, we are saying something simple but important: Their sacrifice should not lead to further sacrifice for their children. Their post-secondary dreams should not be another casualty of the dangers their parents faced.

Speaker, this motion strengthens the bond between our government and our public safety community. It aligns with the work we have already done. And it signals that we will continue acting with fairness, compassion and respect.

I want to thank the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington for bringing this issue forward and for his continued dedication to the families of those who serve. Like the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington, I have a friend and fellow firefighter, Chief Marty Lovelace, who from years of fire service passed at a young age from cancer and whose name is, sadly, on the fallen wall. This is why this bill brought forward today is so very important for the families left behind.

I urge all members to support this motion. It is the right thing to do, and it's the responsible next step in honouring the people who protect our province.

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

I return to the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington who has two minutes for his reply.

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you to all my colleagues who have spoken tonight. It is really heartwarming.

At its heart, this is a simple ask. We're not rewriting the entire Constable Joe scholarship fund. We're not creating automatic entitlements. We are simply asking the government to explore carefully and thoughtfully whether the eligibility criteria can be updated to reflect to this House what we already know: that some deaths are caused by duty-related illness just as surely as by single tragic incident.

We're going to lean on experts who can advise on scope, safeguards and implementation so we can get it right.

A child who loses a parent to occupational cancer does not grieve any less than a child whose parent is lost in a collision. A spouse who watches their partner deteriorate

from duty-related illness does not carry a lighter burden than a spouse who receives that awful knock at the door. In both cases, that loss is related to the service to this province.

With this motion, I believe we take one step further in recognizing, appreciating and honouring the service of those individuals, those men and women who put themselves on the line every day. This House will continue to honour their service and their sacrifice.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

MPP Bresee has moved private member's notice of motion number 39. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until 10:15 on Monday, December 8.

The House adjourned at 1741.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, OOnt

Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Donna Skelly

Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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

Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Allsopp, Tyler (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
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	