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Lundi
24 novembre 2025

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Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 24 November 2025

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 24 novembre 2025

The House met at 1015.

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

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SECOND TRACKS

Mr. Brian Saunderson: My riding of Simcoe–Grey is home to some of the best downhill skiing in Ontario and is the breeding ground of many of our skiing greats like Steve Podborski, Todd Brooker and, most recently, Jack Crawford.

As another ski season approaches, we look forward to welcoming people from across the province and beyond to Collingwood and the Town of the Blue Mountains to enjoy the slopes.

Unfortunately, many local youth in Collingwood and the surrounding area never experience the thrill of skiing. While they can see the hills, the fact of the matter is that many families can't afford the associated costs with the sport.

That reality is the *raison d'être* for a local program called Second Tracks, the brainchild of local businessman John Mealey, a former national ski team member. The program, established last year, introduces local children who might otherwise never get the opportunity to try the sport of skiing. Through the local YMCA, kids register for the program that consists of five weekly sessions, with all costs for transportation, lift passes, equipment rentals and food paid for each participant.

In its inaugural season last year, Second Tracks introduced 160 local kids to the sport of skiing and all the excitement that goes with it. As the new season approaches, more than 300 youth have already signed up and are looking forward to learning how to ski.

Speaker, I want to congratulate, recognize and thank John Mealey and the incredible Second Tracks team of volunteers and sponsors who make this program a reality.

COMMUNITY DONATION DRIVES

MPP Jamie West: Speaker, Sudbury is a community that cares. I'm going to tell you about two examples.

The first one is the Pure Country diaper drive. This was started in 2018. Pure Country is a local radio station. The morning hosts, Josh and Coop, broadcast from the parking lot of the New Sudbury shopping centre, and they collect diapers and wipes from the community. When I mentioned

that Sudbury is a community that cares—in their first year, they collected 60 cases; their second year, 200 cases; their third year, 400; and now, it's more than 1,000.

The second one I want to tell you about is the Edgar Burton food drive. This is the 38th anniversary of the Edgar Burton food drive, in support of the Sudbury Food Bank.

Edgar Burton was a steelworker. He worked at Inco's divisional shops—now Vale. One day, Edgar's daughter asked him why some people didn't have enough to eat. So Edgar brought a box to work so people could put cans into it. He wasn't trying to change the world; he was just trying to make a difference. His motto was always, "One More Can."

Remember I said that Sudbury is a community that cares? Last year, the Edgar Burton Christmas Food Drive collected more than 236,000 pounds of food and \$145,000 in cash donations.

Speaker, those are just two examples of how Sudbury is a community that cares.

TENANT PROTECTION

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I rise today deeply concerned for the seniors of Toronto–St. Paul's, where 61% of the residents are renters and where Bill 60 is creating real fear and instability. These are people who built this province. They expected dignity and security in their later years. Instead, many now tell us they are losing sleep, afraid of eviction, and terrified that the homes they've lived in for decades could be taken from them. This is unacceptable.

1020

Bill 60's changes to the Residential Tenancies Act will worsen housing insecurity and push more seniors toward homelessness. This isn't hypothetical. This is happening right now.

But even in this uncertainty, seniors in my riding are organizing, and they are refusing to be silenced. I want to recognize the tenants at 400 Walmer Road, a naturally occurring retirement community where neighbours have aged in place together. They are gathering petitions, they are meeting, and they are showing remarkable determination.

I want to thank AdvantAge Ontario and CARP for their continued advocacy for older adults across the province.

I also want to thank all who stand with us and the seniors in Toronto–St. Paul's and with advocates across Ontario.

I will continue to fight to stop Bill 60, because every senior in this province deserves the security of a stable home.

KIN CLUB OF RUSSELL RAFFLE TIRAGE DU KIN CLUB OF RUSSELL

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: Je souhaite aujourd'hui souligner le succès exceptionnel du tirage « Catch the Ace » organisé par le Kin Club of Russell dans ma circonscription, dont le tirage de dimanche il y a une semaine a permis à une gagnante de remporter un gros lot de 2,2 millions de dollars, en plus d'un gain hebdomadaire de 172 000 \$, pour un total de 2,4 millions de dollars.

This seventh edition of Catch the Ace raised over \$3.3 million for the community. It benefited numerous local organizations in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, including food banks, youth programs, care homes, organizations supporting vulnerable populations, shelters, cultural and educational organizations, and several others. These funds support essential initiatives that improve the lives of our residents in the region.

Je tiens à remercier chaleureusement les bénévoles, les commanditaires et tous les participants. Grâce à votre générosité et votre engagement, non seulement un grand prix a été remporté, mais notre communauté en sort plus forte, plus unie et plus solidaire.

Congratulations to the winner—and well done to the Kin Club of Russell, Doug and Cindy Anthony, and the whole team for your leadership and ongoing commitment. You truly demonstrate that local action can produce outstanding results and change lives.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I rise today to share real-world consequences of Ontario's chronic underfunding of public education.

A grade 11 student, Caleb Cherian, wrote to my office after learning that transportation for the St. Mary choir school, the Catholic Central High School choir, and the International Baccalaureate program are being cut at his school. Music and IB programs like these have been found to foster leadership roles, creativity, and strengthen social connections. Without transportation, many students can't simply access them. Some are as young as 12 years old or travelling long distances; suggesting they rely on a city bus is neither safe nor realistic.

Equally alarming, at the Thames Valley District School Board, many bus monitors for special-needs routes have been eliminated, forcing children with seizure disorders, mobility challenges and communication disabilities to ride without supervision. Bus drivers can't navigate traffic and simultaneously monitor medically fragile children. Some families have pulled their children off the bus routes altogether.

The government has passed Bill 33, requiring boards under supervision to pay supervisors a salary of up to \$350,000 a year. That salary takes away from student bus transportation services.

Ontario's students deserve safety, and this government needs to invest in school bus transportation that students can rely on.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED ENGINEERING TECHNICIANS AND TECHNOLOGISTS

MPP Mohamed Firin: Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists, which is Ontario's independent certifying body and professional association for engineering technicians and technologists, representing over 21,000 members. These are individuals who take engineering at the college level or equivalent.

Certified technicians and certified engineering technologists play vital roles in building Ontario's infrastructure and working in every corner of this province to support sectors like energy, transportation, housing, manufacturing and mining, while ensuring that our infrastructure and industries run safely and efficiently.

Canada is celebrating National Engineering and Applied Science Technology Week from November 24 to 28, a national initiative OACETT helped launch to raise awareness of this vital profession.

I particularly want to recognize OACETT's leadership in welcoming internationally trained professionals into Ontario's workforce by reducing barriers to credential recognition, allowing newcomers to earn certification and put their talents to work. One in five OACETT-certified technicians and technologists received their training outside of Canada—a testament to how this organization opens doors for global talent and helps address Ontario's skills shortage. These professionals often work behind the scenes, but the results of their expertise are all around us—in our homes, on our roads, and throughout our communities.

This week, I encourage everyone to thank these dedicated professionals for helping build a stronger and innovative Ontario.

FIRE SAFETY

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I rise today to call on the government to act now and protect Ontarians from devastating fires caused by the dangers of exploding e-bikes and lithium-ion batteries.

Earlier this year, 275 Bleecker Street, a 22-storey high-rise building in my riding with over 300 units, in St. James Town, had a very serious fire, with an e-bike, that forced the evacuation of the building in the middle of winter. I was on-site, checking in on those residents, and they told me that this fire was preventable if more was only done to address the unknown dangers of e-bikes and their batteries. Since then, I've been in conversations with Toronto Fire Services to understand how this happened and how we can prevent these fires.

Toronto Fire Services has reported a 1,200% increase in e-bike fires since 2020. The Toronto fire chief warns that e-bike fires can engulf a room within 90 seconds and can burn at extreme temperatures capable of melting firefighter equipment.

Just in this month of November, the first few days when the temperature dipped below zero, another fire was

started by an e-bike—this time on a balcony—that endangered residents in a building at 140 Carlton Street, just steps from my constituency office.

This is a real and burning issue. Again, this government needs an urgent, multi-pronged response to these fire hazards by changing the Ontario building code and fire code.

If you don't act now, there will be more fires. My constituents can't wait, and neither can yours.

CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS WEEK

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: Carbon monoxide remains the leading cause of accidental poisoning in North America. We have a duty to ensure every Ontario family is protected.

The first week of this month marked Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, established through my private member's bill, the Hawkins Gignac Act. It honours OPP Constable Laurie Hawkins; her husband, Richard; and their children, Cassandra and Jordan. Their lives were tragically cut short when a blocked vent allowed this silent, lethal gas to fill their Woodstock home.

Constable Hawkins was a community leader, visiting classrooms, seniors' homes and summer camps, always working to keep others safe.

In the wake of this heartbreaking loss, Ontarians responded. Detectors sold out. And this Legislature acted.

Today, in memory of the Hawkins family, every Ontario home with a fuel-burning appliance or an attached garage must have a working detector.

Designating the calendar week beginning on November 1 as Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week aligns the need to check carbon monoxide detectors with the end of daylight saving time.

As winter approaches, I urge every Ontarian to take a moment that could save a lifetime. Test your detectors. Awareness and vigilance are our strongest tools. With a few simple steps, we can prevent tragedy and carry forward the Hawkins family's legacy of service.

ONTARIO VETERANS AWARD FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Mr. Ric Bresee: I'm proud to rise today to recognize two outstanding veterans from Hastings-Lennox and Addington who have received the Ontario Veterans Award for Community Service Excellence in 2025.

From Legion Branch 137, William "Jack" Magilton has been honoured for more than 33 years of remarkable service to the Royal Canadian Legion. At age 85, he continues to support veterans and families as Sergeant-at-Arms and service officer, and his leadership through programs like Buddy Check Coffee has strengthened the entire community.

Also, from Legion Branch 80 in Marmora, Stephen Jordan has been recognized. Stephen's generosity, steady

commitment and constant willingness to help others have made a meaningful difference in his community.

Speaker, Jack and Stephen remind us all that our veterans continue to serve long after their time in uniform.

I encourage all Legion branches across Ontario to nominate a deserving veteran next year so we can continue honouring these extraordinary contributions.

1030

Please join me in congratulating this year's recipients and thanking all veterans for their ongoing service to this province.

HOUSE SITTINGS

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

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

Mr. John Fraser: Another fundraiser?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Are we starting already?

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Laura Smith: It is my very great honour to welcome to the House Lisa Levin and her team from AdvantAge Ontario. For 100 years, AdvantAge has been the voice of the not-for-profit sector in Ontario.

And I want to give a big shout-out to Eric Frydman and the young Jewish lawyers' group, who are going to be having a meeting with me later on today.

Mr. John Vanthof: I would like to welcome the members of the Ontario Dairy Council here today and invite everyone for some great food in 228.

Also, I'd like to welcome Paul Chatelain to the House today. He's the CEO of the MICs Group.

Mr. John Fraser: Today I would like to welcome the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. Here today are the president, Kathleen Woodcock; the executive director, Stephanie Donaldson; and members of their executive council. I'll be looking forward to meeting with them later this afternoon to talk about local matters in education.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I want to welcome to the House today an undergraduate student in civil engineering at TMU, Konrad Sahaydakivsky, and his mother, Diane Kowalski, and his brother, Markus Sahaydakivsky.

He braved the cold in our winter campaign this year. Thank you, Konrad.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Great news from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock: Kawartha Dairy is in the building, in room 228.

Welcome, Mike Crowe—the third-generation owners of Kawartha Dairy.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I want to welcome in the House members from ACORN Toronto and Hamilton ACORN.

Thank you for all the work that you do helping to people keep housed and remain in their housing.

MPP Catherine McKenney: I would like to welcome Ted Cohen from Ottawa Centre to Queen's Park today. Ted is the CEO of Bess and Moe Greenberg Family Hillel Lodge and is here today with AdvantAge Ontario, the association representing not-for-profit and municipal long-term-care homes. Welcome.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I'd like to introduce amazing Alison McMurray today. She's a great city builder and community leader, running two successful restaurants in downtown Toronto and doing so many things in the east end that we had to name a laneway after her.

Also, I'd like to welcome the Retired Teachers of Ontario.

Welcome to your House.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: A shout-out to ACORN, who's here today—and to my constituent and the president of OPSBA, Kathleen Woodcock, thank you for coming and advocating for education.

Hon. Zee Hamid: I'd like to recognize a special guest, Bob Izumi, who's receiving a King's coronation medal today. He's joined by his family: Sandy, Lynn, Jocelyn, and Allan.

Independently, I also have a Halton school board trustee from Milton, Donna Danielli.

Everyone, welcome to your House.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Today I'm pleased to welcome AdvantAge Ontario; specifically, my constituent Jane Sinclair. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'd like to join in welcoming the members of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, including the president, Kathleen Woodcock, and the executive director, Stephanie Donaldson.

Together, these trustees serve nearly 1.4 million public elementary and secondary students.

Thank you for your work. Members of the official opposition are looking forward to our meetings with you this afternoon.

MPP Mohamed Firin: I'd like to recognize Cheryl Farrow, CEO of OACETT, Stephanie Nuttall-Pesheau and Dave Terlizzi, all from the same organization.

I'd also like to recognize Dylan Attack from the Hamilton area.

Mr. Billy Pang: I would like to welcome my special guests from Markham-Unionville today.

From Unionville Home Society, we have the president and CEO, Abby Katz Star.

I'm also welcoming family members of Adelaide Lim, today's page captain: her parent, Brian, and special grandparents, Edward and Glenna and José and Ruby, and her younger sister Scarlett.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Here with us today for the Lebanese flag-raising is Mr. Grégoire Bostajian, honorary

consul general of Lebanon, alongside Abraham Elias and other members from the Lebanese community.

After the flag-raising, I will be hosting a small reception in room 247, and everyone is invited to attend the event.

Ms. Marit Stiles: This morning we are joined by the York South-Weston Tenant Union, ACORN, CUPE, and so many other housing advocates, as well as, of course, the education advocates we've already mentioned.

I want to thank you for your ongoing, tireless work and for being here today in defence of our democracy. Welcome to your House.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: We have Ada DiFlavio, who is here from Deer Park Villa in Grimsby. Welcome to Queen's Park.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: CTV News has reported that executive pay jumped at many of the companies that received Skills Development Fund grants.

My question is to the Premier. What kind of due diligence was done to ensure that funds were used to train and pay workers—not C-suite bonuses?

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

Hon. David Piccini: Important safeguards are in place to ensure that dollars go to train workers—and that's what it goes towards. As I said, before, we have monthly visits, monthly reporting. We've now implemented financial audits—among a number of other measures to train workers. That's what, at its core, this is about.

We're making historic investments in supporting union-led training in every corner of Ontario to deliver on this Premier's ambitious plan to build. It's breaking down barriers, getting more people into apprenticeships, and leading to rewarding careers that get people a better job at the end of the day—all to support this historic build agenda. We have got to make sure we have the talent pipelines, and we're supporting and working with labour partners to get the job done.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, the answer is none, I guess.

One numbered company received \$9.8 million, which resulted in a 25% increase in their executive director's salary. Just think of that for a minute: a 25% increase. I am meeting people every day in line at food banks who are having to make a choice between food and rent in this province. Hotel workers in Windsor were fighting just to get up to \$18 an hour after they have been working for a hotel for 40 years. And this government is giving money out that's going to executive bonuses like that? Just think about it.

I'm sure the companies are going to say they used other revenues to raise those salaries, but I've got to tell you, Speaker, people are not buying it.

The government does not know how those funds were spent.

I'm going to give the Premier an opportunity to fix things. Will he conduct a full investigation into whether or not that fund's money went toward pay bumps for corporate executives?

Hon. David Piccini: The member answered her own question.

As I said, every agreement includes strict controls, financial monitoring, monthly reporting. We've put in place audits for every program. I think that's a direct answer—audits for every program.

We're going to keep supporting training in every corner of this province, to support mines in the north. They don't support the mining sector, so it's not surprising they're not supporting the training that it supports.

Let's talk about our build agenda. You've got to actually build houses, hospitals, highways—highways they ran against.

What happened when we took it to the people—Highway 413, the Bradford Bypass? They voted in every single member of the Peel region to the PC caucus, because they want to build too and leave behind a stronger Ontario for our next generation—a stronger Ontario that we can be proud of.

We're supporting the talent pipeline to make sure we have the next generation to work in these critical fields.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: So nothing to see here, eh, Speaker? Just a coincidence—proving once again they're the party of bosses and C-suites, not workers in the province of Ontario.

The Premier is not willing to investigate where the money is going because he is just fine with it going to the CEOs.

He has made it very clear who has his ear, and it is not the unions and it is not the workers this minister is hiding behind. We know who it is: It's the CEOs, it's the lobbyists, it's the big donors.

Back to the Premier: Why is it always an endless slush fund for Conservative insiders and CEOs, but cuts for everyone else?

1040

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

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Madam Speaker: The so-called CEOs are the front-line labour folks, the men and women we're training, the 750,000 people—and I don't know if you missed the announcement at Vianode, investing \$3.2 billion in St. Thomas, along with Volkswagen, along with hundreds and hundreds of other companies investing in Ontario, because we created the climate.

I don't know if you heard the news, Madam Speaker, because they sure never heard the news: 350 million people in the US created 119,000 jobs; 16.3 million people in Ontario created 55,000 jobs—55,000 jobs with 16 million, compared to 350 million. That says it all.

If you were in charge, you couldn't run a lemonade stand. You'd bankrupt the lemonade stand in about 10 seconds—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, I'll say again—at least my lemonade stand was legal. He's talking tough over there. The Premier is talking tough right now.

But I'll tell you one thing: I've worked hard my whole life, and I didn't grow up with a silver spoon in my mouth. So you can keep it coming—keep it coming.

It is good to see the Premier finally get up and answer a question in this House. We only sit in this House for a few weeks, and, despite that, last week the Premier decided to adjourn the House so that he could get his MPPs and himself to his fundraiser faster.

While people are lining up at food banks in the province of Ontario, what is this government's priority? It is increasing limits for individual donations to political parties. Why—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Response?

Hon. Doug Ford: Do you know something, Madam Speaker? I wish my dad was here, who started from nothing in our basement—in the basement, on a Ping-Pong table—and grew a company. When I came into it, it was a small printing company—like 98% of companies around Canada. We worked 18 hours a day building that company. We grew that company to employ hundreds and hundreds of people—not just here; we expanded in the US.

You don't have a clue how it is to start a business, to meet a payroll, to come up with a marketing plan, to create thousands of jobs. That's your problem. That's why you'll never be Premier.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary—a reminder to ask your questions and give your responses through the Speaker.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Speaker.

Well, the government and the Premier can talk all they want like that, but their actions speak louder than words. They are bringing American-style politics into the province of Ontario.

At a time when people are so scared of losing their jobs, their homes, in the middle of a jobs disaster of this Premier's own making, the Premier is only concerned about himself—all you have to do is listen to him right there.

I meet people every day who are terrified of losing their jobs, who are choosing between rent and food and having to line up at food banks because of skyrocketing rent.

Instead of doing things to solve these issues, why is it this Premier's priority to see how much more money he can make off this grift?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Thank you, Speaker. Through you to the honourable member: We were sent to this place earlier this year with a historic third mandate, under the

leadership of Premier Ford. As he said this morning, we've had tremendous success in creating jobs and providing economic prosperity.

Just in our own fall economic statement that the Minister of Finance tabled—over and over again, we've been able to put in a plan that's going to go after Donald Trump and his tariffs and bring economic opportunity to our province.

Whether it's the Ring of Fire, whether it's small business support—each and every minister and each and every member, under the leadership of Premier Ford, is going to continue to stand up for Ontarians.

Again with the negativism—again with the partisanship over partnership.

We're looking for partners, but we're also looking to make sure that Ontario continues to be the best place in the G7 to invest.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, Ontarians will remember that last year this government, at this time of year, had to cancel their big fundraisers because of the greenbelt scandal. I think it's pretty bold of them to bring it back while this new, latest scandal unfolds, while they still have a Minister of Labour over there who refuses to resign even though he is mired in a pay-to-play scandal.

They are still under criminal investigation by the RCMP.

The point is that people are losing confidence in this government because of these ongoing scandals.

Ontarians want a government they can trust, a government that cares whether they can make ends meet—not just about themselves and their donors and their insiders.

How is the Premier ever going to regain trust in the government if he's only going to be focused again on his own donations?

Hon. Doug Ford: I feel bad responding all the time, Madam Speaker.

She says people are losing confidence.

The last Abacus poll showed us up 51%. You dropped down to single digits—single digits.

Her own caucus doesn't even support her. They're waiting for her to leave the Legislature any day, that's pretty clear.

But do you know something, Madam Speaker? We're going to create that opportunity. We're going to fight Donald Trump every single day, to fight against the tariffs. We will never apologize to Donald Trump.

We live in the greatest jurisdiction in the world. We have the greatest people. We're putting them to work.

We're cutting the red tape. We're cutting the regulations. My Minister of Energy is building the largest nuclear fleet—large-scale SMRs—in the entire world right now, which will create 20,000 jobs. We're making sure that we're on-shoring manufacturing. We're passing a bill that municipalities and the province have to buy Ontario-made or Canadian-made.

That's what we're doing. You fight—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier. I'm glad to hear he's answering questions today.

So, another day, more skills development, Premier—something to look forward to.

Our responsibility here, Premier, though, is to make the right choices.

I was in Cobourg yesterday, and I was talking to some folks there. They were upset about Loyalist and George Brown shutting down their culinary programs, leaving students and families stranded. Their teachers were among the 10,000 who were fired by this Premier. It's interesting that his minister talks about hospitality workers all the time and he has done this.

Does the Premier really believe that \$27 million to bars and nightclubs, including \$10 million to a strip club owner, is a better choice than investing in our colleges?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I appreciate the opportunity to share the investments that we're making into our colleges, those investments that the member opposite voted down, in budget 2025, including the billion dollars in new investments into our post secondary system—\$750 million for 20,000 new STEM seats, \$75 million for 7,800 new construction-related seats, as well as \$56 million for new nursing seats and \$55 million for new teaching seats.

That's on top of the record-setting investment of \$1.3 billion we invested into the sector last year to stabilize the sector, because of the unilateral decisions the federal Liberals did to the sector right across all of Canada.

We'll continue to be there for the sector time and time again, when their federal counterparts continue to create chaos right across all of Canada.

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

Mr. John Fraser: « Langue au chat », Premier?

Our choices define us.

Last week, nurses were here at Queen's Park. We were all talking to them. What they were telling us was that people don't have enough access to primary care.

There are hospitals that have been starved by this government. They need \$1 billion.

Imagine what that \$2.5-billion Skills Development Fund would have done for our hospitals, would have done for health care.

Does the Premier think giving tens of millions of dollars to a company that was under a forensic audit and is now under an audit by the OPP is more important than investing in the health care that people need?

1050

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I will repeat: \$56 million—to invest into 2,200 new nursing seats right across the whole province, including in Ottawa, at Carleton University, which I know that member attends quite frequently, because he's from Ottawa.

Our operating grants have gone up to \$5.8 billion. That's a record high for our operating grants. That's up 12% since 2023-24.

We're going to continue making those strategic investments, which the Liberals will keep voting down. They say they care about the economy, but their vote speaks otherwise.

We'll continue making the record investments that we're doing, whether it's the \$750 million into 20,000 new STEM seats right across the whole province—that's on top of the 70,000 STEM grads who are graduating on an annual basis from our post-secondary institutions.

We'll continue to be there for the sector, while they continue to vote against every single dollar we invest into the sector.

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

Mr. John Fraser: It is all about choices.

The Premier knows we have one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the country—it's the highest it has been in decades, and the Premier has no plan. What he says to the youth is, "Just try harder." Perhaps he could take his own advice.

Last week, the government and the Premier voted down a plan for young people—a plan to support small business and to get young people started on their career. Again, that's a juxtaposition.

Does the Premier believe that shovelling millions and millions and millions of dollars out the door, with no strings attached, to insiders and lobbyists and donors, endorsers—does he think that's a better choice than investing in our young people?

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

Hon. David Piccini: I'll tell you about our plan—our plan to support incredible training in every corner of this province, union-led training. We know, according to the Ontario Construction Secretariat—higher completion rates, better job placements. And the stats don't lie. We've seen record numbers of youth entering apprenticeships between the ages of 15 and 24, under this Premier's leadership.

You've got to have a plan to build. You've got to have a plan to lower taxes, to attract investments into Ontario, and then have a talent pipeline to support it. That's what this Premier is doing in every corner of the province.

Let's look at some stories—Dylan, IBEW Local 120. "The Indigenous training program at IBEW gave me the skills to be safe and productive on-site. With" Skills Development Fund "funding from the Ontario government, I had access to high-quality training that prepared me for my apprenticeship." Do you know where he's going to be working? In one of our world-class energy facilities, a new nuclear plant, an SMR plant—all under this Premier, to build a stronger Ontario.

ACADEMIC TESTING

Mr. John Fraser: The Skills Development Fund is just something that's really an analogy for this government in terms of what they want to hide and what they won't disclose and how they try to manipulate information.

They won't release the results of the skills development test scores because they don't want us to see what's really going on. We've got to dig and dig and dig.

And now students and teachers and parents aren't getting the EQAO results—because the government is hiding it for another reason. It's all under a shroud of secrecy.

So I guess the simple question is: Why won't you just release the scores?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Last week, I explained that I was not releasing the scores. I delayed the release of the scores because I wanted to do a very thorough and deep dive, board by board, to see what's working and what's not working and come forward.

Do you know who hasn't cared at all about EQAO in September, in October and in November, and only found out or was even concerned—was the opposition. As soon as they heard it on the news—then, "It's a big, huge problem. There must be a conspiracy to try and hide it."

This is the problem with the opposition in the province of Ontario. They've become nothing but a joke—one that hasn't got a clue what they stand for, the other one—you can't pull the arrogance out of the Liberal Party; it is ingrained in them. They think that making fun of a time when we're facing tariffs brought on by our American friends—is a time for jokes and poems.

What we'll do is focus on bringing the province out of a challenge brought on by the Americans, making sure our students, parents and teachers are supported.

We will not listen to the nonsense and arrogance of the Liberal and NDP parties, who are—

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

Mr. John Fraser: Nice try, Minister.

I was speaking to a supervisory officer in September, and he told me about this.

I think the Premier needs to get a minister who can walk and chew gum.

There was nothing preventing him from sending those to the people who needed them: the kids, the educators, their parents. So much effort goes into that.

And you're willy-nilly—like, "Oh, I'm just holding on to them because I want to look good."

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

Mr. John Fraser: Can you not walk and chew gum?

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

Mr. John Fraser: Do you not know that they need them? Do you not know that parents and educators need those for the kids, and you can use them at the same time?

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

Mr. John Fraser: Why can't the Premier get a minister who can walk and chew gum?

Hon. Paul Calandra: The last time they were released later than this, it was under the Liberal Party. So I suggest he might look back.

The problem that we have in the province of Ontario today is 15 years of Liberal mismanagement of the economy. They didn't build hospitals. They didn't build roads. They didn't build transit and transportation. They left us with the highest energy rates in the entire country. Our manufacturing sector was decimated. Our education system was on its heels. Our students weren't learning. It has taken us seven years to put things back on track.

We have fought a global health and economic pandemic.

Now we're fighting a global trade war brought on by the Americans. And do you know what we're doing? We're winning. And do you know why we're winning? Because we aren't listening to the arrogance of the Liberals and the stupidity of the NDP.

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

Mr. John Fraser: You've had seven and a half years, and you made quite a mess.

That's why you're withholding the EQAO results, right, Minister?

That's why the minister is withholding them. He's hiding them.

Is he hiding them because our class sizes have grown too large and that's affecting our kids in school? Or is it because this government has withheld about \$850 million a year from boards, that they have to find somewhere else for special education? Or is it because there's a mental health crisis in our schools that this government is not looking after? Or is it just simply because we know we don't have enough adults in schools?

What is the minister—or the Premier—hiding?

Why won't they release the scores of the Skills Development Fund and the EQAO results?

Hon. Paul Calandra: This is a member who, while in government, closed 600 schools and with who, while in government, students had to suffer through strikes.

It is the former minister who was able to conduct and get deals with our teachers so that the kids can stay in school, learning.

Under the Liberals, our students were suffering; under Conservatives, we are making progress on those scores. We're not releasing them. Do you know why? Because we want to do something with the data—to make sure that they can do even better.

Do you know why we can do work and chew gum and walk at the same time? Because we're Progressive Conservatives who do one thing: focus on the economy, focus on making Ontario better for future generations.

While they worked for 15 long, hard, arduous years for the people of the province of Ontario, destroying everything, with nothing to show for accomplishment, we in just seven years have got subways built. We got long-term-care homes built. We got hospitals being built. We put a million people back to work. Do you know why? Because we're focused on what matters to the people of Ontario.

And the Liberals are focused on their own internal arrogance and fighting.

TENANT PROTECTION

MPP Jamie West: My question is for the Premier.

Tenants need rent control in order to stay housed.

Concerned citizens have been calling my office non-stop about Bill 60's attack on renters.

There have been parents—like Kristiina Raisanan. Apparently, Kristiina and her three children have such a good deal that her landlord has tried to evict her several times.

There are also seniors—like Lori S. Lori is scared she won't be able to remain in the home that she has been renting for 14 years. She's so scared that she asked me not to use her last name. Lori said, "Without rent protection, I'd be homeless."

My question is, will the Premier stop his vendetta against good renters like Lori and Kristiina, revoke Bill 60, and bring in real rent control?

1100

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

Hon. Rob Flack: Let's stick to the facts. Rental costs are coming down. I think we all know that. Let's stop stoking fear, and let's stick to what the truth is:

—40-month lows in Toronto, the lowest rents now in 40 months;

—51,000 new rental starts in the last three years, a record in this province;

—nine months over nine months, year over year, 17,000 new starts in this province, up 38%.

Another key fact, thanks to the Minister of Finance—HST off purpose-built rentals.

We've eliminated red tape, and we've increased fines for bad landlords.

Not one protection is being altered in this bill. Supply creates competition. Competition creates lower rents. Lower rents create affordability. The plan is working. Bill 60 makes sense. We've saved and protected every protection in this legislation.

Speaker, we're going to stick to the plan.

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

MPP Jamie West: I don't know what magical world the minister is living in, but rent is not coming down anywhere in Ontario.

Question back to the Premier—I want to tell you about Mikayla Clancy. She's a mother in my riding, and she's currently on maternity leave. She and her family have been renting for 10 years. Mikayla's family got a new landlord a little while ago. They've already made numerous attempts to bring in over-rent-control increases on her family.

Mikayla said, "Doug Ford's new legislation is terrifying for a mother on maternity leave.

"It would give my landlord the power to put my little family out on the street.

“They could price us out of the home that we’ve lived in, longer than they’ve owned it.”

My question: Will the Premier protect families like Mikayla’s by revoking Bill 60 and bringing in real rent control?

Hon. Rob Flack: Bill 60 protects everyone—landlords and tenants. It brings balance back to the system.

Let’s talk about what the Landlord and Tenant Board has been doing under the Attorney General. We have doubled adjudicators, from 40 to 80. With \$26 million invested in back office administration, to ensure that the backlogs get fixed, we have reduced backlogs—the bottom line—by 80%.

We are protecting tenants—all protections in place remain in place after this legislation.

We are also open for more small landlords to have the confidence to rent out their buildings.

A small percentage of this entire landlord-tenant situation are with bad actors—the vast majority respect the rents, respect their agreements.

We are creating balance in the system.

Think about the small operator, the small provider, that now has confidence to rent out more property.

And guess what? The bottom line is: We’re creating capacity; rents are coming down.

SENIORS

MPP Stephanie Smyth: My question is for the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility.

While this government continues to shovel \$2.5 billion of taxpayer money to friends and insiders through the Skills Development Fund scandal, seniors across this province are living in fear—fear of hunger, fear of eviction, and fear of ending up on the streets.

I hear from seniors in my riding every single day who are struggling to afford groceries, to pay their rent, and to keep the heat on. These are people who built this province, who worked their entire lives, who deserve dignity and security in their twilight years.

So my question to the minister is simple: Does he believe that funnelling millions to well-connected insiders is the best use of taxpayer money? Does he believe this is how Ontario’s seniors deserve to be treated?

Minister—through the Speaker—will you stand up for the seniors you’re supposed to represent and demand that this Premier stop the gravy train to his friends?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you for raising that important question.

The Premier believes that protecting Ontario is protecting seniors in Ontario.

The Liberals want to tax-hike everywhere.

Our government has not increased a single tax since we came into power. Instead, we are putting more money into seniors’ pockets. We introduced free dental care for low-income seniors before the federal government did. We are the only government that doubled the GAINS payment to seniors during tough times.

By making life affordable for seniors, we are protecting Ontario.

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

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Back to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility: I’m not hearing about a lot of seniors being comforted these days.

Minister, you’ve heard clearly what seniors in this province are facing: declining quality of life, rising costs, and a government that keeps turning its back on them.

Seniors are asking for stability, dignity and support, but this government seems more interested in circling the wagons around the labour minister.

So I’ll ask you again, Minister: How can you justify prioritizing the reputation of a cabinet colleague over improving the quality of life for Ontario seniors? Who comes first—your fellow minister or the people of this province who built this province and deserve better?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: We stood against the Liberal-NDP carbon tax and their increase to the gas tax.

Our seniors’ public transit tax credit can save a senior up to \$450.

The seniors care at home tax credit can save up to \$1,500—for seniors to stay at home.

This means more money in the pockets of our seniors.

We are protecting seniors and protecting Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Next question? I recognize the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

MPP Silvia Gualtieri: My question is for the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation.

Every day, thousands of drivers travel between Mississauga and downtown Toronto for work, school or medical appointments—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I apologize to the member, but you cannot ask a question to the parliamentary assistant. You can direct it to the minister.

MPP Silvia Gualtieri: Thank you. Should I start again, Speaker?

My question is for PA Bresee—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Unfortunately, we’ll have to move on.

Next question?

HOUSING

Ms. Catherine Fife: This question is for the Premier.

Bill 60 will further compromise the fragile housing that so many Ontarians are desperately holding on to.

When this government callously removed rent control, this drove people to food banks; so many renters experienced a serious decline in healthy food and quality of life.

When you under-resourced the Landlord and Tenant Board, you failed both tenants and small landlords.

With a failing economy, when will you realize that housing instability in this province is actually causing economic instability as well?

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

Hon. Doug Downey: We are, in fact, creating capacity within the system to provide more rental spaces for tenants who need them and for people who are coming to our province.

Madam Speaker, it's interesting that the member opposite says that we're under-resourcing.

When we doubled the number of adjudicators from 40 full-time plus all of the part-time to 86 full-time plus all of the part-time, that member voted against it.

When we put \$26 million on the table to rebuild a back office system that the Liberals had left derelict, that member voted against that.

When we brought forward change to create capacity, to make sure that the system is working well—and bringing down the backlog by over 80% to date—that member voted against it.

So I don't know what that member is talking about, in terms of creating capacity and in terms of investing. This is the only government that has done that in the last 20 years.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: When this government broke the Landlord and Tenant Board—they're now using the dysfunction that it created to justify weakening tenant rights. That's what's going on and, as a minister of the crown, you should damn well know that—

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Withdraw.

Bill 60 actively works to displace people, all while claiming it will create housing. Ontario does not need more encampments.

News flash for this government: We are talking about people's homes. When rents rise unexpectedly, renters, seniors, families with small children have few choices.

Choice is only for the very privileged, apparently, in Ontario.

How much do they need to donate before you pay attention to the housing mess?

And will you discard Bill 60 and start at a place of dignity for all Ontarians on the housing file, which—

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

1110

Hon. Doug Downey: It's a real disservice to the constituents—both their constituents and everybody else—to fearmonger and to say that things are a way that they are not.

It is simply not true that Bill 60 takes away any rights. Quite frankly, it creates rights for both landlords and tenants by making the system function more effectively.

We are investing in people; we are investing dollars. We are investing in changes of systems to make sure that tenants get a chance to have their matters heard at the tribunal faster than they currently were.

She talks about "broke the board"—she would "woke" the board, and who knows where that would go?

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Stephen Blais: My question is for the Premier.

Madam Speaker, this fall, instead of helping families with the cost of living, the government has slipped changes into its latest red tape bill that open the door to loyalty reward points expiring with the passage of time.

Let's be clear: When families save up their points for flights, for groceries, for Christmas presents and the government changes the rules so that those points can quietly expire, that's not cutting red tape; that's a sneaky tax increase on middle-class families.

Madam Speaker, why is this Premier using a so-called red tape bill to quietly pick families' pockets by raiding their loyalty points, and will he admit that letting points expire with the passage of time is just another backdoor tax grab on middle-class families, who are already stretched?

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Madam Speaker, I didn't think that was a rookie MPP, because he was around the last time—he has seen what we did to cut the gas tax, to make life more affordable for people. And in the May budget, we made it permanent.

Madam Speaker, where was he when we cut \$11.7 billion of taxes and fees—almost \$12 billion—for all families across Ontario? Where was he when he had the opportunity to vote for that tax relief and the fee relief for families and workers across Ontario? He voted no. So he obviously doesn't support families and workers in Ontario.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: No family in Ontario was asking for weaker protection on their reward points. There were no musitations during the election campaign—nobody campaigned on it. Nobody raised it at the door—no kitchen table conversations, no town hall meetings. There was not a hint, not a murmur, not a whisper that loyalty reward points would be on the table.

This is a secret tax grab that is not about protecting Ontario.

This change didn't appear in this bill by accident.

The only people who benefit when points suddenly expire are big companies and the well-connected lobbyists who represent them.

So if the Premier didn't campaign on it, if Ontarians aren't asking for it, if it doesn't protect Ontario, why is the Premier stripping these protections away?

Will the Premier admit that letting reward points expire with the passage of time is a backdoor tax grab on middle-class—

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I know the member would know a little bit about Liberal history. Let's go back to when they were in power for 15 years.

They raised the employer health tax, making it tougher for small business and medium-sized businesses.

They raised driver's licence fees, sticker fees.

They raised taxes on alcohol—wine tax, beer tax.

They taxed everything they could tax. And do you know what they got? They got a higher cost of living for everyone in Ontario.

And by the way, they had deficit after deficit—into a downgrade.

This province has reversed that, putting more money back into businesses and into consumers, and getting credit rating upgrades—at the time to build this economy.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

MPP Silvia Gualtieri: My question is for the Minister of Transportation.

Every day, thousands of drivers travel between Mississauga and downtown Toronto for work, school and medical appointments. For them, the Gardiner Expressway is not optional; it is a critical connection that keeps our regional economy moving. So when construction on the Gardiner was set to last three years, communities in my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville were worried about longer commute times.

For years, the previous Liberal government talked about fixing congestion, but the results were always the same—they left commuters in Mississauga sitting in gridlock.

Speaker, under the Premier's leadership, our government is delivering results.

Can the minister outline how our government stepped in to finish construction ahead of schedule so that drivers travelling between Mississauga and Toronto can finally see relief on their daily commute?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Ric Bresee: I want to thank the member for her question.

Speaker, there's a reason why the Liberals and the NDP lost every single seat in Mississauga. There's a reason why the current Liberal leader, who was the mayor of Mississauga, lost her own riding. Where was that? That was Mississauga East–Cooksville. Why? It's because the Liberals and the NDP just don't get it. They've even suggested tearing down the Gardiner entirely or slapping tolls on it.

Speaker, there are over 140,000 drivers who rely on the Gardiner every single day. The Liberals and the NDP wanted to make life harder for 140,000 people. That's simply unacceptable.

Unlike the opposition, we have a plan to tackle gridlock and to build faster.

That's why our government stepped in and invested \$73 million to accelerate construction on the Gardiner. And it worked. We completed it in a year and a half, 50% of the time—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

MPP Silvia Gualtieri: Thanks to this investment, thousands of Mississauga drivers now save up to 22 minutes per trip when travelling to and from Toronto.

Speaker, there's a clear difference between our PC government and the previous Liberal government.

They sat by as Mississauga's population grew. Instead of building for the future, they stuck with the status quo as gridlock got worse.

When I was door-knocking in the last election, people in my riding told me how out of touch Bonnie Crombie and her Liberals are. I heard how Bonnie Crombie questioned if we should even be building roads.

Clearly, voters rejected the Liberal and NDP policies that would have made life worse.

Under the Premier's leadership, we are getting it done and improving life for commuters in Mississauga and across Ontario.

Speaker, can the minister please explain the impact of the Liberals' 15-year—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you to the wonderful member from Mississauga East–Cooksville.

For 15 years, under the Liberals, nothing got built—and the impact of that? Drivers sat in traffic, families lost time, and businesses paid the price, as gridlock—we know that gridlock now costs our economy \$56 billion each year.

For this government, under this Premier, doing nothing is not an option.

That's why we worked with the city of Toronto to cut the Gardiner construction time in half. By delivering the project a year and a half sooner, we've saved \$273 million in gridlock impacts.

The previous government let the Gardiner crumble. They ignored the requests of the city of Toronto.

Unlike the Liberals and the NDP, we worked in partnership with the city of Toronto. We invested the \$73 million to speed up construction, with 24-hour construction.

The Liberals and the NDP may—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Seniors and families at 2400 Carling Avenue in my riding are fighting an above-guide-line rent increase for building renovations that weren't even necessary. They've waited months for a hearing at the Landlord and Tenant Board. They were denied an in-person hearing even though many of the tenants don't have access to the Internet. Tight budgets mean they're going up against a corporate landlord without legal representation.

Instead of helping tenants like them, the government is stripping away their rights and making it easier for landlords to evict them.

Will the Premier stand with seniors and families and vote no on Bill 60?

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: In fact, I would like to inform the other member that what is happening is that we're making the board more efficient so the tenants can have their hearings, so the tenants can have the protections of the increased penalties to bad landlords. We are creating efficiencies within the system so that everybody can have their day in front of the tribunal.

This fearmongering—that somehow there is a new tool to evict somebody—is simply not fair; it is simply not true.

The reality is, those who don't pay their rent will be subject to hearings at the Landlord and Tenant Board. It's as simple as that.

And for those spreading disinformation that you don't need to pay your rent, that is categorically false—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I'll caution the member on using questionable language.

Back to the member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I don't think evicting seniors more quickly is a record to be proud of.

In Parkwood Hills, Minto is making tenants pay an above-guideline rent increase to demolish a pool that was only condemned because Minto didn't maintain it.

In Accora Village, Ferguslea is imposing an above-guideline rent increase for repairs due to chronic neglect. One tenant living on a disability pension will see her rent increase \$88 a month.

Bill 60 will do nothing to make housing more affordable for these tenants or crack down on abusive AGIs, but it will make it easier for corporate landlords to evict them.

Will the Premier stand with students, young families, seniors and newcomers and vote no on Bill 60?

Hon. Doug Downey: We are creating housing stock. Rental stock is a very important piece of the puzzle—

Interjection.

Hon. Doug Downey: When small landlords—like the member who's heckling me is a landlord—come forward and they can't afford the input costs because the city of Toronto increases property taxes, because the cost of everything goes up, there is a process for that. The landlords don't have free rein to increase rent. They have to go through a process.

Madam Speaker, we know the small landlords, individuals who are opening up their homes for housing stock—we want to encourage more of that. That's what brings down rent.

The opposition just wants to fearmonger and tell people that things are happening that simply are not.

We will continue on this path to make sure that the housing stock is available and expanded.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: Speaker, there have been hundreds of cancelled Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program applicants protesting outside the Legislature the past few weeks. These are skilled workers who left everything behind and are looking for a fair shot. The processing time for these applications was supposed to be around 150 days, but many were left waiting for more than two years and

lost their work permits in the process. Instead of dealing with the individual cases, fixing the program and rooting out fraud, it appears the government may have thrown out legitimate applicants. Does this sound familiar?

Speaker, why are hard-working and skilled immigrants being punished while the government continues to benefit those closest to it?

Will the Premier commit to reviewing each individual application and providing fairness and certainty for those who have waited far too long?

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

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, I would encourage that member to pick up the phone and speak with his federal counterpart.

Ontario operates an immigration nominee program that was cut in half this past year, meaning we have fewer spots to nominate.

This Premier will continue to take steps to nominate workers who will contribute to our economic engine, like the thousands of health care workers we have already nominated to join the front lines of our health care service.

We've worked with the federal government to expand allocation, expand our nomination selection, which I look forward to doing in 2026.

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

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: There seems to be a theme with this government: If you're on the friends-and-family plan, you move to the front of the line, regardless of how well you scored.

But people like Ruhan, who came here in 2018, completed IT and aerospace manufacturing engineering technology programs at public colleges here in Ontario and spent the last three years manufacturing high-precision aerospace, defence and nuclear components—Ruhan was failed by this government. He followed the rules. He waited for more than a year. And because his work permit expired, he had to leave his job mid-shift, after contributing to Ontario for years.

The government says we need more people working in the skilled trades, but then it turns its back on those very same people.

Speaker, will the Premier commit to fairness for rule-following skilled trades applicants and the employers who need them by reviewing all applications, so that any legitimate cases are not punished?

Hon. Doug Ford: Madam Speaker, I understand he's a new MPP, so I'll give him a little leeway here.

Does he understand that immigration comes through the federal government? Does he understand that myself and four colleagues last night, Sunday, while he was watching the football games, were out talking to those same people who were outside Friday? They realize it's the federal government.

I'll be talking to the Prime Minister about this, along with all the other Premiers. We're sending a letter to the Prime Minister, to fix the problem on immigration.

These people came over. They've been trained. I've talked to owners of companies. They're hard-working people. And all of a sudden, two years later, the federal government pulls the plug on them.

Is there a reason why colleagues like Wab Kinew, Premier Eby and other Premiers across the country are all uniting to write a letter, to talk to the Prime Minister, to stop the nonsense?

We need these hard-working people. That's the difference. I'm out there talking to them—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Natalie Pierre: My question is for the Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries.

Speaker, people across Ontario are worried about our economy. They see rising global tensions. They see threats from Donald Trump that could hit our steel plants, our factories and our supply chains. They know our jobs depend on strong, stable and affordable power. When companies face pressure, families are put at risk. When energy costs go up, plants slow down. And when the grid is weak, investment moves elsewhere.

That's why our government must act now. We need a plan that keeps power reliable. We need to protect jobs, protect industries, and keep Ontario strong.

Speaker, can the associate minister explain how our government is protecting Ontario from global economic threats by securing and strengthening our energy grid?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank the member for Burlington for her tireless advocacy for workers and businesses in her communities and across the province.

She is absolutely right; there are very real cost pressures. But we are taking action to protect those jobs, protect those industries, and address those pressures.

Two weeks ago, I was at the Max Aicher steel plant in Hamilton. It's an energy-intensive company that supports hundreds of workers and jobs in that area and is looking to expand. They reinforced how crucial affordable, reliable, secure power is for their ongoing operations and also their future plans.

That is why we have taken action to re-contract at a 30% discount the bad sweetheart deals that we saw the former Liberal government sign.

It's why we've taken action to bring forward the largest competitive energy procurement in Canadian history—and expanding that up to 7,500 megawatts—to keep costs down, to focus on driving reductions in energy prices for the people of this province, as well as introducing efficiency programs to put real money back into the pockets of these entrepreneurs who are able to invest in the people and in products—

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

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Thank you to the associate minister for his response.

Speaker, people remember the dangerous state the previous Liberal government left our energy system in—

sky-high bills, a weakened grid, and industries warned that they could not keep their doors open. Those choices hurt workers. They pushed jobs out of our province. And they left families paying the price.

Today, our government is doing the opposite. We're keeping power stable. We're keeping costs down. And we're giving companies the confidence they need to grow right here in Ontario.

Speaker, can the associate minister explain how strengthening Ontario's energy system is helping to protect jobs and keep our province competitive in the face of global threats?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: The member is absolutely right; we saw skyrocketing energy prices in this province, under the Liberals. We saw massive increases in electricity costs, and that drove hundreds of thousands of jobs out of the province.

You can see the success of our approach last month alone—creating 55,000 jobs, building on to the over one million new jobs that have been created since we came to office.

How is this possible? Well, one of the ways that we've been able to do that is by realizing cost savings in our energy system, by re-contracting, by focusing on a competitive tension in our system that keeps costs down for ratepayers. As a result of that, we saved \$23.1 billion in system costs that would otherwise, under the Liberal plan, have been carried by ratepayers—saving ratepayers \$12.2 billion in electricity system costs, avoiding the build-out of some of that otherwise very expensive new generation, and keeping rates more affordable.

1130

We saw the failed Liberal approach. We can't go back to that.

We're going to be focused on continually protecting jobs, protecting industry, and protecting the pocketbooks of the hard-working people of this province.

HOUSING

MPP Robin Lennox: My question is for the Premier.

Ontario is already in the midst of a jobs disaster, with record unemployment rates and people all across Ontario struggling to make ends meet.

And now we see you leading us further into a housing disaster.

Ontario already has the lowest housing starts on record, the highest number of people on the wait-list for social housing of any province in Canada, and 80,000 people experiencing homelessness.

With Bill 60, you are now targeting tenants and making it easier for people to be evicted. There is nowhere for people to go.

Will you withdraw Bill 60 or will you double down on Ontario's failed housing policy and lead us further into a housing disaster?

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

Hon. Rob Flack: No, we will not.

The rental market is one of the bright lights in the housing continuum today in this province. As I said earlier, we're seeing increased supply, which is creating competition, which is lowering rents, making it more affordable for people to live in their homes.

Speaker, as the Attorney General said today, it is about balance. We've increased fines to the bad actors, the bad landlords. It's about bringing balance and speeding up the process of adjudication.

This bill is good; it's solid. It brings stability to the rental market in this province.

Think about the small landlord who needs to have that income, that rent, to pay their mortgage, to make their car payment, to take their kids to soccer, to put food on the table.

The bottom line: This is what this is doing—it's bringing balance for everybody in the rental market. The plan is working. We are committed to continuing on this path.

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

MPP Robin Lennox: I quite literally gave birth this month, and it still wasn't as painful as hearing this housing minister say that this bill is going to bring stability to our housing market.

In my riding, people who rent their homes are paying 50%, sometimes 80% of their monthly income on rent. They cannot afford any more failed housing policy from this government.

By every metric, you are failing Ontarians, with rental rates soaring, social housing wait-lists growing, and rates of unsheltered homelessness going up each and every year. Your policies have led us into a housing disaster.

Will you take this opportunity to reverse course, withdraw Bill 60, and actually work with us so that we can help you deliver housing policy that will be effective in ensuring safe, dignified and affordable housing for all?

Hon. Rob Flack: Madam Speaker, again, it takes too long and it costs too much to get homes built in this province. But in the rental sector, we've seen success because of the conditions we've put in place to see positive results.

That being said, I want to emphasize again: 17,000 new starts over nine months—nine months versus nine months of last year, up 38%—51,000 new starts.

Why can the opposition not understand that supply creates competition, creates lower rents? In 40 months, it's the lowest ever in this province—record rental starts.

What don't you understand about the program?

We don't build the houses; we create the supply.

Competition is there. Affordability is in place. We're going to continue on this path. Why? Because it's the right path to follow.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: The Treasury Board supposedly has a role in ensuring our tax dollars are properly spent. In their own words—they provide leadership that supports prudent financial and risk management, transpar-

ency, accountability and helps to ensure value for money in government spending.

And yet, with the Skills Development Fund, we have hundreds of millions of dollars going out the door to applicants with failing scores. And we have a Treasury Board audit that found issues with a recipient, but they still kept getting money.

So, through you, Speaker, to the President of the Treasury Board: Do you have responsibility for ensuring value for money in the Skills Development Fund—and if not, will you admit that you're failing on your mandate?

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

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, I'll tell you where we get—

Interjections.

Hon. David Piccini: I'm sorry, Speaker.

I'll tell you where we get value for money. We get value for money when we fund union training halls in every corner of this province—carpenters, LIUNA, pipefitters, steam fitters.

They don't care about that, because they don't want to build. They don't want to build new nuclear. They don't want to build the new hospitals.

We recognize that to get the next generation—to get value for money, we invest in that training. The Ontario Construction Secretariat said it leads to higher apprenticeship, higher completion rates, better job placement for its employers.

It's not surprising that that member doesn't support it; I've never seen her on a single union training site anywhere in Ontario. I'd invite her out.

Join me, visit those sites, visit those places, and see the world-class training to ensure we have the next generation of apprentices—

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

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Speaker, we have the President of the Treasury Board, who won't stand up and talk about her mandate, who won't take accountability for a \$2-billion program that's being ineffectively administered. The taxpayers are not getting good value nor good results.

So that raises a question, not just for the failed Skills Development Fund program, but for all government programs: If the Treasury Board has no oversight over how the Ministry of Labour spends money, does it have any oversight over how any other taxpayer dollars are spent?

Through you, Speaker: Will the President of the Treasury Board demand the resignation of the labour minister and a serious revamp of the broken program?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, what failed was 15 years of Liberal mismanagement that led to the highest taxes, a debt, a stranglehold, on everyday Ontarians; a record of no building—no building public transit. They wanted to close nuclear plants. They wanted to shut down manufacturing plants. We saw 300,000 jobs flee this province.

Now, under the leadership of this Premier, we're investing in training in every corner, like the iron workers at Local 759, whom I visited up in Thunder Bay—they're excited, thanks to the investments of this Premier, expanding training opportunities—or, of course, in any other local in every corner, like 506, who are investing in the next generation of training, breaking down barriers for young men and women to enter meaningful apprenticeships. What's the result? A record high in a decade—a decade high of success for young apprentices—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): If I could have the attention of the House before we move on to deferred votes, I just want to congratulate the member from Hamilton Centre; I had no idea the baby was born.

Congratulations on your new baby.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Baby Remy? I can't wait to see the baby in the House. Congratulations.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 11 relating to allocation of time on the following bills: Bill 68, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes; Bill 27, An Act to enact the Geologic Carbon Storage Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to wildfires, resource safety and surveyors; and Bill 46, An Act to amend various Acts.

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

The division bells rang from 1138 to 1143.

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

On November 20, 2025, Mr. Clark moved government notice of motion number 11 relating to allocation of time on Bills 68, 27 and 46.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Racinsky, Joseph
Anand, Deepak	Gualtieri, Silvia	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Hamid, Zee	Rickford, Greg
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Rosenberg, Bill
Bourma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Bressee, Ric	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Ciriello, Monica	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Clark, Steve	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Cooper, Michelle	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Laura
Darouze, George	Mulroney, Caroline	Tangri, Nina
Deault, Billy	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dixon, Jess	Pang, Billy	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	Parsa, Michael	Tibollo, Michael A.
Downey, Doug	Piccini, David	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.

Dunlop, Jill
Firin, Mohamed
Flack, Rob
Ford, Doug

Pierre, Natalie
Pinsonneault, Steve
Pirie, George
Quinn, Nolan

Vickers, Paul
Wai, Daisy
Williams, Charmaine A.

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

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 71; the nays are 43.

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

Motion agreed to.

FIGHTING DELAYS, BUILDING FASTER ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 VISANT À LUTTER CONTRE LES RETARDS ET À CONSTRUIRE PLUS RAPIDEMENT

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

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

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1147 to 1152.

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

On November 20, 2025, MPP Hamid moved third reading of Bill 60, An Act to amend various Acts and to enact the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2025.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Racinsky, Joseph
Anand, Deepak	Gualtieri, Silvia	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Hamid, Zee	Rickford, Greg
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Riddell, Brian

Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Rosenberg, Bill
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Ciriello, Monica	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Clark, Steve	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Cooper, Michelle	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Laura
Darouze, George	Mulroney, Caroline	Tangri, Nina
Denault, Billy	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dixon, Jess	Pang, Billy	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	Parsa, Michael	Tibollo, Michael A.
Downey, Doug	Piccini, David	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dunlop, Jill	Pierre, Natalie	Vickers, Paul
Firin, Mohamed	Pinsonneault, Steve	Wai, Daisy
Flack, Rob	Pirie, George	Williams, Charmaine A.
Ford, Doug	Quinn, Nolan	

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

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 71; the nays are 43.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): We will take a short recess until the gallery is completely cleared.

The House recessed from 1156 to 1202.

ONTARIO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, TALENT AND INNOVATION STRATEGY ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LA STRATÉGIE ONTARIENNE POUR FAVORISER LE TALENT ET L'INNOVATION DANS LE DOMAINE DE L'INTELLIGENCE ARTIFICIELLE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 61, An Act to establish an artificial intelligence, talent and innovation strategy for Ontario / Projet de loi 61, Loi visant à créer une stratégie ontarienne pour favoriser le talent et l'innovation dans le domaine de l'intelligence artificielle.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1202 to 1203.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): On November 20, 2025, Mr. Cerjanec moved second reading of Bill 61, An Act to establish an artificial intelligence, talent and innovation strategy for Ontario.

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

Ayes

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

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

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 43; the nays are 71.

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

Second reading negatived.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

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

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

The House recessed from 1206 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ric Bresee: I'm very happy today to introduce Angela Malcolm, the director of long-term-care services at the John M. Parrott Centre in Napanee. This is a wonderful person and a great director for that facility I've worked with for many years.

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our guests from Retired Teachers of Ontario, a non-profit representing retired educators.

I'd also like to make a special mention of Jim Grieve, Retired Teachers of Ontario's CEO, who will be retiring after 10 years of dedicated leadership. He also served as a former assistant deputy minister of early years. As a constituent of mine, I want to wish him a very happy retirement.

Retired Teachers of Ontario's contribution to the community and their work supporting seniors across Ontario are deeply valued. Welcome and thank you for being with us.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Tanya Pol, the executive director of Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care. Welcome to Queen's Park. I hope you enjoy your day.

Hon. Kevin Holland: I'd like to welcome Stephanie Pesheau from TBT Engineering all the way from Thunder Bay to Queen's Park today.

MPP Paul Vickers: I would like to welcome Jennifer Cornell, chair of AdvantAge Ontario. She also serves as director of long-term care for Grey county. Welcome, Jennifer.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE INTERIOR

Mr. Aris Babikian: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Interior and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Meghan Stenson): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 26, An Act to amend the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

PETITIONS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure and it is an honour to present the following petition on behalf of professor emerita Sally Palmer, who is the director of social work at McMaster University. This petition is to raise social assistance rates.

This government has indexed people living on social assistance below the poverty line. They have actively kept people under water. This petition points out how this does not cover the rising cost of food. This does not cover the rising cost of rent.

It also points out how, during the pandemic, those receiving assistance from the federal government—it was determined that that would be \$2,000 a month, and yet this government is actively keeping people in poverty, actively keeping people in a difficult situation.

This petition advocates to double social assistance rates. I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and deliver it with page Ojas to the Clerk.

LIFE LEASE HOUSING

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: It gives me great privilege to table this petition I received from residents of my riding talking about the need for the Life Leases Act, 2025. There's currently no legislative framework for life leases in the province of Ontario, and this leaves seniors vulnerable to uncertainty, disputes, financial exploitation and bad actors. Speaker, this bill and this petition are asking for this House to support the Life Leases Act, 2025.

I support this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Anna.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Today I rise to present a petition calling on the government to implement a plan advanced by the official opposition to end gender-based violence and ensure women's economic security. This petition is called "Act Now to End Gender-Based Violence."

This matters, Speaker, because nearly 44% of women in Canada experience intimate partner violence in their lifetimes. The rate is far higher for Indigenous women at 61%; 2SLGBTQ+ at 67%; and women living in poverty at

57% or with disabilities at 55%. We know that violence is both the consequence and the cause of women's economic insecurity, things like job instability, suppressed wages, lack of affordable child care or housing. These conditions trap women and their children in harm's way.

This petition asks for three actions:

(1) invest in the social infrastructure, affordable child care, community services, shelters that support survivors and prevent violence;

(2) bolster women's economic security by ensuring decent work, fair wages, pathways out of poverty; and

(3) strengthen and fully fund the community public sector and child care services, which overwhelmingly are staffed by women, and have suffered for years from disinvestment.

I want to thank members of the OFL for bringing this petition and members of my riding for collecting petitions. I will gladly affix my name and give this to page Oskar.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I want to just thank the almost 800 people who sent this petition in.

Folks are concerned that we're losing 319 acres of farmland every day in Ontario, which threatens our food security, our food sovereignty, our \$52-billion agri-food economy and the one-in-nine Ontarians who are employed in the agri-food sector. The petitioners are calling on the Legislature to enact a food bill to permanently protect farmland in Ontario.

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

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank the hundreds of Londoners who signed a petition calling on the Legislature to fix the family doctor shortage in this province.

The petition recognizes that there are two and a half million Ontarians who don't have access to a family physician, and that includes 140,000 people in the city of London. They are not connected to primary care. They don't have somewhere to go if they have a chronic condition or if they need medical assistance, other than the emergency room, which is a very expensive way of delivering care and does not respect the needs of the patients.

We know that primary care providers want to provide care to more patients, and they would be able to provide more care if they had support staff to take on some of the administrative paperwork burden that they're currently dealing with. Therefore, the petition calls on the Legislative Assembly to come up with a strategy that is going to ensure that primary care providers have support doing the paperwork, dealing with the administrative burden so that they can take in more patients and also are more interested in remaining in this very stressful profession.

I want to affix my name to this petition and send it to the table with page Manaswini.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Jessica Bell: This bill is signed by people who would like Bill 5 to be repealed. Bill 5 gives the provincial government the power to override labour laws, environmental protections and Indigenous consultation in special economic zones, where any municipal and provincial law can be ignored and will no longer apply.

1310

Obviously, I support the petition, as well, and I'll be giving it to page Olivia.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of parents and families in Ottawa to table a petition entitled, "Save the AAADD Program at Algonquin College."

The Academic Assistance for Adults with Developmental Disabilities program has supported young people with developmental disabilities for nearly 30 years in Ottawa, helping them to further their education after high school to build critical life and employment skills and gain independence in a supportive and inclusive setting. But this program is scheduled to be discontinued after this spring, which means that for these young people, there will be no longer a post-secondary option.

I had the opportunity to meet a number of the students this summer, and I asked them what they liked most about this program. They all spoke about how much they loved being at college like their peers, the job opportunities that they had as a result of this program and the really great friendships that they developed with other students and with their faculty. They really want to continue in the program, and they want to see other young people have that opportunity.

And these parents, of course, are fighting very hard for their children to have the same access to post-secondary that every other child in Ontario has, so they are calling on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide the funding to allow this program to continue.

I wholeheartedly endorse this petition, will sign my name to it and send it to the table with page Emery.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm presenting petitions signed by my constituents calling to have the provincial government stop their attack on tenants' rights.

We saw this morning, with Bill 60, the direction this government is going in. But it's very clear that tenants, in fact, want the government to stand up for them. They want protection in terms of the vacancy decontrol system that's in place. They need real rent control so that landlords—corporate landlords, let's be clear—can no longer put them in an impossible position of not being able to afford their rent and knowing that everything else would have to be cut.

I agree with this petition. I'll sign it and I will give it to page Jasper to take to the table.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's a great honour for me to present the following petition today. As London is a health care hub in southwestern Ontario, this petition is entitled, "Health Care: Not for Sale."

This government has moved from a Canadian style of health care delivery towards a US style, where it is all about privatization, and it is about "profitization." But when care and profit compete with one another, profit always wins.

This government has had more care for corporations and less about people. They've continued the work that was started by the Liberal government to eat at our treasured public health care system.

This petition indicates that it will bleed nurses, doctors, PSWs out of public hospitals, and it will make our health care crisis worse. We are seeing it in real time in hospitals and in health care facilities across our province.

We also saw that this government's Bill 124 chased amazing nurses out of our health care system and has forced them to go to the United States. We are not the United States here, Speaker. In Ontario, we are Canadians, and we need to value our Canadian value of publicly delivered health care.

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and deliver it with page Anna to the Clerks.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I have a petition here that is calling for a doubling of OW and ODSP.

Ontario Works is currently \$733 a month. That's for your rent and your food. For folks with disabilities, it's \$1,308. We know this is inadequate, that people can't survive and thrive with this amount of money. And in order to find work, in order to parent your kids, in order to thrive as a citizen, you need adequate money for a roof and food. We'll continue to see people pushed into homelessness if we don't ensure that they have enough to survive.

I fully support this bill, and I will pass it to page Emelin.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

MPP Jamie West: This petition is entitled, "Scrap Bill 5 and Do Development Right!"

This talks about Bill 5 and how the special development zones allow the ministry to sort of suspend any existing labour laws, environmental protections, public health rules, even legal liability. They have major concerns about the fact that First Nations leadership was not consulted about this and the duty to consult was overridden and it ignored the requirement of free, prior, informed consent. Bill 5 disrespects treaty rights. It threatens critical land and water by gutting protections for archaeological sites and endangered species in the province.

With Bill 5, last week we were at a project put on by LAND. They showed some of the area and had a video talking about the land that would be affected up north and

how important it is to protect it to preserve the environment and the way of life of the First Nations people and treaty holders that are there. I want to give a shout-out to Jeronimo, who isn't doing very well—I hope he has a quick recovery from his illness—who was featured in that video.

I support this petition. They're petitioning the government to repeal Bill 5, start over with a full consultation, including with First Nations, to do development right in Ontario. I support this petition. I'll affix my signature and provide it to page Manaswini for the table.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I have signatures here. In the summer, people were outraged about the special economic zones. These are authoritarian-style measures that aim to remove any protections, whether it be for the environment, the Indigenous peoples of the land and their consent, and labour laws. I don't think it's good practice to head down this path.

I support this petition that calls to repeal Bill 5, and I will sign it, and I will pass it to page Raj.

NUCLEAR WASTE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: This petition is calling for a pause on the efforts to establish a nuclear waste site in northwestern Ontario. The people of the north have expressed their concerns about the safety of their highways repeatedly in this House. First Nations have made it clear that they do not want to have to deal with the problems that would come with this. I'm asking that the efforts be paused until there's a full consultation with affected northern and Indigenous communities so that issues of transportation and safety can properly be dealt with.

I support this petition. I sign it, and I give it to page Ojas for the table.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Chris Glover: This petition is entitled "Rent Control for All Tenants," and I think it's particularly poignant on this day when the government just passed Bill 60, which will further worsen the homelessness crisis. There are 100 agencies who have talked about how Bill 60 will worsen the homelessness crisis because it will allow landlords to evict tenants who are paying their rent. We've seen this in the past. This petition talks about how, in 2024, in Mississauga, Chartwell evicted 200 seniors from their homes—

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Shame.

Mr. Chris Glover: Yes—including a 102-year-old because they were selling the building to another developer, and the developer wanted an empty premises so that they would be able to jack up the rents in those places. So basically, they evicted 200 seniors in order to maximize their profit. It was absolutely shameful, what they did.

This government has threatened to eliminate rent control entirely. They've already eliminated it on any building built after 2018, and they've also threatened to end ongoing tenancy, so that every year, tenants would have to renegotiate their tenancy with the landlord, and he would be able to charge whatever he wanted—or he/she would be able to charge whatever they wanted. It's completely unfair to the tenants.

We also need fairness for landlords. We need fairness in the system. This government's destruction of the Landlord Tenant Board has meant that nobody can get a hearing, and there is no fairness for either tenants or landlords.

Right now, I fully support this petition to bring back rent control for all tenants. I will affix my signature and pass it to page Violet to take to the table.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(g), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required. Therefore, the afternoon routine on Wednesday, November 26, 2025, shall commence at 1 p.m.

1320

OPPOSITION DAY

TENANT PROTECTION

PROTECTION DES LOCATAIRES

MPP Catherine McKenney: I move that:

Whereas housing is a human right, and every Ontarian deserves a safe, secure and affordable place to call home; and

Whereas Ontario is losing thousands of affordable rentals every year due to acquisition by corporate landlords that displace tenants in order to raise rents; and

Whereas this unethical business model and other unfair practices that threaten rental affordability and security of tenure for tenants are incentivized by the lack of real rent control in Ontario; and

Whereas chronic delays and understaffing at the Landlord and Tenant Board have allowed bad-faith actors to exploit the system, undermine fairness and deny timely access to justice; and

Whereas the Ontario government refuses to invest in new, permanently affordable, public, non-profit and co-op homes that provide a non-market alternative to private for-profit housing; and

Whereas Bill 60 will increase rent gouging and unethical eviction in Ontario, worsening the housing and homelessness crisis;

Therefore, in the opinion of the House, the government of Ontario must immediately protect rental affordability and security of tenure by reversing Bill 60, restoring real

rent control, establishing vacancy control and ending bad-faith evictions.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Ms. McKenney has moved opposition day number 3. I recognize the member to begin debate.

MPP Catherine McKenney: Speaker, I do trust that we can all agree here that housing is a human right and that every Ontarian does deserve a safe, secure and affordable place to call home, but right now, in this government's Ontario, that right is being systematically destroyed.

Over 80,000 people are homeless today. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario projects that that number will reach 300,000 in a decade without serious intervention. There is not a single city in Ontario where a minimum wage worker can afford a one-bedroom apartment—not one. And what is this government's response? Bill 60, an attack on renters that will make the crisis worse.

Speaker, today the NDP is putting forward a real plan—a plan that will keep people housed, keep them in their homes and pull people out of homelessness.

Right now, 29% of renters in Ontario are in core housing need—almost 250,000 households paying more than they can afford. They are mostly low income and at risk of homelessness if evicted.

It's getting worse every day. Corporate landlords are buying up affordable rental buildings, squeezing out existing tenants and raising rents. We're losing thousands of affordable rentals every year—not to natural disasters, not to aging infrastructure, but to corporate greed enabled by this government's policies. Why? Because Ontario's rent control system—vacancy decontrol—creates a powerful incentive for corporate landlords to get rid of tenants.

Thanks to this government's loophole, rentals built after 2018 are exempt from rent control entirely. Landlords can raise your rent to whatever they want, whenever they want. This government has actually defended rent increases as high as 57%—57%. Tell me, Speaker, whose wages have gone up 57%? Whose ODSP has gone up 57%? Whose pension has gone up 57%? No one's, but this government thinks that rent increases like this are just fine.

Now, with Bill 60, this government is making it even easier to evict people. They're cutting notice periods in half. They're slashing appeal times from 30 to 15 days to challenge an unfair decision at the LTB. The Attorney General has been clear about what comes next: Ending evergreen month-to-month leases, eliminating security of tenure, keeping tenants in constant fear that they'll lose their home. Speaker, this is not a housing plan. This is a homelessness plan.

But the NDP does have a plan. We don't have a press release. We don't have a scapegoating exercise. We have a real plan. We would stop attacks on renters, we would build non-market affordable housing and we would legalize affordable housing options.

Speaker, let me be clear: The choice before this Legislature is clear. This government's plan: attack renters with Bill 60, make evictions faster and easier, defend 57% rent increases, refuse to build truly affordable housing, meet

only 33% of their own housing targets and allow 300,000 people to become homeless by 2035. Our plan would stop Bill 60 and restore real rent control. We would end bad-faith evictions. We would build 300,000 units of permanently affordable housing. We would legalize missing-middle housing, and we would fix the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Speaker, I know what affordable housing looks like. I know what security of tenure means. I know what it's like to have a home that you don't have to worry about losing because your landlord wants to squeeze you out. Right now, people are frightened. We held town halls across Ontario, and we heard from dozens and dozens of renters living in fear—fear of renoviction, fear of eviction, fear that one missed paycheque will put them on the street. The NDP has a plan to fix it, a plan that builds homes people can afford.

This motion calls on the government to reverse Bill 60, restore real rent control, establish vacancy control and end bad-faith evictions. These are urgent, necessary steps to protect renters and begin solving Ontario's housing crisis. I urge all members of this House to support this motion. Support the principle that housing is truly a human right.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. Adil Shamji: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to elaborate on my perspective and our caucus's perspective on this government's failures that have contributed to the housing crisis. I also want to thank the member who introduced this motion for shining a light on, truly, what is a particularly important issue on a day like today, on a day when this government forced through legislation that makes an unprecedented attack on renters and does so by ignoring the basic fundamentals of democracy by time allocating that motion, not allowing it to go through public hearings and limiting the amount of debate. This is a valuable opportunity for us to continue to elaborate on why we must always strive for balance, fairness, justice and not taking exclusively one side in the crisis that faces our housing sector.

Madam Speaker, after record failures revealing progressive incompetence and lack of political will by this government, it's time for a government that is willing to protect renters and treat housing the way it deserves to be: as a human right. Housing instability in Ontario is a vicious cycle of progressive failure over the last seven years. We've seen this government continue to boast while they have the worst home-building record in the entire country, with increasing cycles of homelessness, encampments, renovictions and demovictions.

And it's fair to ask, what is the heart of this housing crisis? Is it with the chronic failures and backlogs at the Landlord and Tenant Board, where bad-faith actors exploit the system and deny timely access to justice? Perhaps it's with the wait-list crisis—and you'd be right to ask, which wait-list crisis am I talking about? I'm not talking about health care today. I'm talking about the wait-list crisis in access to supportive housing where, as of 2024, there were

36,378 people seeking support in supportive housing. Perhaps, instead, it is with the rise in mental health issues, where concerns about housing have increased Ontarians' anxiety, depression and psychological distress. Perhaps it's with all of them.

But the answer is that the cycle will continue to run on and on and on because of this government's persistent refusal to invest in new, permanently affordable housing to fix the crises that it is dead set on continuing to worsen. And perhaps we can all unite behind a motion that will allow us to fight for an Ontario that is safe, secure, affordable and fair to everyone.

1330

This government has the worst home-building record across the entire country, the only province with a double-digit decline in housing starts this year compared to last year. For all that they say about protecting Ontario, all they've managed to do in the housing sector is push people into homelessness and encampments. We are seeing families priced out of the housing sector, rampant renovictions and demovictions, and an unprecedented backlog at the Landlord and Tenant Board.

One would think, in the setting of all of those things, we would have a government that would act with ambition, with audacity—ideally, a little bit of compassion. For those who are watching, we will get none of those things from this government.

They showed their hand just a few weeks ago when, in introducing Bill 60, they had the audacity to try to socialize the idea of eliminating security of tenure. Security of tenure is a principle that allows tenants in good standing to remain in their home until they wish to move on. It protects them against forced eviction, harassment and other threats. In other jurisdictions where security of tenure has been eliminated, we've seen a dramatic increase in the number of evictions, particularly bad-faith evictions.

Now, we all know that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in a subsequent step to the massive province-wide outcry to this, has come forward and said he's not going to proceed with that consultation—for now. What we are looking for is an unequivocal statement that eliminating security of tenure will never be an option by any member of that government, ever.

Bill 60, as I mentioned earlier, passed just this morning. It abolishes many of the fundamental rights that renters have. It allows a landlord to take aim at and evict a renter who is a single day late on their rent payment.

Now, in my constituency office, there is no shortage of people who come in, both landlords and tenants, who are being taken advantage of by bad-faith actors on both sides. People who persistently don't pay their rent, who are taking advantage of the system, do need to be held accountable. But we are in an affordability crisis, and to any member in this House who has, for example, paid a credit card bill even a day late, imagine if the bank could come after you and take away your credit cards, shut down your bank account. Bill 60 allows exactly that. It takes a unilateral, mean-spirited approach to blaming all of the justice issues in our housing sector entirely on renters.

But it isn't, of course, the only harmful provision in that legislation. I could go on and on, but I have to share my time with other members, so I will leave it at this: Bill 60 was rushed through with inadequate public consultation, and many people have significant concerns. It needs to go back to the table, and it needs to be removed.

If we actually want to be serious about addressing the housing crisis, I would point to the track record of my own caucus, in particular a number of the concrete recommendations that we have put forward. For example, we said that we can get more people into homes, both as owners and as renters, if we took steps such as eliminating the HST for all first-time homebuyers on new residences. You would say, "Okay, but that's for homebuyers." Well, when you remove the HST on all homebuyers moving into primary residences, it allows, for example, seniors to downsize. It opens up new housing, two- and three- and four-bedroom homes that can become available to families and available to renters.

We've called for the elimination of development charges that would spur massive amounts of home building, including for rental units in particular. We've called for the elimination of the land transfer tax for first-time homebuyers, seniors and not-for-profits—the kind of not-for-profits that can build rental homes for us. And we have, of course, called for the implementation of fair rent control. A model that we like is the phase-in rent control that has been introduced in many jurisdictions, including the NDP government in Manitoba. This strikes a balance between protecting renters and ensuring they have access to affordable housing but also securing interest and investment from the kind of people who can build and make available the rental housing that we so desperately need.

That balance is what distinguishes us in this caucus from those in the rest of the House. The members on that side of the House believe that only friends and family can get ahead. That's why they are pushing to make it easier to get MZOs. It's why they are using the Skills Development Fund to divert billions of hard-earned taxpayer dollars to donors and people who are in the pockets of the Minister of Labour.

Everyone has a role in solving our housing crisis. And to us, that means growing the not-for-profit sector. It means increasing social housing. It means allowing pension funds to contribute, and the private sector, including builders and developers. And of course, there is a role for government to build some housing too. But it needs to be balanced, and we can't do it with one hand tied behind our backs.

What we won't do is support housing that is exclusively going to be built by friends and donors of the Minister of Labour, for example. We also won't stand for state ownership or dictating the terms of the market as the only way to solve our problems.

So I caution that in some elements of this opposition day motion we must be aware of and prepare for unintended consequences, which is why it is so important to not just have a persistent preoccupation with vacancy

control but to think very carefully and consult widely to make sure that we can avoid any of those unintended consequences.

To the members across, I hope that you'll support this motion. To vote against this motion is to say that Ontarians do not deserve a safe, secure, affordable place to stay. It is to say that eliminating security of tenure is an option, and it shouldn't be. To vote against this motion is to say that rent control is not a priority. It is to say that bad-faith evictions are not a priority. Which of the government members across will look their constituents in the eyes and agree with those things? I fear, unfortunately, that far too many of them are willing to do that. But we will not.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good afternoon, everyone. First of all, I want to thank the member from Ottawa Centre for their leadership in introducing this motion, and all of my caucus colleagues here, who have been out around the province, in their ridings and in other ridings, doing the important work that this government refuses to do, which is actually stopping to listen to the people who will be most impacted by this shameful legislation.

Speaker, this is a shameful day in Ontario. The government's attack on renters, Bill 60, should never have passed. It should never have passed, but this government rushed it through. They did just that, after shutting down debate, after refusing public hearings, after ignoring the more than 150,000 emails from Ontarians in every corner of this province, begging for them to reconsider—150,000 people, Speaker: renters, students, seniors, working people. Those are only the folks that found out in this rush about what was happening. And they're all saying the same thing: "Don't do this." This government said, "We don't care. We're not listening." They rammed that legislation through anyway.

Speaker, I've got to tell you, it's just another example about how this government's priorities are all wrong. Time and again, we see the same pattern: more than 800,000 Ontarians out of work, youth unemployment at record highs. The government is an absolute jobs disaster, and the Skills Development Fund, which was meant to help workers, to help working people, has been turned into a pay-to-play scheme that only serves this government's friends, their lobbyists and their donors. The Auditor General called it not fair, not transparent, not accountable.

And then we get Bill 33, silencing parents, cutting student services, paying Conservative insiders \$365,000 a year.

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And then today Bill 60 was rammed through, passed by this government—open season on renters. When I called out this government for their, let's just say, preferential treatment, the Premier shrugged. He said, "Well, whatever." And 150,000 Ontarians begged him to stop Bill 60. He shrugged. He rammed it through. When people in this very chamber got up and said, "We don't want this to pass," what was the Premier saying? He turned around and screamed at them, and he said, "Go get a job."

He really doesn't understand what's going on out there right now. Renters in this province are working people, right? They're people raising families. They're seniors. Many of them have two or three jobs. They're regular people, and they are choosing between rent and groceries every single day.

Well, I've got to tell you, Speaker, I'm not shrugging, and neither are the members of the NDP caucus. And that's why, today, I am so proud to speak on behalf of this motion—a motion that does what this government refuses to do: protect renters and make homes more affordable for the people of Ontario.

Our motion—yes, it calls on the government to turn right around and repeal Bill 60, because we know a bad law when we see one. We know where this is headed.

We need to also bring back real rent control, closing the loopholes that are letting big corporate landlords jack up the rent above guidelines over and over again; to end bad faith evictions; to establish vacancy control; and to ensure fairness, finally, at the Landlord and Tenant Board.

It also calls on this government to commit to doing what we should have been doing for the last 30 years, which is to build permanently affordable housing in the province of Ontario again.

I want to talk for a minute about the reality that Ontarians are facing, because it has never been more expensive to afford a home in Ontario. That's a fact. Ontario renters are paying the highest rents in Canada by a long shot. And if you're making minimum wage in this province right now, you'd have to work 160 hours—that's four full weeks—just to pay the average rent in Ontario—before groceries, before you pay for transit, before anything else. Let that sink in for a minute. And what has been this Premier's solution? Bill 60.

The promise of this government was—let's remember back to the early days of this government when there was some hope: 1.5 million homes. That's what they were going to build, Speaker. They are not even close. They've given up completely on that target. Housing starts are actually at an all-time low in the province of Ontario. We are dead last in home building—dead last.

But do you know what is going up? Evictions—evictions are going up. Homelessness is going up. Corporate landlord profits are going up. That's this government's housing plan.

This government would rather evict tenants than build housing. It's a fact. And this government is just making it worse with this legislation. They are fast-tracking evictions. They are cutting the time that tenants have to appeal decisions from 30 days to 15. They are eliminating compensation for tenants when they are evicted and when a landlord claims that they want to move in.

So let me get this straight. This government can fast-track evictions in 15 days—15 days—but it takes 18 months to get a hearing at the Landlord and Tenant Board if your landlord refuses to fix your heat? They can kick you out in two weeks. You can't get them to fix a leaking roof for a year and a half. Tell me how that's fair.

Speaker, the Landlord and Tenant Board is already broken. It is broken for everyone. It is broken for the small

mom-and-pop landlords. It is broken for tenants. Massive backlogs, endless delays—tenants are already up against the big corporate landlords with expensive legal teams and unlimited resources, and now the government is stacking the deck against them further.

This did not happen overnight, though. We've seen corporate landlords exploiting these loopholes for years. They've been hiking rent above guidelines. I mean, my constituency office deals with this every day. I know most of my colleagues are seeing it as well. They're hiking the rent above guidelines. They're unleashing renovictions. They're pricing families out of their own communities. And what does this Premier do? He removed rent control after promising he wouldn't touch it. He opened the doors to this crisis, and now he's making it worse.

When people say to me every day, in every community in this province that I visit—they say, "This homelessness crisis is getting worse every day. What can we do to stop it?" Well, let me start with this one: Let's stop evicting people. Let's stop evicting seniors. Food banks are calling on the government to stop the evictions. They see what's happening.

When they wrote this legislation, who did they write it for? Did they write it for the single mom who's working two jobs, who can barely afford rent? No. Did they write it for the senior on fixed income who's facing eviction? No. Did they write it for the student who can barely afford their textbooks? No. They wrote it for the corporate landlords who want to squeeze every single last dollar out of renters. That's it. That's the answer. That's who they wrote it for.

So while families are lying awake at night wondering if they can afford next month's rent, while seniors—and let me tell you, Speaker, I have heard from so many seniors over the last few weeks who are afraid of being evicted from the homes that they have lived in for decades—and while students are struggling to keep up with rising costs, this government is handing more power to those same corporate landlords.

Speaker, housing is a human right. Those are not just words, right? Every Ontarian deserves a safe and secure and affordable place to call home. Our motion is about getting those priorities right. It is about establishing some balance in the province of Ontario—real rent control so families aren't priced out of their communities, fairness at the LTB so tenants have just a fighting chance, building affordable housing so we're not kicking people out of their homes that they already have.

Let's bring back real rent control. Let's take a step towards a more affordable future in the province of Ontario.

Speaker, I'm not going to stand any more for corporate landlords being given priority over families.

You are voting to tell that single mom, "Sorry, you're out on your own." You are telling that senior, "Sorry, you're out." You are telling that student, "Sorry, just figure it out yourselves." I'm not going to accept that. Ontario is not going to accept this.

Support this motion. Reverse Bill 60. Protect renters. Do the right thing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I actually didn't get a chance to debate or to speak on Bill 60 when it came before the House because it went through the legislative process at lightning speed, like so many government bills that we see here. But I remember vividly why I voted against this bill this morning, and it's pretty much for all the reasons that are laid out in this motion.

The fact is, Madam Speaker, that our housing system in Ontario is failing, and it's failing especially for tenants. We need urgent and courageous change. Our communities are sending clear warnings: Families are being priced out, tenants are being pushed out, housing insecurity is growing in every corner of this province, and Bill 60 doesn't fix any of that. In fact, it makes it worse.

The evidence is overwhelming. According to a recent report from municipalities across the province, more than 80,000 Ontarians experienced homelessness in 2024. That's not a small bump; it's a 25% increase since 2022. Nearly half of those individuals have either lived in shelters or on the street for over six months or have cycled in and out of homelessness for years. This is not a distant crisis; it's here—in our communities, in our cities and in our backyards.

Speaker, the Landlord and Tenant Board is broken. Justice for tenants, justice for taxpayers has become inaccessible. In Ottawa, vulnerable tenants, seniors, newcomers, low-income workers wait months for a hearing. The Landlord and Tenant Board, the body that's supposed to protect tenants, is broken.

According to the Tribunals Ontario annual report, at the end of 2023-24, there were over 53,000 active LTB cases. That means that tens of thousands of tenants are waiting for resolution, and many never even see their day in front of the board before they get an eviction notice.

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This government has had years to repair the system. Instead, delays have gotten longer, oversight has weakened and corporate landlords have been given even more power.

When affordable housing disappears, homelessness rises. That's not an opinion. That's a simple fact. We are watching it happen in real time, and we're not doing anything about it. When tenants are evicted and there are no affordable options left, Speaker, they don't disappear. They fall into homelessness, and the data supports that truth.

According to municipal leaders, addressing this crisis will require an \$11-billion investment over the next decade, just to build 75,000 new affordable and supportive homes. On top of that, \$2 billion over eight years is needed to properly house people currently living in encampments. That's money we refuse to commit, or, worse, we propose a bill that makes eviction easier.

We cannot pretend this problem will solve itself. Encampments are multiplying across Ontario. Over 1,400 were documented in 2023 alone. These are not just numbers on a page; these are people forced to sleep in tents because they are invisible to a system that claims to care.

The government likes to pretend that the private market can solve everything. But proven solutions, like supportive housing and housing-first, only work when backed by real funding, qualified staff and long-term commitment—none of which we are getting from this government. It is neither humane nor economically responsible to leave people cycling between shelters, emergency rooms and police interactions. The solution is well known: stable housing with mental health support, social workers, employment assistance and community care.

This government needs to do the right thing:

- reverse Bill 60;
- restore rent control that works for the good landlords and protects tenants;
- end bad-faith evictions;
- fix the Landlord and Tenant Board so tenants have a fair chance; and
- invest in public, non-profit and co-op housing.

Housing is not a privilege, Madam Speaker, it is a fundamental right.

Et maintenant, je vais poursuivre en français, parce qu'il y a beaucoup de francophones dans ma communauté qui viennent aussi me voir à propos de cet enjeu. Toutes les raisons exposées dans cette motion expliquent clairement pourquoi notre système de logement est en crise, et ce sont les locataires qui en payent le prix. Nous avons besoin d'un changement urgent et courageux.

Dans ma circonscription d'Ottawa-Vanier, je vois chaque semaine des familles, des aînés et des nouveaux arrivants qui reçoivent des avis d'expulsion ou qui n'arrivent plus à payer leur loyer. Les évictions abusives, les rénovictions, sont devenues monnaie courante. Et maintenant, avec le projet de loi 60, le gouvernement a rendu ce processus encore plus facile.

Ce projet de loi ouvre la porte à davantage de hausses abusives de loyer, à plus d'évictions injustifiées et à encore moins de supervision. Il donne plus de pouvoir aux riches propriétaires, surtout aux corporations, et réduit au silence les locataires.

La Commission de la location immobilière ne joue plus le rôle essentiel pour lequel elle existe. Le système est engorgé : audiences annulées, délais interminables, décisions incohérentes et un chaos qui profite aux propriétaires les plus agressifs. Même la vérificatrice générale l'a dit : les locataires n'obtiennent pas justice. Et le gouvernement n'a rien fait pour corriger la situation.

La perte de logements abordables mène directement à une hausse de l'itinérance. Quand les gens perdent leur logement et qu'il n'y a aucune option abordable, ils tombent dans l'itinérance. C'est la réalité. À Ottawa-Vanier, nous savons ce qui fonctionne : c'est le modèle logement d'abord. Mais il n'y a pas assez d'unités—non pas parce que le modèle est défaillant, mais parce que le gouvernement refuse d'investir.

Ce n'est ni humain ni économique de laisser les gens tourner en rond entre les refuges, les urgences et les interventions policières. La solution existe : un logement stable, des services de santé mentale, du soutien communautaire et des soins de proximité.

J'en appelle donc au gouvernement : écoutez les locataires. Abrogez le projet de loi 60, réparez la Commission de la location immobilière et investissez dans les logements avec soutien, dans la santé mentale et dans les services qui préviennent l'itinérance plutôt que de laisser la crise s'aggraver. Arrêtons les expulsions. Arrêtons les excuses. Construisons un système de logement qui fonctionne, pas seulement pour quelques privilégiés mais pour tout le monde.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm standing here with my MPP colleagues, renters and housing advocates as we stand united in our opposition to the Conservative government's move to make our province even more expensive. I was shocked by the Conservatives' audacious move to threaten to remove rent control on all homes, giving big landlords the right to raise the rent to any amount they think they can get away with.

Now, the Conservatives backed down after public outcry, saying now is not the time to end rent control. But they refuse to commit to never reopen that horrible door again. They refuse to commit.

The threat to end rent control sends every renter I know into a high state of alert; of fear and anxiety. It is, quite frankly, an existential threat. Renters lose sleep, stressing over what life would be like if their landlord is given the right to raise the rent to whatever they want and economically evict them into a housing market that is, quite frankly, hostile to renters, and into an economy where over 700,000 people are looking for work. That is downright cruel. It is downright cruel.

Even with that backtracking, the bill that we are debating today, Bill 60, is just a downright terrible bill. It shows that the Conservatives are picking favourites—big landlords—over 1.7 million renter households in Ontario. It is a shame.

This motion that we are debating today is calling for a repeal of Bill 60. It is calling for the Legislature to fix the housing crisis, to make housing more affordable, bring in rent control on all homes, stop illegal evictions, and buy, build and fund the construction of 300,000 affordable homes as part of our Homes Ontario plan.

I want an affordable province. It starts with housing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Tyler Watt: I rise today on behalf of the people of Nepean—on behalf of every Ontarian who is struggling to keep a roof over their head—to speak in support of this opposition day motion.

First though, I want to thank my colleague from Ottawa Centre for bringing forward this motion. They've been a long proponent of housing security, and I admire their efforts to draw attention to this issue over many years.

I speak to you today not only as an MPP but as a lifelong renter thus far, and as a millennial who still feels that home ownership is out of touch. I also speak to you as a nurse who has watched many of my patients, especially the seniors, struggling with their rent.

Housing is not a luxury. It's not an investment vehicle first and a home second. Housing is unequivocally a human right, full stop. Canada recognized this when it adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948; through the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1967; and by way of the federal government's National Housing Strategy Act in 2019.

However, if you look at this Conservative government's record on housing, it's clear that they never got the memo or simply don't care. Time and time again, this Conservative government makes finding a place to live in Ontario more expensive, more time-consuming, less convenient and more headache-inducing for landlords, tenants, and homebuyers and sellers. It's long past time for this government to live up to those legally binding commitments, and it's about time that all Ontarians had a safe and stable place to call home. Yet here in Ontario, that right is slipping away from more and more people every single day.

The housing crisis is not abstract. It is not a contrived political stunt. It is not theatre. It is real, it is immediate and it is hurting people in every community in this province, including mine. In Barrhaven, Centreponte, Heart's Desire and Longfields, families are watching their rent go up faster than their paycheques. Seniors are terrified of being priced out of the communities they've lived in for decades. Young people—students at Algonquin, early-career nurses, trades apprentices—are losing hope that they will ever afford a home of their own. Parents come to my office, and they're worried their kids will have to leave Ontario just to find somewhere they can afford to live. This motion gets at the heart of why.

1400

Speaker, Ontario is losing thousands of affordable rental homes every year because of corporate acquisition and financialization of our housing stock. A University of Waterloo study this year found that corporate landlords are charging rents 44% higher than local neighbourhood averages. That's about \$670 more per month. We are watching the disappearance of affordable units right before our very eyes. In 2025, multi-property owners purchased more than a quarter of all non-condos and over 40% of condos in this province.

That volume of consolidation does not happen by accident. It is happening because this government has created an environment where buying up housing and pushing out tenants is not just allowed, it is rewarded.

Over half of all above-guideline increase applications come from these big corporate landlords. And why wouldn't they file them? Under this government, AGIs have become a business model—not a tool for urgent repairs, a business model. Renovictions and demovictions are ripping apart communities. People are being displaced from their homes under the false promise of repairs that never happen just so rents can be hiked for the next tenant, and that's unacceptable.

The motion before us recognizes that. It calls on this Legislature to finally stop pretending this is normal and

start calling it what it is: a crisis fuelled by policy choices that favour big corporate businesses over everyday people.

Speaker, this isn't the first time we have seen the consequences of this government's decisions play out in real time. We saw it in 2019, crystal clear, when the Conservative government removed rent control for new rental buildings and tenants sounded the alarm immediately. Just one year after rent control was scrapped by this government, tenants at 22 John Street in Weston here were hit with shocking rent increases: 6%, 10%, 25% in a single year. People who had lived in their homes for just seven months were suddenly told their rent could jump from \$1,650 to over \$2,000 a month, a 21% increase overnight. One tenant, Davica Persaud, said it plainly: "I know business is business, but this is absolutely crazy. It's not within reason."

Speaker, these were not luxury units. These were homes, homes that had received millions of dollars of public subsidies—from the city of Toronto, from provincial federal programs, from property tax exemptions—meant to support affordability. And yet tenants were told to either sign a lease with a massive increase or be forced into a month-to-month rate that was even higher.

This is what happens when a government tears down rent control and pretends that the market will police itself. It doesn't. It never happens. Tenants were threatened with economic eviction. Meetings had to be held in the building lobby because more than 70 residents were facing double-digit increases. Advocates warned that tenants were being pushed out, not because of repairs or renovations, but simply because they were vulnerable.

And Speaker, let's remember this: Despite the government's claim that removing rent control would spark a building boom, the data shows the complete opposite. Urbanation reported that by late 2019, 53 new rental units had been proposed across the GTA, but fewer than 4,000 had actually started construction. Rental construction has declined, not grown. Meanwhile, the only thing that rose quickly were rents. And I don't even need to get into this government's absolute failure on their record of building new homes.

This was the warning, loud and clear and documented. Tenants are being gouged. Advocates call them economic evictions, and the government's justification that removing rent control would magically solve supply has again proven to be a myth.

Speaker, that was 2019. But today, in 2025, the same government is making the same mistakes with Bill 60: speeding up evictions, weakening tenant protections and tilting the system even further towards corporations who already control so much of our rental stock.

We should have learned from 22 John Street. We should have learned from those tenants that faced 25% rent hikes. We should have learned that when you remove guardrails, people get hurt, and big corporations will always take advantage.

This motion gives us a chance to correct the course, to restore real rent control, to end bad-faith evictions and to prevent exactly that kind of abuse Ontario saw when this

government dismantled protections once before. I stand with this motion because tenants deserve stability, dignity and a government that learns from its failures, not continuously repeats them.

Speaker, I want to speak briefly about the Landlord and Tenant Board, because tenants cannot access justice if the tribunal that is supposed to protect them is so backlogged that it takes months, even years, to resolve.

In September, there were still 36,700 active cases, and it still takes between three to seven months on average to get a hearing. When someone is facing a bad-faith eviction, three to seven months is the difference between staying housed and ending up homeless.

We know that 84% of Landlord and Tenant Board applications come from landlords, and the vast majority seek to terminate tenancies. Tenants barely have a path to defend themselves in this system, and the Conservative government has made it worse at every turn.

Instead of fixing the tribunal and ensuring hearings are fair and accessible, the government brought forward Bill 60, a bill that makes it faster and easier to evict tenants while making it harder for tenants to raise legitimate issues in their own defence.

Let me be clear: Speeding up the Landlord and Tenant Board by stripping tenant protections is not efficiency; it is cruelty.

Speaker, Bill 60 passed today, and it will make this crisis worse. This bill changes compensation for personal-use evictions, limits Landlord and Tenant Board discretion on fairness, restricts tenants from raising new issues at hearings and adjusts notice periods in ways that overwhelmingly favour corporate landlords.

The government can claim Bill 60 is about getting shovels in the ground or reducing backlogs, but what it really does is open the doors to more rent gouging, more unfair evictions and more displacement.

We should be protecting housing security, not undermining it.

Speaker, the motion also raises an important point about public and non-profit housing. Ontario is the only province in Canada that downloaded social housing onto municipalities, a legacy of the Mike Harris Conservative government. Municipalities across the province have been left with the bill ever since. They want to build more non-market housing, but the property tax base simply cannot carry the load, especially with how much this government has downloaded onto municipalities.

The federal government has recognized this gap and launched Build Canada Homes, a national public builder for affordable, non-market homes, and Ontario should be doing the same.

Ontario Liberals support expanding non-market housing. We want to see co-ops, non-profits and public housing become a meaningful share of our housing stock again. We need to stop pretending that the market will magic its way out of this crisis. It won't. Housing affordability cannot be solved without strong rent control.

In 2017, Ontario Liberals expanded rent control to every building in the province. It worked. It brought back

stability to the rental market. But in 2018, this government ripped those protections away, exempting all new buildings from rent control, and ever since, rents have exploded.

The motion before us calls for vacancy control, preventing big rent hikes when a tenant moves out. Ontario had vacancy control until 1998, when it was cancelled by the Harris Conservative government, and eviction applications jumped 28% within just four years. That tells a story. It tells a story that when you allow unlimited rent hikes between tenants, you create an incentive for landlords to push people out.

I also want to be very clear about something else: Not every landlord is a corporate giant with a downtown office, a portfolio of towers and little direct connections to the families that they rent to. In my own community, I've heard from small landlords, people who have basement units or a condo they rent out to help pay the mortgage, who have had truly awful experiences with tenants: months of unpaid rent, damaged units, situations that drag on and on and on while they are waiting for a hearing at the Landlord and Tenant Board. Those stories are real too, and we shouldn't ignore them.

Most people, tenants and landlords alike, are acting in good faith. They want stability, fairness and a system that doesn't leave them hanging for half a year before anything happens. That's exactly why the Landlord and Tenant Board has to be an independent, properly resourced body that works for everyone who comes before it. It cannot be tilted towards landlords, and it cannot be tilted towards tenants. It has to be a place where both sides can bring forward evidence, be heard fully and trust that the rules are applied fairly.

1410

I've gone a little over my time, so I'm going to wrap this up.

We say that housing is a human right, but too often, that phrase ends up in a press release or an election slogan. Today, we are given an opportunity to reaffirm that those words mean something. To the tenants in Nepean who have been renovicted, to the seniors in Bells Corners who are rationing their medications so they can pay their rent, to the young people in Ottawa who feel like home ownership is further away than ever, to the families waiting for months for a Landlord and Tenant Board hearing that may decide their future—you deserve better, and today Ontario Liberals are voting accordingly.

Speaker, this motion is not the final solution, but it is a powerful and necessary step. Housing is a human right. Renters deserve protection. Bad-faith evictions must end. Rent control must be restored, and public and non-profit housing must grow.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to share some of what I've been hearing from the people I represent in London West about Bill 60, the legislation that this government ran through this morning.

A Londoner making \$70,000 a year has been in her home for five years, but only barely breaking even. She

says if this new bill passes, "I'm terrified that families like mine will lose our homes." A single mom raising two kids fears that Bill 60 will "force her to make impossible choices" when she's already struggling to buy food. A disabled senior says, "I am literally at my wits' end trying to find affordable housing."

Why are these Londoners worried, Speaker? They have a very real concern that Bill 60, this government's refusal to implement real rent control, is literally forcing people into homelessness. We know in London, the average asking rent for a one-bedroom apartment just in October 2025 was \$1,714. Minimum wage is \$17.60 an hour, Speaker. Workers would need to earn almost \$33 an hour, twice minimum wage, in order to keep rent at an affordable level. We live in a city where there are already 2,000 people on the by-name list because they are experiencing chronic homelessness. Homelessness is the number one concern in our community.

People in London are not calling for the government to make it easier to evict tenants. People in London are calling for this government to take responsibility, to build housing in the province of Ontario. They're calling on this government to implement real fixes for the mess that they created at the Landlord and Tenant Board. They're calling for real rent control, like what we set out in this motion, a plan that will make homes more affordable, that will stop unfair rent hikes and bad-faith evictions and will ensure fairness at the Landlord and Tenant Board.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I'm happy to speak today to this motion from my colleagues in the NDP. The core principle of this motion is one that Ontario Liberals share with our NDP colleagues: Tenants' rights matter and this government's record on housing has been an abject failure. Representing Toronto—St. Paul's, a riding where over 61% of the residents are renters, we can see first-hand, on the ground, that tenant rights have been under siege during Doug Ford's leadership or, rather, this government's leadership.

We have watched this Premier eliminate rent control for newer buildings. We've watched renovictions, demovictions—as we all have been talking about—proliferate across our communities. We've watched the Landlord and Tenant Board buckle under unacceptable backlogs that deny tenants timely access to justice. And now, we're watching Bill 60, just passed, threaten to make things even worse.

Speaker, we hear from seniors in our ridings every single day, seniors on fixed incomes who are being displaced from homes they've lived in for decades, seniors who are terrified that their next rent increase will force them onto the street, seniors who worked their entire lives in this province, contributed to their communities and now find themselves one bad landlord, one renoviction notice, one unjust eviction away from homelessness. In a province as wealthy as Ontario, this is unconscionable.

But wait. These are also the same seniors who are now mobilizing in great numbers, signing a petition my team

and I have started in Toronto—St. Paul's to protect tenants' rights. They will not sit back quietly and let this happen. Renters in Toronto—St. Paul's are aware and they are activated.

The members opposite will stand up and talk about their housing plan. They'll point to targets and timelines. But housing starts have plummeted in Ontario; we are nowhere near reaching this government's goal of 1.5 million homes by 2031. The Minister of Housing can throw around all the numbers he wants, but the reality on the ground tells a very different story. It's a fact: This government is failing to build the homes Ontario needs.

That's why Ontario Liberals have put forward a concrete solution to drop the HST on primary homes. That would kickstart 45,000 housing starts this year alone. That's not a pie-in-the-sky promise, not targets we'll never meet; that's real homes, real construction, real relief for Ontario families. But the members opposite voted against that.

But it's not enough to build homes if we're allowing corporate landlords to exploit the system and displace vulnerable tenants. This motion identifies a growing problem of large corporate landlords acquiring rental properties, pushing out long-term tenants and jacking up rents to maximize profits. This isn't just bad policy, Speaker; this is fundamentally unethical, and we need to protect the rental housing we already have, even as we work to build more.

That brings me to those AGIs, the above-guideline increases. What we're seeing right now with AGIs is a clear abuse of the system. Landlords are using above-guideline increases not for legitimate capital improvements, but as an excuse to drive up rents and push out tenants who can no longer afford to stay.

That is exactly why I will be tabling a private member's bill this week to strengthen tenant protections around AGIs: because the system as it stands is failing the very people it was meant to protect. We need to take a hard look at how AGI applications are assessed and approved. They must be limited strictly to genuine, verifiable capital repairs that expand the life and safety of a building—not cosmetic upgrades, not some paint here and there, not routine maintenance, and absolutely not improvements designed just to justify profit-driven rent hikes. My bill will ensure that AGIs are fair, transparent, warranted, and it will strengthen the oversight process and give tenants a real voice in challenging unjustified increases, because right now, the deck is stacked against renters and this government is holding the cards for the landlords.

Speaking of rent control, it's also worth remembering how we got here. In 2017, as my colleague mentioned, the Ontario Liberal government ended the long-standing exemption that had kept rent control off units built after November 1991, bringing almost all private rental units under the rent-increase guideline. Of course, that was reversed in 2018 when the Premier restored an exemption for any new buildings or additions first occupied after November 15, 2018. The Ontario Liberals continue to support a phased-in approach to rent control, protecting

older rental housing now while steadily extending protections to newer units.

Let's talk about that dreadful, dysfunctional Landlord and Tenant Board for a moment. This government has allowed the LTB to become a complete disaster: chronic delays, understaffing, bad-faith actors exploiting the system while good tenants wait for months—sometimes over a year—for hearings. As a member of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, I see first-hand how this government continues to stack our tribunals with friends, insiders and loyal—often unqualified—donors. These are critical quasi-judicial bodies that make decisions about people's homes, livelihoods and rights, yet this government treats them like a reward system for party loyalty.

Sound familiar? It should. We are watching a series of mini-SDF scandals unfold across the entire appointment process. The same circular economy of donor dollars, backroom connections and partisan favours is fully alive and operating, and it's not limited to one ministry or one fund; it is happening in every corner of this government's appointments machine. Ontarians deserve tribunals and boards led by qualified experts, not political patrons cashing in. Until this government stops treating public appointments like a loyalty program, confidence in these institutions will continue to erode.

1420

I've heard stories of tenants who have been waiting for justice while living in substandard conditions, while facing harassment from landlords, while wondering if they'll be evicted before their hearing even takes place. This is not a functioning system; this is a system in crisis, and this government's neglect has allowed it to reach this point.

I'm going to circle back to what we've been hearing a lot about today, and that is housing as a human right. This is not just a slogan—I can't believe we even have to discuss it in this way—but it is a principle that should guide every single housing policy that we make in this Legislature.

When we recognize housing as a human right, we recognize that no one should be forced to choose between paying the rent and buying groceries. We recognize that stability and security of tenure aren't luxuries; they are necessities. And we recognize that bad-faith evictions, rent gouging and exploitation have no place in a just society. And can I just say—the emotional toll that Bill 60 has taken on the people that we have been working with in Toronto—St. Paul's that we see every day, who are really concerned about their futures.

It's not just about politics. We all have to agree—all parties—and work together to find the best solution for the hundreds of thousands of renters in this province.

They deserve better than what this government is offering, and they deserve a government that treats housing as the human right that it is.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):
Further debate?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I want to share an example of why it's so important that this NDP motion on reinstating real rent control pass.

In my riding of Ottawa West–Nepean, a new landlord last year bought an apartment building, Aspen Towers, and almost immediately turned around and issued renovation notices to the tenants, even though the building did not need repairs. He sent them out right before the Canada Day long weekend and told tenants that they had five days to sign the paperwork and agree to leave, or they wouldn't get any compensation, which is not what the law says here in Ontario.

So I went in and helped tenants understand their rights. ACORN went in and organized the tenants, and they successfully fought off this bad-faith renovation attempt, Speaker. But then the landlord turned around and tried to evict one of the leaders of the fight-back-against-the-renovation attempt, saying that he was guilty of harassment. So that poor tenant then had to turn around and fight another bad-faith eviction attempt.

Thankfully, Paul won. He's a great activist and great advocate for affordable housing. But more than 80% of the tenants in that building were harassed out by the landlord. What happened, Speaker, was that rent for those units doubled. So the landlord won, despite the fact that tenants are supposed to have protection against bad-faith evictions.

Instead of standing with tenants—like these people, these seniors, these families who have lived in that building for years, who are working sometimes two, three jobs just to afford the rent—the government is standing with corporate landlords that are trying to evict them.

Just this morning, they passed Bill 60, and here's what Harold, a senior in Ottawa West–Nepean, wrote to me about Bill 60: "If this goes through and landlords start taking advantage of this, after having lived in our building for over 30 years, we would be forced to leave Ottawa as we would not be able to afford present rents in a decent, reasonably safe building and area on our incomes, equal to what we live in now."

That's this government's record on housing, and that's why it's important that we adopt this NDP motion to protect people who need affordable housing in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Bill 60, a grab bag of unrelated items, is being rammed through the House undemocratically without committee hearings or public consultation.

I support two elements of the bill: The harmonization of municipal road construction standards and the requirement to have a G licence for a year before applying for an A licence. Unfortunately, the rest of the bill is egregious.

Bill 60 attacks tenants' rights, yet the Ombudsman has been clear: Problems at the Landlord and Tenant Board were deliberately created by the Ford government. It's not working for small landlords and it's not working for tenants, yet the bill makes it easier to evict tenants and push people into homelessness.

The government's move to digital hearings has also blocked access to justice for people with language barriers, disabilities or a lack of access to technology, including many seniors. The Minister of Housing likes to point to

drops in rent, but the average cost for a bachelor apartment is still \$2,000 a month, so let's not pretend that Conservative rent policies are anything but a disaster for all but the wealthy. Meanwhile, corporations keep buying up housing, turfing out tenants and jacking up the rent.

What we need is real rent control and getting back to building deeply affordable housing like the co-ops and non-profits built in the 1990s that are still providing excellent housing at affordable rates. You know what this bill really is? It's the return of favours owed to the developers that we forced to get off the greenbelt gravy train.

The government is failing in its responsibility to put people over profits. Stop the evictions. Rescind Bill 60.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm proud to rise in this House to speak to this motion, a motion that calls for the rescission of Bill 60, a bill that was rushed through time allocation, a bill that actually bypassed all committee hearing.

What the committee would have heard, if the committee hearing was to proceed, would be at least two organizations from Toronto Centre. These organizations would include the 519 community centre as well as No Demovictions, and they would have actually come forward and said that this bill silences tenants. It's going to increase rent costs in Ontario. It doesn't do a darn thing to actually bring forward cheaper rents, and all it does is silence tenants.

Bill 60 is a bill that is harmful to renters across Ontario, including the 70% of renters in Toronto Centre, one of the highest that we know in Ontario. Bill 60 is a bill that has got to be repealed.

We know that so much of Bill 60 has been designed to benefit corporate landlords and very few others. Bill 60, actually, will now expedite evictions in a manner that will see growing encampments in Ontario, something that we certainly don't need.

We want to be able to put forward solutions that make sense for renters in Ontario. I know that something that has gotten this House's attention is rent control. And I want to just state, for the record, that when it comes to rent control, it was not the Conservatives, nor was it the Liberals, that have gotten it done. With an NDP government, we will get it done.

So Bill 60 has got to go. We will bring in rent control when we form government.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I keep thinking about Leonard Cohen's poetry:

I can't run no more
With that lawless crowd
While the killers in high places
Say their prayers out loud ...
They've summoned up a thundercloud
They're gonna hear from us.

Speaker, Ontario has reached its thundercloud moment. That is why the galleries erupted this morning when they passed Bill 60.

This government has spent years pushing working families, tenants, women, seniors, ODSP recipients, individuals with autism, children in protective care, everyone without wealth or political connections to the margins. And Bill 60, this attack on renters—this is a line in the sand.

We have watched as scandal after scandal piles up around this government: the greenbelt, Ontario Place, attacks on the environment and First Nations rights, assaults on democracy and even the criminalization of homelessness, and now, Bill 60, the government's plan to push renters out even faster.

Speaker, one in three households in Ontario rents. In Parkdale–High Park, 60% of my residents are renters, and this bill puts them all at risk. This government broke the Landlord and Tenant Board, and now it uses the chaos to justify the weakening of tenant rights, cutting notice periods, speeding up evictions, giving corporate landlords a fast track to force people out.

Last week, over 132 organizations, including food banks, including legal clinics in Parkdale–High Park, wrote to the Premier, begging him not to do this. They know what will happen when more families lose their homes: rising food insecurity, rising homelessness, children paying the price. But today, the official opposition stands with Ontarians who are drawing the line. We say stop Bill 60, restore real rent control and build public, non-profit co-op housing, because Ontarians deserve safe, affordable homes.

1430

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate? I recognize the member from Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you, Speaker.

Interjections.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you, colleagues.

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: Great member.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the member from Bay of Quinte for that lovely comment.

Good afternoon, colleagues. It's wonderful to rise today and it's an honour, always, to rise this week in the Legislative Assembly. Today I'm speaking to opposition day motion number 3, which was moved by the member for Ottawa Centre. As my colleague from Bay of Quinte said earlier, it only takes one government member, as it's taken over 10 opposition members to talk on this motion this afternoon. But it's an important topic—I have a long debate, colleagues, so plenty of time for them to heckle me. But it's an important topic that we're here to discuss—a fulsome discussion, I hope, as members opposite have provided a fulsome discussion on their ideas on how we can improve the housing continuum, the housing market and homes in Ontario—across Ontario. And the member from Toronto–St. Paul's made an important comment in her remarks this afternoon. She said, "Facts are facts." And I think all the government members can agree: Facts

are facts, and facts matter. Unfortunately the opposition does not back up their facts with this motion.

As such, I'll begin with some of the opposition's themes. I'm willing to confront some of these facts, and I will go through them this afternoon. But despite their rhetoric, and despite their insistence that everything in Ontario's rental market is moving in the wrong direction, the evidence tells a very different story.

Interjections.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I'll pause for effect, colleagues.

Rents are going down in the city of Toronto. And it's not just little old Matt Rae, MPP for Perth–Wellington, saying that. It's not the Minister of Housing saying that. I'll quote—this is the CMHC, so I think we can all respect that organization to do some important work. They give out mortgages across Canada and Ontario with partnership from the federal government. And it said that, in Toronto, the advertised rental prices in 2025's first quarter decreased between 2% to 8% compared to the first quarter of 2024. And, again, colleagues, you can go to MLS and look up rentals and see what the rent was in the previous year in Toronto and what it is now for a one-bedroom or a bachelor or even two-bedroom apartment in the city of Toronto. Rents have fallen, as the Minister of Housing mentioned this morning, to a 40-month low. Those are facts. The opposition can claim otherwise, but that would not be correct. And it's time for the opposition to come to terms with what's happening in their own backyards, Speaker.

Rents are improving across Ontario. And that's not by accident. It happens when—well, I can talk about rents in my riding. A house for rent in Mitchell, the town I live in and have the pleasure to represent, is \$1,700. That's a three-bedroom house—very affordable, I know, for Toronto. Come to Perth–Wellington. But \$1,700 per month is down by roughly \$300, is my guess—again, I'll have to do some research on that—for a house in—we can talk about facts, Speaker. Alternative facts: That's the NDP, and I'll get to some of those alternative facts, but they—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Order, please. Order.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Revisionist history, as I like to say.

Speaker, we're working to ensure that we put forward responsible, practical decisions and solutions that create the conditions for more homes to be built, faster and at costs people can afford. And that's what our government has done, and that's why the rental market is thriving, as we heard this morning from the Minister of Housing. We've heard often from him because the opposition likes to ask him questions, it seems, today.

We have seen over 51,000 rental starts in the last three years alone in the province of Ontario, a 30-year high—a 30-year high for rental starts, and that's purpose-built rentals. Do you know why those builders are choosing to build purpose-built rentals, Speaker? It is because our government took a leadership role two years ago now and called on the federal government to remove the HST on purpose-built rentals, and it's because of the leadership of

Premier Ford and our government that the federal government came to the table and removed the HST in the province of Ontario and across Canada on purpose-built rentals. And we have seen a skyrocketing increase in the starts and construction of purpose-built rentals across Ontario, and that's because of our advocacy and our leadership on that. And the benefit to that is, if you talk to the builders of rental housing—as I know my colleagues do, and I'm not sure if the members of the opposition do—they mention that the ability to have that HST rebate back in their capital costs allows them to build the next apartment building.

If, for example, you're in the city of Stratford and you're going to build a five-storey to six-storey building—I know; not very large for Toronto, but large for the city of Stratford—you're going to build two of them. In the old system, before we got the HST rebate, that builder was only able to build the first tower because they weren't able to go get financing, like a condo builder can, from a bank or a private lender, because they would have to ensure that they have filled it and have tenants and generate income from their building.

The fact that they're getting back, in most cases, millions of dollars for the HST rebate allows them to go and then build the second building once the first building is done and welcoming new tenants to their building—speeding up construction, ensuring we're getting more homes built across Ontario of all kinds. We're ensuring this through fair and predictable and enforceable rules for everyone, Speaker. And we're not done. I know my colleagues have talked a lot about some of the housing legislation we brought forward, and I'm pleased to share with them that we are not done, Speaker.

It brings me to a central piece of this debate, because the motion before us tries to rewrite the reality of what's happening in Ontario's rental market. They pretend the only path to affordability is through new layers of rules and restrictions and red tape: the three Rs—not reduce, reuse and recycle, Speaker, which is very important—but it's rules, restrictions and red tape—

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Please, no more of that.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I agree with my colleague from Essex: no more of that.

They agree that if we only tax people, somehow affordability will return to the province of Ontario. On this side of the chamber, the government, we just do not agree.

The opposition stands here today speaking in support of an inefficient system that is failing to protect Ontario. They're defending an overly complex, overly burdened and outdated process. And it's disappointing, Speaker. The approach is wrong for Ontario renters, and it fails to address the challenges we are facing. We know to protect Ontario renters we need a system that is clear, timely, balanced and functional. And while here they stand, wanting the public to believe that restoring basic accountability is somehow an attack on tenants, that simply does not stand up to scrutiny.

I know we've talked about many bills, but I'll keep my remarks this afternoon to Bill 60 because that is what's in

the opposition motion. In Bill 60, if we go to schedule 12, it mentions subsection 59, which deals with—more or less it's the seven days they talk about. This is what the act currently states:

Subsection 59 of the RTA, “(1) If a tenant fails to pay rent lawfully owing under a tenancy agreement, the landlord may give the tenant notice of termination of the tenancy effective not earlier than ...” and in (b) it says, “the 14th day after the notice is given, in all other cases.” They can give notice for the eviction if they fail to meet that. That is what's currently written, 14 days.

In the bill the government just passed, and we voted for here, as amended now, “Non-payment of rent

“(1) If a tenant fails to pay rent lawfully owing under a tenancy agreement, the landlord may give the tenant notice of termination of the tenancy effective not earlier than the 7th day after the notice is given.” The notice is given, Speaker. There is still a hearing. There is still a hearing, colleagues. It's the notice. It's literally sending a piece of paper in the mail, via email etc. That's the notice. That's the one thing they keep saying that's going to lead to higher evictions and the sky is falling, Speaker.

One of the other changes in this legislation that we passed, again, earlier today, was around the power to review. Basically, in the Residential Tenancies Act as it currently states, section 209(2), “Without limiting the generality of section 21.2 of the Statutory Powers Procedure Act, the board's power to review a decision or order under that section may be exercised if a party to a proceeding was not responsibly able to participate in the proceeding.”

In the amendment, which we passed earlier today, the power to review is amended and so it will state, “the power of the board to review all or part of its decision ... under section 21.2 of the Statutory Powers Procedure Act is subject to any prescribed limitations or conditions.

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“Timing of review

“(3) A request to review all or part of a decision or order of the board shall be submitted within 15 days of the issuance of the decision or order, unless the board considers it just and appropriate in the circumstances to extend the time to request the review.”

I just bring that to everyone's attention. Appeal rights aren't mentioned. Appeal rights are actually in section 210(1), which weren't touched with Bill 60, everyone. So appeal rights, currently, are the same.

It is the notification, colleagues—seven days, 15 days—the notice. They still have to have a hearing. They still have to go to the Landlord and Tenant Board. But I'm happy to talk about the Landlord and Tenant Board as well because I know it's been discussed this afternoon.

We came into power in 2018, and we inherited—as was talked about at question period by multiple ministers and parliamentary assistants—a province that saw 300,000 manufacturing jobs leave this province. I know in my own riding, in 2008, Campbell Soup closed and went to America. It was a Liberal member at the time, a very nice man—but Dalton McGuinty's policies led to Campbell

Soup leaving the province and ensuring that we saw 300,000 manufacturing jobs go south of the border or abroad.

Interjection.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you, Harper. I wish Harper was our Prime Minister right now; I'll just say that. Let's bring back Harper. I think we should start that, everyone: four more years, my colleagues.

I was talking about the Landlord and Tenant Board. We inherited a province with sky-high hydro prices. We inherited a province with manufacturing, when they said, "We're going to be a service economy only," which was very disheartening to the riding I represent, which has a lot of manufacturing and agriculture. And the Landlord and Tenant Board was in disarray.

In my riding, I have lots of farms. I'm proud to represent over 4,000 farm families in this place. When a farmer potentially buys a new farm and there's a house on it, historically, he may rent that house out. But under the previous Liberal government, the farmer would knock down that house. Do you know why? Because they could never evict a bad tenant. They could never get a hearing at the Landlord and Tenant Board because, under the previous Liberal government, they didn't invest in the Landlord and Tenant Board. So we saw housing stock disappear in rural Ontario because farmers had no choice but to come in with a tractor or a bulldozer and knock it down. And now, we've seen our government, since 2022, invest heavily in the Landlord and Tenant Board.

I've been the parliamentary assistant in the municipal affairs and housing role for a while now, and I remember, in 2022, our government invested more than \$19 million to help reduce the long-standing backlogs and accelerate the decisions at the land tribunal and the Landlord and Tenant Board. The funding helped appoint more impartial adjudicators in the OLT and LTB and support additional technology at the land tribunal and resolve issues faster.

I know the opposition likes to quote our illustrious House leader. I would like to quote him today, too. When we made this announcement with the Attorney General and the House leader, then the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, this is what MPP Clark said: "As the ultimate impartial adjudicator, investing in the Ontario Land Tribunal as well as the Landlord and Tenant Board will help break the cycle of delays and appeals—getting homes built faster and helping tenants and landlords resolve disputes." I agree, colleagues. That is what we're seeing with this investment.

Then, last year, in the 2023-24 fiscal year, we invested an additional \$6.5 million for the LTB to hire, as the Attorney General said this morning in question period, an additional 40 adjudicators and five additional staff, more than doubling the full-time adjudicators at the Landlord and Tenant Board to help address the backlog, improve timelines and strengthen client services at the Landlord and Tenant Board.

This is a very important fact: The LTB has reduced its caseload by 33% since its peak in December of 2023. That is great news. It's great news because we're bringing back

balance to a system that has drifted too far off course, reducing unnecessary delays and streamlining procedures. We're ensuring that hearings happen faster and outcomes are fairer, transparent and predictable, and we're making these changes while maintaining Ontario's extraordinarily robust tenant protections that remain the strongest anywhere in Canada.

Let's look at a few of those, Speaker. Each year, Ontario sets a legal limit on how much rent can increase for most—the vast majority of—private rentals in the province of Ontario.

Interjections.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I'm hearing groans already, Speaker.

This guideline is tied to the consumer price index, ensuring modest and stable rent growth. We require that landlords may only request rent increases above an annual guideline in specific cases, such as major capital repairs or significant utility cost increases. Every AGI must be reviewed and approved by the Landlord and Tenant Board, ensuring we remain fair and capped at reasonable levels.

I heard all my friends—I'm actually not a landlord. I can't say that for some of the members of the opposition. None of my family are landlords either. So Speaker, I actually don't know this world very well on that side of things, because I don't have personal experience in that—unlike the member from Toronto Centre and Spadina-Fort York and others who do.

As I mentioned, every AGI—above-guideline rent increase—needs to be approved by the LTB. In 2025—for 2026; the Minister of Housing provides the next year's guideline—the rent increase guideline was 2.1%, the lowest it's been in four years, Speaker, the lowest it's been in four years. That's actually the lowest above-rent guideline in the entire country.

This isn't the first time Ontario has had an exemption for rent control to encourage the construction of rental units. The first time, in fact, there was rent control and allowing above-guideline rent increases was the last time the NDP formed government, Speaker.

Interjections.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I know, colleagues.

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: When was that?

Mr. Matthew Rae: When was that? Well, that was back in the day of 1990 to 1995.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I'm much too young to remember that.

Mr. Matthew Rae: My colleague from Essex is much too young to remember that, he says.

Under the last NDP government, under Bob Rae, they introduced an exemption for rent control for all buildings built after 1991. Speaker, I can't believe I'm going to say this on the record: It was a good idea. It was a good idea then, and it's a good idea now.

The only person that doesn't agree it's a good idea is the leader of the NDP—and I think the Liberals now too, apparently.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: They have a leader?

Mr. Matthew Rae: I don't know if they have a leader for the Liberals. But the leader of His Majesty's official

opposition has said about her time working for the NDP government that she is really proud of what they achieved in government. I'm assuming that includes the above-guideline rent increases, which they allowed in those situations as well, similar to our government, and a similar approach that he has taken.

Speaker, to prepare for today's remarks—I just want a little audience participation maybe now for my colleagues to make sure everyone is still with me. You let me know if this is a good idea. I'm going to read, more or less, a policy. Basically, this is the policy proposal: “a control on rents that reflected not merely CPI increases but the actual costs of running and operating rental accommodation in this province. Those have been higher, particularly those elements that relate to energy costs and tax costs, on a three-year rolling average, which is the formula which is being continued, than CPI increases have been....”

“Once we take” in inflation over the last “three-year rolling average as the cost of running rental accommodation and add in the 2% for maintenance and capital expenditures that's built into the guideline, we have a guideline which is higher than the rate of inflation.”

Is this a good policy to implement in Ontario, colleagues?
Interjections.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Is it a good policy, NDP members? I don't think they're listening anymore. I wouldn't listen either, because guess who said that at committee? Bob Rae's housing minister, while they increased rent by 4.9% in 1992. Bob Rae's housing minister—it's in the Hansard.

Interjection.

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Mr. Matthew Rae: Oh, man. Well, we're not allowing above-guideline increases of 4.9%—I'll just say that—in the province of Ontario at this moment.

Speaker, I don't even know where I am anymore in this speech.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Ask Matt Rae.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I should ask Matt Rae—no, I wouldn't do that. Don't ask my wife about that.

Anyway, colleagues, I'll start with this. The opposition day motion fails to recognize a simple truth: supply matters. The reason we're seeing a decrease in rents in Toronto is because of an increase in supply. We're also seeing an increase not just in Toronto. There's been a brand-new apartment building built by HIP Developments in Stratford—don't worry; they don't donate to me. Again, it's six storeys. It's open now, and open for renters to move in.

That's because our government has, again, focused on ensuring more houses get built, rental units get built; ensuring we're cutting down timelines and processes; ensuring that we are there to ensure that balance is in the system. We've heard, colleagues, throughout the debate on Bill 60 and now today's debate on motion number 3, that balance matters. That's what Bill 60's goal is: to achieve the balance between landlords and tenants.

The vast majority of landlords are small landlords. They're mom-and-pop landlords. They may be someone who uses it to supplement their retirement income—or a

young person. I know a few housing developments in my riding in Palmerston, Ontario, where they built stacked townhouses. The builder basically told me he did it this way to ensure that young people could enter the housing market. What he has done is there are three bedrooms above and then one walkout basement, which are separate units—separate gas and electrical. That allows the individual to either live in the bachelor pad, or live in the three-bedroom if they have a family, and then rent out the vice versa unit to supplement their mortgage, allowing them to get into the housing market to build some of that equity.

That's because it's important to have a variety of housing built. It's not just Soviet-style housing. It could be stacked townhomes that allow some of that ownership, or it could be allowing seniors to downsize, live in the bachelor pad and have, maybe, a child live above with their family—again, helping with family matters in that aspect as well.

I've still got a few minutes left on the floor today.

Really, Speaker, the *modus operandi* from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is that we'll continue to fight every single day to protect Ontario's future by keeping housing and rental options within reach for families across this province. Our plan is working. The results are real, and the progress is undeniable. We are restoring balance, strengthening the system and building conditions for a rental market that works for today, for tomorrow and for generations that follow. While challenges remain, we must stay eyes wide open and be aware of the things that are improving so we can learn from our success. I doubt the opposition will accept that advice, but I offer it still the same through you, Speaker.

I would be remiss if I didn't remark on the second egregious example of the opposition once again failing to address the real work this government is doing. We were elected on our promise to protect Ontario, and we are doing that, Speaker. It's not just a slogan. It's not just symbolic motions that don't reflect the reality on the ground, but it is with action: action that builds, action that supports and action that strengthens non-market housing many people rely on.

Speaker, we are taking action through Bill 60, Bill 17 and many others that have come before this place as a foundation to build—real action, not just talk, because we know when housing is delayed, it's the vulnerable people who feel the consequences first. Now, colleagues, I agree.

I actually wanted to quote the motion we're debating this afternoon. It says in the motion, “understaffing at the Landlord and Tenant Board,” which is actually false because, as I mentioned, we hired 40 adjudicators, plus staff associated with that—five individuals each, usually for that individual.

And then also on this, the fourth or fifth paragraph, “refuses to invest in new, permanently affordable public, non-profit” housing. I find that really perplexing, because I spent half my summer touring the province, making announcements on behalf of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing at non-profit housing across Ontario.

We're investing billions—billions, colleagues, with a B—to non-profit, affordable housing, supportive housing.

I had the opportunity recently to join my colleague from Brantford—Brant in his beautiful riding to announce \$4.8 million in Indigenous supportive housing. And I printed the news article off, because I just wanted to quote one of the directors, Dr. Trevor. He said, "It's a renewed commitment to ensure Indigenous women and children have access to safe, affordable, supportive housing that is free from violence"—which I think everyone in this House can agree is important—and it was through our Indigenous Supportive Housing Program.

I mention that because unfortunately the members of the opposition, prior to the last election, voted against that investment. They voted against the budget, which had the \$14 million plus almost \$700 million in the Homelessness Prevention Program and the Aboriginal housing services initiative. They voted against it, Speaker.

I know, when I was here—I mentioned I've been in Municipal Affairs and Housing for a few years now—we brought forward that budget bill that increased the Homelessness Prevention Program by 40%, Speaker. Inflation has not been 40% over that time period. We increased it by 40%, the homelessness prevention fund, the main vehicle that we fund—

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: Some 83% in Niagara.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Some 83% in Niagara West, Speaker, because we have a great member from Niagara West who advocates for his community.

And so, Speaker, a 40% increase in the homelessness prevention fund, almost \$700 million, as I mentioned: That's the main funding vehicle that we provide to our service managers so they can decide what works in their communities, because we don't want—I'll be frank—someone in downtown Toronto saying what is supposed to be built in Thunder Bay. That is for the city of Thunder Bay and their service manager to figure out. That is also the same in Stratford: They don't know what would necessarily work in Stratford or what they need. Not every community needs emergency shelters. Some may need affordable housing or supportive housing. Some may need just purpose-built rental, more purpose-built rental.

And the reason I say that, Speaker, as I mentioned in the beginning of my remarks: Housing is a continuum. So when you build more purpose-built rental housing units, you allow those individuals who may be in supportive housing—and if they have been able to improve their standing in life and now can afford something more, they can now graduate into market rent. Those in market rent can then graduate, if we build more homes that you can purchase, into homes that you can purchase. And those who may have been unhoused get into supportive housing—and, for example, example, example, continuing forward, climbing that ladder, climbing to prosperity and a brighter tomorrow for their families. That investment of \$700 million helps this do that.

I know in Toronto, the minister, this summer, was with Habitat for Humanity GTA and the city of Toronto; 33 deeply affordable units are coming online because of our

government's work and support through that, and it really is being there to support those who are most vulnerable.

But colleagues, it's not just the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing that provides support to those who may be unhoused; it's also the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Health. I think of a great investment that we have made as a government in the city of Guelph through Stonehenge mental health supports, which provides wraparound supports for those who may be experiencing homelessness, and through a budget that our government passed and the members of the opposition voted against, unfortunately, colleagues. And so, really, that is why we continue to make these investments.

The one last point I want to make on the homelessness prevention fund was—so, not everyone was as lucky as the member from Niagara West to get an 83% increase in the homelessness prevention fund for their area. But every service manager—I called my two local service managers, and they appreciated this fact as well. We told them in 2023 what you're going to get in 2024 and 2025, because we made it multi-year funding. So they knew what they were going to get each year, which allows them to plan long-term—because we know there is not one short-term, quick solution to the challenges in front of us related to housing or many other challenges we deliberate in this place. And so, it was providing that stability—the first time any government has done that through this fund, and I know they appreciated that ability to make those decisions and plan accordingly, as any business or any non-profit would want to be able to do.

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Speaker, I was also perplexed by the comment in the motion around "refuses to invest," when just prior to the last provincial election, in the fall economic statement last year, we brought forward \$75 million for emergency shelters, but also last-mile or capital projects across Ontario: \$300,000 came to the city of Stratford for shelter spaces and supporting those who may be unhoused; \$300,000 went to United Housing which is in Listowel. They're redeveloping a building in downtown Listowel—again, revitalizing our rural Ontario downtowns—and building 10 deeply affordable housing units. That has allowed them to get shovels in the ground and construction started because our government chose to invest in those non-profit and housing initiatives.

Speaker, as well, I want to mention that our municipal partners already have tools to help us, stand with us, to build deeply affordable housing. They're called community improvement plans. It allows a municipality to defer property taxes, provide cash lump sum payments and help with financing a variety of initiatives. I know, again, in the town of Listowel, they have chosen to do this with Listowel Gardens along with CMHC, as I quoted earlier—a fact the members of the opposition do not like to hear around rental prices.

But with the CMHC, the community improvement plan and the province providing these resources, they're able to come together to build an apartment building. There aren't

a lot of apartments and there needs to be more apartments in Listowel, and I'm glad to see that investment—again, all levels of government working together, which is the key to this.

I've still got a few minutes, colleagues. Really, colleagues, I guess I'll conclude.

So, colleagues, we're here today to again debate another opposition day motion on us saying we're refusing to invest in supportive housing, saying we need to bring back real rent control. I don't know what real rent control is when we are copying the NDP—

Interjections.

Mr. Matthew Rae: —when Minister Flack and the Premier Ford are literally copying Bob Rae's rent control policy, I don't know what real rent control is—

MPP Wayne Gates: He's a Liberal.

Mr. Matthew Rae: He's a Liberal now. I won't tell Bob Rae that—

Interjections.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Wayne, if you run for leader—sorry, I can't say Wayne. If the member from Niagara Falls runs for leader, maybe he'll want Bob Rae's endorsement, but I don't know.

But it's Bob Rae's policy when he was an NDPer. Now, he's a Liberal; he changed his coat. Maybe the NDP will decide to change too if they get—I have an idea, colleagues. In my last few minutes—I have an idea and they brought it up, colleagues: Why doesn't the leader of the NDP run for Liberal leader? They can get together and be one big, happy family and suggest policies that will not build housing, will increase taxes, increase regulation and ensure Ontario remains overburdened with a Landlord and Tenant Board that does not protect renters or protect tenants.

Speaker, our government will continue to invest in those important initiatives and continue to build non-profit housing and continue to build infrastructure and continue to build a stronger Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Wayne Gates: I just want to say to my colleague across there, if you're so proud of this bill, Bill 60, then why didn't you take it to committee? Why didn't you go to every single community in the province of Ontario and defend the bill? Because it's undefendable.

This is all about one thing and one thing only, and make no mistake about it: It's about making sure your corporate friends can make money on the backs of Ontarians. That's what it's about. It's not about affordability, it's not about building other homes—it's about your corporate buddies making money.

And I want to say something, and I can do this because I have a daughter—and I said this a few days ago—who was living in the house. She did everything right: She went to school, got an education, got a double master's, got a job, and then she went to try and find a place to live because she was living with us. She had no disrespect for her mom and dad—she loves us, but she certainly doesn't want to live with us when she's 26, 27 years old. She went

out there and tried to find a place, get an apartment so she can live and get on with her life, start saving for a house.

Guess what it cost her to get a place in Niagara Falls? It was \$2,500, taking up most of what she earns—can't afford to buy groceries. The good thing about that, she comes to the house because my wife will make meals for her.

Is that acceptable to you on that side of the House? You stood up there for an hour defending it. If you defend it—

Interjection.

MPP Wayne Gates: Whatever it was, it was longer than it should have been.

But at the end of the day, if you're so proud of Bill 60—I've got 30 seconds. All those people who were here today gave up their time because they can't afford their rent, 800,000 people without a job today, more people using food banks in the history of Ontario and you're proud of Bill 60 that's going to throw seniors on the street?

You should all be ashamed of yourselves for supporting Bill 60.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: There's a basic, fundamental human principle that we ought to treat other people the way we wish to be treated, and it seems like this government has never been a renter in their entire life because the way in which they have attacked renters is simply objectionable.

People are asking, "Who does this government listen to?" The answer is pretty clear: They listen to corporate, monied people. They are an elite class who charge \$1,500 a plate while people in Ontario are struggling. This government governs for the rich, this government governs for the elite, and it's very clear through Bill 60. It's almost like the words "non-profit," "co-op" and "affordable" are like poison in their ears and like a dagger in their hearts.

The Conservatives called creating affordable housing and non-market housing communism and the death of the free market. This sort of obnoxious fearmongering has no place in this chamber. J.P. Robarts built 90,000 permanently affordable housing units and was a Conservative Premier, but I guess the difference is he had a social conscience and he had a backbone.

I encourage all of the government members across the aisle to pick up your phones and I encourage you to open up your constituency email—not your gravy-train email, but your constituency email—and you will see the droves of people who are pleading with you not to pass Bill 60. This is a bill that will harm seniors, people living with disabilities, those on social assistance, those on fixed incomes, young people, those people working two and three jobs simply trying to make it by, and you are attacking them. I urge you: Listen to the people who voted in this election, listen to the people you are obliged to support.

People across Ontario are scared—they're terrified. You are the one who is terrifying them, so you need to stop this attack on renters immediately and pass our opposition day motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I rise today in strong support of the motion to immediately protect rental affordability and the security of tenure for renters across Ontario. Housing is not just an investment strategy, it is a human necessity—a right that has become increasingly out of reach for far too many individuals and families in our communities, like my riding of St. Catharines.

For years, Ontarians have been sounding the alarm. Rents are skyrocketing, renovictions are pushing long-term tenants out of their homes and entire neighbourhoods are being reshaped by policies that favour speculation over stability. Bill 60 is going to make a crisis-level situation even worse. The rate of seniors 55-plus experiencing homelessness is increasing sharply for the first time. Why? Why, you ask? Because when this government removes meaningful rent protections, it opens the door to unchecked rent hikes and further instability for people who are already struggling to stay housed on fixed incomes.

I urge this government to restore real rent control to ensure that tenants are not punished with unaffordable increases the moment a unit turns over or the moment their lease ends. Ending bad-faith evictions protects families from being displaced under the guise of renovations or owner use, only to see their former homes relisted at skyrocketing prices. They are about keeping people in their homes, maintaining stable communities and allowing seniors, young adults, families and hard-working Ontarians the opportunity.

Premier, it's time to put people before profits and ensure every Ontarian can count on a safe, stable and affordable place to live. I urge all members to support this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Aujourd'hui, le parti néo-démocrate a déposé une motion. Pourquoi? Parce que le logement est un droit humain. Tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes méritent un endroit sûr, sécuritaire et abordable où ils et elles peuvent se sentir chez eux.

1510

À chaque année, l'Ontario perd des milliers de logements à prix abordables parce qu'ils sont achetés par des propriétaires corporatifs qui expulsent les locataires afin d'augmenter les loyers. Ce modèle d'affaires est contraire à l'éthique, ainsi que d'autres pratiques déloyales qui menacent les loyers abordables et la sécurité d'occupation des locataires.

Tout ça, c'est encouragé par l'absence de véritable contrôle des loyers en Ontario, comme les retards chroniques et le manque de personnel à la Commission de location immobilière qui permettent à des acteurs de mauvaise foi d'exploiter le système, de nuire à l'équité et de refuser l'accès à la justice en temps opportun.

Même avec tout ça, le gouvernement de l'Ontario refuse d'investir dans de nouveaux logements publics sans but lucratif, coopératifs, abordables de façon permanente qui offrent une alternative aux logements privés à but

lucratif. Bien au contraire, le projet de loi 60 va augmenter les loyers de façon abusive et les expulsions en Ontario, aggravant la crise du logement et de l'itinérance.

Donc aujourd'hui, on exige du gouvernement de l'Ontario d'immédiatement protéger les loyers à un coût abordable et la sécurité d'occupation en annulant le projet de loi 60, en rétablissant un véritable contrôle des loyers, en instaurant un contrôle des logements vacants et en mettant fin aux expulsions de mauvaise foi.

J'espère que, pour faire changement, les membres du Parti conservateur vont se ranger du côté des Ontariens et Ontariennes plutôt que des grosses, super riches corporations.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Jamie West: The member from Nickel Belt just gave a little speech in French. One of the first French words I learned as an MPP was “sans-abri”—one of the first words I learned. It means “homeless.” And the reason I had to learn that is because in Sudbury, although we had people who are homeless, we didn't have a visible tent city of people. And every year since I've been elected, that has grown, while the Conservative government promises to bring the rent down.

They're building more housing. The problem, Speaker, is the Conservative government thinks that housing is like making fidget spinners: They make thousands and thousands and thousands, accidentally have too many, and the price comes down. I built houses for 10 years. When the prices go down, we stop building. That's how it works. You need to build affordable housing. You cannot convince me that a million-dollar house is going to drop down to an affordable range magically. People just won't sell. People will sit on it.

The other thing that's important is they keep protecting themselves and putting the mom-and-pop landlords in front of them. And what they failed to recognize is that the mom-and-pop landlords, the ones who come to me and say, “I need help because the Landlord and Tenant Board is busted”—they don't understand that corporations, corporate landlords, are buying apartment buildings of 10 or 12 units and evicting everybody. They're saying, “Well, I have to do rental repair. I have to do renovictions. I'm renovating the place.” But what they do, Speaker, is they paint. They have enough money to keep the place empty for three, four, five months, and they evict everybody and then they double the rents.

This happens again and again in Sudbury, and each time they do, more and more people are homeless in Sudbury. That's the problem we're having. The problem is the mom-and-pop landlords—they don't do this, but they're competing with the corporate landlords and they're getting ripped off, just like every tenant is being ripped off.

The government doesn't get it. They keep saying they're going to bring more and more rental units, but rent becomes more and more expensive. And so they passed Bill 60 so that their corporate friends, their wealthiest donors, can evict more and more people as quickly as possible—from 30 days to 15 days, and rush it and rush it and rush it and build those “sans-abri” homeless centres,

larger and larger tent cities in every city of this province. Shame on them, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Catherine McKenney: Let me end this by explaining what's happening here: This government set a target of 1.5 million homes by 2031, they are failing spectacularly and they need someone to blame. So they looked around and they asked, "Who has the least political power here? Who can we attack without consequence?" and they landed on renters.

They claim that the tenant protections are causing delays at the LTB, and they claim these delays are discouraging investment in rental housing. There is absolutely no data to support this. We've asked; there is none.

So who benefits from Bill 60? Not workers, not families, not seniors or students, not people trying to keep a roof over their head: Corporate landlords benefit. REITs, property management companies—these corporations use housing as an asset to extract profit from, not as a human right. That's who this bill is for—not for the 1.4 million Ontario households in core housing need who are paying way more than they can afford to stay in their housing, not for the 80,000-plus people who are experiencing homelessness, not for the millions of renters who are doing everything right and are still struggling.

Renters are not the problem here. Renters are teachers; they are nurses; they are grocery store workers; they are students; they're your neighbours; they're essential workers that kept this province running through the pandemic, and they're doing their best in an impossible housing market.

The math doesn't work. This policy doesn't work.

Bill 60 will increase homelessness. It will destabilize families. It will push more people into poverty. It will retraumatize victims of harassment who can't get justice at the LTB. And it will make housing less secure for millions of people. It doesn't work.

The politics of this are cruel, and I implore you to think again. Repeal Bill 60 and do the right thing. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): MPP McKenney has moved opposition day motion number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1517 to 1527.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): MPP McKenney has moved opposition day motion number 3.

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

Bourgoin, Guy	Gretzky, Lisa	Smyth, Stephanie
Bowman, Stephanie	Hazell, Andrea	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Burch, Jeff	Hsu, Ted	Stiles, Marit
Clancy, Aislinn	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Collard, Lucille	McCrimmon, Karen	Tsao, Jonathan
Fairclough, Lee	McKenney, Catherine	Vanhof, John
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 39; the nays are 70.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECT ONTARIO BY CUTTING RED TAPE ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO EN RÉDUISANT LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 17, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant diverses lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question. Ms. Khanjin has moved second reading of Bill 46, An Act to amend various Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gates, Wayne	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Gilmour, Alexa	Shamji, Adil
Blais, Stephen	Glover, Chris	Shaw, Sandy

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. The motion carries.
Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):

Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
 AND SAFETY ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LA GESTION
 DES RESSOURCES ET LA SÉCURITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 4, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to enact the Geologic Carbon Storage Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to wildfires, resource safety and surveyors / Projet de loi 27, Loi édictant la Loi de 2025 sur le stockage géologique de carbone et modifiant diverses lois concernant les incendies de végétation, la sécurité des ressources et les arpenteurs-géomètres.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):

Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I now am required to put the question. Mr. Harris has moved second reading of Bill 27, An Act to enact the Geologic Carbon Storage Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to wildfires, resource safety and surveyors. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1533 to 1538.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):

Mr. Harris has moved second reading of Bill 27, An Act to enact the Geologic Carbon Storage Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to wildfires, resource safety and surveyors.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Flack, Rob	Racinsky, Joseph
Anand, Deepak	Ford, Doug	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Rickford, Greg
Bailey, Robert	Gualtieri, Silvia	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hamid, Zee	Rosenberg, Bill
Blais, Stephen	Hazell, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref
Bourma, Will	Holland, Kevin	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bowman, Stephanie	Hsu, Ted	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bressee, Ric	Jones, Sylvia	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Calandra, Paul	Jones, Trevor	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jordan, John	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Kanapathi, Logan	Shamji, Adil
Ciriello, Monica	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Dave
Clark, Steve	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, David
Coe, Lorne	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Graydon
Collard, Lucille	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Laura
Cooper, Michelle	Lumsden, Neil	Smyth, Stephanie

Crawford, Stephen
 Cuzzetto, Rudy
 Darouze, George
 Denault, Billy
 Dixon, Jess
 Dowie, Andrew
 Downey, Doug
 Dunlop, Jill
 Fairclough, Lee
 Firin, Mohamed

McCarthy, Todd J.
 McCrimmon, Karen
 Mulroney, Caroline
 Oosterhoff, Sam
 Pang, Billy
 Parsa, Michael
 Piccini, David
 Pinsonneault, Steve
 Pirie, George
 Quinn, Nolan

Tangri, Nina
 Thanigasalam, Vijay
 Thompson, Lisa M.
 Tibollo, Michael A.
 Tsao, Jonathan
 Vickers, Paul
 Wai, Daisy
 Watt, Tyler
 Williams, Charmaine A.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):

All those opposed to the motion will please rise one a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike
Begum, Doly	Gilmour, Alexa	Shaw, Sandy
Bell, Jessica	Glover, Chris	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Gretzky, Lisa	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Clancy, Aislinn	McKenney, Catherine	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gates, Wayne	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 80; the nays are 26.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):

Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is ordered for third reading.

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

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 19, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):

Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Harris has moved second reading of Bill 68, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1543 to 1548.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):

Mr. Harris has moved second reading of Bill 68, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend

various statutes. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):

All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 68; the nays are 38.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is ordered for third reading.

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

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

Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved third reading of the following bill:

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

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Colleagues, feel free to leave if you so wish, but I'm really pleased to rise to speak to Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act.

Madam Speaker, in Ontario and across Canada, we are navigating the impact of global economic uncertainty. Tariffs are taking direct aim at Ontario workers and communities.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Stop the clock. I'm going to allow all of the members to clear the chamber before we start the debate.

To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to my friends across the aisle. I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act.

Madam Speaker, in Ontario and across Canada, we are navigating the impact of global economic uncertainty. Tariffs are taking direct aim at Ontario workers and communities. That's why it has never been more important for our government to deliver on its plan to protect Ontario.

Our plan is one that delivers critical funding for workers and businesses, creates a stronger, more self-reliant economy, gets shovels in the ground on infrastructure across the province, makes life more affordable and puts money back in the pockets of the hard-working people of Ontario. It allows us to protect our communities and it continues to deliver world-class public services. Madam Speaker, let me be clear: It is a plan that confronts the very challenges that Ontario faces today while building for a more competitive, resilient and self-reliant tomorrow.

We know that Ontario and Ontarians are resilient, and I want to remind this House that it's thanks to prudent fiscal management and strategic investments that we are well positioned to continue protecting our province and building for tomorrow. The first part of our plan is to build a strong fiscal foundation for Ontario, and in just the past little while, we've received two credit rating upgrades for the first time in nearly two decades—one from Morningstar DBRS and the other from Standard and Poor's.

I have to ask this House, Madam Speaker: Where else have we seen a nation or sub-sovereign jurisdiction receive credit upgrades in these uncertain times? Not only have we seen these upgrades to our economic outlook, but Ontario has also maintained its AA credit rating with all four major credit rating agencies this year through these turbulent times. In short, this means less interest on every dollar borrowed and more investments in our province's growth, which means more money back in the pockets of people. It means more money to protect our economy and means more money to build critical infrastructure.

As detailed in the 2025 fall economic statement, the province's 2025-26 deficit is projected to be at \$13.5 billion. This is an improvement of \$1.1 billion from the

outlook published in the 2025 budget that I tabled this past May. This prudent fiscal management has given us room to act to protect our workers and communities and set the foundation for a more competitive, more resilient, and self-reliant economy and province.

In the face of economic uncertainty, our government acted immediately to protect Ontario. We have already announced nearly \$30 billion in relief and supports for tariff-impacted businesses and workers to unleash our economy. That money is flowing right now to keep our economic engine going, from our \$150-million Ontario Together Trade Fund, which is supporting small and medium-sized businesses right across the province, to our \$5-billion Protecting Ontario Account, which is providing up to one billion dollars in liquidity to sectors affected by section 232 tariffs.

What's more, Madam Speaker, is that we have done all this while finding more ways to lower taxes and fees to drive our economy. This means some \$11.7 billion in cost savings for businesses this fiscal year alone, \$5.6 billion of which goes to helping small businesses. We have done this while keeping costs down for the hard-working families that are counting on us in these uncertain times. We have cut taxes and fees and put more money back in people's pockets, saved commuters money by removing tolls that, in fact, the previous government put on, particularly in my region in Durham, the 407 East, the 412 and the 418—nowhere else in the whole province—penalizing one segment of the province. And, Madam Speaker, we made the gas tax cuts permanent. And just—

Interjection.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Yes, I heard a clap.

Just this last month, I announced that Ontario is removing the full 8% provincial portion of the HST for first-time buyers of qualifying new homes.

Madam Speaker, that's what leadership is about. We're leading in this economy. We're leading, we're putting relief in the pockets of businesses and people, and we're doing all this with never having raised a tax or fee. In fact, for businesses this adds up to \$11.5 billion in this fiscal year alone—a remarkable move to help businesses at a time when they need that relief. We know that investors around the world have confidence in Ontario, in Ontario's fiscal plan, in Ontario's plan to protect the businesses, hard-working families and workers in this province. They have confidence in Ontario's ability to deliver because Ontario has an ambitious vision and plan to make Ontario more competitive than ever. It's thanks to our solid foundation in key strategic sectors like mining, energy, steel and advanced manufacturing that that vision is already well on its way to becoming a reality.

1600

We're building growth through strategic investments, investments that raise our productivity as an economy and our prosperity as a province. Take energy, for example—which I'm sure the Minister of Energy would be very happy that I do because he tells me that all the time: Together with the federal government we are building the first small modular reactors anywhere in the G7, at the

Darlington site right here in Ontario. It's thanks to this minister and his team that this will create 18,000 new construction jobs and another 3,700 jobs to operate the facility at a time when our economy needs it most. It means generating enough power, which is the equivalent of 1.2 million homes—homes that will benefit from the investments we make here today for generations to come.

But we're not stopping there, Madam Speaker. Ontario is abundant with the vital resources needed to advance these strategic sectors, resources like the critical minerals in northern Ontario which are key to sectors in advanced manufacturing like EV parts and batteries. That is why we're leveraging key investments, like our \$500-million Critical Minerals Processing Fund, to help unleash our vast critical mineral resources. It's why we're working closely with partners like Webequie First Nation to kick-start the construction of critical infrastructure like the Ring of Fire, which I'm sure the member from Thunder Bay really appreciates.

Speaking of infrastructure, no government has dedicated so much towards building infrastructure quite like our government. With over \$201 billion already allocated to build homes, highways and hospitals until over the next decade, Ontario is more than equipped to match its growing economy with a growing network of infrastructure, one that will sustain the high growth we have seen in our population as well as the high growth we are seeing in the bustling new industries that see Ontario's potential and choose to settle and do business in our province. I'm one of those beneficiaries of a welcoming province, as my parents came from war-torn Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s—a province where you could get a good job, get an education, where you could feel safe. That is what we're delivering for Ontario again for the next generation and this generation and looking back to past generations.

And speaking of high-growth industries, let me take this opportunity to assure you that Ontario is more than prepared to continue attracting investments in artificial intelligence, defence and advanced manufacturing. These are all part of Ontario's economic future. Through the remaining streams of our \$4-billion Protecting Ontario Account, we will leverage the private capital necessary to fortify our economy, drive innovation and attract the best talent around the world.

Madam Speaker, this government's approach is simple: We are being fiscally responsible, protecting our businesses, our workers and our farmers. We are unleashing our economy. That is the foundation of the 2025 economic outlook, and it is the foundation of Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act, 2025. This legislation would give our government the tools to continue delivering stability in an uncertain world, to protect jobs, strengthen key industries and ensure that we can keep investing in priorities that matter most to people.

It reflects our responsible and disciplined approach to managing Ontario's finances. It reflects our belief that protecting the province means preparing for whatever comes next.

If passed, Bill 68 will allow us to move forward with targeted investments that help communities grow, support

for businesses as they navigate global headwinds, and ensure families have access to the services that they rely on not just today, but for years to come. Ontarians have faced challenges before, and we have always come out stronger. These measures lay the groundwork for long-term stability, prosperity and opportunity across our province.

I urge all members of this Legislature to support these measures and join our government in continuing to unleash our economy and make Ontario the most competitive place in the G7 to invest, create jobs and do business.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'm proud to be rising on behalf of the residents of great Ottawa West—Nepean to speak to the third reading of the government's bill to implement their fall economic statement, Bill 68.

We're already here at third reading, Speaker, even though the bill only just got introduced, because the government has once again moved time allocation on a bill, meaning that they're not allowing people to come and share their perspectives with the government about what the legislation would mean for them, changes that people need to see in order to make sure that the legislation isn't causing them any harm.

This is the same thing that they already did with Bill 33, where they told students, parents and workers they didn't care what they had to say: "Don't bother coming to Queen's Park. Our minds are made up. You have nothing important to share with us." It's the same thing that they just did on Bill 60, where they told renters from across the province who are deeply concerned that their rights are being taken away and their landlords will be able to more easily evict them, "We don't care what you have to say. It doesn't matter what you think. Our minds are made up." And now, on their fiscal plan for the province of Ontario, they are telling people the same thing: "We don't care what you think. We don't care what you have to say."

But Speaker, I have a few ideas why the government might be taking that approach on this budget bill, because there are measures in here that are clearly not meeting the urgency of the moment. I'm going to start with education, which is obviously very near and dear to my heart.

We've just seen in the past couple days that the Minister of Education is refusing to release the EQAO results, which show parents and educators how students are progressing. That's important information that they can use to know what kinds of supports should be provided for children right now, who are in the middle of their academic year. The government doesn't want to release it, which you know means these scores aren't great.

Of course the scores aren't great, Speaker, because the government has taken more than \$6 billion in funding out of the education system, which means larger class sizes, fewer educational assistants, a lack of special education and mental health supports—all of which are failing our kids. The government doesn't want to know that.

But of course, they don't want people to come and share their perspectives on the budget because the budget

doesn't do anything to invest in our classrooms, to make sure that there are caring adults, smaller class sizes, mental health supports and special education supports. So of course they don't want to hear what people have to say about that.

There's no real job plan in the budget, when we have 800,000 people out of work. In fact, youth unemployment is so bad that one in four students don't have a job right now. So of course they don't want to hear from people who are out of work or who are afraid of losing their job right now. Why would you want to hear from them when you are failing them so badly?

They don't want to hear from people who can't afford to make big donations to the government, because one of the things that they're doing is massively increasing the threshold for donations to a political party, and they're doing this at the same time the government has been shoveling money out the door to Conservative donors through the Skills Development Fund. That's money that should be going to train workers and create full-time permanent jobs.

The government can't name a single full-time permanent job that that fund has created, but the pattern is very clear about this money going to Conservative donors and insiders, so of course they don't want to hear from workers who need training. Of course they don't want to hear from people who can't afford to make big donations to the government, because why would they when people are going to say that that's not where their tax dollars should be going, and we shouldn't be spending our time trying to increase the threshold so this government can make more money off of donors that they're giving grants to?

Another area where this budget is failing people is in health care, Speaker. They did not put any funding towards right-sizing the Queensway Carleton Hospital, meaning that they're leaving half the population of Ottawa with a hospital that is far too small to meet our needs. So of course they don't want to hear from the people of Ottawa about health care, because why would you when you're failing to address the fact that people are waiting for 14 or 15 hours in the ER and that they have to wait months and months in pain for surgery or treatment at the Queensway Carleton because there just aren't enough beds available?

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They don't want to hear from people about how they're failing seniors and people with disabilities who need home and community care because they didn't provide funding to properly support those services and address the wage gap, which means that sector is constantly losing workers when people desperately need that support, and it helps keep them out of the hospital, which is a far more expensive form of care.

So of course they don't want to hear from patients. Of course they don't want to hear from seniors and people living with disabilities, because why would they when those people would come here and tell them that their funding is insufficient and they need to properly support the people of Ontario?

This is a failed budget, Speaker, and that's why they don't want to hear from anybody, because they like to have

their fingers in their ears and go “la, la, la” while they’re ignoring the big problems that people in Ontario are facing every day.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Stephanie Smyth: It’s such an honour to listen to the Minister of Finance talk about Bill 68, the Plan to Protect Ontario Act. He was talking very eloquently about the conflicts and the very challenges that Ontario is facing today, and also about being fiscally responsible, unleashing the economy, and how they are doing whatever it takes to protect the stability, the prosperity and the opportunity in Ontario.

Those are all really lofty goals for the province of Ontario. That’s what you expect to hear when you look at a fall economic statement. You want to see your government responding to the pressures they feel every single day. You want to see that they have a plan to help with rising costs, to stabilize the work environment, housing, etc.—all the challenges facing young people and families in every corner of the province. That’s what you want to hear.

But what we don’t expect to hear, and what we should never have to worry about, is that hidden deep in this financial bill is a major rewrite to the rules that govern our elections. I just don’t see how that squares. Yet once again, this is what this government has placed before us.

Buried inside this bill are sweeping changes to Ontario’s democratic framework, changes that have nothing to do with affordability, nothing to do with job growth, nothing to do with the everyday responsibilities that people are juggling. Instead, it just focuses squarely on giving the government of the day more control over when elections happen and who can influence them.

Schedules 7 and 8 are not housekeeping measures. They reshape the foundation of our elections in ways that serve the incumbents, not the public. One of the clearest examples is the government’s decision to eliminate fixed election dates. These dates were introduced almost two decades ago because predictable timelines make elections more accessible and fairer, and they give Elections Ontario that ability to prepare properly. I’m sure you all dealt with Elections Ontario coming up with this election back on February 27, didn’t you? They let schools, community centres, long-term-care homes and municipalities plan for polling locations. They ensure that 18-year-olds, new Canadians and people who have recently moved can be reached through targeted registration. And they provide voters with the certainty that is essential to full participation in a democracy.

Fixed dates were designed for the public good, not for the political interests of whichever party happens to form government. And yet this bill takes us backwards. If these changes pass, Ontario is going to stand with just one other province in abandoning fixed election dates—and not because it strengthens democracy, not because the public requested it, but because it gives the Premier the power to call an election whenever it’s most advantageous.

Unpredictable election timing is not a sign of a healthy democracy. We see where that leads: jurisdictions where

election days become tactical weapons rather than public obligations. That’s not a model that empowers voters. It benefits the party in power and only the party in power. And once fixed election dates disappear, so do all the transparency rules that depend on them: advance notice at polling locations, as I mentioned; structured preparation timelines; publication of projected election costs; and the safeguards around government advertising leading up to a campaign. All of that vanishes the moment the certainty disappears. This is a shift of power away from the public and toward the Premier’s office, and nothing in this bill justifies that trade.

The second major change is an increase to political donation limits. Under this legislation, individuals will be able to contribute significantly more to political parties, and those limits will continue to rise automatically, year after year after year. And do you know what? I have yet to meet with a young worker, a new parent, a senior, struggling with grocery bills or rent, who asked for this: “Please, please, can you work at Queen’s Park to make sure the election donation limits go up? That’s a real issue that we’re facing right now.” Again, this is not what people are asking for now, choosing between rent and food.

Those people who believe that the most urgent priority for this government is to make it easier for wealthy donors to give more money to political parties, the people who benefit from the higher donation caps, are not the ones looking for affordable housing—

Interjection.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I know; it’s funny, isn’t it—not the ones looking for affordable housing, not looking for stable employment, not relief from rising costs; they are the people with thousands of dollars available for political contributions, and that reality is unavoidable.

Meanwhile, we’re seeing youth unemployment continuing to climb, families continuing to face record high housing costs, small businesses struggling to survive. And instead of focusing on these pressing issues, this government is pouring its efforts into changing the rules that affect its own electoral advantage.

Speaker, it’s incredibly difficult to explain to Ontarians why these measures appear in an economic bill, and it’s even harder to explain why they seem to be among this government’s top priorities at a moment like this. Removing fixed election dates benefits only the government. Raising donation limits benefits only the government. Weakening advertising rules benefits the government. None of these provisions benefit the people we represent.

And as the critic for ethics, integrity and accountability, I have to look not only at what these changes do, but what they signal. Public trust is built when governments demonstrate that they act in the public interest, even when it’s inconvenient for them. But this bill concentrates power, removes the safeguards and sidelines the independent institutions meant to hold our elections stable and fair. When a government rewrites the rules of elections midway through its own mandate, it’s understandably raising questions about motive. When it tucks those changes into a massive budget bill, it raises questions about transparency.

Democracy belongs to the people of Ontario, not to the party in power. Fixed dates improved accessibility and accountability. Donation limits were put in place to reduce the influence of big money after past scandals. Undoing those protections at a time when public trust is already strained is irresponsible, and it's completely unnecessary.

If the government were confident in its record, it would not need to control election timing. If it were confident in its connection to the public, it would not need to raise how much money donors can send its way. If it were confident in its democratic values, it would not choose this moment, when so many people have other urgent issues that demand attention, to prioritize itself over the people that it serves.

Ontarians deserve a government working on their behalf, not one reshaping the rules to its own advantage, and they deserve solutions to affordability, not solutions to fundraising. They deserve economic stability, not political maneuvering. It's our responsibility to speak up when the integrity of our democratic system is weakened. These schedules do not strengthen Ontario's democracy; they erode it. For that reason, we cannot support them.

The people of this province deserve elections that put them first, not the government, and they deserve far better than what is being offered in these sections of the bill. Thank you.

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The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise today to speak to Bill 68, the implementation bill for the government's fall economic statement. It's kind of misnamed, actually—Plan to Protect Ontario. I can tell you, it fails to protect everyday Ontarians. People are struggling right now: job losses, cost of living through the roof, rents unaffordable, climate pollution on the rise, food bank use at record highs, and one of the signature items in this budget is to study a tunnel under the 401, something that would be a costly nightmare, generating decades of traffic chaos that the government already knows is likely not even feasible from an engineering standpoint and will do nothing to reduce gridlock—while people are struggling.

This fall economic statement fails to protect the record number of families going to food banks because they're having to choose between paying the rent and putting food on the table. I know the Premier, earlier today, said to folks who were here raising concerns about sky-high rent, to get a job. Over half of food bank users now have full-time work and a third of those people have two jobs, and they still cannot afford to live in Ontario right now under this government's policies.

The fall economic statement does nothing to protect the 81,000 people experiencing homelessness right now as we head into winter. It does nothing to protect the teachers and nurses who are facing increasing levels of violence in their workplace because of underfunding in our education and health care systems. I was meeting with a mining company the other day talking about the incredible safety record mining companies have achieved—it's now safer to work

in the mines than it is in a school or a hospital in the province of Ontario due to chronic underfunding of our education and health care systems.

It does nothing to protect people on Ontario disability supports or Ontario Works who are forced to live in legislated poverty. Like, the math doesn't add up—\$1,300 a month, \$731 a month to try to pay the rent, put food on the table and meet other expenses.

The fall economic statement does nothing to protect the integrity of our environment and our natural ecosystems. I'm going to be talking about a number of schedules in this bill that make that very clear.

It does nothing to protect young people who are facing recessionary-level unemployment rates, homes they can't afford and rents they can't afford. As a matter of fact, we have a whole generation of young people right now wondering if they will ever be able to afford a home, many of them living in their parents' basements, and yet housing starts in the fall economic statement are at historic lows. Housing prices, on the other hand, are at historic highs.

The fall economic statement projects housing starts of 64,500 this year. Just to even meet the government's target of 1.5 million over the next decade would take more than double that—150,000 housing starts—and yet the Premier continues to say no to legalizing mid-rises and multi-plexes. The fastest and cheapest way to increase housing supply: building homes that people can afford in the communities they know and love, close to where they spend time with their family, saving them long commutes because they're close to work—they say no.

There is no city in Ontario where a full-time, minimum-wage worker can afford average monthly rent, and yet this fall economic statement does nothing to protect renters. As a matter of fact, the government just passed legislation earlier today that takes rights away from renters and puts them at even greater risk of being evicted and experiencing homelessness.

There is nothing in the fall economic statement that allocates funding to build deeply affordable, non-profit and co-op housing, even though 93% of the deeply affordable homes built in Ontario were built before 1995. No wonder 81,000 people are experiencing homelessness. No wonder food banks are experiencing record numbers of visits—as a matter of fact, a 340% increase in food bank visits since this government was elected in 2018.

There's nothing in the fall economic statement to reverse the chronic underfunding our health care system is experiencing—as a matter of fact, less than 2% increases, even though many of our hospitals right now are taking out lines of credit just to meet payroll, let alone provide enhanced health care services for people.

There's nothing in the fall economic statement reversing the \$1,500-per-student cut to our education system, leading to overcrowded classrooms and the inability of schools to address special needs students, in particular.

There's a 10% cut, a 10% real cut, to post-secondary education, even though Ontario has the lowest funding per capita for colleges and universities in the country. This is where we're going to train our workers of the future. This is where we're going to do the research that provides us

with the innovations and the technology to build great Canadian companies to get us out of this economic mess, yet it's cut.

There's no increase in the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, despite the fact that the wait-list for autism services is growing, despite the fact that developmental service organizations across the province are selling off homes for adults with developmental disabilities wondering where they're going to go—no increase, no increase at all, so it isn't even about keeping up with inflation, just none at all.

Schedule 3 of this bill essentially takes a sledgehammer to our conservation authorities, knocking them from the mid-30s down to seven, concentrating power in the hands of the ministry here at Queen's Park, stripping away local expertise.

I just want to ask the members opposite: Do you remember Hurricane Hazel, 1954? Eighty-one people tragically died in Ontario; 4,000 families were made homeless; in inflation-adjusted dollars, over a billion dollars' worth of damage. That's why conservation authorities were strengthened. That's why we said we would never make that mistake again and we wouldn't allow building in inappropriate and irresponsible places, and this government is taking away the ability of conservation authorities to protect communities, protect families, protect businesses from the increasing frequency and severity of unsafe weather events.

Schedule 18 actually sells off part of Wasaga Beach to the local community, opening up opportunities for development, parking lot, raking beaches, destroying habitat for the piping plover. It goes on.

But the most concerning schedule of this bill is schedule 1, where this government essentially cancels climate action. It just cancels it as if it's not happening. Get rid of the need for targets to reduce climate pollution. And I realize the Auditor General over and over again has said this government has a made-to-fail climate plan and then most recently said there is no way the government is going to even come close to meeting the weakened pollution reduction targets that they have. But to just throw your hands up and say, "Okay, then, we just won't do it. We won't measure it"—you can't manage what you don't measure.

And to do it at a time when we're seeing the increasing severity and frequency of unsafe weather events fuelled by the climate crisis—three years ago, we had the worst fire season in Ontario's history. It cost our health care system \$1.4 billion in four days—the four days that southern Ontario had the worst, most toxic air pollution in the world—due to increased hospitalization for people with respiratory issues.

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Two summers ago, the GTA experienced one of its worst floods ever, costing \$1.3 billion an hour—an hour. Yet this bill just gets rid of climate action, and they're doing it at a time when economic opportunities in the green energy transition have never been better: \$2.3 trillion will be invested in the green energy transition this

year alone. The green energy sector is now an \$8-trillion industry, and yet Ontario is saying no to wind, no to solar, no to renewables. It's ramping up gas plants. It's buying American SMRs, locking us into American technology and enriched American uranium, which has now jacked up our electricity prices by 29%, starting November 1.

Now, they cover it up with \$6.5 billion being spent on electricity subsidies that disproportionately benefit the wealthy. I don't understand why millionaires and billionaires like Galen Weston are getting a break on their electricity prices when the government says we don't have money for education or health care, mental health services, children with autism, affordable housing—the list goes on.

We could create good-paying jobs in Ontario using Ontario-made steel to make Ontario wind turbines and racking for solar, for battery storage. We have the workforce. We have the resources. We have the ability to do it. As a matter of fact, a lot of the mining they want to do would actually facilitate that kind of economy, and yet, the government is not going to move in that direction. They're not going to have a climate plan.

So I say to all the young people: Greens are going to keep fighting for your future because you deserve a livable future.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mrs. Michelle Cooper: Today I have the honour to rise before you to speak as part of the third reading of Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 (No. 2), in follow-up to the Minister of Finance, Peter Bethlenfalvy, who began third reading of this bill by outlining the vision behind our government's plan to protect Ontario—a vision to protect our province and its people by building the most competitive economy in the G7 to invest, create jobs and do business.

Ontario has faced challenging times before and, each time, we have emerged stronger, more united, more prosperous and more confident in what we can achieve together. Today is no different. Global uncertainty, trade disruptions and economic headwinds have tested our resilience, but Ontario is not standing still. We are moving forward with a plan to protect our province and to position us for long-term success. This bill and our government's plan to protect Ontario is about more than responding to global uncertainty and US tariffs. It is about laying the foundation for long-term prosperity by creating the conditions for investment, innovation and growth in every corner of our province.

We are building a more competitive, a more resilient and a more self-reliant economy—an economy that protects Ontario not just from tariffs but from anything that comes our way for decades to come. Our plan is clear, and it is to make Ontario the best place in the G7 to invest, create jobs and do business.

Competitiveness begins with lowering costs for businesses and creating a tax environment that rewards investment and growth. We have a commitment to take significant steps to reduce costs for businesses to help them become more competitive. Our government's key actions

on this matter would enable an estimated \$11.7 billion in cost savings and support for Ontario businesses in 2025. Further to that, \$5.6 billion of those would go to small businesses in our province. Some of those actions include the Ontario Made Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit and its proposed temporary expansion and enhancement—something that has been talked about at length during second reading of this bill.

It also includes other measures as well, such as:

- cutting the gasoline tax rate by 5.7 cents per litre and the fuel tax rate by 5.3 cents per litre, helping businesses and families to keep their costs down;

- supporting the reduction of the WSIB premium rate, which is now the lowest in 50 years, saving Ontario employers approximately an estimated \$60 million in 2026;

- increasing the employer health tax exemption to \$1 million and help businesses by reducing the tax for eligible private sector employers;

- helping small businesses thrive by reducing the small business corporate income tax rate to 3.2% and expanding access to this preferential rate; and

- providing a six-month interest and penalty relief period for select provincially administered taxes.

These are some of the measures we have taken, Madam Speaker, but not the only ones, because we know we need to do more. This is why our government will continue delivering on its plan to protect our workers, our businesses and our communities by developing a multi-year tax action plan. Developing Ontario's Tax Action Plan will help make Ontario the most competitive jurisdiction in Canada. Our government's work will focus on updating Ontario's personal and corporate income taxes to encourage and attract more business investment, to help improve our competitiveness and to lower costs or provide relief for individuals and families.

But competitiveness, Madam Speaker, is not only about costs. It's also about positioning Ontario for the economy of tomorrow. This is why we're positioning Ontario's defence industry for growth. The government will continue supporting Canada's national defence by exploring additional ways to support local industries in producing and providing made-in-Ontario goods and technologies for the defence sector.

We have already started. As part of the 2025 budget, we announced an additional investment of \$90 million in venture capital funding through Venture Ontario. That investment includes \$50 million to Ontario-based venture capital funds focused on technologies that support national defence, such as artificial intelligence and cyber security. Investments such as these will ensure Ontario is not just a participant in the Canadian defence economy, but a leader. This would help these projects start and advance faster while maintaining stringent safeguards and standards for environmental protection and fulfilling the province's duty to consult with Indigenous communities.

When international investors look for a home for their project or investment of money, they want speedy and certain decisions and sound partnerships. As global trade tensions and US tariffs continue to challenge our econ-

omy, Ontario is responding with strength and purpose. The government continues to reinforce our competitiveness and resilience by attracting major investments through Invest Ontario. The province's one-window investment attraction agency provides investors with streamlined access to expertise, tailored services and financial support through the Invest Ontario Fund.

Earlier this year, our government brought the total fund to \$1.3 billion by allocating an additional \$600 million to it. The results speak for themselves, Madam Speaker. To date, Invest Ontario has announced more than \$8.2 billion in investments, which are expected to create over 10,200 good-paying jobs across the province. These are not just numbers; they represent the opportunities for Ontario workers, growth for Ontario businesses and prosperity for Ontario communities.

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Strong capital markets are essential for investment and growth. Our government's commitment to make Ontario a global hub for entrepreneurial finance is unwavering.

The Ontario Securities Commission is already implementing forward-looking reforms to ensure Ontario competes at the highest international standards. These reforms are reducing regulatory burden and accelerating access to capital that fuels cutting-edge technologies, job creation and sustained economic growth. We will continue to work closely with the Ontario Securities Commission and other key partners to increase capital formation in the province and Canada.

Credit unions are another fundamental pillar of our province's financial ecosystem. This is why this bill in front of us today includes measures to enable credit unions to raise alternative capital to unlock new growth opportunities. Through Bill 68, the government is now proposing amendments to the credit unions act, 2020, that would allow credit unions to raise capital for non-members while giving them flexibility on how to structure the issuance of securities. The changes being proposed today would expand credit unions' access to public and private sources of capital, enabling them to scale up, innovate and strengthen capital formation across Ontario's economy.

The ability to take these bold actions and put forward this plan rests on a foundation of fiscal strength. It is because of our government's unwavering commitment to fiscal prudence that Ontario's finances are stronger than they have been in over a decade.

Our plan to protect Ontario is a blueprint for a stronger, more competitive province. It is about creating the conditions for growth, ensuring that Ontario is more competitive, more resilient, more self-reliant and that Ontario becomes the best place in the G7 to invest, create jobs and do business. Our plan invests in people, in businesses and in communities. It strengthens our economy by cutting red tape, investing in infrastructure, supporting workers, improving public services and making life more affordable.

Let us seize this moment to protect Ontario not just for today but for generations to come. As I stand here today, I call on all members to vote in favour of Bill 68. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Wayne Gates: It's always a privilege to rise because the one thing I enjoy doing up here is telling the truth. I know that doesn't always happen in this House, but I always say I'm telling the truth, so I have to tell the truth about Ontario.

The fall economic statement is supposed to be an opportunity to say all the wonderful things that are happening in the province of Ontario. We just had the member there talk about how great we're doing. I'd like to know from that member how much we're paying every single day on the debt in the province of Ontario that could be going to health care, could be going to education, could be going to the homeless.

I have to do that, so I rise today on behalf of workers, families, seniors, parents, young people and communities right across the province of Ontario who expect the fall economic statement to offer solutions to the crisis they are living through.

Instead, this so-called Plan to Protect Ontario Act offers nothing of the sort. There's no plan to protect jobs, no plan to address the affordability crisis, no plan to protect public health care or public education. What we have is a bill that protects the political interests of this government and the financial interests of their insiders while everyone else is left behind.

I want to say clearly—and I want all my colleagues to listen. I know they're busy talking over there, but I know the one guy in the back corner is listening. He's got a big smile on his face. Ontario now has the highest unemployment rate in a decade. You can't even blame the Liberals on this one. We know how bad the Liberals were when they were in office, but you can't blame them. This is all on you because you've been here for eight years.

I've already told you I have three daughters. I've got five grandkids, and I worry every day about their future—every day. They're doing everything right. They're going to school. They're getting an education. And then they graduate—my grandkids haven't graduated yet, but some of my kids obviously have. And what are they looking forward to? Unemployment for young people in the province of Ontario is close to 20%. What future is that for our young people in a province which is the richest province in Canada? Where is the money going?

Is it going to health care? I can tell you in my riding, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fort Erie and Niagara Falls, they're shutting down my urgent care centre—if you can believe this, Speaker—in Fort Erie. It used to run 24/7, 365 days a year. Now, it's down to 10 hours a day—think about that—as Fort Erie has grown up to 40,000 residents, where a high percentage of them are what? You know what it is, Speaker? Yell it out. I know you're listening. Yell it out: seniors. A lot of them don't drive. There's no public transit in Fort Erie to speak of, and now they want them to go to St. Catharines or Niagara Falls to get health care. What are we doing in the province of Ontario?

The one that really drives me nuts—I think it drives everybody here nuts: food banks. Have you seen the ads

about our food banks today? Member from Sudbury, you've seen them?

MPP Jamie West: I didn't see those ones yet.

MPP Wayne Gates: There's no food. Their shelves are empty. They're begging people to bring food. Because people are working full-time in the province of Ontario. At the end of the day, because of the cost of rent—we had this discussion today about rents. In Niagara Falls, I told you about my daughter, \$2,500 for rent. How do you pay rent and buy groceries?

So they're working, and the first place they go, in our case in Niagara Falls, would be Project Share. Project Share is a food bank. So instead of running to the bank with a big smile on your face—"I've made a successful week. I got a few dollars to spend, maybe go to the show." "No, I'm going to the food bank because there's no money." It's absolutely amazing as they stand up here and continue to talk about how great we're doing in Ontario.

Housing: I talked a little bit about housing, but housing starts in this province right now are declining to the lowest level in a decade. How many remember—it wasn't that long ago—when they were going to build 1.5 million homes in the province of Ontario and they needed all the greenbelt land to do it? Well, today, you're at about 67,000 homes this year. You're down almost 40,000. How's that happening, as you continue to tell us that we're in the best shape we can?

Just let me know when I have to be quiet. Just give me a nod.

I know the Speaker will appreciate this, and I know a few other people that are here today, especially the leader of the Greens. Seniors: No time in our history that I've been here in 11 years—12 years now, I guess—have I seen so many seniors come to my office. They're coming with their partner, and they're coming because they can't afford groceries. Because I know the Weston family is making record profits, and they're still gouging for groceries. They're coming to my office and they're crying because they can't buy groceries. And when they do buy, they're skipping meals or they're skipping their medication. Think about that. They gave their entire life to this province, and that's how their senior years are being built.

I could talk about the health care system. I talked a little bit about Fort Erie. Port Colborne is in the same boat, but I'm sure my colleague from Welland will talk about Port Colborne.

I remember this government coming to us—and I think they said it again in the last couple of elections, by the way, how you're never going to see health care like you did under the Liberals, hallway medicine. I'm not going to speak for anybody else; they can stand up and speak for themselves. But in my riding, hallway medicine is worse today than it has ever been in our history. Last weekend, I go there, and where are they at? They're in the hallway, but they're also in the janitor's room. People are sitting in the hallway for days, no beds. What are we doing? Then we have the minister who stands up and says how wonderful we are in the province of Ontario.

How much time have I got? Let me touch on education.

Education: Our colleague, our critic for education, has done a great job. But I'm telling you, I've never seen the education sector and the stuff it is, and I can speak for it. My daughter is a teacher. My one daughter teaches at St. Nick's. I just did a breakfast club for them; it's called the crew, down in Niagara-on-the-Lake. They make breakfasts and lunches for the kids. One of the schools they go to is St. Nick's, because she teaches in a school that's really in a really tough area. We have to thank all those volunteers that are providing some food for them. And we continue to have that problem.

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Violence in her school: You've never seen anything like it. Staffing levels are at record lows. Class sizes are so big now, they're 40, sometimes 42 in a class, in Ontario. Do you remember when the Conservatives came to power? They were going to make sure education didn't go through that.

They were going to fix the schools. That's the other one that probably drives everybody nuts, right? The backlog—and I'm going off the top of my head here; I don't have it written down in my notes, but it's around \$17 billion, a backlog for repairs in our schools.

I'm going to touch on the Skills Development Fund just for a minute, because it's part of this.

Interjection.

MPP Wayne Gates: He wants me to wrap it up. He's getting scared of what I'm going to say about the Skills Development Fund.

But I'm going to tell you what: Every worker in the province of Ontario deserves to get training. We all deserve to get training; I have no problem with that. But when you're taking the Skills Development Fund and you're giving it to strip clubs to buy new poles for the dancers, I have a problem with that. That money should go to workers, union and non-union, for training only, not to buy their votes, not to say, "Hey, we'll give you \$30 million, \$25 million if you can get your members to vote for you." It should be because we want to make sure that every single worker in the province of Ontario is safe, so they come home to their family at the end of the day.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Today, what I'm going to talk about—I too am going to talk about schedules 7 and 8 and the changes to our election framework. For me, what it comes down to is that, during this previous election, none of this was ever mentioned. None of this was mentioned, and somehow this government thinks it has the mandate to change our election framework.

Now, there are arguments that can be made for and against fixed-date election laws. They improve transparency and predictability, better long-term governments, more efficient election administration. It encourages voter engagement.

In this country, there's only one other province that doesn't have a fixed-date election law—only one other province. There's a reason for that. It's because if you have a fixed-date election, these things become predictable.

People get used to it. I mean, it encourages voter engagement because it's predictable and everybody knows what the rules are. There are better long-term governments because of that predictability. It means you can't call an election to get yourself out of, let's say, a tough situation. That fixed-date election means it's going to happen when it's going to happen, and you'd better keep your affairs in order to make sure that you're ready when it's going to happen.

When I think about this, when I look at these changes to our electoral framework, to me what it looks like is securing the incumbent advantage. That's what this is all about, in my opinion. With the fixed dates, it kind of controls the election cycle instead of making it always campaigning, instead of the incumbents always having that advantage of being able to call the election whenever they want. It's a huge incumbent advantage.

I have a question, though: In these very perilous and challenging times, why is changing our election framework the priority of this government? When people can't find jobs and people don't have a house and when we've quadrupled the number of homeless people in this province from 20,000 to over 80,000 Ontarians who don't have a place to call home, why is changing our election framework the priority of this government, especially when people are hurting?

And I, too, am going to talk about the Skills Development Fund. Who is getting rewarded here? Loyal followers, friends and donors, and they're financing their projects with public funds, with taxpayer money, and then—

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Strip clubs.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Exactly—and then, what happens when they get caught? What do they do? They increase the donor limits. They increase the amount of money it can—and you nod, but guess what other province increased their donation limits this year? Alberta—another incumbent Conservative government who is running into trouble, so they too have changed and increased their donation limits.

How does increasing donation limits to \$5,000 per year help ordinary Ontarians? How does it help them participate in democracy? How does it prevent the wealthiest donors, the wealthiest people in our province from having undue influence? It doesn't. It makes it easier. So what it means is there will be more money in Ontario elections. There will be more pay-to-play. They will be more cash-for-access. And that's exactly what we don't need, Madam Speaker.

The conservative pundit David Frum said, "If conservatives become convinced that they cannot win democratically, they will not abandon conservatism. They will reject democracy." Speaker, these changes, without prior notice and without consultation, reflect that rejection of democracy. None of the changes in these bills were part of the Conservative Party platform. So how can the government say that it has the mandate to do them? For me, we've seen this before. We know exactly what this is. We see the pattern, and we see the pattern being reproduced in other provinces and other countries around the world when

the right wing wants to take over and wants to remake the province in their own image.

How do they do it? First of all, they defund. They defund education. They defund public education. They defund public health care. They defund the public interest so it doesn't work. And what does that cause? It causes a destabilization. Then what happens? Then they start dismantling, taking it apart piece by piece by piece. And once you've got it dismantled, then you can privatize it. So something that was of public interest becomes private interest, and then what do you do? You sell it off. You sell it off so your friends and your donors can make more money.

Madam Speaker, when I look at this bill, there are just so many changes, so many things that were not part of the Conservative platform in the last election, so many things that are significant changes for this province. And that is why I won't be supporting this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Lisa Gretzky: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill, to the fall economic statement. I'm going to start by talking about what we've heard a lot from the government side of the House today specifically, which is how everything is rosy in Ontario under their leadership.

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We've heard claims from the government side several times now that the cost of rent has gone down in this province. I think if you actually were talking to renters, you would find that the cost of rent has actually gone up in Ontario. I have constituents in my riding—I'm sure you all have them, if you actually would talk to them. You've probably received plenty of emails and phone calls from your constituents who are on the verge of losing their home, losing a roof over their head because, time and time again, under this government, the above-guideline rent increases are just being rubber-stamped and people are being priced out of their home.

I was talking to a colleague earlier. My mother is 84 years old, and they are finally getting around to doing some maintenance in her building—I would say long-overdue maintenance and renovations that need to happen. My mother is in a constant state of fear—at 84 years old—of being renovicted from her apartment because she's watching it happen to other people in her building in real time.

We just saw the government rush through Bill 60 with no consultation and, I would add, deplorable behaviour from the government side. When people from this province—it's their House—were in the galleries and verbally shared their displeasure, you had the Premier yelling "Get a job" up at the people. And you had the Minister of Indigenous Affairs yelling up at them, to a woman who was yelling, "Aw, are you really mad? Get 'em all out of here," which is exactly what we're seeing in their attitude towards renters, frankly. It's just, "Get 'em out of here. Just evict 'em. Just get 'em out of here."

On this side of the House, we're talking about these corporate landlords. I know the government side is trying

to make it sound like we just hate landlords. That is not the case. We're talking about corporations like the one that owns the building and all the surrounding buildings that my mother lives in—who, at 84 and is medically fragile, is concerned that she's going to get evicted; who, frankly, got swindled because of this government's laws into signing an agreement for air conditioning because she was told she had to or would have to leave her apartment. So I don't think it's unreasonable on this side of the House that we don't want to see our constituents out on the street, because this government has now made it easier for that to happen.

They voted against a motion that we brought in this afternoon that called on them to reverse Bill 60, to actually consult people in this province, to listen to the public instead of yelling up at them, "Get them out of here," and "Oh, jeez. Are you really that mad?"—to actually listen to the people of this province because it has not gotten cheaper to pay rent. Life has never been more expensive in this province in decades other than under this government, which has been a government for eight years. I can tell you, my constituents—I'm not defending the Liberals, but they're getting a little tired of hearing this government always pointing fingers. You have had eight years to fix things, and you have only made it worse.

We are seeing historic numbers of people visiting food banks, to the point where the food banks can't collect enough donations to be able to support all the people coming there, because a lot of the people who used to donate food to the food banks are now themselves going to food banks. We have seen an uptick in seniors going to food banks. We have seen an uptick of working people relying on food banks. We have record numbers of people experiencing homelessness in this province. And what this government has done, especially in this bill, is the equivalent to walking past them on the street, stepping over them on the street, because if we don't acknowledge they're there, they don't exist. We're not like them, so we don't need to deal with them. We just step over them and pretend they don't exist. That's what I've heard a lot of today: "We just won't acknowledge them, and then they don't exist. We're just going to pat ourselves on the back and applaud ourselves."

We're seeing record unemployment. About 800,000 people in this province can't get a job, have no job. Windsor has the highest unemployment rate in the country and in the province, with high youth unemployment. But this government is applauding themselves, saying: "We've created all these jobs and everyone is doing wonderfully. Life has never been better."

And what my constituents are asking is for the government to actually listen to the people of the province to bring in real measures to support people, to stop showing up at food banks for photo ops and actually do something to reduce the number of people that are relying on food banks, to bring in real rent control—rent control that you got rid of.

And what we're asking on this side of the House, along with our constituents, is for you to stop criminalizing

people who are living in poverty, because you cannot police your way out of homelessness and, in fact, it costs even more when you try. We want them to bring in real policies that are going to help people, support people; we want them to stop cutting services, which they're doing; and we want them to stop pretending—stop gaslighting the people of this province when it comes to the damage that their policies have caused. Because they're not buying it, because they're living a very different reality—very different reality than this utopia that you are trying to sell.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Speaker, I rise today with some very serious concerns about Bill 68 because, really, this fall economic statement fails to meet the moment that Ontarians are living through at this very moment. And I think it's a very simple question in order to figure that out: You simply have to ask your constituents, "Are you better off today than you were in 2018 when this government came into office?"

I don't think it's a stretch to say that if you speak to any average Ontarian today, they're not going to say they're better off. They're going to say life is harder. It's harder to find a job. It's harder to find a place to live. It's harder to pay rent. It's harder to put food on your table. It's harder to find a family doctor. That's the reality that we're facing in Ontario right at this very minute. So when members of the government stand to applaud Bill 68, to talk about it as some sort of triumph, Speaker, you really have to wonder, who are they talking to? What bill are they reading? Or are they simply that out of touch with the average Ontarian?

There's nothing in this bill that helps young people find their first job. In fact, this government voted against a bill that would help young people find their first job. There are no real investments in our hospitals, in our schools, or our colleges and universities. But again, when you ask members of this government about those very topics, they'll point to record investments. But when you speak to actual people at the colleges, when you speak to staff and students, they'll tell you the system is on the brink.

When you speak to nurses and doctors at our great hospitals across this province, they'll tell you they're overworked, they're underpaid and they're short-staffed. When you build a hospital, you build a building, but if you don't actually put people in there with training, treat them with respect, provide them with the tools they need—the nurses, the doctors, the medical staff—then it's not a hospital; it's simply just a building.

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Yet somehow, despite all of this—despite the realities that the average Ontarian is facing right now—this government can still find its way to prioritize building a tunnel under the 401. They can prioritize giving \$10.5 million to the owner of a strip club. And in this bill itself—an economic bill—they prioritize expanding the funding limits for elections, removing fixed date terms for election cycles. Is this ignorance, or is this simply a government that's out of touch?

Once again, you simply have to ask the average Ontarian, "Are you better off today than you were in 2018

when this Conservative government came to power?" And the answer is simply no.

Interjections.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: And the members opposite will squawk and squeal as they always do because they are simply out of touch. Speak to your constituents. And if you can honestly speak to them and look them in the eye and say that they're doing better today, when rents are out of control, when jobs are unable to be found—Ontario is now on track to reach half a trillion dollars in debt. Families are being asked to make sacrifices, yet this government refuses to make any sacrifices itself. The FAO has been clear: This government has not been upfront with taxpayers about the true state of Ontario's finances. And all of this is happening while Ontarians face a weakening economy, rising costs and increasing uncertainty about the future.

Speaker, this fall economic statement should have offered hope. It should have offered direction. Instead, all it offers is excuses and empty promises. So as the member for Don Valley North, I have particular concerns around how this fall economic statement fails to support the people that I represent, the people in my home community of Don Valley North. Speaker, I would like to walk you through a few of those concerns through this debate.

So what is missing in this fall economic statement for the people of Don Valley North? Number one: missing shovels. The fall economic statement fails to provide the shovels in the ground for the Sheppard subway extension. Now, this is an extension that has been promised by this government year after year after year. In fact, many of the people in my riding in the past have voted for this government because, under Doug Ford, it used to be "Subways, subways, subways." Now, suddenly, the Sheppard subway is no longer a priority. When you look at the maps put out by this government, it's this broken dotted line: "Maybe someday, somehow, we'll get around to it. We'll promise all you want—all you want—but we're not actually going to get to it." Not a single dollar has been promised. No timelines have been made. The only thing this government—that used to believe in subways—has given the people of Don Valley North in terms of the subway extension on Sheppard are empty promises.

Why I raise this concern is because a Sheppard subway extension is a vital corridor. Thousands rely on it daily, and it has the potential to connect our entire community to the rest of the city. We're talking about hard-working Ontarians trying to get to their jobs—those who are actually able to find them, at least. And for years and years, this government has promised—you've talked about finishing it. You've talked about bringing it all the way to the Scarborough subway at Scarborough Town Centre. You could have done that in Bill 68. You could have done that instead of raising donation limits, instead of getting rid of fixed dates for elections. But no—no confirmed funding, no timelines, no commitments at all to moving this essential project, a project that the people in my community are desperate for. They're tired of these announcements with no follow-through. They're tired of looking at these maps of dotted lines.

Speaker, real economic plans include real transit investments, projects that shorten commutes, increase economic activity and reduce emissions. Bill 68 misses a major opportunity to deliver progress on a project that has been delayed now under this government.

I also want to touch on health care. Similar to, I suppose, all of your ridings, health care is a critical issue for the people of Don Valley North. And in my riding, we're home to North York General Hospital, which is a fantastic institution. But institutions like North York General Hospital need support from this government. It needs investments in its nurses. It needs investments in its doctors. It needs investments in the capital as well.

North York General has started out on an ambitious project. In addition to building a seniors' tower, which will be one of the largest in all of Ontario, it's also moving forward to creating a new patient care wing at North York General. This is one of the most urgent health care needs in my riding. This new patient care tower, the largest expansion in the hospital's 56-year history—Speaker, this project is not a luxury. This project is an essential investment in one of the busiest and fastest-growing regions in our province.

The people of my riding, the people of Don Valley North, will not be ignored any longer by this government. They deserve attention. They deserve health care. They deserve transit that actually gets them to their jobs, not these squeals and whines that we always hear from this government of empty promises. They deserve results.

At this time, North York General Hospital serves more than 500,000 residents across north central Toronto and southern York region. Each year, the hospital manages over 120,000 emergency department visits along with hundreds of thousands of in-patient and outpatient cases. The pressures on this hospital are immense, and the population it serves continues to grow exponentially every single year.

The patient care tower that I'm speaking about is designed to meet this surge in demand. It will add up to 317 modern private rooms and nearly 100 net new acute care beds. Speaker, we're looking for funding for that. We're not looking for empty promises.

Another piece I want to speak about before I take my seat is the lack of funding for community safety. This summer in Don Valley North, in July, there was a horrific murder. A grandmother was murdered in the parking lot of a grocery store at 9 a.m. The person arrested: a 14-year-old. What has been the response of this government?

Immediately, I went to our police and spoke to our superintendent to ask him what he needed, to ask what our police at 33 Division needed to protect the safety of our residents. Silence—silence from this government, silence on Bill 68: That's the response, Speaker, to the murder of a grandmother in my riding—silence.

Speaker, 33 Division has come up with innovative ways to engage the community through community safety hubs, and we have one in my riding of Don Valley North in Fairview Mall. Bill 68, if it was serious, it could expand those. It could work with my superintendent of police to use that as a model to expand it across this entire province.

If we're serious about combatting crime, do something about it. Actions speak more than words.

Speaker, with that I'll take my seat. Thank you.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to speak in House, and today on the fall economic statement—the truncated, time-allocated version of the fall economic statement.

I'd just like to make clear, Ontario is one of the greatest places on Earth to live. It's got some serious problems right now, but we have a really good base. And let's be serious, we are facing an existential threat from the United States right now. We are. The government is great with their Protect Ontario slogan, but the fall economic statement didn't really face that threat. It threatened more Ontarians, actually, than facing the threat. I don't understand why the government actually isn't addressing issues that are within their grasp.

I come from a place where a lot of lumber is produced—a lot. The lumber industry is under pressure because of 50% tariffs. We live in a province where there is an incredible housing shortage, especially affordable housing. Why didn't the government actually go, "You know what? Maybe this is a good time to put together a program to help the builders of this province use the lumber of this province and actually build affordable housing for people to live"? Wouldn't that be a novel concept, as opposed to coming up with bills to evict people? Wouldn't that be meeting the moment?

Another one: I'm the agriculture critic. I am a farmer by trade. Every agriculture group I talk to—we are great at producing food. Where we have a problem, especially now with our slightly unfriendly neighbours to the south, is that we don't have enough processing capacity. Now, every sector is trying to fix that with very little help from the government. I guess it's not flashy enough. They like to talk about their huge projects 20 years down the future. How about the government actually help the processing sector in Ontario so that we actually have, we control a Canada supply chain?

Another issue—we talk about this all the time: Because we have to have a stronger supply chain in this country, how about Ontario actually step up and fix the Trans-Canada Highway?

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Exactly, and that would make the country stronger. How much—we're trying to calculate this right now in our office, and we will come up with figures. Each time the Trans-Canada Highway was closed and there were hundreds of transports stuck along the highway, transports that bring the goods back and forth across not just the province but the country, how many millions of dollars of economic activity are we losing every day?

This government's response? Well, the 2+1 pilot project: I heard they're putting up a sign announcing—it was announced four years ago. It's a 14-kilometre pilot

project to see if it's going to work, and because we put out a video about the sign, we heard there's a sign coming. But if the government was serious, how about—I don't understand why governments don't do practical things. A section of Highway 11 is rebuilt every year. Cool, you need to do it. From Englehart to Kirkland was just rebuilt. Why don't you just put full passing lanes every time you build a section of highway? And then—you know what?—10 or 15 years, 20 years later, you're done, and you've actually made a huge impact.

But no, this government comes up with vindictive bills or bills like the greenbelt act that actually don't have the purpose of what they're talking about, and they're failing to meet the moment of the threats we're actually facing. As a result, the people of Ontario, the greatest province in the country, one of the greatest places in the world to live—the people who live here are suffering from government mismanagement. I can't understand why they don't meet the moment.

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

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: It's a pleasure to rise in this House always and to speak to the fall economic statement, Bill 68. I've spoken about this a few times now, but I want to just reiterate a couple of key messages here.

First of all, this government promised in 2018 to deliver a middle-income tax cut. They have yet to do it seven years later. How many budgets later? Seven budgets later, six fall economic statements later, it still is not done. We are living in an affordability crisis. This would be exactly the time to keep that promise, but there's not a word about that in the fall economic statement, Speaker.

Let's talk about small businesses. Small businesses are one of the key economic drivers of our province, but sadly, under this government, their contribution overall to our economy has shrunk. It used to be that about two thirds of private sector jobs came from small businesses; it's now down to 61%.

That's partly because they're not getting the support they need from this government. The CFIB and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce have asked repeatedly for a cut to small business taxes, and this government has yet to do it—okay, sorry, Speaker. They did cut it by 0.2% or 0.3%. That's hardly worth bragging about.

The last Liberal government cut it in half, and we have proposed now, I think, three times to once again cut the small business tax rate in half. That's actually what the small businesses want. That's what the CFIB has been calling for. They say, "We don't even want grants. We would rather have a tax cut than a grant. Please, just give us a tax cut." That would have put \$18,000 back in their pocket, and that would have allowed them to maybe hire an extra summer student this year or to even reinvest in their business, put in some new technology, some new software to make them more efficient, more productive. We had nothing for small businesses, Speaker.

Last week, our caucus tabled a motion. Our opposition day motion was about a youth career fund, and it would have taken some of the billions set aside to "protect

Ontario." It would have actually protected youth who need jobs. It would have protected small businesses, small and medium-sized enterprises in our province who are really hurting under this government's policies.

It's not just recently. It's not just US tariffs that are hurting this province. Nine quarters of rising unemployment under this government—that's because of bad policy, Speaker. They've been focused on moving the Ontario Science Centre to Ontario Place and building a spa that nobody wants. We now hear that's going to be much delayed—no big surprise. They're talking about a tunnel under the 401 when they've got a staff report that clearly says something they don't want us to see because they won't release it. They're going to spend another \$9 million of taxpayer money on that.

Instead, they could take some of that Protect Ontario fund and they could actually direct it to a meaningful program that would create jobs—between 47,000 and 75,000 jobs for young people in this province. That would give them some hope again for the future. We know that they are really discouraged right now because they're waiting months to get that first opportunity. Those are the kinds of things we were really hoping to see in this fall economic statement.

Instead, we see changes to our election laws. We see cuts to our environmental protections. Those are not what this government campaigned on. There was not one mention in all of their ads. Whether they were the government ads before the election that they spent \$40 million on, whether they were the ads during the campaign, they didn't once say, "Oh, and how would you like it if we extend our term to be five years? How would you like that?" They didn't ask that question, Speaker. They didn't want the voters of Ontario to know, clearly—because it doesn't just come out of thin air. They had a plan for this, and it's really disappointing that that's one of the kinds of things we see in this fall economic statement.

The other thing is that we didn't see any acknowledgement that maybe they should clean up the Skills Development Fund before they start shovelling the next hundreds of millions of dollars out the door. It would have been the right thing to do to maybe pause that for a few moments in time and take a look, implement the recommendations from the Auditor General's report.

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Instead, we have a government that is doubling down and saying this is the best program ever. Yet we have millions of dollars going to strip club owners. We have millions of dollars going to companies who basically got a failing grade on their application. They're getting approved over high-scoring applicants. It's all pretty shocking. It would have been really great to see an acknowledgement that that is something that they would fix here in this fall economic statement.

Speaker, those are the kind of things we were really looking for. It was a disappointment to read. There is a little bit of new funding, but it's only about \$600 million. That is not going to move the dial here in Ontario. We have got stagnating growth. We have got debt per capita that

has risen 15% under this government. And yet what are we doing? We are barrelling towards half a trillion dollars in debt under the government who said reducing the debt was a moral and fiscal imperative; those are their words. There's no debt reduction here. In fact, they don't even have a debt reduction strategy, and the Auditor General has called them out on that. She's got it in her report. They won't even admit that.

I think that the government needs to rethink their strategy. It's not working for the people of Ontario. We've got rising unemployment. We've got over 200,000 young people without jobs, 700,000 in total in the province looking for work, record numbers of people visiting food banks. And we know that more people will be getting evicted under this latest bill that they just passed, Bill 60, where they're reducing tenants' rights even further.

This is not a fall economic statement that gives the people of Ontario any hope. In fact, it doesn't give us any confidence in this government's ability to manage our economy—even to manage their own finances, Speaker—when they continue to talk about doling out hundreds of millions of dollars in the Skills Development Fund, which the Auditor General called not fair, not accountable, not transparent. It was a real sad day, Speaker, and I really cannot support this fall economic statement.

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

MPP Jamie West: I am proud to stand and speak about the fall economic statement on behalf of the people from Sudbury. I wish we had more time to debate this. Unfortunately, it was time allocated, so that means minimal, minimal debate. I think it's about 36 minutes. That means that it is not going to go to committee. It's not going to travel. It's not going to hear from the people of Ontario. That means that not only the voices in the chamber are limited; that means the voices of Ontario people are limited as well.

The fall economic statement basically is like a mini budget. It comes out in the fall as a checklist of what happened on the budget. There has been a lot of bravado about "protect Ontario" and what we're going to do and how we're going to stand with Ontario. I believe in that. I think there is an appetite out there for "elbows up" and "protect Ontario" and "Canada first." Unfortunately, in this bill, not much jumps out there in a bold way about protecting Ontario.

I think that the weirdest thing in this bill that stands out is that there's a whole section in this that increases political donations. Just imagine for a minute, Speaker, you are trying to figure out how to put food on the table, you are one of those workers who has a full-time job—this number keeps growing, the number of workers who have a full-time job and continue to go to food banks. That number has been growing ever since I was elected. Every year since the Premier and the Conservative Party have been in power, that number continues to grow.

Under this party that is working for workers, more and more workers are going to food banks. The number one priority apparently with this government is, "Can we

increase donations to \$5,000 as a max?" Because I guess the previous max donations that have been coming across to the Conservative Party haven't been enough. So at a time where people are trying to pinch their pennies and find the ways to keep food on the table, the provincial government, the Conservative government is trying to figure out how to put more money into their pockets from donors.

The Premier has been a jobs disaster. That's not just something I am saying as I stand up here. There are stats that follow this. In Ontario, 800,000 people are unemployed. We have nearly 18% unemployment. There is sky-high food bank use, as I have said before, and 22% of youth are unemployed. One in four youth in Ontario cannot find a job, no matter how many times the Premier says that they're lazy and should go look for a job. There are no jobs because the Premier is a jobs disaster.

Let me tell you what happened for people and what this means, because there have been stunts about pouring out Crown Royal on the ground and eating ice cream bars. That doesn't save jobs.

And while the Premier is pulling these stunts, 3,000 Stellantis workers in Brampton are losing their jobs; 12,000 GM workers in Ingersoll are losing their jobs; 160 Diageo bottling workers in Amherstburg are losing their jobs; 160 sawmill workers in Ear Falls are losing their jobs; 130 Holsag furniture workers in Lindsay are losing their jobs; and 118 Rogers and Ericsson workers, mostly in the GTA, have lost their jobs even though they came here to Queen's Park to beg the Premier to fight for those jobs. And do you know what he did? He sat on his hands. He didn't lift a finger, didn't make a phone call, didn't do a thing. In fact, when I talked to various ministers to try to get help, the best I could get out of this was, "Well, we could offer them retraining."

The Conservative government needs to understand that workers don't want retraining; they want a Premier who's going to fight for their jobs. Stunts like pouring out Crown Royal are not fighting; it's a photo op. And the workers of Ontario are sick and tired of being treated like photo ops.

So there's no jobs plan. There is nothing protecting workers, because as we've seen with the Skills Development Fund, the number one priority for this government is rewarding the wealthiest people in this province, the wealthiest CEOs.

The Skills Development Fund has been a sham. The fund itself is great, but the way it's being used: \$17 million for Scale Hospitality—the Minister of Labour still can't tell me if they ever built the training centre, still can't tell me who's been trained.

Almost \$11 million for the owner of a nightclub—and let's be honest; it's a strip club. "Nightclub" is just a thing we say to be polite. And a lot of this money is being used to give the executives who own these bonuses—bonuses. They can not tell you how many people have been trained.

Time and time again, the Minister of Labour will shroud himself with the unions that receive the funding and drag them through the mud.

I was at LiUNA the other day. They're holding a massive fundraiser for a long-term-care facility for the

Portuguese community in Toronto—unions giving back to the community. This is what they do. They invested long before the Conservative government came along. Unions use portions of their dues to reinvest and train people in the community.

These are important things that happened, and I don't think the Minister of Labour should continue to drag people through the mud for receiving skills development funding for legitimate skilled trade worker training—because if I go to LiUNA or the carpenters or pipefitters or any union and I say, “How many apprentices do you have? How many of them were fully trained, and what are they doing today?” they can give me stats on it, the same with our colleges, the same with our universities. Do you know who can't give us stats? The strip club owner, the hospitality owner—a whole list of these things that were marked super low. One guy got a bunch of money to train himself. It's unbelievable.

So we have record unaffordability. We have housing prices through the roof. We have people who can't afford rent. In the midst of this, we have a government who's making it easier to evict people. They just time allocated a previous bill today and then voted against the opposition day motion to increase rent controls and protect people and lower rent.

But they don't care about that. What they care about are the wealthy, corporate landlords, the ones who buy entire buildings and evict 10, 15 people at a time. That's who's in their corner.

I've got a limited amount of time. Let me talk about some people from Sudbury who wrote in. Kevin says this has no measures to help people with truly affordable housing. Kevin was paying \$650 for a one-bedroom unit five years ago. Now his rent is \$1,500 because of no rent control. He wants to move into a one-bedroom on the main floor. It's \$2,000, and he can't afford rent and to eat in the same month right now. Kevin says, “With no rent control, there's nothing stopping landlords from making us all live in tents in the park so they can make a quick buck.”

Melany says lack of funding for LTB makes for serious delays and issues. She's lived in her unit for 10 years. She has to maintain the property and replace the appliances. She has no proper heat during the winter despite paying for hydro.

“When the driveway began caving in”—I apologize for laughing, Melany, but this is unbelievable. These are the landlords out there that make all the landlords look bad. “When the driveway began caving in, we asked for repairs. The ‘repair’ was a truck dropping off a load of fill, leaving my neighbour and me to rake it out ourselves for a week because we never heard back from the landlord.”

The landlord continues to try to evict her. In 2023, the landlord's son moved into the other unit just long enough to turn it into a rooming house for four people living in a three-bedroom house. The constituent's mother wanted to retire but can't because they're so worried about being evicted and not being able to afford the rent as it continues to climb.

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Marc Lalonde talks about no affordable housing for young people. He's 53 years old. He's going to retire from teaching. He has two sons. One of them lives at home, and they're trying to save a down payment for a house. He's been saving for three years to do this. Prices for homes are out of reach on a single salary even with a 5% down payment.

Marc says, “Stop building \$750,000 homes that my son's generation will never be able to afford. This is a source of great mental health issues for his generation. I hear the same story from all of my colleagues who have children his age and a little bit older who would like to buy a house and live an independent life from their families.”

Kyle says there's no support for people on social assistance. He's been living in his unit for 10 years. He has disability support; he has an injury that prevents him from working. He says, “We scrape by each month with little to no food, and no money once all the bills are paid.”

He says, “I live above an empty unit that was vacated on a cash-for-keys deal with the landlord. The landlord then tried to deny payment to that tenant and hasn't come to fix any of the problems the former tenant kept bringing up. Instead, they painted over the water damage and have continued to neglect upkeep.”

The next lady didn't want me to use her name. No support for social assistance—I've got 30 seconds—“My husband is on ODSP, I have always worked. ODSP doesn't pay a lot when there is a working spouse in the home, and said spouse is only allowed to make \$200 a month before deductions kick in. He gets \$1,000 per month from ODSP currently for our family of four, and he's lucky if he makes \$300 biweekly, and in the last month, he has had even less hours but has had no adjustments in his support payments.”

Speaker, I could go on and on with people who are writing in, begging the Conservative government for help, and the fall economic statement doesn't provide any of it. All it provides is higher donation limits for the Conservative members.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: While we're here on a Monday evening, almost quarter to five—

Interjection: Quarter to six.

Mr. Dave Smith: Quarter to six, sorry—I'm turning the clocks back yet another hour, Speaker.

We're talking about the fall economic statement. I understand that our standing orders say that we're supposed to be discussing the bill that's before us. I know that when we're talking about a fall economic statement or a budget bill, it provides a lot of leeway. The opposition members wandered way off on a lot of different things. The way that they tie it back in is they say stuff like, “This wasn't in the bill,” and they're right. It wasn't, because it's a fall economic statement.

It was described as a mini budget. That's not what the fall economic statement is. It's an update on what the budget is. I heard some of the things that were talked about

on there, and I want to dispel some of the poetic licence, as I'll refer to it, because keep in mind this is an update on what the budget was and where we are in reflection to the budget.

So in terms of consultation for the budget, we're going through that right now with the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. This year, we'll have 11 different cities that that committee will travel to, and it's about eight hours of deliberation or groups coming for presentations for us. So we're looking at about 88 hours this year for the budget.

Last year, though—because we're talking about the update from last year's budget, the 2025 budget—we actually went to 16 different communities. Now, one of them we had to reschedule because of a blizzard. We weren't able to get to Manitoulin because of poor weather, but all of the presenters from Manitoulin were given the option of joining us through Zoom.

When you look at that alone, just the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs going out and having all of those different delegations—it's 24 different delegations at each of those locations, and we went to 15 instead of 16. When you do the math on that, well, that's about 300 delegations that you have.

But on top of that, the Ministry of Finance actually does delegations as well. We went to 24 different cities last year with that, and we had about 25 people in each of those. So again, when you do the math, you're getting up to 500. We heard from close to 1,000 different groups that came and gave feedback on the budget, and of course we all—all of us—meet with different constituents and different groups constantly to get an understanding of what it is that the people need. When you look at it from that perspective, there is a great deal of consultation that goes on. And what Bill 68 does, as the fall economic statement or the fall economic update—it is the plan to protect Ontario, and it reflects the principles that our government has been guided by since day one: responsibility, stability. It's an unwavering commitment to the people of Ontario at a time of global uncertainty.

Now, I've heard the opposition talk about this and say things like, "Trump's tariffs don't really mean that much," and "We need to be focusing on all of these other things." But the reality is that there are economic pressures, shifting markets, all across the world. Ontarians are looking for leadership, and that is what they're receiving from us.

Bill 68 is rooted in the simple idea within a much bigger plan—and the plan is about the progress that we've made, responding responsibly to the challenges of today and building a foundation for long-term prosperity. That's one of the things that the opposition has kind of pushed aside and ignored. The economy is really what drives everything, and if the economy is not going well, then you don't have the money to do some of the things.

They've talked about things that they thought were a waste of money, like our transportation plan. Now, we know that to get goods to market, they have to travel somehow. And when you're investing in highways, when you're investing in rail systems, when you're investing in

subways and public transportation, it's all about moving people and product, and that improves your GDP because you get the product to market. And that is what we're doing, because the fiscal prudence is actually the foundation of Ontario, and doing things, then, that improve our GDP is being fiscally prudent. We've seen an increase in the GDP from about \$800 billion to \$1.2 trillion in the time that we have been in power, and we have been able to leverage that without raising a single tax, and what we have done is investing back into Ontario.

Now, I heard someone from the opposition talk about cuts to health care, and I was really surprised by that, Speaker, because in 2018, the health care budget was \$61 billion. Now it's \$93 billion. That's a 50% increase over seven and a half years. That is a massive increase. And the only way that you have the money to do that is by focusing on building the economy. These are the same things that we've been doing. The projected deficit in our budget was \$13.5 billion, but we've been able to have an improvement on that—not by raising taxes; we have cut that deficit by \$1.1 billion simply by investing in our economy. We are seeing a growth in actual income tax, we're seeing a growth in corporate income tax, and it's because we're doing things to promote businesses.

Speaker, protecting Ontario means also supporting the people who make this province strong. For workers, it means access to good jobs; it means training and safe workplaces. And our plan is to strengthen those skills, strengthen the training and strengthen pathways to careers in sectors critical to Ontario's growth. We're not just talking about a job; we're talking about a career.

When we talk about things like the skilled trades—when we first were elected in 2018, we had a deficit of about 350,000 people in the skilled trades. We've seen growth in Ontario's population of almost two million; we've seen growth in the amount of houses that are being built, in the amount of infrastructure that's being built. It's put more of a strain on the need for people in skilled trades. We've been able to bring that down to about 300,000 now that we need, because we've increased the number of people who are working in those skilled trades, and that creates a career for them, not just a job.

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This year alone, our government is committing nearly \$11.5 billion in meaningful relief for individuals and their families. It's all about those things working together to build the confidence of the people in this province. But it's not just the people in this province that we're building that confidence for.

When you look at what has happened economically—again, I'll come back to it, because this is the fall economic statement—Ontario received two credit upgrades: Standard and Poor's and Morningstar DBRS. We now have an AA rating with all of the major credit agencies. It's been more than 20 years since Ontario has had an upgrade. In fact, we had downgrades during the Liberal governments. Now, why do I bring that up? Because one of the things that was talked about was the amount of interest payments. When you increase your credit rating,

you decrease the cost of interest, and by decreasing the cost of interest, that means that we're not spending as much servicing that debt as we would have previously. We have the best debt-to-GDP ratio that Ontario has seen in over 40 years. That is something that is worth celebrating. That is because of the types of things that we have been implementing.

We're reducing barriers, we're encouraging innovation and we're strengthening job creation in every region in Ontario. Together, these measures strengthen Ontario's competitiveness, and they ensure people and employers have the foundations they need to thrive. When you look at some of the things that we've been doing, building that stronger foundation with a more resilient, more reliant economy for today, families have stability and families have health care. It all comes back to our economy.

Our government has been directing the spending where it has the greatest impact while maintaining the flexibility we need to navigate that changing global economy.

In eastern Ontario, innovation hubs and research centres are connected to cutting-edge technology and emerging sectors, fostering entrepreneurship and encouraging talent growth in all of those regions. When we look ahead, these investments are far more than short-term growth. They position Ontario to compete on the world stage.

Now, I talk about eastern Ontario, Speaker, because being in Peterborough, we're considered part of eastern Ontario most of the time. Sometimes we get lumped in with Durham; sometimes we get lumped in with Scarborough. But most of the time, we're considered the start of eastern Ontario. That's why I mentioned that.

We're investing in infrastructure to keep the province moving and have it competitive. Projects like the Bradford Bypass, Highway 413, the Ontario Line and expanding GO transit—these are all investments in the future. These are all projects that help people move faster. These are projects that help product move faster, and the quicker you can get product to market, the easier it is to sell that.

But we haven't just stopped there. We've also been looking at how do we make it easier for the youth of today. One of the key things that we've done is cutting the HST, removing it—8% less on the purchase of a new home if you're a first-time homebuyer. Now, when you combine that with the federal government also doing that—they're taking a 5% cut—it's 13% off the cost of a new home for

that couple or that single person who's looking to get into their first-time home. It could be as much as \$130,000 saved on that purchase. That is real money going back into their pocket, because you're reducing the mortgage by that amount of money. And a mortgage, cutting it down by \$130,000—that's about 500 bucks a month that they're not going to have to be paying out. It makes it more affordable.

We have been doing the things here in Ontario since the budget to ensure that Ontario does remain competitive. We want to make sure that Ontario is the greatest place in the G7 to invest. We have been attracting investment that way. Our goal is to make a province that is prosperous, secure and ready for the challenges ahead.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I'm now required to put the question. Minister Bethlenfalvy has moved third reading of Bill 68, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

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

Would all those in favour of the motion please say aye?

Would all those opposed to the motion please say nay?

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Third reading vote deferred.

REQUEST TO THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a request by the member for Davenport to Cathryn Motherwell, Integrity Commissioner, for an opinion pursuant to section 30 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, on whether the member for Northumberland–Peterborough South, David Piccini, has contravened the act or Ontario parliamentary convention.

Orders of the day?

Hon. Steve Clark: No further business, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1756.

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	