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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 29 November 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 29 novembre 2018

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us pray.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ACCESS TO NATURAL GAS ACT, 2018 LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ACCÈS AU GAZ NATUREL

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 28, 2018, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 32, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 32, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this incredibly important topic. I would like to thank our Minister of Infrastructure, Minister McNaughton, and his team for moving forward on this issue.

Speaker, in 33 sitting days previously, we have done so much to make life for Ontarians better. We announced the end of the cap-and-trade carbon tax. We reformed OHIP+, supporting people in the greatest need of assistance. We launched the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry and a line-by-line audit of government spending to get Ontarians answers. We ended the York University strike, bringing thousands of students back to the classroom. We invested \$25 million to combat violence, and announced a cannabis retail model.

Our government campaigned on putting the people of Ontario first, and Bill 32, the Access to Natural Gas Act, is another example of a piece of legislation that is truly for the people. That's why I'm proud to stand here in support of it today.

During the election campaign, the Progressive Conservatives made a commitment to the people of Ontario to provide relief from energy and hydro costs that skyrocketed under the eye of the previous government. From 2008 to 2016 alone, residential hydro costs in Ontario increased by 71%, nearly double the national average increase. The government of the day's solution, the Fair Hydro Plan, would have provided short-term relief, but at the expense of our wallets further down the line.

On the hydro file, our government has already signalled that help is on the way. By eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax and repealing the Green Energy Act, we will be cutting hydro rates by an average of 12% for the people of Ontario. This is money that can stay in the pockets of hard-

working Ontarians, right where it belongs. Promise made, promise kept.

Speaker, by now members of both sides of this House have heard the stories of Ontarians who have had to choose between heating and eating, stories of Ontarians who have had their electricity cut off when the days and nights are still cold because they couldn't afford to pay their bills, and stories of Ontarians who have had to walk away from their homes because their hydro bill was bigger than their mortgage. I truly believe that we can all agree that this is unacceptable.

Currently, 3.5 million residential customers and 130,000 businesses across the province use natural gas for heating, but this is not enough. The fact is, most of Ontario, demographically and geographically, doesn't have access to safe, affordable natural gas; 3.5 million customers is only approximately one quarter of our province's population. Less than one fifth—about 20%—of rural Ontarians have access to natural gas, forcing them to rely on pricier energy sources such as oil, propane and electricity.

Our government wants to allow the people of Ontario to spend their hard-earned dollars the way they'd like, and by enabling greater access to natural gas, we will be doing just that. Industry and government estimates suggest that the cost savings between gas and other energy sources is significant. Residential customers can expect to save between \$800 and \$2,500 per year. That's right; I'll say it again if it caught your attention: a savings of \$800 to \$2,500 per year by switching to natural gas from alternative energy sources. These savings are complemented by the savings families will see on their bills thanks to the removal of the carbon tax from their bills just a few short days ago.

If passed, Bill 32 will provide access to this incredible resource to potentially dozens of Ontario communities by enabling companies to participate in the expansion of natural gas infrastructure. Tens of thousands of households and families would be connected to natural gas in the months and years ahead, all at no cost to Ontario taxpayers.

Leveraging private sector resources will result in an expedient expansion of natural gas infrastructure so that more Ontarians can reap the rewards sooner rather than later. Government involvement would serve no purpose.

This isn't a one-shot subsidy at the taxpayers' expense. This is a meaningful change that will bring affordability and improved business. We said it during the campaign, we said it when we were elected, and we're saying it again through this announcement: Ontario is open for business.

Those of you familiar with my riding, the wonderful area of Mississauga–Streetsville just 45 minutes west of here, may know that there's not a whole lot of farmland

left, but even residents of downtown Toronto will benefit from increased rural natural gas access. Lower overhead and expenses mean that many of Ontario's 50,000 farms, which support 1.2 million jobs and contribute approximately \$106 billion to our GDP, and other rural businesses, can pass on the savings to consumers.

0910

Expanding natural gas will only make Ontario communities more attractive for job creation and new business. New, better jobs will put money in the pockets of more Ontarians, decrease reliance on social assistance programs and increase investment in the province, while raising our GDP.

Speaker, Ontarians wanted a government that would stop wasting taxpayers' money and time and create meaningful change and investment for the province. On June 7, we were given a clear mandate by Ontario voters to create and bring jobs, financial relief and prosperity back to this province. The aims of the natural gas act support this mandate.

We are not alone in our belief that increased access to natural gas is an important objective; individuals and stakeholders alike agree. Ontario Chamber of Commerce President Rocco Rossi was "pleased" to hear of our plan, adding that natural gas is a "clean and affordable option for powering homes and businesses" all across Ontario. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture, representing over 38,000 Ontario farm families, says that "natural gas is the single most important investment that will deliver a competitive edge to continue to drive growth" across this great province.

This plan is part of our promise to make life easier and more affordable for all families and businesses. Communities lacking access to natural gas, mainly rural, remote and First Nation communities, will be given access through private capital investment, subject to, of course, approval by the Ontario Energy Board.

We campaigned on lowering energy prices so people wouldn't have to choose between heating and eating. Promise made, promise kept. We campaigned on making sure that good-quality jobs were available in the province. Promise made, promise kept. We campaigned on making sure we let everybody know that Ontario is open for business. Promise made, promise kept. We campaigned on committing to usher in opportunity and prosperity, the likes of which this province has never seen before. And we've been transparent about what we want for do for the people of Ontario, and that's what we were elected to do.

The passing of this bill will allow us to get our economy moving and help those in need of assistance; \$800 to \$2,500 per year—that is an enormous savings for an Ontario family, savings that could be used at their discretion rather than on energy costs. Keeping money in people's pockets is what we were elected to do, and we are all proud of what we are doing.

I'd also like to add that I personally use natural gas to heat my home and to cook my food. I take it for granted, but, unfortunately, across this province many people don't

even have that option. What we as Progressive Conservatives—as a government with the support of the NDP and the independents, we should be able to provide that for all families across Ontario.

I'd like to also continue and thank, once again, Minister McNaughton for bringing this act to fruition. We will, hopefully, gain the support of everyone here in this chamber.

Thank you very much, Speaker, and I'm looking forward to the responses.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: It feels like we've been talking about this for a long time, and I feel like I keep saying the same thing, so I'll say it again, hoping that this time we're listening. I feel like, all parties coming together, we all agree with the main substance of this: that there are rural, remote and First Nations communities, as the member from Mississauga–Streetsville said, that require access to more forms of energy. My riding of Sudbury is fine. We're densely compact, there's natural gas everywhere and it's easy to get to. My colleague from Nickel Belt, for example, not so good: There's natural gas running nearby, but there's nothing into the community, neighbourhoods and the farms.

In principle, we think it's a good idea. The problem is—and I think I've said this now seven times: The rural, remote and First Nations communities, which the government continues to say time and time again in every speech, aren't anywhere in the bill. So we can pass this bill, make it a law, and then the distributors can really use it any way they want.

What we're saying is, "Trust us," and cross our fingers. We have seen how energy scandals have really foiled the government and have really upset a lot of people. Why would the government want to set themselves up for something like this, a potential scandal where, in good faith, we say we want to get natural gas to rural, remote and First Nations communities, and the official opposition—myself, personally, I think seven times—has said, "Let's put that in the bill"? And the government says, "No, trust us. It will work. It will work." How do you think that will play out if it doesn't work?

I'm not here to criticize and just poke holes; I'm here to help you be successful. That's our role as the opposition: to criticize effectively and say, "Here's how it can be improved." It's your role, as the owl on this side indicates, to listen and make wise decisions.

So, probably for the seventh time, we should have "rural, remote and First Nations" communities in the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Billy Pang: I understand and appreciate the position of the opposition because the opposition is supposed to oppose whatever we put forward, right?

Today we are talking about Bill 32: that we want to allow more customers access to affordable natural gas.

I can still remember 20 years ago, when I had just come to Canada. I cooked on a coil stove, and my pan was not

flat enough for the whole area to touch the coil. I strongly felt that it was kind of wasting energy, until I moved to a new home that used natural gas. Every point of the pan was heated by the natural gas. I think it is environmentally friendly and cost-effective.

I believe this bill, allowing more consumer access to affordable natural gas, is a great bill because it supports rural and northern Ontario families and businesses. To switch from electric heat, propane or oil to natural gas, we have a number that you can save: about \$800 to 2,500 per year.

Since natural gas is one of the three fossil fuels that the world runs on, I believe it produces less pollution than the other fuels.

This is a good bill. We want to extend service to those people who need it, save their money and save the planet.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Joel Harden: It's an honour to rise and speak to this motion today. I want to echo what my friend from Sudbury said. When you ask a question seven times and you don't get an answer, you begin to develop a theory as to why you don't get an answer.

Wearing my political economy hat for a second—because, thanks to the good people of Ontario, Speaker, I got to sit on my butt for years and pore through political economic research in various fields, and I'm aware of the energy industry. I know for a fact that there is an oversupply of natural gas in the market. There's a lot of natural gas looking for a home, and it's an important transitory fuel. It's an important transitory fuel, but it is not the future. The future is renewable energy. The future is figuring out a way to get families access to efficient, affordable energy.

When we don't know if northern Ontario and remote communities are going to get access to this natural gas, of which there is an oversupply in the market, all that one can conclude when one doesn't get an answer is that this supply is going to come into the Ontario market and be funnelled towards suburban development and growth, where it's a lot easier and more profitable for suppliers to turn around margins quickly. The northern communities will continue to be underserved.

What's really galling about this bill for me—even though we're going to vote in favour of this bill, because we want the object of this. We want access to natural gas for those communities. What's not in this bill is access to affordable renewable energy. Later today, we're going to hear—I hope, finally—a plan for climate change from this government. Will that plan include access to renewable energy? Will that plan include what other jurisdictions have done, making sure that Ontario is ready for the green revolution that is happening worldwide? We wait with bated breath, Speaker. We wait with bated breath, but what I still don't see in this bill is what we need in our northern and remote communities.

0920

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I rise today to talk about Bill 32. I was at the committee meeting on general government. Madam Speaker, you were on that committee. The natural gas extension to rural Ontario and also Aboriginal communities is a very important project. Bill 32 achieves this goal.

The reason I support it and that I'm passionate about this one is that heating is not a luxury anymore; heating is a basic, essential need for all Ontarians, regardless of where they live and what economic capacity they have. Expanding natural gas would make Ontario communities more attractive for job creation and new business. This will help send a clear message that Ontario is open for business.

Under the previous government's restrictions, private sector companies were limited in participating in some natural gas expansion, priorities which were instead managed by a taxpayer-funded grant program. The proposed natural gas expansion support program's charge would be limited to a very low cost to consumers, which is more than offset by the savings families and businesses will receive from the cancellation of the cap-and-trade carbon tax. We are committed to putting more money into your pocket by removing the cost of the cap-and-trade carbon tax from natural gas bills. It will save families approximately \$80 a year and small businesses approximately \$285 a year.

Again, I have to say, affordability is an issue for most Ontarians, especially in my riding of Markham—Thornhill. I spoke about affordability—

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

I return to the member from Mississauga—Streetsville for her reply.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: As we spoke of earlier, only about one fifth of Ontarians have access to natural gas. That leaves a very large number of communities—rural, First Nations—that still need access to natural gas. Our government has at least put a bill forward to make sure that those people can have that access. We waited for previous governments to do this, and they failed. So what we want to do is make sure that everybody has access to safe, affordable natural gas. All of those communities that we talked about earlier, especially the Indigenous communities, First Nations, rural, farmers, businesses, households—everybody should be able to have access to affordable natural gas, and that's what our plan is to do.

I feel that our government is listening to the people right across this province. Many people say that in the urban areas like here, because we've always taken for granted that we have this natural gas access, we've not thought about the northern ridings and rural areas. But we've taken a different approach. We are making sure we've listened to those people. They told us loud and clear throughout the campaign that they wanted to not to have to choose between heating and eating, that they wanted to be able to have options of ways to heat their home, like by using natural gas. We have the supply; we just want to make sure they can have access. Private capital markets will provide

the infrastructure to make sure that they can build and have access to that gas.

Thank you to everyone who spoke today on the natural gas act. We want to make sure we follow through. We really do hope and expect that the NDP and independents will support us.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Here we are, on the third reading of Bill 32, the Access to Natural Gas Act. Like all of my colleagues, we have no problem with the spirit of your bill, that you want to give Ontarians who have limited options for energy other options for energy.

I represent the riding of Nickel Belt. I represent 33 beautiful little communities with names like Shining Tree, Biscotasing, Westree, Gogama, Mattagami First Nation, Alban and Estaire, and the list goes on.

Most, if not all of the communities that I represent—we do not have access to natural gas. As I have said before, we see the great big pipeline going by. From where I live, from my house, there's a little hill where I go blueberry-picking. On top of the hill, I can see it. It is right there, but none of us have access. None of us are connected.

As an MPP for 11 years, how many of my constituents do you figure have asked me, "When are we going to get connected to the natural gas?" I would say pretty much all 96,000 of them have at one point or another. Have I looked into this? Oh, yes, absolutely.

My neighbour is not going to be happy, but he is in charge of Union Gas. He lives two doors down from where I live, and he does not have natural gas, because, remember, the pipe goes by; we're not connected.

I've looked into this issue. I, like everybody else I represent, would love to have an alternate source of energy. We see what it does to our neighbours. I'm really close to my MPP friends here from Sudbury. Lots of people who used to live in Sudbury now live in Nickel Belt or used to live in Nickel Belt and now live in Sudbury, as people move around. We see the difference it makes.

We live in northern Ontario. It will be no surprise to anyone that when I look out here, and I can still see a few trees that have leaves on the trees, and I have a foot of snow, and I have shoveled my driveway seven times—really, my husband did, but I supported him morally to shovel the driveway seven times already. Things are colder up north.

The source of energy is something that we are really looking forward to, so when I see a bill that says "access to natural gas"—I must say that there was quite a bit of excitement on this side of the House and for the people I represent. It sure has a title that we have been waiting for for a long time. But then it is my job to read the bills, not just the title, so I read the bill with the full anticipation that they were going to talk about us: that they were going to talk about small, northern, rural communities, that they were going to talk about First Nations communities, that they were going to talk about the people who have been wanting an alternate source of energy to heat their house.

In Nickel Belt, you heat your house with electricity. Some have an electric furnace. A lot just have electric baseboards. And you heat your house with wood. Yes, there is a lot of wood in Nickel Belt, and a lot of us heat our houses with wood. But there comes a time in a person's life when heating with wood is really difficult. You have to go into the bush and cut the trees, bring them to your lot, cut them to size, split them, pile them, let them dry for at least two years—sometimes more, depending on the species of trees that you have. Then you take those piles of wood that you have all around your house and you bring a little bit of it in. Some of us have basements full of cords of wood because you can dry them a little bit faster when they're in the house, and if the wood is warm when you put it in your wood stove, it burns better. But that still means that at least once, but more than likely two or three times a night, you get up, you go downstairs, you put wood in the stove and you go back to bed.

As you keep doing this year after year, it gets hard. As people get older, to get up and go downstairs in the middle of the night is not always the safest thing to do. You don't want to turn the light on so that the dog, the cats and the chickens outside all think that it's morning and start to go at it. So here you are, an elderly person maybe with a little bit of vision impairment if you don't put your glasses on in the middle of the—and there's a risk.

0930

Not to mention that if you've ever put a wood stove into your house and your insurance asks you if you have a wood stove in your house, be ready to pay double what you pay now to insure your house.

So it is difficult. It is doable, and lots of us do it, but if you offer us natural gas, I don't know one person where I live who would not take it.

We also know—after having talked with my neighbour who's in charge of Union Gas, remember—there is no way they are doing that on their own.

Nickel Belt is the centre of the Canadian Shield. In school, all of us learned about the Canadian Shield, this great big massive rock that goes up in northern Ontario. If you put a pin in the middle of the Canadian Shield, you've just put a pin in the middle of Nickel Belt. In most of the surroundings of Nickel Belt, you don't have to dig very far at all, often none at all, and you can see that it is rock.

I'm not an expert in natural gas transportation by any stretch, but we all know that they are pipes—I know this because I've seen them lay the pipes—and we all know that they are underground for safety. In order for that to happen where I live, it often means what we call in the mining community "drill and blast." You have to drill holes, put explosives in there, put all of those great big mats that they put on top, and then excavate the broken rocks and go at it. It is very expensive to do that.

The only reason we don't have natural gas where I live is because it is too expensive to bring it to us; although, as the crow flies, I'm not even one kilometre away from the main pipe that comes into Sudbury to supply all of the good people of his riding. They're not going to connect us because it is too expensive.

This is why when the NDP put our platform forward, we put aside \$100 million specifically targeted at helping First Nations who have no other source of energy but a hydro line and heating with wood. This is why we had specifically targeted areas in rural northern Ontario and rural southern Ontario—because we know that there will never be a company that will do that on their own.

When this bill came out, I went and saw the executive of Union Gas and said, “The Conservatives have put that forward, access to natural gas. You’ll be able to raise the cost by \$1 a month for everybody else so that you’ll bring natural gas to us.” He’s my neighbour; if he gets it, I get it also. The answer was, “No, a dollar more per customer is not the type of program that will bring natural gas to us. A dollar more on the bills of other natural gas customers allows them to bring natural gas to new developments, to areas that are already close to urban centres. The \$1 more is not for northern and rural—this is because the people who build houses, when they build a new sub-development, before they get the permission to expand and build a new series of houses, the municipalities will tell them, “You have to pay to bring the services out there. You have to pay to bring the water, the sewage. You have to pay to build the roads. You have to pay for the sidewalks and the ditches and the storm sewage and all of that, and you have to pay to bring natural gas.” Now the developers won’t have to pay to bring natural gas anymore. What will happen is that everybody else in the neighbourhood will all have to chip in \$1 a month more on their bills, and they will be subsidizing the housing developer so that they can develop and make money selling houses.

There’s no problem with good entrepreneurs wanting to make money. This is what life is all about: We go to work because we get a paycheque, and so do they. But now, rather than them assuming the cost of this expansion so that when they sell their houses they can say, “The house is connected to the Internet and connected to electricity and phone and natural gas. And look, it won’t cost you that much to heat the house, because we insulated it, we designed it and you have natural gas at your door,” it will be the good people of Ontario, through an increase in their natural gas bills.

When he started to talk to me about that—his name is Jim—my friend Jim. When Jim started to talk to me about this, I said, “Yes, but isn’t that going to work for us too,” the people he represents? He said, “Listen, we’re changing the pipes right now that go in front of your house from a six-inch to an eight-inch because yes, we know that there will be a higher demand for natural gas, and they need a bigger pipe.” But it’s never going to come to where I live; it’s going to go to that new development—mainly in his riding; good for him, but—

Mr. Jamie West: I win again.

M^{me} France Gélinas: He wins, and I lose again. I feel left out. I really feel left out.

That does not even start to talk about First Nations. The member from Kiiwetinoong yesterday made the point about how this is the first time ever that we have an Indigenous person representing a riding that is, in majority,

representing Indigenous people. For them, it is really new and really different, and they are watching us more than they’ve ever done.

I must say that provincial politics is something I find fascinating, but there are people who don’t share my interest. I would say that a lot of people in northern Ontario—we don’t have cable; therefore we don’t have the parliamentary channel. We get our television through satellite, and the satellite does not carry the parliamentary channel, and that’s it for us, so they never see us on TV. The news sometimes covers what’s going on—mainly if something derails badly and there’s bad news to be. But most of the time, they don’t really know.

Now they have a member. Things have changed. They have a riding where the majority of them are Indigenous people, so a lot of Indigenous people are looking at us. They live in areas like where I live, where we don’t have access to natural gas. They see a bill that says, “access to natural gas,” and they, too, are starting to think, “Wow, that means I won’t have to split 13 cords of wood. Maybe I could only split half of that next year. Man, my back feels better already. My hands are not going to be as covered in blisters and everything else.” We got kind of excited there for a little while. But they did the same thing I did, and the same thing everybody else who represents a northern riding did. We’ve all been at that for a long time. It doesn’t matter where you live in northern Ontario; we’ve all wanted access to natural gas and other sources of energy for a long time. So when they reached out to the people who run the natural gas in their area, they were set straight pretty quickly that, “So far, we haven’t been able to identify a First Nations community in northern Ontario that would be able to benefit from access to natural gas.”

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Yet whenever people from the Conservative government stand up, they always say “access to natural gas.” They talk about us. They talk about rural and northern Ontario. They don’t say “Nickel Belt,” but it’s as close as it ever comes. They talk about First Nations, and they describe us. But when we ask and we connect with—it’s mainly Union Gas that has the big pipes in northern Ontario. We ask them, “Is there a chance for us?” There is none. There are no First Nations who will be helped by that. There are no communities in Nickel Belt who will be helped by that.

We do want the help. We do want alternative sources of energy. Right now, as my colleagues have said, there is an oversupply of natural gas. There is a need in northern Ontario to heat our houses, and businesses and everything else that’s going on in northern Ontario. We have been asking for this for a long time, to the point where we put it in our platform that there would be \$100 million, but we targeted it to where it was needed.

Don’t get me wrong. I’m happy that there will be people buying brand new houses in subdivisions close to urban centres who will have natural gas. I’m not against this, but I don’t see why the natural gas payers have to pay for that. It has always been done that it was the contractors and the developers who paid for those developments, not

the taxpayers, the ratepayers and the homeowners who had to pay for that through an increase.

Then you start to look and you say, “Well, we give an industry access to the monthly bills of”—I used to know the number. I think it’s nine million.

Interjection.

M^{me} France Gélinas: No, I’m too high. It’s 1.9 million consumers. We have given a private, for-profit, monopoly industry access to our natural gas bills. Is it just me who thinks that this is a little bit dangerous? Is it just me who thinks that this could derail and go really, really bad, really, really quickly? We looked for the safeguards put into the bill; there are none.

This bill is not for northern Ontario, not for rural Ontario or northern rural Ontario. It is not for the First Nations of northern Ontario. So who is it for? It’s for suburban southern Ontario. Some of it will be rural, I agree, but most of it is suburban. It will help the housing developer and it will open up this really dangerous set-up where a big monopoly will have access to your monthly bill so that they don’t have to pay the bill. They will pass it on to their 1.9 million consumers every month. I am extremely worried.

I do want natural gas. How hard would it have been to say “northern, rural and First Nations” in the bill? We tried and tried and tried, Speaker, through second reading, through deputations, through making amendments to the bill. Here we are in third reading, and we all know that after third reading this is it. We have a majority government that will vote in favour of this. “Northern, rural and First Nations” is not in it. This is not for us, and that’s really shameful.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: Good morning. I rise to speak to Bill 32. Thank you to the member from Nickel Belt for your comments.

In the news release it actually says, “Ford Government to Help Expand Access to Natural Gas: Announced legislation that, if passed, will bring natural gas to families and businesses throughout rural and northern Ontario.”

I’ll also give you a quote from the CEO of the Ontario Home Builders’ Association, who said, “The decision to extend natural gas services will support future housing supply and choice in rural and northern communities while providing homeowners and businesses with an affordable and reliable heating option that will keep their everyday costs down.”

Now I’m going to take you back to September to the International Plowing Match—I’m sure we all remember that; we had a good time. In an article released by the CBC from the International Plowing Match, we have, “The government of Ontario says in a news release that families will save about \$80 a year and small businesses \$285 a year from removal of the carbon tax,” which is great.

Then, the leader of the opposition, the member from Hamilton Centre, took the stage later and “was in agreement with Ford about natural gas expansion, saying they will make sure the promise is kept”—in writing. From her lips to God’s ears, so to speak.

So it’s interesting when I hear members from the opposition benches saying that they’re not going to support the bill, when it says right here in black and white that Horwath—the article says her name—“Horwath who took the stage later was in agreement with Ford about natural gas expansion, saying they will make sure the promise is kept.”

As I’ve read, there have been two quotes now saying that we will be bringing it to rural and northern Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

M. Guy Bourgouin: Ce matin, j’étais content d’entendre ma collègue de Nickel Belt parler, parce que la réalité est qu’on n’est pas contre l’accès au gaz naturel. Moi, je suis un des chanceux dans ma circonscription à l’avoir. Mais je peux vous dire qu’il y en a plusieurs qui ne l’ont pas. On regarde le projet de loi et il n’y a aucune mention—on l’a répété souvent—aucune mention des communautés du Nord ou bien donc des Premières Nations. Ce n’est pas à cause qu’on n’a pas essayé; on a présenté des résolutions, on a essayé d’amener des changements au projet, mais pour une raison quelconque le gouvernement ne veut pas supporter notre position.

D’entendre aujourd’hui une collègue des conservateurs dire, « Non, non, non : il va y avoir des expansions dans le nord de l’Ontario », bien, je pense qu’ils sont déconnectés un petit peu de la réalité dans le nord de l’Ontario. Peut-être qu’ils devraient prendre le temps de venir voir les réalités du Nord, parce que je peux vous dire que les réalités du Nord ne sont définitivement pas les mêmes que celles du sud de l’Ontario. Le projet de loi dont on traite—comment est-ce que je pourrais dire ça, les « suburbs » en français?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Les subdivisions.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Les subdivisions, merci—les subdivisions y ont accès. On n’est pas contre ça. Mais il faut que nos communautés du Nord aient accès au gaz naturel comme tout le reste. On est des Ontariens—pas plus, pas moins. On demande juste les mêmes services que le reste de la province.

J’ai une communauté, Kitigan, où il y a six maisons qui ont accès au gaz naturel et le reste ne l’ont pas. J’ai parlé en Chambre d’un de mes commettants, M. Potvin, qui a demandé l’accès. Ça lui a été refusé par la compagnie. On est bien mieux de se préparer dans le nord de l’Ontario, parce qu’il va en avoir souvent, des lettres comme ça, par des compagnies.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments? I recognize the member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know you had the pleasure to listen to me speak about Bill 32 a couple of weeks ago here in the House, and we had some great conversations after that, but one thing that I just wanted to reiterate to the members opposite is that I spent 26 years of my life living in northern Ontario and I understand the realities. I know what it’s like to heat your house with propane. I know what it’s like to heat your house with electricity, with a wood stove—which I think gives the best heat, by the way, and I’m sure the other

members opposite may agree; you love walking into the house and smelling that smell of a wood stove.

But the reality here is that our minister and our Ministry of Infrastructure have stated, and they've made it pretty clear, that this natural gas expansion will not just be in the suburbs or southern Ontario; it will be in parts of rural Ontario that do not have natural gas. It will be in parts of northern Ontario that don't have natural gas.

I can tell you that under the last government, with two economic development projects that touched on natural gas, only nine new communities received natural gas expansion. That's dismal. We're talking 15 years—nine new communities. We've been in power now for roughly four and a half months, and we're bringing natural gas to 78 new communities across Ontario.

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I have a lot of family that still lives up north, and I can tell you, I will be making sure—and I'm sure the other northern members in here as well; I know there are a few. They're going to want to hold our ministry accountable and make sure that natural gas is expanded into northern Ontario. It's something that shouldn't be taken for granted.

I know that there are so many family members that I have that are currently heating their house on propane. When we're talking about switching from propane over to natural gas, you could see a savings of—and this is a staggering amount—\$2,500 a year.

I appreciate the opportunity to stand here and debate this today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: As my colleague from Sudbury has mentioned, we have spoken about this so many times, and yet the government has chosen not to work with us. We've mentioned how this needs to have rural, north, and Indigenous communities mentioned explicitly within this legislation, yet this government has not taken our advice and has not taken this opportunity.

It really is a sweetheart deal for developers, that they're going to be allowed to reach into the pockets of ratepayers across Ontario, and there is no guarantee what they will take. There are no limits being placed upon them, and that's quite frightening. This government should—as the member from Ottawa Centre has so rightly mentioned—take heed from the experiences of past governments and their mishandling of the energy file.

The member from Kitchener–Conestoga mentions that this will benefit 78 communities. Then they should be named within the legislation. Why is that so difficult? You could drive a truck through this legislation; it's full of so many holes.

This really was an opportunity for the government. This is something that people have been waiting for, as the member from Nickel Belt has mentioned, for so many years. This was a great opportunity. But unfortunately, this government has really extended the gravy train to private enterprise. They are allowing private enterprise to reach into every Ontarian's pocket who pays for natural gas. Quite frankly, that is not right, that is not fair, and this

government will have to wear that mark forever. We'll wait and see how this plays out.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Nickel Belt for her reply.

M^{me} France Gélinas: As I said, we are now debating third reading of Bill 32, the Access to Natural Gas Act. After those few hours of debate left, it is done. This bill will pass.

Throughout this entire process, the NDP has stood up and told the PC government that you're going in the right direction, you are saying the right thing, but your bill does not line up with your talk. You talk about bringing natural gas to northern Ontario, to rural northern Ontario, to First Nations, but your bill is not going to do that.

To say, “Well, it will be our job to hold the ministry to account”—you cannot hold the minister to account on something that is not in the bill. It would have been so easy to mention northern Ontario. It would have been so easy to mention First Nations. It would have been so easy to say “rural northern Ontario” in the bill, but none of that happened.

On est rendu à la troisième lecture, madame la Présidente. Après tout ce débat, on n'est pas plus avancé qu'on ne l'était lorsque le projet de loi a été déposé. Le projet de loi a été déposé en disant que le projet de loi était pour amener le gaz naturel dans les milieux ruraux du nord de l'Ontario et des Premières Nations. Lorsqu'on a eu le temps de lire le projet de loi, on ne parle pas du Nord, on ne parle pas des Premières Nations et on ne parle surtout pas des régions rurales du Nord. Pendant toutes les heures de débats, lorsque les gens ont pu venir témoigner, lorsqu'on a essayé de faire des changements au projet de loi, les conservateurs ont toujours refusé de dire que—ils disent que c'est pour nous, mais ils ne veulent pas le mettre dans la loi.

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

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I'm pleased to rise today in the Ontario Legislature to speak in support of Bill 32, the proposed Access to Natural Gas Act. I would like to first thank the Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Energy, as well as their parliamentary assistants and their staff, for their collective work on this proposed legislation.

As members know, this bill is designed to increase access to natural gas for those families, individuals and businesses living in the more rural, remote and northern parts of Ontario. Many may look at me now speaking in the Legislature and wonder why I rise in support of Bill 32, which may not be directly affecting my great riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park. But, Madam Speaker, access to natural gas does affect my constituents. We in Scarborough–Rouge Park are not an island unto ourselves, so to speak. We have families and friends in more rural and remote areas. Some from Scarborough–Rouge Park are fortunate enough to have their vacation properties in the areas that will be affected by this bill. But most importantly, we have Ontarians whose lives will be improved by the passage of this proposed legislation. That is great news, and I have the pleasure of speaking to it today.

We all know that life is expensive. It's easy to see that. Whether you live in rural and northern communities or

not, you see it every time you go to pay your bills, every time you go to the grocery store. In particular, we in Ontario have the highest hydro rates in all of North America. In the recent campaign period, I heard from residents of Scarborough–Rouge Park who struggle with their hydro rates. On June 7, the people of Ontario showed they'd had enough with 15 years of Liberal mismanagement of their money and, importantly, the rising cost of energy in this province. Our government has already worked to reduce electricity costs. Help is on the way.

Madam Speaker, expanding access to natural gas in this province would greatly benefit many Ontarians by providing them with more affordable options to heat their homes. People are facing high energy costs, and reliance on electricity, oil or propane to heat homes simply adds to the cost of life in many areas. By giving those people an option to use natural gas, they have the opportunity to reduce their monthly expenses, especially during the long Ontario winters.

I come from a country where we never had winters like this, and I can attest to the fact that our winters here in Ontario are very cold. Here in Ontario, you need to heat your house. I was especially touched when I heard from the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, who has an 80-year-old constituent who is chopping wood to ensure that she can stay warm throughout the long, cold winter we have here in Ontario. Remember, I come from Tamil Eelam, where we never quite had chilly weather, and while I enjoy sitting by the fireside as much as other Ontarians, I usually do it out of choice, not necessity. It saddens me that we have 80-year-old seniors who are forced to be out chopping wood to stay warm, although I must say, I congratulate Fran Kolton on her health, and hope that I'll be fit enough at 80 to be chopping wood.

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If this bill passes, this legislation would help the private sector expand their natural gas service to a wider swath of Ontario. While many homes and businesses in Ontario currently have access to natural gas—3.5 million homes and 130,000 businesses—this would open up access to natural gas to many more in this province.

In fact, this legislation, if passed, would enable government to work with the Ontario Energy Board to develop programs that will allow the private sector to deliver natural gas to up to 78 more communities over the next five years. This is up to 33,000 more Ontarians—up to 33,000 more Ontarians. That's not a number to sneeze at. That's up to 33,000 more Ontarians who are not forced to chop their wood to heat their homes, who are not forced to use expensive and inefficient ways to stay warm. Instead, they will now have access to natural gas, similar to many other communities in Ontario, giving them an opportunity for monthly savings and putting more money in the pockets of families and businesses. For many, it would give them more time to spend with their families if they don't need to be out chopping wood to stay warm in the winter months, and more money to spend on their loved ones in their local community stores.

Natural gas is very affordable and an environmentally friendly way to heat your home, especially when com-

pared with heating your house or business with oil, propane or even electricity. I mentioned earlier, we have the highest hydro rates in North America here in our great province of Ontario. Thanks to the previous Liberal government for the hydro rates skyrocketing.

As always, the numbers don't lie. My background is in finance, and in this case we are talking about \$800 and \$2,500 per year for those switching from electricity, oil or propane to natural gas to heat their homes. That's a significant amount of money that we want to put back into the pockets of everyday Ontario families, money they can choose to spend in their communities at local businesses or put toward their savings for the future, whether it be retirement, their children's education or simply put aside for a rainy day fund. As a former financial adviser, I would say that this is a great win for those families.

Our government was elected on a mandate to reduce the cost of living for everyday Ontario families. The people of Ontario were struggling after 15 years of the Liberal government adding to the cost of living through their misguided policies. Well, as everyone here knows, we have moved fast to deliver on the mandate we were elected on. We have already passed a number of bills which are reducing the cost of living for Ontario families. We have removed outdated policies such as the Drive Clean program, which was costing the government and the taxpayers some \$40 million a year. We cancelled the cap-and-trade carbon tax, which, removed from natural gas bills, saved families some \$80 a year and businesses \$285 a year. This was an unnecessary cost and burden to families and businesses.

It certainly stifled investment in many industries in Ontario, chasing jobs out of this province. I'm happy to say, as many of my colleagues already have, Ontario is open for business. This province is back, and we want businesses, families and individuals to thrive and not be stifled by their government and unnecessary red tape, regulations and taxes, as it has been in the past 15 years. This is not the role of government. I'm glad we are cutting those programs and policies and ensuring that people and businesses can move forward with confidence that they have a government that supports them.

I recently received a picture from a colleague, the member for Mississauga–Malton, showing gas prices in his riding at under \$1. I'm sure that some members on the opposition benches may think that this is horrible and we need high taxation and high gas prices, but that's simply not the reality for so many Ontario families. It's not what the average Ontario citizen wants.

Many of us Ontarians rely on gas to get us to and from work, to drop off our kids and pick up our kids from hockey practice or cricket practice or drive out of the city for a little relaxation in nature.

We are working hard to reduce the cost of living for families in Ontario. I'm proud to say that I think we are already having an effect. We are delivering on a mandate from the people of Ontario, and we are doing it in a fast yet responsible manner.

From speaking with many residents across Ontario, especially my constituents in the riding of Scarborough–

Rouge Park, they appreciate more money in their pockets—more money that they get to choose what to do with. No one wants the hand of the government in your pocket more than is necessary.

There are numerous examples of legislation that our government passed which created savings for Ontario families across the province. I have already mentioned a few. This proposed bill on access to natural gas, Bill 32, would do the same for those families living in rural and remote areas of Ontario. It would put more money in their pockets. Those who currently rely on more expensive, inefficient and less environmentally friendly ways to heat their homes now have a choice to move to natural gas instead, if the legislation is passed, and put more money in their pockets by making that switch. I strongly believe that this is a good thing, and I think many others here in this Legislature today think that as well.

We are talking about \$800 to \$2,500 more a year for families. You can do a lot with that money. I know that in Scarborough–Rouge Park, my residents would be thrilled with that kind of annual savings. It would allow them to spend more on programs with their children. It would allow them to buy better and healthier food at the grocery store. It would allow them to fix that broken fence that they have been putting off due to the cost. It would allow them to invest in their future, which I can confidently tell you, given my financial background, makes a difference. If you manage to invest \$800 a year towards your retirement, you could maybe stop working a little earlier to enjoy more time with your loved ones as you get older. You could save for that nice trip with your wife or husband that you have always talked about. In many cases, you wouldn't have to penny-pinch to ensure the basics of everyday life for you and for your family. I hear this from my constituents in Scarborough–Rouge Park, and I believe that this is the same for people across Ontario. So when we say that this legislation will save families who are using inefficient means to heat their homes some \$800 to \$2,500, I think this will have a larger impact on lives and certainly one for the better.

Access to natural gas is so much more than just savings; it opens up a host of options to residents of our rural and remote communities. Rural communities in Ontario contribute \$106 billion to the GDP of this province—\$106 billion—and rural communities support some 1.2 million jobs. And this isn't some made-up Liberal math; this is Statistics Canada data.

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Many of those in our rural and remote communities are involved in the agricultural and food industry. These are people who work hard every day to ensure cities like Toronto and ridings like my riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park have the food we often consume without much thought as to where it comes from. We enjoy the fruits of their labour, so to speak, and we need to make sure they have the supports to continue their work and live in a comfortable and affordable manner. Expanded access to natural gas would greatly assist these farmers, and more

than just in the comfort of their home, as I have already discussed; this would help them run better and more efficient businesses. This would help them employ modern technologies to help grow our food—an obvious example being the booming greenhouse industry. We need to ensure that our farmers have the tools they need to continue to supply our cities with affordable goods, that they have the ability to farm in innovative ways and to stay competitive and in business.

Beyond the agri-food industry, Madam Speaker, there are a number of other industry sectors that would benefit from the expanded access to natural gas. I'll just highlight a couple of the many examples. The transportation industry, vital to those in the north, could greatly benefit from this proposed legislation. With expanded access to natural gas, many of those diesel vehicles could switch to the more environmentally friendly and more affordable compressed natural gas option. This would include buses and commercial trucking, both vital to life in remote areas.

Additionally, the mining sector, which employs many in the areas which this proposed legislation would expand natural access to: two thirds of the mining jobs in Ontario are in northern communities, so this is exactly where this proposed legislation would be expanding access to. This would help this important industry, which supports 26,000 direct jobs and 50,000 indirect jobs. Between the benefits to the agri-food industry, transportation sector and the mining industry, communities, families and businesses in the rural and remote areas of Ontario will strongly benefit from this proposed bill, Bill 32. These are just a few of the key industry sectors that would see improved operations and opportunities from this proposed legislation. Madam Speaker, we want to ensure that all of Ontario is open for business.

Madam Speaker, we also want to make a long-lasting and positive change in the lives of everyday Ontario families and the small businesses that so many of them run or are employed by. Bill 32, if passed, would do just that. It's not a one-off or a one-time subsidy. This small investment will bring lasting change and improvement to the lives of many Ontarians.

We have heard from a number of my colleagues now who have talked about the direct benefit that this proposed legislation would bring to the lives of their constituents. We have heard the emails and letters read by the Minister of Infrastructure, the member from King–Vaughan and others, as well as even some members from the opposition benches. We have heard the ringing endorsements from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Ontario Home Builders' Association and many others. I'm not going to repeat them and further bore my colleagues in the Legislature today, but I think that this is a clear message. Everyday Ontario families want this proposed legislation passed. This benefits the rural and remote areas of this great province, and would benefit all in Ontario.

Thank you to the hard-working ministers and parliamentary assistants and their staff who worked on this proposed legislation for trying to support as many Ontarians as possible in a responsible manner.

I'm happy to say that I support this proposed legislation. I urge my colleagues here in the Legislature to do the same.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): It being 10:15, this House is now recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have in the Speaker's gallery some very special guests, the family of the late Reid Scott, MPP for Beaches during the 23rd Parliament: daughter Lesley Scott; son Greg Scott and his wife, Sandy; grandson Michael Scott and his wife, Holly; brother-in-law Doug Phillips; niece Judy Phillips; nephews Steve, Dave and Mike Palmer; and friends Jeanne Fraser and Murray Baer. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

They are joined by David Warner, Speaker during the 35th Parliament and chair of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians. Welcome back, David.

Also today in the Speaker's gallery is Bill Hannan, who was the director of our legislative foodservice from 2006 to 2017. Welcome back to Queen's Park, Bill.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and introduce a delegation from Poland, from the beautiful and bountiful province of Lublin, including: Mr. Przemysław Czarnek, the governor of Lublin Province; Mrs. Agata Grula; Bartosz Rybal; Jerzy Sądół; Mieczysław Ryba; Jacek Gołębiowski; Marek Konieczny; Stanisław Pisarski; Marcin Mazur; Maciej Kister; Piotr Pomarański and Marek Manturowicz. I welcome you to Queen's Park and I look forward to our discussions about how our two provinces can work together.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, I take great pleasure in informing you that today we have a guest from Kenora. The mayor of Kenora, Dave Canfield, is here. He did not seek re-election. He's up for his final AMO board meeting and decided to take in question period this morning. Welcome, Dave.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I've got seven members of the Oakville community I would like to welcome today: Francis Gao, May Xie, John Wang, Simon Luo, Lisha Peng, Zhen Zhou and Shawn Fang. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Paul Calandra: It gives me great pleasure to introduce my beautiful daughter Natalie, who joins us today. She has a school project due tomorrow and she will be giving a hard-hitting interview to the Premier later on today, so I just want to welcome her.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: As the MPP for Beaches–East York, I would just like to extend a very warm welcome, on behalf of all the constituents in Beaches–East York, to the members of Reid Scott's family and friends. Thanks for coming, and welcome.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's a real honour to welcome two friends from Guelph here today, Crista Renner and Rob Ramage, and also to welcome climate activists Jen

Ackerman and Don Hudson to Queen's Park today. Thank you for joining us.

Ms. Lindsey Park: It's my privilege this morning to introduce my mother, who is joining us in the east members' gallery, Joan Park. With her is our dear friend Ruth Anne Campbell. Thanks for joining us.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I would like to thank our page Lillian Liu from my riding of Richmond Hill. Lillian is a student in the grade 8 PACE program at St. Charles Garnier Catholic Elementary School in Richmond Hill. She is joined by her proud father, Mr. Andrew Liu. Lillian is the middle child of three children.

Mr. Liu, we are happy that Lillian is having this wonderful opportunity to participate in this full-time educational experience in the parliamentary and political process.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Sault Ste. Marie.

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to beg your indulgence from the outset here. I have a bit of a list that I've been provided.

On behalf of Minister Rickford, I want to welcome the recently retired and first-ever mayor of Kenora, Dave Canfield. Just a little bit of background: Mr. Canfield spent 32 years working in the forestry sector, a crane operator by trade. He's the former president of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association. He served as the mayor of Jaffray Melick from 1994 to 1999 and the mayor of Kenora for the last 15 years.

I also want to welcome to Queen's Park John Emberson and John Crowley, the president and vice-president of Coach Canada, here in the gallery; Jim Burnett, vice-president of Pathway Group; and Leanna Karremans, director of research, policy and communications from Pathway Group.

Welcome to Queen's Park, everyone. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I want to recognize Vanessa De Matteis, a young entrepreneur and student at Ryerson, here from the great riding of King–Vaughan. Welcome to the people's House.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: It's my pleasure to introduce John Karapita and Matt Caron from the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association here today. Welcome, and thank you for joining us.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'd like to welcome Laura Northey, Carolyn Young, Dora Chan, Bill Redelmeier, Eric Payseur and Kristen Howe, here today from the Organic Council of Ontario in support of my bill this afternoon on organic farming.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Mrs. Robin Martin: Mr. Speaker, I believe you'll find we have unanimous consent to wear red ribbons in honour of World AIDS Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence is seeking the unanimous consent of

the House to allow members to wear red ribbons in recognition of World AIDS Day. Agreed? Agreed.

REID SCOTT

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: Point of order, Speaker: I believe you'll find that we have unanimous consent for a tribute to Reid Scott, the member for Beaches in the 23rd Parliament, with five minutes allotted to the independent Liberal members, five minutes allotted to the independent Green member, five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's government and five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to do a tribute in memory of Reid Scott. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: It's an honour to pay tribute to Reid Scott and his life of service to his community and to Ontario. I want to welcome his family and friends: his daughter Lesley Scott; his son, Greg Scott and his wife, Sandy Scott; his grandson Michael Scott and his wife, Holly Scott; his brother-in-law Doug Phillips; his niece Judy Phillips; his nephews Steve Palmer, Dave Palmer and Mike Palmer; and his friends Jeanne Fraser and Murray Baer.

Reid Scott was elected in 1948 at the age of 21 in the riding of Beaches and became the youngest member ever to serve in the Legislature. It was a record that stood for 60 years, but of course many records are eventually broken.

He does have a record, however, that will never be broken—and, in fact, each of us here does and anyone who has sat here does. It's called Hansard. The words we speak are in Hansard forever, and it's good for all of us to remember that. Those words tell us about ourselves and about others.

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Here are some of Reid Scott's words as a 21-year-old member of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation: "May I just say this much however, that if you took every Communist or Communist supporter in this country and shot him at sunrise, tomorrow, it would solve nothing. It would not build a single house, it would not increase the old-age pension, it would not provide hospitals, it would not solve any of the great problems which are crying out for solution."

The more things change, the more things stay the same.

It is also evident that Reid cared very deeply about education and equality of opportunity. During a debate about access to post-secondary education for Ontarians who did not have the financial means to attend, Mr. Scott asked the government of the day, "How can you sit back and allow your own supporters to be so adversely affected. Don't you see that this situation is not improving, and that it will become worse and worse unless something is done. Don't you see that its major effects will not be felt this year or next year, but rather 10 or 12 years from now. Don't you

see that this trend if left unchecked will sap the basic strength of our system, which is an educated population, that it will result in a decreasing level of education." Something we're still debating 70 years later.

Reid went on to serve as one of the first elected NDP members of Parliament, from 1962 to 1968, and served on the committee that brought us our flag, the Maple Leaf, something I am told that he was very, very proud of. The flag debate was a very contentious one—we wouldn't know about that—as debates go. He worked hard with others to broker a solution, and the result was the flag that we know today. I don't know the inside details of how it exactly happened, but I think he was rather imaginative and ingenious in finding that solution, from what I understand.

He also served as a Toronto city councillor from 1969 to 1976. That's a real record of service, if you think about that: all three levels of government. Not many of us get the chance to do that.

In 2008, after a six-decade-long attachment to the NDP, Reid Scott saw the light and he joined the federal Liberals. Impressed by Stéphane Dion's carbon tax plan, and the fact that the world was going to go to a price on carbon, Reid Scott sent a letter to the federal Liberals, saying he would like to take out a membership. "He's got great integrity and courage," Reid Scott said. To all my friends in the NDP, Reid Scott shows it's never too late.

He also served as a provincial judge and a lawyer, and used his talents and knowledge to help many, many people.

Speaker, when I came to this place, I got into the habit of asking pages, "What's the most interesting thing in this place?" I'm always hoping the answer will be me, but it never is.

Their answers are always very interesting. I'll never forget this one answer I got from a page named Mira Gillis from Windsor-Tecumseh. I asked her the question, "What's the most interesting thing about this place?" And here was her response: She said that when she came here she was very intimidated "because all of you were so important but when I came here I realized that you're just one big family." And she's right.

Reid Scott was a member of our family and part of our heritage, and I'm honoured to have a few words to say about his legacy today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour today to rise in this House to pay tribute to Reid Scott for his distinguished public service to our province, the city of Toronto and our country. I welcome his children and grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and friends who are with us here today. It's truly an honour to pay tribute to such an honourable person and such a distinguished public servant.

Mr. Scott's accomplishments are very impressive: a career in public service that not only included being elected to serve in this House; but also to serve in our federal Parliament; to serve as, at that time, a city of Toronto alderman; and, later, to serve as a judge in our judiciary.

In 1948, Mr. Scott made history—and believe me, I can relate to making history. He was elected as the first CCF

MPP in Ontario's history and also at that time was elected, at the age of 22, as Ontario's youngest MPP ever. In that election, he actually defeated an incumbent who had been in office for 22 years—quite an accomplishment for a 22-year-old upstart. He served in this Legislature from 1948 to 1951 and then was elected as a federal MP in the riding of Danforth in 1962 for the New Democratic Party, where he served until 1968.

He had many accomplishments, but I think the one that was most significant and that he seemed to speak about later in his life was the role Mr. Scott played in the Canadian flag. It's my understanding that he played a critical role at committee especially, when there was a lot of controversy over the flag. We've all read about the Great Flag Debate, but it was my understanding that it was Reid Scott who convinced his colleagues to get behind the great maple leaf. I have to say that I believe we have the best flag of any country in the world, and Reid Scott played a critical role in making that happen. Later in life, he was quoted as saying that every time he went to Parliament Hill, he was so proud to look at that flag that it would make him cry. What a legacy.

Then in 1969, he was elected to Toronto city council. One of the things that impressed me was that he advocated that Yonge Street should have a pedestrian zone and that cities should be about people, not necessarily about cars. I thought, "Wow, for somebody to say that in 1969"—because here we are, decades later, and we're still having that conversation about making our streets about people. He then later served as a provincial court judge.

I'm deeply inspired by his contributions to democracy, but I have to say it was also his ability to predict the future that I find very, very admirable. In 2007, he was quoted in the *Toronto Star* as saying, "I believe the Green Party will elect an MPP to Ontario's Legislature." It may have taken an additional 11 years for that prediction to come true, but indeed it did in 2018.

I really admire Reid Scott's commitment to the environment. He advocated for climate action decades before most people even realized climate change was an issue that we needed to address. He advocated based on principle, not party. I know my Liberal colleague has made reference to this already, but in 2008, he switched parties based on principle and based on his belief that we had to take climate action. I'll even admit this publicly in this House so it will be on the record forever: I thought about it in 2008 myself when I saw the Green Shift plan put out by Mr. Dion.

I deeply admire Reid Scott standing up and always putting principle first throughout his entire career, regardless of which party he served in and which level of government he served in.

I just want to say to Mr. Scott's family and friends what an inspiration he was, especially for somebody like myself, a bit of a trailblazer as well, that he blazed so many trails for so many people. I deeply admire the work he's done and his contribution to our province and our country. Thank you for being here with us today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Niagara West.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Speaker, I'm honoured to rise in this House to pay tribute to a former member of the Legislature, Reid Scott, who served in this very Legislature from 1948 to 1951, and served in many other capacities as well.

I'm especially grateful to pay tribute today to Mr. Scott because we have something in common. Like myself, he set the record as the youngest MPP to sit in the Ontario Legislature. He gained office at the age of 21, defeating a seasoned incumbent, and would go on to serve the public in significant ways.

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Mr. Scott was born on October 23, 1926, and passed away peacefully on March 2, 2016. He is survived by his four children: Janette, Karen, Lesley and Greg; his four grandchildren: Lindsey, Michael, Katie and Sash; his sister Betty and her family. Thank you very much for joining us today.

He is remembered with love by his family and friends, and in the course of history, he is also remembered with love for his many years of public service to the people of Ontario and all of Canada at large. As an honour graduate of the University of Toronto with honour degrees in economics and political science—another thing we have in common—and a graduate of Osgoode Hall Law School, Mr. Scott used his personal and professional expertise to aid and change many lives.

He first served as a Co-operative Commonwealth Federation member of the provincial Parliament for the Beaches constituency from 1948 to 1951. Scott, a law student at the time, defeated the 22-year incumbent Thomas Alexander Murphy when he was elected to the Ontario Legislature. And at age 21, he set the record for the youngest MPP ever elected, which remained unbroken until a by-election in 2016.

Mr. Scott went on to become the New Democratic Party member of Parliament for the Danforth electoral district in Toronto from 1962 to 1968. During his time as a member of the House of Commons, he was selected to be a member of the parliamentary committee tasked to select Canada's national flag. Scott successfully lobbied Social Credit and Cr ditiste MPs to back the maple leaf flag. He even claimed that he rigged the final vote to ensure the 15-person parliamentary flag committee recommended the single-leaf banner that has flown across Canada since February 15, 1965. It was up against a three-leaf pennant favoured by the Prime Minister at the time and a version of the red-leaf flag that included the Union Jack and fleur-de-lis and was supported by the opposition Conservatives. When some called his rigging into question, he argued, "I don't call it trickery. I call it legal manoeuvring."

He considered his presence on the committee and his contribution to the selection of Canada's national flag to be one of his most important and proudest moments. If it wasn't for his legal manoeuvring, we quite certainly wouldn't have the beautiful national flag that we have today, a proud symbol of our strong Canada that is glorious and free.

Mr. Scott left federal politics when his riding disappeared due to redistribution but returned to politics in 1969 as a Toronto city alderman. In the early 1970s, as chair of the Metro public works committee, he proposed turning part of Yonge Street into a pedestrian mall. This experiment was conducted for a week in 1971, attracting 50,000 people a day.

At the age of 80, Scott threatened to come out of political retirement to contest the riding of Ajax–Pickering for the Ontario NDP in the October 2007 provincial election. He said he wanted to become both the youngest MPP ever elected and the oldest MPP at the same time. He did not end up running, but his longevity and tireless passion for politics are a testament to his relentless energy and commitment to his causes and constituents.

Scott is a true inspiration. Because of young, energetic members like Mr. Scott and many others throughout the ages, including the late William Pitt, who became Prime Minister of Britain at age 24 and was instrumental in abolishing the slave trade in Britain, that gave me the courage to get involved and make a difference at a young age. The younger you start, the more you can contribute, and Mr. Scott's life story shows us precisely that. Through his service as an elected member of the Ontario Legislature, member of the House of Commons and alderman for the city of Toronto, lawyer and provincial court judge, Reid Scott has made a lasting impact on the broader community. He has led a life of public service for which we are forever indebted.

I wish to also thank his family for sharing Scott with Queen's Park, with Ontario and with Canada. Although we differ in political philosophy, I admire Scott's legacy, tenacity and passion. I'm honoured to pay tribute to him today. May his legacy live on and inspire many more citizens to dedicate themselves selflessly for the service of others.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next I'll recognize the member for Beaches–East York.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: It is my extraordinary honour as the MPP for Beaches–East York and a member of the official opposition NDP to pay tribute to Reid Scott. I never had the privilege of meeting Reid Scott, but in looking back at his life and in piecing together the many facets of it that were in the spotlight and the many that were not, it is clear that his drive and success were always fuelled by an intense desire to promote change for the better.

Seemingly destined to enter politics, Reid was an honours graduate of the University of Toronto, where he studied economics and political science. He then went on to Osgoode Hall Law School—all while operating an ice truck, by the way, to pay his tuition. In 1946, while still studying at Osgoode, he became the youngest person elected to the Ontario Legislature, at age 21. He was a member of the CCF and represented the Toronto riding of Beaches, where he had lived all his life and had attended the awesome schools of Kew Beach and Malvern Collegiate.

I'd like to share an excerpt from his campaign literature: "In the years just ahead, shall we again suffer unemployment, want and poverty in a land of plenty? You know that it is unnecessary.... Our province has a bright future—but only if

we use our resources wisely and co-operatively. The old ways have been tried and failed. It's time for a change." Beautiful words, and how true they still ring.

Throughout the 1950s, Reid embraced life as a lawyer. He had a flourishing criminal law practice and became a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada.

Reid was called to federal politics in 1962, when he was scouted by then-NDP leader Tommy Douglas to run in the Toronto riding of Danforth. He won, and subsequently served three terms as a member of Parliament.

It was during this time that his most cherished political moment occurred, as we've heard: He was appointed to a 15-person parliamentary committee tasked to select Canada's national flag, and he played an integral role in advocating for the single maple leaf banner which has now flown across Canada since 1965. In the last few years of his life, it brought him much joy to be able to share his experience of that pivotal moment in Canadian history.

In 1968, he decided not to run for re-election as an MP, but instead ran and won the race for Toronto city council alderman in ward 9. He also served as president of the council and, for a time, as acting mayor. Although he was one of the first crop of reform-minded politicians in council, he developed a strong working relationship with then-Mayor David Crombie, who was known as a Progressive Conservative.

Colleagues always spoke highly of Reid's calm and focused nature, especially when he was discussing contentious issues. He was known as one of the most articulate debaters, and it was said that "his oratory was smooth, his delivery stylish and his arguments flowed in a pattern." Throughout his career, Reid was always able to earn the respect of his colleagues, regardless of political stripe, because of his ability to combine his progressive beliefs with his genuine appreciation for the places and people he served.

In 1976, Reid left Toronto city council to accept an appointment as a provincial court judge by Premier Bill Davis, a position he held until his retirement in 1991.

As you can by now imagine, Reid's list of achievements is just about endless. It goes far beyond the few tidbits I've been able to share with you today, to his time with the Queen's Counsel; as a volunteer counsellor for Anchorage house, a centre for alcohol and drug addiction; and with the countless community organizations he supported in his retirement.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge Reid's family and friends who are here today. We know that political life is difficult, and it is often the most difficult for families. He stated once that his biggest disappointment was not seeing his loved ones enough, but his kind and generous nature was no doubt in part due to the love and devotion that he shared and cultivated with you by his side.

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The research that was shared with me was full of beautiful memories: Reid, with his wonderful, dry sense of humour, entertaining his family and friends with a theatrical rendition of Danny Boy. Everyone is at the family cottage in Fenelon Falls, Ontario, where many unforget-

table years were spent together. People are laughing, singing and dancing. That's the memory I'd like to leave you with here today.

Thank you for being with us today, and thank you for sharing Reid with us.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to thank the members for their eloquent tributes and once again say thank you to the family of Reid Scott for joining us this morning.

ORAL QUESTIONS

FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. Franco-Ontarians from across our province—in fact, francophones across this country—have made it clear to the Premier that he has disrespected the francophone community. He has made a major mistake.

Will he do the right thing: restore funding to the French-language university and restore the independent French Language Services Commissioner?

Hon. Doug Ford: Franco-Ontarians have played a major role in Ontario. Even though they're 3% of the population in Ontario, they played a major role in culture and history and different areas of business in Ontario.

We did listen. I've talked to hundreds of Franco-Ontarians, as they have my cellphone number, like everyone else does. I had an opportunity to speak to them. They really appreciate us being straightforward about the university, a false promise made days before the election from the Liberal government to actually use Franco-Ontarians—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll ask the Premier to withdraw.

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw—not too sure what I was withdrawing.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: They realize that our province was left in a bankruptcy state—a \$14.5-billion deficit we're facing. We're paying interest of over \$12 billion a year. They realized they were being used as pawns. That's shameful, to use Franco-Ontarians as pawns during the election.

We did listen, and what we did: We're empowering the role of the French Language Services Commissioner under the Ombudsman. We have a fantastic new minister—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again to the Premier: They are a founding people of this country.

This is more than just a broken promise. The Premier has dashed the hopes of Franco-Ontarian youth by scrapping the plans for a university, and told them that their rights won't be respected by scrapping the watchdog who protected French services.

Half measures and damage control won't solve this crisis. Will he do the right thing: restore funding to the French-language university and restore the independent French Language Services Commissioner?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: The opposition is misleading the people. There was no funding—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the Premier to withdraw the unparliamentary—

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): He may conclude his response.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Doug Ford: It was not in the fiscal budget.

What we did do: We are empowering the role of the French Language Services Commissioner under the Ombudsman. We have a fantastic new Minister of Francophone Affairs, a wonderful person, Caroline Mulroney. You couldn't ask for a better representative. And I'm hiring a senior policy adviser responsible for francophone affairs in my office.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: We have 11 colleges and universities offering 300 courses in French language. We want those 300 courses to be filled; unfortunately, they aren't filled. We have—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. John Vanthof: Encore au premier ministre : les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes se sont toujours mobilisés pour conserver leur place dans la province et défendre leurs droits. Maintenant, ils ont une demande claire : annulez ces coupures. Est-ce que le premier ministre fera ce qui s'impose : renverser ses projets d'annuler l'Université de l'Ontario français et le Commissariat aux services en français? "Even though?"

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: You can't cancel something that was never there in the first place. We go back to the 11 universities and colleges offering the courses: I encourage our young people in high school to fill the courses. Fill the 300 courses that we have and make sure they're filled. It's our job to get our communities into these French-language courses—300 of them in 11 different colleges and universities across the province.

The temporary opposition leader knows very well that we support the Franco community in Ontario. I've spoken to hundreds of them; as a matter of fact, I've spoken to more Franco-Ontarians than anyone in this chamber the last few weeks—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. Start the clock. Next question.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is for the Premier.

The people of Oshawa were dealt a hard blow this week, but they're already organizing to save jobs and reverse GM's decision to abandon them. Yesterday, the Premier accused them of spreading false hope.

Why is the Premier so certain that they're wrong to fight for their jobs?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member for Brampton Centre: All I've heard are these leaders get up there and talk, talk, talk, talk, giving these poor people—I feel so sorry for them because, again, my phone has been ringing off the hook. I have talked to hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of GM workers. My first phone call started at 6:15 this morning.

Once I talk to the people at GM, they understand. They don't appreciate Jerry Dias giving them false hope when they have to go home and tell their spouse and tell their kids there might be a chance, when Jerry knows exactly there isn't any chance. Our job is to find new jobs, to create an economy and an environment out in the Durham region to attract new jobs, new opportunities. They appreciated my call.

The members themselves don't agree—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. Start the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Sara Singh: Across North America, elected leaders from all political stripes say they're ready to stand with GM workers and fight GM's decision to walk away from their communities.

Why is the Premier so convinced that all of these leaders are so wrong to keep fighting for good-paying jobs here in this province, and that giving up is the best option here for workers in our province?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member for Brampton Centre: It's called grandstanding. They know the truth. The Prime Minister knows the truth.

The president of GM spoke to me four times. Jerry Dias knows the truth because he has spoken to the president of GM numerous times. I spoke to the CEOs of Ford Motor Co., Honda and Toyota. Everyone knows GM is leaving. Our job, rather than talking and giving people false hope, which is the worst thing you can do to a family, is to create opportunities, new jobs, create the environment by lowering gas prices, lowering hydro rates, making sure we create a friendly atmosphere for businesses, because this decision wasn't done in the last six months. It was in the works for the last year and a half. That's the truth of the matter.

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Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. Start the clock. Final supplementary?

Ms. Sara Singh: Families in Oshawa deserve leadership right now, and they need a government that understands that Oshawa has the skills and talent to succeed and a government that's willing to fight GM to ensure that those jobs don't go to China or Mexico but stay right here in our province of Ontario.

Instead, they have a Premier who is telling Oshawa families that there's no point in even trying to fight for their jobs. Why is this Premier so determined to just give up?

Hon. Doug Ford: Again, through you, Mr. Speaker, this is a terrible, terrible situation for the people of Durham, but there's only one scenario that would even be

worse. What would even be worse is if the NDP got elected. There would be 7,500 people at the Pickering nuclear station who would be out of work as well, and their families. That would have been even more of a disaster.

You listen to the Prime Minister's staff saying all options are on the table. Well, Prime Minister, you can't be promoting a carbon tax on Monday and then wonder why jobs are leaving on Tuesday. Jobs are leaving because of the terrible carbon tax, because of cap-and-trade, because of the highest hydro rates in North America, the highest taxes, the worst labour laws right here in Ontario.

But guess what, Mr. Speaker? We're changing it. We're turning the corner and making an atmosphere and an environment—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Next question.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, I have said I will fight alongside workers in my community and so I will bring their questions directly to the Premier. Michelle, a worker at GM, writes:

"Jennifer, thank you for standing with us in this fight. I am a second-generation autoworker. I was born and raised in Oshawa. General Motors raised me, it paid for all my birthdays, extracurricular activities, medicine when I was sick, and dental, food, school and the roof over my head. My father and I have given our blood, sweat and tears to this company and have always supported them by purchasing the vehicles that employed us. I am absolutely devastated knowing that I'm soon to be out of a job with hardly any notice. I worry how I'm ever going to get through Christmas let alone how I'm going to pay my mortgage with no job. I hurt so badly inside thinking about what I will face in this next year. I hurt because we currently have a Premier who doesn't care about me or my family or General Motors having a manufacturing presence in Canada."

Michelle's question—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Government, come to order.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Speaker, they're heckling Michelle. Michelle's question to the Premier is, "Why does my government not care about me and my family?"

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I guess what I said about the Prime Minister applies to the NDP: You can't support a job-killing carbon tax and wonder why companies are leaving by the droves. That's a big issue.

My friend from the Durham region: I would like to know what the NDP is doing to create new jobs, other than voting against a bill that gives money back to the most needy people in society, lowering hydro rates, getting rid of the job-killing carbon tax and scrapping Bill 148, which was a job-killing bill.

What is the NDP doing? I'll tell you what they're doing, Mr. Speaker. They're doing nothing, zero. As you're sitting there, running around talking, we're out there creating new

jobs. We're going out there, as we did in southwest Ontario, opening new plants across this province. We're going to continue to open new plants, attract new companies—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. I'm going to ask the Premier to withdraw.

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House will come to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: What I am doing is standing alongside my community, because I believe Oshawa is worth fighting for.

Speaker, the Premier has spoken to GM; I have spoken to them too. It sounds like we are in for really uncertain times. However, I know better than to count Oshawa out. But on day one, the Premier said it was over. He threw in the towel without a fight.

My community does have some hope. The thousands of GM workers, their leadership and the tens of thousands of workers in the automotive supply chain have some hope. One would think the Premier would want to meet with them to see where that hope comes from and to make sure that he has indeed considered every option to keep those jobs.

My question is, why does this Premier have no hope at all?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm just wondering if anyone from the NDP even spoke to the president of GM. The answer is no. I wonder how many people the NDP talked to—front-line workers. I've talked to hundreds.

It's amazing, Mr. Speaker, when I talk to them on the phone, starting at 6:15 this morning—my last call was at midnight last night. In every single call when I speak to them, they say, "You're right, Doug, and by the way, we're no fans of Jerry Dias." I heard that over and over again. All he was doing—one person described him as a 1930s union member, sitting in front of his members, banging on the table, but doing nothing.

We're doing something. We're out there. We're creating jobs, and we will create jobs for each and every person who lost their job. I can tell you, Durham will be booming under our—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Next question? Start the clock.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. David Piccini: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Over the past few days, our government has laid out a plan to help workers affected by GM's recent announcement of the closure of their plant in Oshawa. We know these workers are going to need help transitioning to new careers over the next year. I know, personally, our Premier has responded on the ground, has responded to hundreds of calls and hundreds more text messages.

My question is to the minister. Can the minister update this House on steps our government is taking to help workers in Oshawa?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South, who was with the Premier and I, and our Minister of the Environment, the President of the Treasury Board and other caucus members from the Durham region in Oshawa, meeting with officials, with the CEO of the chamber of commerce, talking about the next steps for Oshawa after the closure of General Motors, which seems imminent, as far as car and truck production is concerned, in late 2019.

It feels like the Premier and I have been on the phone for the last week, constantly talking with business and civic leaders in Oshawa but also across the entire auto sector, working with them on how we can make it easier to build cars in Ontario, how we can make it easier to sell cars and drive cars in Ontario—that's a real plan—and how we're going to dig ourselves out of this. What the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities is doing with the rapid re-employment team, that's a real plan. Mugging for the cameras? That's not a plan.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Tell that to Lyndsey Vanstone.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Waterloo, come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Mr. David Piccini: I thank the minister for his work on behalf of a number of my constituents affected by this recent announcement, constituents like Jim, who reached out to me, who is looking, in a time of uncertainty, for certainty. He's certain in his skills training, and he's looking for certainty from this government. That's what we've given them: certainty in skills training, certainty in linking jobs to transitioning into a new career in the next year ahead—not desk-banging and not grandstanding.

We know there are efforts on the ground to help General Motors workers find new careers, but there's more our government is doing to improve the prospects for workers and businesses in Ontario's auto sector. Can the minister elaborate on the Premier's commitments regarding our government's plan to help Ontario's auto sector?

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Hon. Todd Smith: As a matter of fact, I can. We've already done a lot, including passing the Making Ontario Open for Business Act. The Premier said it yesterday: You can't be out there in favour of a carbon tax on Monday and then complain about job losses on Tuesday. It just simply doesn't balance; it doesn't add up.

Getting rid of the regressive job-killing carbon tax, the cap-and-trade system that we had in place here for the last couple of years in Ontario, is going to help us build cars, it's going to help us buy cars, and it's going to help people drive cars in Ontario. That's a real plan.

We're also committed to working with the federal government in a full-court press to get rid of section 232

tariffs. Those are on steel and aluminum. We want to get those tariffs lifted, Mr. Speaker. They are an attack on auto sector jobs and manufacturing jobs on both sides of the border. I've spoken with the US ambassador and I know the Premier has spoken with the US ambassador. We're going to do everything that we can to make sure that Ontario is the best place to do business in North America.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, the Premier likes to make a big show about giving out his cellphone number, but this week it seems like he's not too happy about the nature and volume of calls that he's getting from the Oshawa region and the workers at GM. The president of Unifor Local 673 tweeted yesterday, "Doug Ford called our national president, Jerry Dias, to ask if he can stop Unifor members from calling him" on his personal cellphone "regarding GM."

Does the Premier think that if he can stop the calls from coming in, the people in Oshawa won't care that he refuses to fight for their jobs?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: When I did speak to Jerry Dias, I told him that there was a lot of rude, nasty swearing going on, attacking my family, attacking my brother, and I said to him, "I wish you would get your members—the rude ones—to stop calling." But the good ones that I've talked to, 99% of them—and there were 99% good calls. When I spoke to them, I found out one thing: Jerry Dias doesn't have too much support within his own Unifor union. That's what I learned.

I learned that people actually realize and appreciate the truth. They know that the biggest problem here is the tariffs. The tariffs are killing the auto sector. I made it very clear: If the Prime Minister wants to do something, get rid of the carbon tax and get rid of these job-killing tariffs. That's the truth. I've talked to more GM workers—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Start the clock. Supplementary.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The Premier can blame the Prime Minister and he can blame Jerry Dias. In a question yesterday to the Minister of Economic Development, the minister said that your government has been on the phone with GM for weeks and weeks and months. But it's pretty clear that it was only when GM spoke with Ford that they decided to get the hell out of Dodge.

Speaker, the Premier is in for quite the education this week: The women and men fighting for their jobs in Oshawa aren't the trained seals and backbenchers who do standing ovations on command, and Dean French's temper tantrums aren't going to scare them. For the workers watching at home who may not have the Premier's number but want the Premier to fight for their jobs—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to caution the member on intemperate language and ask him to withdraw his offensive remark.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I withdraw, Speaker. Thank you.

For the workers watching at home who may not have the Premier's personal cellphone number but want the Premier to fight for their jobs, can the Premier confirm that his cellphone number is still 416-805-2156? Let me say that again: 416-805-2156. Is that what it is?

Hon. Doug Ford: Boy. You know something—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Mississauga—Streetsville, come to order.

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I'm glad that people talk to me. You don't get stuck in a bubble like the opposition does. They get stuck in this ivory tower. They say they're for the working people. They aren't for the working people. They're there for the Jerry Diases and the rest of the heads of big unions. They aren't there for the front-line union workers. It's amazing.

The best thing that happened—Unifor did send out my number, and the best thing you did is remind people to call me, because once you speak to them—

Interjections.

Hon. Doug Ford: Once you actually speak to people, and you actually talk to them and you get into a conversation—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the House to stop the constant interjections. I can't hear the member who has the floor when I'm constantly calling members to order.

Start the clock. Next question.

POLICE SERVICES

Mr. Deepak Anand: My question is for the Attorney General.

This government has done tremendous work to date supporting our law enforcement and providing them with the support they need to help keep our communities safe, whether it's aligning the standards for police carrying and administering naloxone with other responders or replacing the crumbling Public Safety Radio Network to ensure front-line responders have reliable, modern tools and resources.

Yesterday, our government announced an additional funding initiative to support our law enforcement in helping victims of crime and keeping our communities safe through the Civil Remedies Grant Program. Mr. Speaker, can the Attorney General provide us with the details of this program and the benefits it will provide to Ontario's law enforcement?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you to the member from Mississauga—Malton for the question.

Our government takes the safety and well-being of Ontarians very seriously. We are always working to find ways to support initiatives that help us achieve those goals, which is why yesterday our government announced that through the Civil Remedies Grant Program, we will be

providing \$1.5 million in funding to help 17 police services across the province keep our communities safe.

This year's funding will help law enforcement agencies run 21 programs to assist victims and prevent unlawful activity. These include programs such as Project Enhance in Sudbury, which will receive \$77,000 to prevent and combat sexual exploitation, human trafficking, organized crime and opioid trafficking through state-of-the-art surveillance equipment.

Our government values and respects the work our law enforcement does, and we want to ensure that they have the resources they need to continue their work. These grants will—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Supplementary?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Wow, 21 programs that will receive funding this year throughout the province. This is certainly good news for many communities across the province. Our law enforcement agencies do fantastic work in supporting victims of crime, and working to prevent unlawful activities. It is reassuring to know that they have the support and the resources to do that.

You spoke about one of the projects, in Sudbury, receiving support from the government. Can the Attorney General share with this House the additional projects our government is supporting to bolster Ontario's law enforcement?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I'd be delighted to provide that information. Many of these projects are aimed at combatting human trafficking and supporting survivors of this heinous crime. Project Safe Horizons: Eyes Open in Barrie will receive \$92,000 to fund outreach for information-sharing across all Ontario police services and outreach to local businesses to increase awareness of human trafficking.

The Seeds Project in Brantford will receive \$93,000 to help create an international database of individuals, addresses and vehicles associated with human trafficking in the community.

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Exit Strategy in Windsor will receive \$99,000 to provide officers with advanced technology and training to enhance their ability to identify both victims of human trafficking and perpetrators. The program will also provide support to community partners, allowing for a multi-disciplinary approach to rescuing victims.

Mr. Speaker, I would love to be able to list all of the projects, but as time is short, a complete list can be found on the Ontario Newsroom website. I encourage everyone to check out these important projects and speak to—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Next question.

CHILD PROTECTION

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Speaker, Anna is one of the speakers who joined us in the media studio this morning. She is a fearless youth advocate. She is also a former crown ward. She's a social worker, and

she is joining us here today in the gallery. Anna knows what the system is like and she knows how important the advocate's office is for youth who are hurt, abused or taken advantage of. To her, the big question is: Where are young people supposed to go now? Like many, Anna knows this cruel decision to cut the child advocate's office makes absolutely no sense. The government must restore the independent child advocate's office that can make sure that voices of vulnerable youth in this province are heard.

Will the minister commit today to reversing this hurtful decision?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the question. Obviously, it's great to see Anna at the Legislature. Just over a week ago she was actually in my office, as I'm the minister responsible for children's issues, and I was listening to her and other children and adults with lived experience. That made my resolve even more strong to make sure that we uphold a stronger and higher standard for child protection in the province of Ontario. That's why we are moving towards the Ombudsman, who has a stronger oversight capability than the child advocate did. We're going to ensure there's a turnkey unit for children, especially there.

Finally, one of the things that I think is most important is with respect to the Ombudsman and the coroner. They have investigative powers that are able to provide my ministry and children's aid societies, as well as youth detention centres, with recommendations as a result of their investigations, and they're stronger than what the advocate had. We're going to continue to do that. That's why I've asked for all pending investigations by the child advocate to be reviewed by our Ombudsman.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Miss Monique Taylor: Just in case, and I know the minister is new in her role, but the Ombudsman is reactive and the coroner is when children are already dead.

Speaker, for many in Ontario it's unbelievable that the Ford government would cut the independent child advocate's voice to save a few bucks. Today the gallery is filled. People are watching from home. These are people who have experienced care. They're advocates and they're parents, and they want to share their disappointment and disgust with this decision. This cruel decision means that children and youth will be left to fend for themselves, left without an independent, dedicated officer of this Legislature to speak out solely for these children's needs.

Speaker, why does this minister believe that children and youth do not deserve to have their voices heard by an independent officer of the Ontario Legislature?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Obviously, the move that we're making strengthens oversight and accountability. It will strengthen the investigative side in the Ombudsman's office. I think the member opposite knows I've been here for 13 years. I used to be a children and youth critic—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Davenport, come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —so I do know a thing or two about what I'm talking about.

But where the member opposite gets confused from time to time is that she thinks the investigative unit is the same as advocacy.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa Centre, come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: That's why I've created three tables—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —one Indigenous-led, one for youth in care, and one for youth in custody—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for York Centre, come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —and they will report directly to me, who is accountable to the Premier and to the people of this province.

To suggest that we are lessening an advocacy role—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —when we are actually going to have this embedded within my ministry is disgraceful. It's fearmongering and, again, it is unbelievable—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

Once again, I'm going to inform the House that the Speaker is having a great deal of difficulty even listening to what the person who has the floor has to say because of the constant interjections. Therefore, I will call you to order once, I will warn you and, if I have to speak to you again, you'll be named. I hope that's clear.

Start the clock. Next question.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Premier. First and foremost, my heart goes out to the Oshawa and Durham community. I can imagine what those families are going through right now. Two of my brothers are auto workers, and they were not surprised by the news on Sunday night. It's not unusual for lines to have to fight for products in this sector.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Mississauga Centre.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: But this government's response has been so underwhelming at best—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: —it has left everyone feeling dejected. GM employees don't want retraining.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Mississauga Centre.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: They want their jobs.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Infrastructure.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: In 2013, Heinz announced that they were closing Leamington operations. Seven hundred and forty jobs were at stake. It was a done deal. But the government of the day did not sit back. Speaker, the collaboration between the previous government, municipalities and business saved 250 jobs.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Mississauga Centre is warned.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: What is the Premier doing to save those GM jobs right now?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Before I answer the question of the member for Scarborough–Guildwood, I had a great experience the other day. I went to the painters' union. There were about 600 people, and guess who I saw? I saw the member of provincial Parliament from Scarborough–Guildwood. I introduced her and told the crowd that they did a great job.

But I'll tell you one thing: It was a real wake-up call for the member over there, Mr. Speaker, because I've never had a warmer reception. When I walked through those doors, everyone was standing on their feet, cheering away. I went all the way through the room.

My point is that front-line union members support this government. They don't support the NDP and they don't support the Liberals, because they know the Liberals and NDP destroyed this province. They made it uncompetitive. They had 300,000 manufacturing jobs leave this province under their watch. They bankrupted this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Premier, it's not about you; it's about those workers and it's about those families. That is your job: To fight for—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for King–Vaughan.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: —those workers and their families.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry is warned.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question to this government is, what are your plans for a changing economy? You talk about the 300,000 manufacturing jobs that were lost.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Niagara West.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: You refuse to talk about the 800,000 jobs that were created.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Northumberland–Peterborough South.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Our province, like every other place in the world, is experiencing a changing workforce:

automation, innovation, technology. What are you doing to lead this province into a new era of work? Because you have said, “The ship has sailed.” That is not good enough. It is not good enough for those workers; it is not good enough for those families. They want leadership.

What are you doing in the face of a changing economy to make sure you stand up for Ontario jobs?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Or are we just going to be importers of hundreds and thousands of vehicles and—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member for Scarborough–Guildwood: We’ll tell you what we’re doing. We’re changing every law that they destroyed this province with. That’s what we’re doing. We’re changing the job-killing labour law, Bill 148, which we did. It’s the best bill we put forward, Bill 47—creating jobs.

We’re lowering hydro rates. Under their watch, we had the highest hydro rates in North America, the number-one issue when I went across this province and talked to small, medium and large businesses. They were killing them.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough–Guildwood, come to order.

Hon. Doug Ford: The regulations under their government: There are 380,000 regulations that they created.

There’s the carbon tax—cap-and-trade—destroying this entire country. Companies left by droves. They left to the tune of 300,000 manufacturing jobs.

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Now the door is open for business. People know Ontario is open for business. We’re attracting new jobs—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

I would remind the House that when the Speaker stands up, your microphone goes dead. We will have order in the remaining 24 minutes of this question period.

Start the clock. The member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Mr. Speaker, through you—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize. I made a mistake. I have to recognize the member for Mississauga Centre.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

RESPONSABILITÉ GOUVERNEMENTALE

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: My question is for our stellar President of the Treasury Board.

My constituents in Mississauga Centre are concerned about how government spending ballooned over 15 years of Liberal mismanagement. While the NDP supported this spending, it’s clear that there was little oversight and even less good governance practices when they mattered the most. In fact, one of the key points from the line-by-line review was that Liberal spending was not based on evidence, was decentralized and was out of control. It’s clear, Mr. Speaker, that the fall economic statement tabled

by the Minister of Finance earlier this month is going to improve our province’s fiscal standing.

Si on veut que notre province prospère, on doit changer la façon dont le gouvernement se comporte et dépense.

Can the President of the Treasury Board please tell us how announcements in the fall economic statement will help control government spending?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member from Mississauga Centre for that great question.

The line-by-line review showed that labour costs are our single largest expenditure across government, totalling about \$71 billion. Shockingly, under the Liberals, government agencies were not required to have their bargaining mandates approved by government. Well, Mr. Speaker, as part of our promise to restore accountability to government, that lack of oversight ends right here, right now.

Earlier this week, I informed my colleagues that agencies with collective agreements expiring at the end of the year must seek bargaining mandate approval through the Treasury Board.

Let me be crystal clear: In no way does this impact collective bargaining rights. Instead, it ensures that the people footing the bill, the taxpayers of Ontario, will know what the final amount will be.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Thank you to the President of the Treasury Board for that excellent answer.

The practices of the previous Liberal government are indeed shocking. It’s encouraging to see that this government is taking bold action to increase accountability and oversight on spending. In fact, the line-by-line review showed that every 1% increase in compensation-related spending translated into a staggering \$720 million in additional costs. It’s clear that after 15 years of Liberals signing blank cheques on the backs of the people of Ontario, our government is taking action.

Well, Mr. Speaker, accountability and good governance are not just sound bites; they are the very foundation of what we are working for: a government that respects the taxpayer.

Can the President of the Treasury Board please inform this House what the impact of this new accountability initiative will be?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Merci à la députée pour cette question. Let me be frank. The line-by-line review revealed that, for 15 years, when the Liberals were signing the paycheques, they were letting someone else fill in the blanks.

If we want this province to prosper, if we want our public servants to be sustainable, we must change the way government behaves. This new oversight effort will apply to 24 agencies, accounting for approximately \$2.6 billion annually in compensation costs.

Ontarians can be assured that we are taking action to control government spending and are implementing appropriate oversight measures.

Mr. Speaker, not only will this government approve the numbers going on those cheques, but in the memo line we will have one word and one word only: “Accountability.”

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Ian Arthur: Mr. Speaker, through you, my question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks was asked whether the government's new climate change plan would use tax dollars to pay polluters and—shocking, I know—the minister did not answer.

I'll ask again: Is the Premier flipping the principle of the polluter-pay model upside down by forcing taxpayers to pay polluters instead?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Our plan is a fabulous plan, and our Minister of the Environment is going to be rolling that out today. Let me tell the people here that the Paris agreement 2030 goal is 30%. Guess what Ontario is at? Ontario is at 22% already. We will make sure we hit the 30% by the end of 2030, because we have the best plan.

When we went across the province—people want clean air. They want clean lakes. They want clean rivers. They want clean parks. I can tell you that people who want to pollute, the companies that want to pollute—we're going to come down twice as hard on them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Ian Arthur: I hope the Premier has time to read the Paris climate agreement at some point.

Yesterday, the minister was asked to explain where he will find the money to pay for his climate change plan and again he refused to answer, and then the PC caucus gave him a standing ovation for that. I will ask again: How will the Premier pay for his climate change plan?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, member opposite, for that question. Listen, our environment minister will be rolling out our plan for Ontario today and I'm pretty excited about it rolling out, because our plan is going to ensure that we are going to protect and conserve land, air and water. We're going to address urban litter and waste. We're going to build resilience to the impacts of climate change such as extreme weather events and do our part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

I can tell the member opposite what we're not going to do. We are not going to reintroduce the job-killing, regressive carbon tax that this government has been opposing and the other side has been cheering on for decades. We are not going to take—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the Minister of Transportation. I couldn't hear a word you were saying because of the standing ovation.

Supplementary? Or was that the supplementary? That was the supplementary. Okay. Next question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My question today is for the Minister of Infrastructure, and it's a question I'm very eager to ask. Yesterday I joined our Premier, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of Infrastructure for an exciting announcement in my riding of

Niagara West that will cut hospital wait times and end hallway health care.

Applause.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Yes. I'm proud to say that unlike the previous Liberal government, our government for the people is prioritizing investments in essential health care infrastructure projects. I'm so proud to have worked with the community and my predecessor and former PC Tim Hudak to look after the needs of families and seniors in my communities. Since I was elected two years ago, I've been fighting for a rebuild of the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, so that patients across the Niagara region will have the quality health care they deserve and expect.

Can the minister please share the great news about how we are delivering infrastructure for the people of west Niagara?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you to the member for Niagara West for that question. Our government is committed to making life easier for the people of Ontario and our government is committed to ending hallway health care. Those two core principles come together in the Ministry of Infrastructure, touching countless lives.

Yesterday I was honoured to join our Premier, the Minister of Health and the great member from Niagara West for a truly historic announcement. The West Lincoln Memorial Hospital is over 70 years old, yet on average each year more than 25,000 people visit the ER and approximately 1,000 babies are born in that hospital every year. Starting in December of this year, our government is investing \$8.5 million in upgrades to that hospital, which will serve that community in the time ahead.

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Our government will continue to invest in the right infrastructure at the right time and in the right place. The West Lincoln Memorial Hospital is most certainly a promise made, promise kept.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Start the clock. Supplementary?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you, Minister. I'm so proud of yesterday's announcement, and I know my community is very, very excited about this big news. I'm proud to be part of a government that stands for the people of this province, and I need to thank the Premier, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Infrastructure for standing with the people of Niagara West yesterday.

My community has been long waiting for this time. We know that the Minister of Health prioritizes patient safety over all else and has been working tirelessly to end the days of hallway health care in our province.

Can the Minister of Health please elaborate on the importance of yesterday's historic announcement with respect to fixing our health care system and ending hallway health care?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I want to thank the member for his question and for being a tremendous advocate on behalf of his community. The people of Niagara West are in very good hands.

Patients in Ontario want to know that the care they need will be there when and where they need it, and our government for the people understands that. That's why yesterday I was proud to stand with the Premier, the Minister of Infrastructure and the great member from Niagara West to announce that our government is investing \$500,000 in a planning grant that will go towards the redevelopment of the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, and \$8.5 million in money for much-needed infrastructure repairs.

The fact is that hallway health care is a multifaceted problem that is going to require innovative and new solutions, and this announcement yesterday is part of that plan. Our government is determined to ensure that everyone in Niagara West and everyone in Ontario has access to excellent-quality health care in excellent-quality situations.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, through you to the Premier: Auto manufacturing has been the cornerstone of the Niagara region's economy for over half a century. The news that the GM plant in Oshawa will be closed by the end of next year is causing anxiety for all those who rely on the auto sector for their livelihood. I, the member from Niagara Falls, and the member from St. Catharines stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in Oshawa.

The events of this week illustrate that now more than ever, Ontario needs a comprehensive auto strategy. Will this government do the necessary work to develop an auto manufacturing strategy for Ontario to support our most valuable exporting industry? Yes or no?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, the good news, when I spoke to the president of GM, is that they're keeping the St. Catharines engine plant. I personally have gone through numerous times in my previous career, and they're great people out there.

But we're going to have some good news in maybe a month or two months about the Niagara region. We're going to have great news. Just stay tuned. Mark my words: It's going to be fabulous for the Niagara region, because now businesses around the world see this government as open for business. They realize that they're going into a business-friendly province that they haven't seen for 15 years, because again, the NDP propped up the Liberals 97% of the time on the job-killing carbon tax.

I just wish my friend from Niagara—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Response?

Hon. Doug Ford: —would go into St. Catharines and talk to these people with me, and tell them, "I'm for the carbon tax, which is going to hurt your jobs"—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Premier will take his seat.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. We're allocating a minute for questions and a minute for responses. When the Speaker stands up, your microphone goes dead, just to remind the House.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I don't like the hand gestures, either. The member for Brantford—Brant is called to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary? The member for Windsor West.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Back to the Premier: Windsor is standing shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in Oshawa. In 2010, our GM plant shut down and we lost 1,400 good-paying jobs. We will be feeling the economic impacts of the Oshawa closure in Windsor, too. There are over 300 local companies that are part of the Oshawa supply chain: mould makers, tool and die, parts makers and more.

On July 18, I asked this Conservative government if they would commit to creating an auto strategy. They refused and we've lost thousands of jobs.

My constituents are going to fight for auto jobs in Oshawa, Windsor and across Ontario. They—we—are not going to give up as easily as the Premier did. Will the Premier join the fight for our auto jobs? Will he work with industry and workers, including Jerry Dias, to create an auto strategy?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: We have an automotive strategy, we have a job strategy, and it's the same thing to all manufacturers no matter if it's automotive or any other manufacturer.

I had an opportunity to go to Windsor and go through the facilities. There is a tremendous amount of automotive parts manufacturing and other manufacturing. Guess what I heard, Mr. Speaker? "Our taxes are too high, the hydro is too high, kill the carbon tax, get rid of Bill 148"—the same policies that the NDP supported their cousins the Liberals on 97% of the time.

There is one thing the Liberals and NDP love: high taxes—hurting the front-line workers, taking more money out of their pockets. We believe in putting more money into the pockets of the hard-working people here in the province until they will be able to go out and do stuff—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Start the clock. New question.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

Applause.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Thank you to our team of colleagues for your kind support.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for my neighbouring Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Our government for the people was elected with a mandate to make life easier for all Ontarians, and after 15 years of neglect we are doing just that.

That's why I along with many of my constituents who are active hunters and fishers from across this province were so excited to learn about the modernization of Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Licensing Service, in particular, the ability to finally print game tags at home. It will make life easier for people to get outside and enjoy our great

outdoors, especially those folks who live in our rural communities.

Today, could the minister update this House on the timeline for the implementation? When can our constituents finally enjoy the new features of this updated service?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank my neighbour from Hastings–Lennox and Addington for the very excellent question. He's quite right. This is an exciting time for Ontarians who take advantage of our greatest natural resource, our beautiful outdoors. Approximately two million hunters and anglers use our automated service to purchase outdoor cards and hunting and fishing licence products.

This past Monday, my ministry launched our new Fish and Wildlife Licensing Service, or FAWLS. In keeping with our promise to make life easier for the people of Ontario, my ministry wants to improve the way that hunters and anglers do business with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Interacting with your government should be seamless, and we've replaced the old service with one that serves everyone in the province.

The new service includes features such as a single outdoors card and a licence summary that can be printed at home or saved on a mobile device. We are continuing to improve the service, and in a few short months, people will have the ability to buy all of our hunting and fishing products online, print them at home, and spend more time doing what they love in the great outdoors.

I will speak more in the supplementary.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I certainly want to thank our minister for your decisive, quick, timely response to the concerns echoed by all of our members from across this Legislature.

I certainly know that many of our constituents are looking forward to this convenience of finally being able to print their tag from the comfort of their own homes.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford and the minister, our hunting and fishing communities finally have a government that is on their side, one that recognizes them, their concerns, and works for the people.

Truly, what this is—this is common sense, colleagues. They are common-sense changes like free fishing licences for our greatest heroes—our veterans—or improving fish and wildlife service lines. Our government has and continues to demonstrate the customer service mentality that Ontarians expect and they deserve.

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Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our constituents, those who may not have access to the technology necessary to print the products online or print them to a mobile device: Minister, will the products still continue to be available through traditional means?

Hon. John Yakabuski: Thank you again to the member—a great advocate for his constituents as well as for hunters and anglers across Ontario. That's a great supplementary question.

I think it's important to note that just because we're adding new features to the updated service, it does not mean that we are taking away other features. We recognize that not everyone will be able to fully use some of the mobile

and online features of the new system. This service will continue to be available at over 700 licence issuers and participating ServiceOntario locations across the province.

In addition, our Natural Resources Information and Support Centre will continue to sell products over the phone, and is happy to assist anyone with questions about our new system.

This is a great time to be an outdoors enthusiast in Ontario. I thank the member for his interest in this new service, and look forward to improving the options available from my ministry so that folks can get outside faster and easier than ever before and enjoy the great outdoors.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Jill Andrew: My question is to the Minister of Education. Yesterday, in light of recent events at St. Michael's College School, I held a town hall in my riding of Toronto—St. Paul's called “Breaking the Silence,” where parents, youth and community members gathered to have courageous conversations on how to keep our kids safe.

One parent expressed concern that their child would be a target of bullying because they don't fit in with the school's sports culture. I heard from other parents that incidents like this call for systemic change where a culture of silence and stigma needs to be shifted.

Can the minister tell us how the government is combating bullying in our schools when the minister is sitting back as our kids are being taught by an outdated, dangerous health and physical education curriculum?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: First and foremost, I completely reject that premise that the member opposite put forward. The fact of the matter is, I appreciate the empathy of the member. She is absolutely spot-on: We need to be standing by every student in Ontario. The fact of the matter is, families matter, and that's why we have the consultation going on for the parents—

Interjection: What about the parents?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: The member opposite, or whoever was heckling, said, “What about the parents?” We agree. What about the parents? We heard from them loud and clear during the campaign this past spring. That's why we introduced this comprehensive consultation at fortheparents.ca, because we want to be hearing from the parents and we want to be hearing from the students.

When I'm out and about talking about what we need to do to improve our curriculum as well as our learning environments in our classroom, students, teachers and parents are providing such great, rich information. We're going to be on the right track after this consultation is done.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you, Minister of Education, for the non-answer.

My question is back to the minister. The conversations I had with parents covered bullying, gender-based violence and social media safety. By the way, they were not convinced that the parent consultation had anything to do with actual parents or kids. They expressed a desire to have more information and tools to combat these issues at

school and at home to address the various ways in which bullying and harassment manifest themselves in children's lives every day.

One parent said that their kids need more information on who to turn to when they witness or experience bullying or violence. Every single person in the room asked for more information on consent.

What is this government doing to ensure that our kids feel empowered to speak up for themselves or others when witnessing or experiencing violence or bullying—again, when this minister is doing nothing?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: We are doing so much. We are doing so much more than the past administration. I am proud of what we're doing over here.

Speaker, I would suggest to you that that tone that was thrown over to me is nothing but bullying. I will not be bullied into a particular action, because I believe that what we're doing is spot-on, because it's completely based on what the parents wanted.

I ask her to submit her report to fortheparents.ca.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I think that was the shortest standing ovation so far.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Mike Harris: My question is for my neighbouring minister, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Farmers in my riding have been facing challenges with the high levels of DON or vomitoxin in their corn. Yesterday, I was happy to inform them that the minister announced that our government, in partnership with the federal government, is providing assistance to farmers experiencing revenue loss because of high levels of vomitoxin through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

Farmers in my riding were happy to hear that our government is providing help for our farmers in addition to any assistance that farmers may receive from insurance coverage and Agricorp. This support will help ease the impact for affected farmers and assist the entire grain sector in better managing challenges caused by this plant disease in the future.

Can the minister please tell us what type of assistance that farmers with high levels in vomitoxin in their corn can expect from our government?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I thank the member from Kitchener-Conestoga for his dedicated leadership on this issue.

I was pleased to announce yesterday that our government, together with the federal government, will be providing assistance to farmers with high levels of DON on their corn through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. We're going to be opening an application process aimed at covering a portion of eligible farmers' expenses for on-farm testing for vomitoxin levels. We're also supporting new projects to help address challenges at different points in the value chain, such as finding ways to best process or market the impacted corn. We are partnering with the Grain Farmers of Ontario in researching new actions

to reduce the frequency and impact of high levels, including finding temporary options to store corn and improve grain quality.

Our government is committed to continuing to work across the value chain with the Grain Farmers of Ontario and the federal government on any next steps.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. That concludes question period for today.

The member for Orléans has informed me that she has a point of order.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Merci, monsieur le Président. I had made a promise on Monday to provide some literature to our Premier and our Minister of Francophone Affairs. I did. I just want to make sure that it's on record that I'm handing this to the Premier. Just to make sure that he understands, it's not 3% but 4.7%—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It's not a point of order. This House is recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1208 to 1300.

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask members to introduce any guests they might have, I want to remind them that the warnings that were issued during the question period this morning carry over into the afternoon sitting of the Legislature.

Introduction of guests? No?

ESTIMATES

BUDGET DES DÉPENSES

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I'm rising on a point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Mr. Speaker, I have a message from the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by her own hand.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the members to rise.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2019, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly.

La lieutenante-gouverneure transmet les prévisions des dépenses visant les montants nécessaires au fonctionnement de la province pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2019 et les recommande à l'Assemblée législative.

Members may take their seats.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Guy Bourgouin: Je me demandais de quoi parler dans mon « member's statement », mais avec tout ce qui

se passe cette semaine sur la francophonie, je ne peux pas m'empêcher d'en parler.

Je peux vous dire qu'on a vu les vraies couleurs des conservateurs cette semaine. J'ai eu la chance de parler avec plusieurs personnes à travers la province à propos de la francophonie, et puis toutes sont très déçues. On est déçu que nos droits ne sont pas respectés, nos droits constitutionnels, et puis qu'on est encore obligé de s'astiner.

On a donné la chance au gouvernement de faire la bonne chose et de supporter une motion pour l'université et pour rétablir notre commissaire en langue française, mais ils ont failli à la tâche et puis ils ont donné une autre gifle dans la face de la communauté francophone.

Je peux vous dire qu'en fin de semaine, le 1^{er} décembre, il va y avoir près de 5 000 francophones qui vont crier sur toutes les tribunes : crier parce que c'est nos droits, c'est notre province et puis c'est notre place. J'ai hâte que vous réalisiez que notre place est dans l'Ontario autant que vous et tout le reste du Parti conservateur qui ne nous supporte pas, parce que vous aviez la chance de faire la bonne chose et de reconnaître les Franco-Ontariens.

J'ai été très déçu ce matin quand j'ai entendu mon premier ministre dire en anglais « even though ». Je peux vous dire qu'on voit bien de quel bois il se chauffe. Aussi, il a montré ses vraies couleurs envers la francophonie.

SCARBOROUGH YORK REGION CHINESE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I attended the 36th-anniversary inauguration gala for the Scarborough York Region Chinese Business Association last week. I was impressed by how they filled the room with business leaders and politicians from all three levels of government. They are one of four associations making up the Confederation of Greater Toronto Chinese Business Association. I served on the sister association in Richmond Hill for over 20 years and was their past president.

Their mission is to support businesses. Specifically, we organize networking meetings for Chinese businesses to integrate into the mainstream.

We help build relations with all three levels of government. We work with economic development to organize seminars on business development, financial management, crime control, security and much more.

The Chinese Business Association has been an effective trade bridge for Canada and China, helping Ontario to grow in economic development, as well as supporting growth in Ontario.

Ontario is open for business, Mr. Speaker, through this kind of work.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Oshawa has a long and impressive 140-year history of automotive excellence. I toured our award-winning, state-of-the-art facility on the

day GM Canada was celebrating its 100th anniversary. There were cars and trucks and a bright future on the line; that was only three weeks ago. For 100 years, our community has had a strong relationship with GM. We have nurtured the spirit of innovation and an automotive dream for a century. GM has been a part of our city's foundation, but GM didn't build Oshawa; Oshawa built GM.

On Sunday night, my community was blindsided by devastating news. GM Canada has decided to stop investing in Oshawa and has said it will not allocate product to be built beyond December 2019. This is not what our community deserves, but we are told it is all we're going to get.

We are talking about thousands of good jobs: jobs that pay for homes and car payments, family and school costs with benefits to cover medications and dentists and with pensions and security.

We are talking about tens of thousands of supporting and connected jobs in the supply chain. Some of those have benefits, most of them won't have pensions, and all of them are in jeopardy if GM abandons Oshawa. These are the kinds of jobs we want to create, but here we have thousands of them already here, and this government won't fight to keep them.

On the day of the announcement, after one phone call with the company, this Premier threw in the towel and said there was nothing he could do.

What he could do is stand alongside us. The workers and the community of Oshawa believe there is always something to fight for. We don't know how this will turn out, but Oshawa is worth the fight.

ETOBICOKE-LAKESHORE SANTA CLAUS PARADE

Ms. Christine Hogarth: In my riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore, we've had some really important guests visit us over the past few months. We've had Minister Yakabuski there twice, and Minister Clark there to talk about the Mimico GO station and announce a partnership to improve station building and create a new housing development around the station. Over the summer, we had the Minister of Finance and even the Premier join us in the riding to announce the buck-a-beer challenge with a local Etobicoke brewery.

But I think we can all agree that even more well-known and anticipated guests will be making a special one-year appearance in the Etobicoke-Lakeshore this Saturday. Santa Claus is coming to the Lakeshore. The Etobicoke Santa Claus parade, now in its 27th year, is happening on December 1. I'm told that Santa himself will be taking time out of his busy schedule to march in the parade.

The Lakeshore Village and Long Branch BIAs have been working hard all year to make this parade the biggest and best yet.

I'm looking forward to participating in the parade, and if I'm lucky, get a chance to see the big man himself to

make sure all the constituents in my riding are on his “nice” list for Christmas this year.

NON-PROFIT VETERINARY CLINICS

Ms. Catherine Fife: I had the pleasure of recently visiting East Village Animal Hospital’s Kitchener location. They provide an essential service in my community: low-cost veterinary services for pets being cared for by low-income individuals and non-profit animal rescue groups.

East Village operates under non-profit principles, yet for nearly two decades veterinary clinics across the province have been unable to obtain charitable status due to regulations in the Business Corporations Act and the Veterinarians Act. East Village and organizations like it want to change that. They’re asking the government to allow vet clinics like theirs to register as charities under these two acts.

This is a solution that will not financially impact the province; it’s just the right thing to do. It will help animal hospitals like East Village who care for the pets of individuals who are in poverty, those coping with mental illness and with disabilities and, of course, our seniors.

Pet ownership has been shown to reduce strain on the health care system by reducing physician visits and reducing the prevalence of mental illness.

A team lead at the Canadian Mental Health Association shared this about a client who required in-patient treatment. When the client found out that East Village Animal Hospital could help, it “gave her an incredible amount of hope when she needed it the most.”

As legislators, we should be doing all that we can to assist groups like East Village Animal Hospital to be the best that they can be. I look forward to supporting East Village Animal Hospital in their journey of receiving charitable status in the province of Ontario. It is just the right thing to do.

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CHILD ADVOCATE

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I’m pleased to rise in this House and speak on behalf of the Ontario Child Advocate.

At Queen’s Park earlier today, Anna, May, Troy, Bailey, Elsbeth and hundreds of children and adults were on the front lawn to hear the stories of the vulnerable youth in this province, where a system is not working for them. For the first time, they felt listened to under the Ontario Child Advocate. These stories were heart-wrenching.

I urge the Conservative government to reinstate the independent child advocate and to protect Ontario’s youth.

I want to say thank you to Irwin Elman, who has been serving ably in this office for over a decade.

The Conservative government’s first chance to explain to Ontarians what their plan was for the future of this province contained the most damaging cuts to independent officers that we’ve ever seen. Included in these cuts is the Ontario Child Advocate. The child advocate listens to

vulnerable children, to those children who need the most help. This is a ruthless act to save money.

The voice of Indigenous youth, LGBTQ youth, Black youth, youth in children’s aid societies, special-needs youth and youth with disabilities must be heard in this province, and I ask the government to rethink its decision to close this office.

FISHABILITY

Mr. David Piccini: This past weekend, I had the great opportunity to attend the FishAbility dinner in Bewdley.

FishAbility was founded in 2008. It’s a fishing club for children, youth and adults with any disability. But it’s so much more. It’s an inclusive group that helps really break down barriers. They show everyone in our community that with a little effort, time and commitment, anything is possible—or, as they say, making the impossible possible.

I have to credit my dog Max for first introducing me to this remarkable group when we were at Brighton Applefest. He got pulled away to some of the treats young Vicky Hillyer, who is with the FishAbility group, was selling. I’ve got to say a big thank you to Vicky, to her family, to Debbie and Keith Hillyer, who are working, and to all the people who volunteer their time to make the FishAbility dinner a success.

Thank you for bringing my attention to the important cause. Thank you for giving me a deeper understanding of the challenges those with disabilities face so that we in this Legislature can make Ontario more inclusive, break down barriers, so that everybody can have the opportunities you fight so hard for the young men and women in our community to have.

Thank you very much for the FishAbility dinner.

AUTISM TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to share a message from my constituent Chantale Chartrand, who lives in Capreol. She wrote:

“I am writing to you to express my concerns about the current wait-list times for” autism spectrum disorder “diagnosis, services and programs.

“I am a special-needs mother to my two amazing children, nine-year-old Émilie and three-year-old Valérie; both have been diagnosed with developmental issues. Valérie is severely delayed in all areas of her life.”

She has been receiving speech and language therapy since 2017. It took 12 months before her physiotherapy could start, and she was told that she will finally start occupational therapy in January 2019. She is fortunate because since she has been receiving therapy—she was non-verbal before; now she’s doing way better.

After Valérie received her diagnosis, she asked what the next steps are. They recommended ABA therapy, but there’s a minimum three-year wait-list for her to start. She will be six years old. When you’re three years old, a three-year wait-list is a lifetime.

This is not an exception. It is the norm for families in Nickel Belt.

We want this government to realize that those kids' lives depend on them doing the right thing. Make sure the services that the children on the spectrum disorder need are available to all, including the people of Nickel Belt.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Lindsey Park: I rise today to again voice my disappointment with the recent decision of General Motors to close the Oshawa assembly plant. We've made cars in Oshawa for more than a century, and thousands of my constituents, their friends, and their families work at GM or have worked at GM in the past.

I want to let the people of Oshawa and Durham know—the affected workers and their families—I stand with you, and I will continue to stand up for you.

While GM has made clear that they're abandoning skilled workers and a region that has stood by them in good times and bad, Oshawa and Durham are resilient, and together we will get through this.

I want to also let the people of Durham know that our government for the people will work day and night to bring good-paying jobs back to the region.

Years of economic mismanagement have hurt innocent families, and we as legislators must do everything we can to create the economic conditions that will open Oshawa and Ontario for business once again. I stand shoulder to shoulder with our Premier and my Durham Progressive Conservative colleagues in this Legislature, promising you that we will do just that.

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Mr. Norman Miller: I rise today to thank the community groups and local businesses that come together across my riding to bring Santa Claus to our communities in the form of Santa Claus parades and through gift drives.

In Huntsville and Bracebridge, the Santa Claus parades are organized by the local Rotary Clubs; in Parry Sound, by the Optimist Club; and in Gravenhurst, Bala and Port Carling, by the chamber of commerce. Local Lions Clubs organize the parades in MacTier and Baysville. The Sundridge and Burk's Falls parades are organized by the municipality.

Local businesses put a great deal of work into these parades, including Kimberly-Clark, which has been building Santa's float for the Huntsville parade for more than 20 years.

But how much fun is it to see Santa on Christmas morning if there aren't any presents under the tree?

I also want to thank all the businesses, groups and individuals that collect, donate, and deliver gifts and other supports to those who might not otherwise have anything to open come Christmas. There are too many groups to list them all, but I do want to make special mention of the Salvation Army and all of our local food banks who work to support people in need, both at Christmas and year-

round. Whether these groups are collecting toys for children, gifts for adults or food for families, I want them to know their efforts are appreciated not only by the recipients, but by the whole community.

I'm looking forward to delivering some shoeboxes to the Muskoka Shoebox Project in time for the deadline this weekend. I encourage anyone else who is able to donate to any of these gift drives to do so.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Ms. Jane McKenna: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to standing order 111(b).

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. McKenna presents the committee's report. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Ms. Jane McKenna: No, I don't, but thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Pursuant to standing order 111(b), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

PETITIONS

WATER EXTRACTION

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition is entitled "Protect Water as a Public Good."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas groundwater is a public good, not a commodity; and

"Whereas local ecosystems must be preserved for the well-being of future generations; and

"Whereas the United Nations recognizes access to clean drinking water as a human right; and

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"Whereas the duty to consult Indigenous communities regarding water-taking within traditional territories is often neglected, resulting in a disproportionate burden on systemically marginalized communities during a period of reconciliation; and

"Whereas a poll commissioned by the Wellington Water Watchers found that two thirds of respondents support phasing out bottled water in Ontario over the course of a decade; and

"Whereas a trend towards prioritizing the expansion of for-profit water bottling corporations over the needs of municipalities will negatively impact Ontario's growing communities;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of the

Environment and Climate Change to prioritize public ownership and control of water over corporate interests and fund the accessibility of free drinking water in public spaces across the province.”

I support this petition and will affix my signature and give it to page Imran.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Cette pétition s’intitule, « Prenons notre place : Redonnez-nous nos acquis ». Elle est adressée à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario.

« Attendu que la présence » française « en Ontario remonte à plus de 400 ans;

« Attendu que plus de 622 000 personnes dans la province s’identifient comme francophones et qu’ils méritent de préserver leurs acquis et ce dans un contexte de situation linguistique minoritaire;

« Attendu que l’énoncé économique présenté par le gouvernement conservateur de Doug Ford le 15 novembre 2018 s’attaque aux acquis de la communauté francophone par l’abolition de deux de nos institutions : le poste de commissaire aux services en français et l’Université de l’Ontario français;

« Attendu que l’élimination du Commissariat aux services en français et son indépendance diminue la protection des droits linguistiques de la minorité et met en péril les mécanismes de surveillance et son pouvoir d’enquête envers les communautés francophones et francophiles de l’Ontario;

« Attendu que la jeunesse francophone est en droit d’exiger la poursuite de leurs études postsecondaires dans leur langue dans un milieu favorable à leur développement et épanouissement social;

« Attendu que la communauté franco-ontarienne est en droit de se doter d’outils collectifs afin d’assurer sa pérennité et son développement;

« Attendu que la population de l’Ontario veut conserver les acquis en francophonie et demande rien de moins que le statu quo au gouvernement Ford;

« Nous, soussignés, présentons une pétition à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario comme suit :

« Que tous les membres de l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario défendent les droits linguistiques des francophones en Ontario et réclament que le Commissariat aux services en français de l’Ontario et son indépendance ainsi que l’Université de l’Ontario français soient rétablis » maintenant.

Il me fait plaisir d’y apposer ma signature et de la remettre au page Kidan.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas certain commercial operations known as ‘puppy/kitten mills’ have been reported to keep animals in precarious conditions in breach of provincial animal welfare laws; and

“Whereas dog/cat breeding in accordance with the law is a legitimate economic activity; and

“Whereas it is the duty of any government to ensure the laws of Canada and Ontario are respected and that the health and well-being of innocent animals is protected;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services work proactively with all amateur and professional dog/cat breeders, as well as consumers, with the intent to tackle confirmed animal cruelty cases in puppy/kitten mills and to educate all stakeholders about animal welfare standards.”

Thank you very much. I will sign this and give it to Emily.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I would like to submit this petition on behalf of Heather Downey of London.

“Reverse” Premier “Ford’s Cuts to Low-Income Families.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas” Premier “Ford eliminated the Basic Income Pilot project and slashed the new social assistance rates by 1.5%, and did so without warning;

“Whereas cuts to already-meagre social assistance rates will disproportionately impact children, those with mental health challenges, persons with disabilities, and people struggling in poverty;

“Whereas the decision to” cut “the Basic Income Pilot project was made without any evidence, and leaves thousands of Ontarians without details about whether they will be able to access other forms of income assistance;

“Whereas the independently authored Income Security: A Roadmap for Change report, presented to the government last fall, recommends both increases to rates and the continuation of the Basic Income Pilot project as key steps towards income adequacy and poverty reduction;

“Whereas the failure to address poverty—and the homelessness, hunger, health crises, and desperation that can result from poverty—hurts people, families and Ontario’s communities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse” Premier “Ford’s callous decision to slash increases to social assistance rates by 50%, and reverse his decision to cancel the Basic Income Pilot project, decisions that will undoubtedly hurt thousands of vulnerable people and drag Ontario backwards when it comes to homelessness reduction and anti-poverty efforts.”

I support this petition, sign it and give it to page Emily to deliver to the table.

INJURED WORKERS

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I have a petition here: “Workers’ Comp Is a Right.” This group came to see me in my riding

in Scarborough–Guildwood. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

"Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

"Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social assistance programs, and have gradually curtailed the rights of injured workers;

"Whereas injured workers have the right to quality and timely medical care, compensation for lost wages, and protection from discrimination;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to accomplish the following for injured workers in Ontario:

"Eliminate the practice of 'deeming' or 'determining,' which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers do not actually have;

"Ensure that the WSIB prioritizes and respects the medical opinions of the health care providers who treat the injured worker directly;

"Prevent compensation from being reduced or denied based on 'pre-existing conditions' that never affected the worker's ability to function prior to the work injury."

I'll sign this petition and give it to page Ella.

GUIDE AND SERVICE ANIMALS

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 indicates, 'If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the provider of goods or services shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises;' and

"Whereas the Ontario Human Rights Code speaks to the 'duty to accommodate persons with disabilities ... in a manner that most respects the dignity of the person;' and

"Whereas, despite these provisions, many who require, have been medically recommended for and own professional, trained service dogs, including children with autism, PTSD sufferers and others, continue to be denied access to public places; and

"Whereas service dogs perform a series of vital tasks to support those living with disabilities, including serving in guidance, seizure response, mobility assistance, autism and PTSD support, among other medically acknowledged services; and

"Whereas there are cases where children who rely on a service dog are not allowed to bring them to school; and

"Whereas ongoing denial of access means those requiring service dogs are continuing to face further

hurdles beyond the impacts of disability to be allowed the public accommodations they deserve;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Open access to registered service dogs and owners:

"Reintroduce the Ontario Service Dog Act, to end continued discrimination and ensure those requiring service dogs are no longer denied the essential public access they should already be guaranteed."

I remember that Colin, a service dog in training, was here just two days ago.

Thank you very much. I affix my signature, of course, and give it to page Nidhi.

PHARMACARE

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition entitled, "Universal Pharmacare Is for All Ontarians.

"Whereas prescription medications are a part of health care, and people shouldn't have to empty their wallets or rack up credit card bills to get the medicines they need;

"Whereas over 2.2 million Ontarians don't have any prescription drug coverage and one in four Ontarians don't take their medications as prescribed because they cannot afford the cost;

"Whereas taking medications as prescribed can save lives and help people live better; and

"Whereas Canada urgently needs universal and comprehensive national pharmacare;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a universal provincial pharmacare plan for all Ontarians."

I fully support this petition. I will be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Ethan to deliver to the table.

1330

FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to restore Franco-Ontarian acquired rights.

"The economic statement presented by Doug Ford's provincial government on November 15, 2018 abolished the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner and the Université de l'Ontario français. Two achievements and pillars of the Franco-Ontarian community are disappearing, a huge setback in that community's future and development.

"Whereas the francophone presence in Ontario goes back more than 400 years;

"Whereas the government of Ontario has formally apologized in 2016 for the harm done to the Franco-Ontarian community during the regulation 17 (1912-1927) crisis;

"Whereas the Franco-Ontarian community has been calling for the creation of a French-language university in Ontario for decades;

“Whereas the main recommendation of the 2013 community-led *états généraux* sur le postsecondaire en Ontario français was the creation of a French-language university in Ontario;

“Whereas Franco-Ontarians have the right to be educated in their own language in institutions that unite them, and the creation of the Université de l’Ontario français is intended to meet that objective;

“Whereas the Franco-Ontarian community has the right to develop the community tools it requires to ensure its sustainability and development;

“Whereas the French Language Services Act, unanimously passed by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in 1986, was given quasi-constitutional status;

“Whereas the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner has been working scrupulously and with great professionalism since it was founded in 2007;

“Whereas the French Language Services Commissioner has been an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario since January 1, 2014;

“Whereas the independence of the commissioner, with the power to investigate, provided an oversight of the application of the French Language Services Act and provided a recourse to Franco-Ontarians when this act was flouted by the government and designated agencies;

“The signatories of this petition demand that the office of the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario and the Université de l’Ontario français be reinstated immediately.”

I will sign this petition and give it to Kidan.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mrs. Gail Firby, who is from Coniston in my riding, for collecting these petitions. It reads as follows:

“Save the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Premier Doug Ford promised that there would not be cuts to nurses’ positions; and

“Whereas in Sudbury” there has already been a loss of 70 nurses at Health Sciences North and the hospital is closing part of the Breast Screening and Assessment Service; and

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will result in longer wait times, which is very stressful for women diagnosed with breast cancer; and

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will only take us backwards;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Provide adequate funding to Health Sciences North to ensure northerners have equitable access to life-saving programs such as the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.”

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

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Tom Rakocvic: My petition is entitled, “Stop Auto Insurance Gouging.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas some neighbourhoods across the GTA have been unfairly targeted by discriminatory practices in the insurance industry;

“Whereas people in these neighbourhoods are penalized with crushing auto insurance rates because of their postal code;

“Whereas the failure to improve government oversight of the auto insurance industry has left everyday families feeling the squeeze and yearning for relief;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ban the practice of postal code discrimination in the GTA when it comes to auto insurance premiums.”

I fully support this and will affix my signature to it and give it to page Hannah.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

SAFEGUARDING OUR INFORMATION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LA PROTECTION DE NOS RENSEIGNEMENTS

Mr. Crawford moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 55, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to the disclosure of confidential information / *Projet de loi 55, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la divulgation des renseignements personnels.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: It’s a pleasure to be here today and speak to the House about Bill 55. I think it’s very, very important. I’m proud to be able to rise in this House today and speak to the second reading of the first of my private member’s bills that I have presented, entitled the Safeguarding Our Information Act, 2018.

The need for protection transcends riding and partisan boundaries. All Ontarians deserve to be thoroughly protected by a common sense consumer protection law. They should be able to trust that their consent will be obtained prior to the disclosure of sensitive personal information to government institutions. Strengthening consumer protection law, as this law proposes to do, is one way in which I am delivering on my commitment to the people of Oakville to work hard as their representative here in this assembly.

In today’s digital age, Ontarians are increasingly embracing digital banking options, such as shopping online and through apps. They’re also using credit and debit cards much more frequently, by tapping or swiping to pay for everyday items.

Consumers who enter credit agreements unavoidably disclose sensitive personal information, like credit history and data. Robust consumer protection laws are critical to protect consumers from unacceptable breaches of their privacy, and our privacy laws must be updated in order to enhance and safeguard Ontarians' personal information. That's why I introduced Bill 55, the Safeguarding our Information Act, 2018, to take meaningful action to protect Ontario consumers and their sensitive personal information. If passed, this act will prevent government institutions from obtaining personal information from Ontarians without their consent. The act will also amend the following Ontario statutes: the Consumer Protection Act, the Consumer Reporting Act and the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act. These changes will prevent government institutions from disclosing consumers' personal information unless consent is expressly given by the consumer.

Statistics Canada has, in recent months, sent "compel letters" to some financial institutions soliciting the financial data and personal information of thousands of Canadian households. The chief statistician of Canada has argued that Stats Canada has to have the access to this data. However, on November 8, 2018, before the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce, Mr. Neil Parmenter, president of the Canadian Bankers Association, told senators that "all options are on the table" when asked about possible legal action against the federal government.

He later stated, "The central concern is this is a very new and unprecedented request. Banks have never been asked to provide personal client information to Statistics Canada before ... so that's why there's such concern from the industry," and we "have been clear that we have serious concerns over the privacy implications of the Statistics Canada transaction-level data request."

In addition, I have listened to feedback from the credit unions and the Canadian Credit Union Association. These organizations, representing many thousands of Ontarians, have indicated their strong support for this bill and its firm protections for credit union members from personal-information disclosure requests from government institutions without consumer consent.

I am very glad and I was honoured that Mr. Kelly McGiffin, the CEO of the FirstOntario Credit Union, attended my recent public announcement of Bill 55 and offered remarks on behalf of more than 135,000 members who belong to his credit union. He stated, "My first duty as CEO of FirstOntario Credit Union is to do the right things for our members. Legislation to give members a say in who can access their information is doing what is right for our members."

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Thus, industry stakeholders, banks and credit unions alike support protecting and respecting consumers and preventing overreach on the part of federal government institutions trying to obtain personal information from consumers without their consent.

The federal Privacy Commissioner also agrees. Giving testimony before the same Senate committee on banking,

federal Privacy Commissioner Mr. Daniel Therrien stated, "I think we were all struck in the recent news by the amount of data" being requested from StatsCan "from a large number of dwellings in a very detailed way. What is raising a lot of concern, currently, is what I call the scale, the breadth and the scope of the information that is being sought." He also confirmed that the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada has received complaints about StatsCan and its collection of personal information from private sector organizations without any consent.

In our ever-changing digital world, we need to enhance protections for consumers and take into context the changes in our society. By passing this bill, we can implement the safeguards needed to protect Ontarians and give all Ontarians the ability to say no to their data being collected by federal government agencies without their consent.

According to a recent Nanos Research survey of Canadians, 75% of Canadians opposed Statistics Canada accessing personal records without consent. The study also found that 57% of respondents would never consent to having their personal financial data shared with Statistics Canada if given the opportunity.

Statistics Canada has asked to access the sensitive personal information of over 500,000 Canadians from across the country. Ontario represents approximately 40% of our national population, and therefore, in proportional terms, represents approximately 180,000 Ontarians who could be impacted by this decision. This means that the personal, private data and banking and credit information of approximately 2,000 unsuspecting Oakville residents will otherwise be obtained by the federal government without their consent. My obligation is to protect the people of Oakville and the people of Ontario.

Ontarians understand the significance of this unprecedented breach of privacy. Speaking in the House of Commons on October 30, 2018, the Honourable Lisa Raitt, deputy leader of the Conservative Party of Canada and official opposition, stated, "StatsCanada has written" the country's "nine largest financial institutions and demanded that they hand over millions and millions of financial transactions by hundreds of thousands of Canadians, and were it not for a Global News report, Canadians would never know that the government was this far into their personal information. They know now and they are appalled."

I have listened to the constituents and the consumers from Oakville and across this province who are asking for stronger consumer privacy protection law. In the absence of federal action, this act will update and enhance protection for consumers, and prevent government institutions from obtaining personal information from Ontarians without their consent. The bill has been written to address these concerns and update the Consumer Protection Act, the Consumer Reporting Act and the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act.

Our government was elected to deliver on a plan for the people of Ontario to make Ontario a better place to live, work and raise a family. This will contribute to that. We

also made a commitment to restore accountability and trust in Ontario's government and take a new approach, one which respects all of the hard work of the people of Ontario.

Strengthening consumer protection, as this bill proposes to do, aligns with our commitment of responsible government and correcting overreach on the part of government in everyday lives. Gaining the trust and confidence of Ontarians is critical, and as such it is appropriate to emphasize the central importance of protecting consumers in the privacy of their financial data.

Mr. Speaker, there have been several reports of data breaches and data integrity issues at institutions around the world recently. Most notably, Facebook has faced intense criticism in its inability to prevent unauthorized use of users' data by firms such as Cambridge Analytica. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg was called to appear before the US Senate commerce and judiciary committees to justify his company's actions with respect to privacy, data-mining regulations and Cambridge Analytica. This matter came to prominence in the United States during the aftermath of its most recent general election and the use of targeted campaign advertisements.

Consumers and advocates were very concerned by what has been, in their view, a violation of the terms of agreement, which stipulated that the data Facebook offers for academic purposes may not be sold, brokered or used for advertising purposes. Mr. Zuckerberg was called to appear in front of a committee in the UK made up of lawmakers from nine countries, including the US, the UK and Canada. This was a wake-up call for the world. Personal data is sensitive, and consumers demand that protection needs to be strengthened. This bill will enhance that protection.

Financial data is especially vulnerable to hacking. In the past 10 years, the number of attacks has increased greatly, including in 2014, a data breach that impacted Home Depot, and in 2017, Equifax was impacted as well by a data breach. In both of these cases, millions of people had their sensitive data stolen—data that included social insurance numbers, addresses and credit card information.

Bill 55 will protect consumers by giving them the option to opt out of this disclosure of personal information. Madam Speaker, my professional experience is in the financial industry, where I helped build two asset management companies. I and my colleagues were in a position of trust, investing on behalf of and for the benefit of our clients, and we took our responsibilities and fiduciary responsibility very seriously. I understand the need for thorough compliance oversight and security of sensitive, personal data. It's unfortunate that the federal government does not view privacy through the same lens that industry and the overwhelming majority of consumers do.

Through this legislation, we will amend Ontario statutes. This debate transcends provincial boundaries and political partisanship. Investor confidence is low in this country. We need to regain investor confidence. Foreign investment is down dramatically in Canada over the last 10 years. We need to have strong investor protection and consumer protection in this province and country so people are confident to reinvest in this country.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all members of this Legislature to engage in robust and thoughtful debate, and I look forward to hearing from my legislative colleagues about their thoughts on this bill.

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

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you to the member from Oakville for bringing this legislation forward.

The issue of protecting personal financial information from government overreach goes to the heart of our fundamental values as Ontarians, including treating our neighbours with respect, valuing their privacy and asking for consent.

It was shocking to learn last month that Statistics Canada had asked banks to turn over personal financial information on their customers without the customers' consent.

Technology has made it possible to process incredible quantities of information, and suddenly, the public is faced with a reality in which our personal financial information is being collected in identifiable form for the federal Liberal government to use without the knowledge or consent of the public. This includes some of our most personal information, such as details of our purchases, bills, applications for loans, and investments.

What is even worse is the suspicion that the collection might have been motivated by the ability to sell this information to private companies. This is an abuse of power that demonstrates a fundamental disrespect for the public.

Similarly, we learned this summer about the Conservatives' data theft scandal in which tens of thousands of individuals' personal information was stolen from the 407 ETR. We still don't know what happened to all of that stolen information—whether it was sold or whether it was used for political advantage—but we know it was stolen because personal data is valuable.

1350

One of the ways that this personal information is valuable is its potential to be used for public manipulation. Whether it is a criminal stealing data to gain access to voters for a political campaign or whether it is businesses looking to sell a product, people are rightfully uncomfortable knowing that their privacy has been violated for personal gain. We might expect dictatorial regimes to sell out the privacy of their own citizens, but that behaviour is unacceptable in a democracy.

People expect their government to protect them and their privacy, but the disturbing reality is that both the federal Liberals and those responsible for the 407 ETR data theft put Ontarians at extreme risk of identity theft when they took the public's personal data.

Statistics Canada has told the public that it anonymizes information after they aggregate the financial data with the geographical data, but it is alarming to consider what could happen to the data in the process of being transferred and aggregated. As a matter of fact, we have discovered that neither the Liberal minister in charge of Statistics Canada, nor the privacy commissioner even were aware of

the scope of data collection. How can we trust that the data is being processed responsibly when the oversight bodies are learning about the data collection from news outlets?

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

Laughter.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I know everybody's laughing because it's hard to see me standing over here, but I am standing up. I'm a little on the short side.

I'm very pleased to talk today about the Safeguarding our Information Act, the bill put forward by my colleague the member from Oakville. This is a piece of legislation that I think is in much need of debate here in the Legislature. It's something of concern to people in all of our communities. If it gets passed, we want to see that we can require that government institutions that request personal information can only disclose that information with consent.

That's the word here. We hear a lot of talk about consent lately about other matters of a more personal nature, but we all know that protecting people's privacy is of utmost importance to this government. We need to have those strong, robust consumer protections for people when they disclose their personal banking information but other very personal information as well.

The member from Oakville has cited a survey that was done of Canadians where 75% of respondents oppose Statistics Canada accessing personal records without consent, and 57% would not consent to having their personal financial data shared with Statistics Canada. That came about because there was a bit of a controversy in Ottawa. People found out that Statistics Canada was possibly sharing some personal information that they were collecting. Everybody assumes, when government collects personal information, that somehow (a) it's safeguarded and it's safe, and (b) it's only for important government planning, to know the demographics, perhaps that we have aging seniors and what type of medical investments we need to make. People are aghast if they consider that their government is somehow using their information for what they consider to be somehow unseemly. There were many Conservatives MPs federally who brought up their concerns at committee of course.

I want to mention that, just looking at my smart phone—and some people here have three, believe it or not: one because they're working with a ministry and there's a separate ministry phone, one because as an MPP we have our legislative phone, and then a lot of people still want to carry around their personal phone, which I did for the few months I was here, because you're holding onto your old phone number, your personal life and all that entails. If you look at our phones, so many of us have apps. We have Uber apps. I have a Cineplex app. I have a CIBC app and an Air Canada app, and Google Nest now to control your thermostat and things in the house. All of this has very personal information. The Google Nest tracks if somebody's home or not home, and lighting schedules and things like that.

In the old days you used to be afraid to tell the newspaper delivery that we were going out of town; we preferred to have the neighbour pick up the paper, because we didn't even want the Toronto Star to know that we were away. But now we all recognize that our lives are just such an open book, but that doesn't mean that we have to completely give up giving any kind of consent. We can certainly do a lot more to protect the members of our constituencies. We can protect the consumers, and we can protect ourselves and our family members, as well.

I think that we all live in fear sometimes. We get those messages: "I think you've been hacked on Facebook, because I got a friend request from you, and we're already friends." Sometimes it's that they were hacked, and everybody is updating their password, and we're all talking to our staff and our family members: "Who changed the password?" It's kind of a game, and it's frustrating. It's frustrating for people, between their alarm codes and their banking codes, and then on top of that we have all these passwords.

Hopefully, technology is going to be coming out to help us deal with all this, as well as to help protect us, but in the meantime, maybe we have to look at ways that we can work hard to protect ourselves and everybody else across the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? I recognize the member for Humber River–Black Creek.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the member from Oakville.

I rise today in support of Bill 55, the Safeguarding our Information Act, as I believe that this bill does provide some important amendments that will help to ensure that some of our private and confidential information will remain just that.

This bill will amend the Consumer Protection Act, the Consumer Reporting Act and the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act in order to close any loopholes where government agencies might be able to collect our personal financial data without our knowledge or written consent.

I'm particularly encouraged to see the Conservatives bringing forward such legislation on privacy protection, particularly after tens of thousands of Highway 407 ETR customers' private data was breached this past spring after a former PC candidate illegally obtained their names, addresses and phone numbers without their consent. Here are a few small steps to making amends based on this violation of people's privacy.

I want you to imagine if a government agency wanted to access your personal, private medical records in order to compile a province-wide database about the medical conditions of all Ontarians to predict future medical records or trends in the province. We would be horrified, no?

Consider if a government bureaucrat could call up your family doctor and demand access to every single one of your medical files, without the knowledge or consent of the patients affected by this—thousands of files containing

some of the most sensitive and personal information. These files could contain deeply personal details, things you might not want to share with close family or friends, let alone someone you don't even know who isn't a trusted medical practitioner. This government agency he works for would be able to access the medical records of literally millions of Ontarians.

If we would never allow this to happen, why would we allow similar bureaucrats to collect and compile detailed financial information and store it in a national database, without our knowledge and, again, without our consent? But that's just what the federal Liberals have done by forcing banks and credit card companies to hand over the private and sensitive financial information of half a million randomly selected Canadians without their consent, give it to Statistics Canada and allow them to create a data bank which they could use to predict future consumer trends.

That's right: your personal banking information—every deposit, every withdrawal, every credit card payment, mortgage payment, car payment, every purchase you make on your debit card, every one of your online subscriptions, whether you buy a coffee from Tim Hortons or Starbucks or wherever, and whatever you put on your debit card—stored in a data house, given to Statistics Canada for whatever purpose they deem necessary. Right now, they have access to so much: our SIN number, personal demographic information, age, marital status—it goes on and on. Now they'll know the size of our morning coffee.

In 2017, StatsCan made over \$100 million selling our data to businesses. As our purchasing habits are becoming increasingly more digital, a larger chunk of purchases are now being made using credit cards, debit cards and online banking apps. Our personal data is a valuable commodity. How much do the federal Liberals believe selling it is worth?

1400

If we have to sign a consent to release medical information forms before any of our medical information can be released, it only makes sense for us to sign a consent before our financial information is shared with any other party.

Our personal information is something that belongs to us as individuals. It does not belong to the government. It is something that we can choose to share with those we trust or simply keep to ourselves. It is not something that anyone, from any level of government, should be allowed to view or obtain without first receiving our consent.

It is for this reason that I support the bill and again thank the member from Oakville.

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

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Today I'm speaking on a very important bill being introduced by the MPP for Oakville, the Safeguarding our Information Act. Madam Speaker, if passed, this bill will require that the government institutions requesting personal information from a lender can only access that personal information if the consumer

consents. The most important word is "consent"; the consumer has to give his consent.

Sensitive and personal information is disclosed to financial institutions when entering into credit agreements, such as credit history and other private data. Through financial transactions, day-to-day footprints are collected.

The MPP from Oakville is the right person to introduce this bill. He has extensive experience within the financial industry and is well aware of the vast amount of personal information these institutions maintain. He has the insight and, most importantly, is in the know on the concerns expressed by consumers when lending firms handle and disseminate personal information.

Madam Speaker, as an ex-information technology consultant, I'm aware of the extensive safe measures that our financial institutions take in protecting their clients' private information. I remember meeting with financial institutions and organizations, and the very first question they always used to ask me was, "Kaleed, how can we protect the data?" At the end of the day, the end-user information has to be protected and saved at whatever cost, because it is extremely important. It can damage the reputation of that organization or financial institution as well.

Consumers and clients demand that their private information be protected. As well, they expect institutions to ask for consent before releasing their information. According to a study done by Forex Bonuses in 2017 ranking the world's top 10 cashless countries, Canadians were ranked first in embracing cashless technology, followed by Sweden, the UK and France.

As can be demonstrated by this ranking, Canadians trust our institutions with their most valuable assets: their money and personal information. We need to be mindful of the responsibility they have given to us as government, and to uphold their trust.

A simple truth is that the majority of Canadians want their consent when Stats Canada is accessing their information. A survey conducted by Nanos research of Canadians found that 75% of respondents opposed Stats Canada accessing personal records without their permission.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: I would, first off, like to thank the member from Oakville for putting forward this bill regarding the protection of privacy. I hope that the government actually lives by the intent of the bill because I'm going to talk about a little breach of privacy that has happened since this government has been elected that has been caused by this government.

This government struck a select committee to look into the books of the previous government. A select committee is a very powerful tool. I'm going to read part of the motion:

"That the records be produced within three calendar weeks of the passage of this motion;

"That the records be produced in searchable electronic format; and

“That the records be produced with no relevant information redacted or sealed, regardless of any claim of privilege or confidentiality”—pretty tough stuff.

The people who were demanded to give those records gave them within three weeks, the equivalent of a million pages. But there was one little problem. Three of those companies—OPG, the IESO and the Ontario Energy Board—sent letters to the committee asking the committee to please keep the documents confidential because there was private information. There was bidding information; there could be bank account numbers. They provided the information to the committee. They asked that the information be kept confidential.

The committee had to make a decision. Our side argued to keep the information confidential. And do you know what the government did? This government, which claims to be accountable, which claims—and I hope the member from Oakville can fix this—to care about privacy, do you know what they did? They voted to release a million pages of potentially confidential documentation to the public—a million pages of searchable documentation. That’s what they did.

Then the next day, we meet again and the IESO sends us another letter. It’s long, but basically what it said was, “Are you kidding me?” And guess what? The government of trust and accountability all of a sudden changed their mind. They changed their mind, but for 24 hours your government and the member for Oakville’s government released a million pages of confidential documentation, and then you took them back. The committee has now deemed that some of this documentation shouldn’t ever be released. Oh, who would have thought that bank account numbers and bids in a competitive energy market shouldn’t just be thrown open to the public? That wasn’t the federal Liberal government. That wasn’t the last Liberal government. That was your government. A million pages—once more, a million searchable pages of confidential information that you released a month ago.

I hope this bill passes. I hope the government takes it to heart and actually does protect people’s information and doesn’t blame other governments but looks in the mirror and protects our information. You’re very good at blaming others. It’s time that you look at what you’re actually doing and protect Ontarians.

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

Miss Kinga Surma: First, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Oakville for bringing this item forward. I have to tell you, you’ve actually really helped me because a few weeks ago I had constituents come by my office to inquire about this very subject after reading various articles in the paper. They asked us what we were going to do as a government. Truthfully, at that point in time, I wasn’t exactly sure; I wanted to consult with my colleagues. Then I saw that you presented this to caucus, so I was very happy about that and now I have something to take back to my constituents. So thank you for your work on this.

Personal information is just that: It’s personal. How this information is collected and used by business and by

government institutions in Canada and across our province is governed by privacy laws. Individuals need to be confident that their personal information will be protected and handled appropriately. Any business, financial or lending institution that has collected information that is personal has an obligation to take all precautionary measures to ensure it’s adequately protected. It should not be stolen or lost, accessed or disclosed, copied or modified. When the time comes, it must be carefully disposed of and destroyed.

1410

Most of us assume that safeguards are in place and that we don’t have to worry about our information ending up where it doesn’t belong. Yet the terms “identity theft,” “spam,” “online tracking,” “phishing scams” and even “election targeting” are always buzzing around us, and so we proceed with caution with the tools we have. We know we should protect our passwords and PINs and not share them with anyone. We keep our personal documents safe.

When the protection of our personal information is compromised or there is a breach in our privacy, it has been described to feel like a stranger invaded your home and not only robbed you of your possessions, but more significantly took away the ability to feel safe. So why on earth should government institutions be allowed to obtain our personal information, without our consent, from private sector organizations?

We ask ourselves, why are financial institutions being asked to hand over the financial data and personal information of thousands of Canadian households to Statistics Canada? The scale of personal data of a financial nature is concerning. Is this really necessary? Is the scope and breadth of data collected proportional to public policy goals that the data is intended to serve? What government programs specifically are they concerned with keeping relevant?

My constituents are telling me that they want protections for consumers and they don’t want government institutions obtaining their personal information without their consent. I’m hearing that they are appalled at this unacceptable breach of consumer privacy.

The Safeguarding Our Information Act, 2018, will amend statutes to update and enhance protections for consumers and prevent government institutions from obtaining personal information without consent. Strengthening consumer protection legislation in the absence of federal action, as this bill proposes to do, sends a clear message that our government is working for the people of Ontario.

Again, I’d like to take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues for supporting this wonderful bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Oakville has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I’d like to thank all the participants in this debate: the members from York South–Weston, Etobicoke Centre, Thornhill, Mississauga East–Cooksville, Humber River–Black Creek and Timiskaming–Cochrane.

The one thing I think I see from everybody is that we do need to strengthen consumer protection laws here in

Canada. Clearly, the federal government is not only doing nothing but actually enabling this consumer violation to happen. We need to stand up. I think people across Canada are watching us—consumers and businesses across Canada—to see how we deal with this. Ontario and our government is at the forefront of protecting consumers.

The world is changing. We live in a very different world than 30 years ago or even five or 10 years ago. We need to update our laws, particularly with respect to consumer protection, to be in modern times, so that we can protect our consumers and banking information.

The federal NDP consumer critic, Brian Masse, earlier this month was quoted as saying, “Canadians are appalled to learn that Statistics Canada plans to access their detailed personal banking information. They were never consulted and did not consent....”

“Building a massive database of personal banking information without telling anyone is just wrong.” That’s from the federal NDP consumer critic.

I think this crosses political lines. I’ve heard from constituents of all political persuasions who are very, very upset by what the federal government is doing. We need a government that’s going to stand up and that’s going to protect consumers here in Ontario. I’d be interested to see what the independent members think of this bill. I certainly hope they will support it as I really do think this crosses geographic and partisan lines.

Again, thank you very much for the time to be able to speak. I look forward to the vote.

ORGANIC PRODUCTS ACT, 2018
LOI DE 2018 SUR LES PRODUITS
BIOLOGIQUES

Mr. McDonell moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 54, An Act to regulate the labelling and certification of organic products / Projet de loi 54, Loi visant à réglementer l’étiquetage et la certification des produits biologiques.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jim McDonell: It is my distinct pleasure to stand here today for second reading of my private member’s bill, Bill 54, An Act to regulate the labelling and certification of organic products.

This bill will require that all producers using the word “organic” in marketing, product labels and business names follow the already established federal regulations for organic produce.

Today, organic producers must be certified by an accredited certification body in order to use the Canadian organic logo or to move products labelled “organic” across provincial or national borders, as regulated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. However, those that distribute solely within the province within which they produce only have to adhere to provincial regulations, which Ontario currently lacks.

The agri-food industry is one of our province’s major employers, and the organic sector plays a significant role. When Ontarians choose to pay a premium for organic food, they want to be assured that they are purchasing produce that meets the high standards set by the Organic Council of Ontario. Should this bill pass, it will provide consumers with this guarantee of quality organic produce to support the continued success of the organic food industry. Within the province, the Canada Organic Regime is only enforced for products that carry the Canadian organic logo. Products labelled “organic” that do not leave the province are not subject to enforcement.

The Organic Council of Ontario, an organization that is supportive of my bill, has been advocating for organic regulation since 2016. The results of a survey of small-scale producers performed in early 2018 and published by the Organic Council of Ontario show that the majority of farmers surveyed are in favour of organic regulation. The organic council surveyed 94 small-scale producers, and 81% of them expressed their support for the regulation in principle.

I’m proud to have the support for Bill 54 from the Organic Council of Ontario, the voice of organics in Ontario, some of whom are in the gallery today. I know we have Laura Northey, Carolyn Young, Dora Chan, Bill Redelmeier, Eric Payseur and Kristen Howe here today.

“Small-scale producers are among those most likely to be impacted by a new regulation,” noted OCO executive director Carolyn Young, “and we continue to be committed to helping them overcome barriers to certification.”

Six other provinces have already passed legislation to protect consumers against false organic claims.

Ontario is home to Canada’s largest organic market, with over \$1.6 billion in sales. For a growing number of consumers, buying locally produced food is important. It supports people and businesses in or near your community, stimulates the local economy and can promote sustainability and biodiversity. When you buy Ontario organic produce, you are helping to grow a thriving and resilient local food system—the best of both worlds.

By choosing local and organic products, consumers are making a long-term investment in the ecological preservation of Ontario. Organic production uses less energy and offers ways of sequestering 100% of greenhouse gas emissions. The agri-food sector comprises almost 6% of the provincial GDP. It is worth more than \$37 billion, while the sector as a whole employs more than 800,000 people.

Given the size of the agricultural sector, buying local food can have a significant multiplier effect. Small increases in household spending on Ontario products can add billions of dollars and thousands of jobs to the economy. Organic food businesses amplify this effect by creating more sustainable livelihoods on less land. With the prized organic seal of approval, these organic farms and businesses receive a premium for their product. Bill 54’s protection of the organic designation will regulate the use of the term “organic” in Ontario and will protect the investments by certified producers.

Passing this bill and engaging with organic farmers directly will fit well within our existing government strategy to promote local food and ensure that everyone knows that Ontario is, indeed, open for business.

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In fact, we heard from local businesses that share our belief in this bill. In the great riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, proudly served by my friend MPP Norm Miller, we heard from Gerhard Latka, founder and president of Crofter's Organic food spreads. Gerhard and Gabi Latka started their business 29 years ago. They now employ 56 people and ship their organic jams and spreads across North America and Europe. It is a business such as theirs that early on embraced the organic producer mindset and built a successful and fruitful business. Madam Speaker, Bill 54 is meant to serve producers like Crofter's Organic. It acts to support and maintain the integrity of the word "organic."

Ontario is Canada's largest organic market, but our organic businesses aren't protected. Organic standards are good for economic development, because being certified organic in Ontario levels the playing field for businesses investing in the organic sector by protecting its image and highlighting the rigorous and expensive production standards and guidelines. I know that, driving through my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, often you'll be driving through many fields of corn and soybeans. Certainly, when you come across an organic farm, it can be very obvious, because there's no question that production is lower and weed control is much harder. They do stand out. Because of that, production is not as high, making them more expensive.

Our government, Madam Speaker, is committed to making Ontario open for business, and this bill demonstrates our commitment to supporting the economic opportunity of organic food production.

There are lots of different labels, terms and certifications for consumers to consider when buying the food they bring home for themselves and their families. This contributes to consumer confusion that Bill 54 seeks to eliminate.

In general, organic production does not allow for the use of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, genetically engineered materials or irradiation, but exceptions have been made in rare situations where there are no viable alternatives.

Gaps in the federal standards allow for the sale of non-certified "organic" foods within Ontario. Erroneous, false or non-verified claims undermine the trust of consumers, the value of the term "organic," and eventually the investments made by producers.

This is the third time that an attempt has been made to create Ontario-based organic regulations. My hard-working colleague from Dufferin–Caledon, Minister Sylvia Jones, earlier this year, as an opposition MPP, introduced this legislation, because it was important then and it is important today. I'm proud to have her support now as our government's Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. When she introduced her bill,

she noted that without provincial regulation, development and growth will not reach its true potential and, "Inconsistencies lead to the erosion in consumer confidence in organic products, because there is no certainty that the claims about organic products are valid."

Today it is our goal to provide that certainty that is essential to grow consumer demand and that will result in an expanding, stronger and more predictable and significant sector of our agri-food industry, Ontario's number one employment generator. British Columbia, Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have already adopted their own provincial organic food standards. With the passage of Bill 54, Madam Speaker, Ontario will catch up to this important market group. We will be able to work with farmers and producers to promote Ontario's organic food industry and increase food transparency that will certainly support and enhance consumer protection and confidence in the food they choose to purchase for themselves and their families.

With respect to our government's commitment to reduce barriers and cut 25% of red tape by 2022, Bill 54 is primed to aid in keeping that commitment.

Back in October, I had the opportunity to meet with members of the Organic Council of Ontario and hear their concerns for the future of the organic industry. Speaker, I'm proud to represent Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, one of the prime agricultural regions in the province. I know and understand their challenges and their concerns. When I spoke to my friend and colleague Minister Hardeman, our hard-working Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, about addressing these issues and the development of the necessary legislation, he recommended this bill from the very honourable member from Dufferin–Caledon to meet the needs of the Organic Council of Ontario.

Bill 54 will also fulfill our government's commitment by reducing red tape and the burdens that our food producers face.

Consultation from stakeholders during committee, should this bill be successful, will prove invaluable to fine-tune this legislation to address all the needs of consumers and producers, for a healthy and prosperous organics industry will provide choice and quality food for the residents of Ontario and is good for our economy.

I am confident that these consultations will provide balance in the implementation of certified organic standards, while reducing unnecessary red tape and minimizing the costs to producers and job creators like Crofter's Organic in Parry Sound.

Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege to stand in this Legislature and represent my constituents, but to speak on behalf of my private member's bill is truly special, and to have the support of so many in the industry and within my own caucus is a privilege.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: First, I want to thank the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for bringing this bill forward. I truly support it and I'm very pleased to speak to it.

I also want to send a big thank you to the member from Toronto–Danforth, MPP Peter Tabuns, who introduced this bill in the past, as well as Sylvia Jones, who co-sponsored this bill in the past.

I am very pleased to speak to this bill because my grandfather was a farmer, and in my childhood days I watched him work hard to provide good food. I think this bill is really important because it will support the local farmers who want to grow local organic food.

The absence of all chemical pesticides avoids the risk of health damages to the consumers, to the farmers, but it's also good for our environment. I think we have to make sure that we are very careful of the way we're supporting our local farmers, our environment. It's something that's good for the consumers. And 85% of farmers surveyed actually indicated that they want this bill to go forward.

Speaker, the lack of regulation leaves consumers unprotected. A study showed that 43% of organic labelling claims are unsubstantiated, which is extremely dangerous—43%. That means that we're leaving our children who are getting their meals at school, for example—it might claim to be organic, but it won't be. We're putting our families at risk.

A few weeks back, I had a group from the Organic Council of Ontario come to our office, and one of the individuals I had the honour of meeting was also from Real Food for Real Kids. I want to share this quote from their card, which says, "There are 400,000 kids in the GTA. We're sure 20,000" out of the 400,000 "eat real food every day." That's so dangerous. That leaves about 380,000 kids eating things that we don't know what they're eating.

So I'm really pleased to support this bill because we're making sure that we're giving that opportunity for our children, and for farmers to provide real food.

Ontario is Canada's largest organic market. However, unlike BC, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Quebec and Nova Scotia, Ontario does not have any regulations on the word "organic." It's an outlier. It's the largest, yet we don't have any regulations on that. When the Canadian organic standards were created by the federal government, the intention was for every province to adopt this legislation. It's really sad that we have been slow in that process, but I'm happy that we're finally moving forward on that.

The lack of regulation also means organic businesses must compete with those that are not certified—and that's an uneven competition—even though the certification process is a big investment of time and energy that allows them to make that claim. The third-party certification process ensures organic integrity and was created to offer consumers a way to feel confident in the claim—which means that when these businesses go through the certification process, there's a huge process they go through. So anyone who claims that they are organic, but that claim is unsubstantiated—those small businesses, for example, that are actually organic are not having an equal opportunity to sell in the market.

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I also want to share the information that I got from the Organic Council of Ontario. I found this really, really

interesting and informative, which is why I want to share this with the House. It says, "Organic: More Than Just Marketing," and that's what I was just talking about. It means that organic is a set of production practices verified through third-party certification. "Farmers and processors certify so that you can be confident you are getting what you pay for." It also means that organic is more than just spray, which is a product used, and also that organic is more than just local.

So we're talking about a lot of different issues that are brought together that I think this bill will be an introduction for.

Another point of this bill, I think, is that it's supported by three general farming organizations. In the recent stakeholder outreach effort by the organic council, as I pointed out, 85% of farmers surveyed were all in favour of this bill.

I want to send a big thank you to all the folks who are here in the gallery as well, because I think they've done a lot of work, and the council has done a lot of work, to make sure that we move on with this bill a lot sooner than we have. I want to conclude by sending a big thank you to the council.

One thing I want to say is, the bottom line is that if farmers want it, if consumers want it, if it's good for business, if it's good for our environment and if it's good for the people of Ontario, then we must support it.

Thank you to the member for bringing this bill forward.

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It's obviously a real pleasure to stand in support of Bill 54, brought forward by my friend and colleague. For obvious reasons, I very much am pleased that this bill is coming forward again.

I want to touch on some of this stuff because, frankly, the two previous speakers have gone a lot into the stats, so I want to sort of explain it like I would explain it to my children.

This is, at its core, a consumer protection piece of legislation. As a parent, as a purchaser—some of us choose to buy organic; some of us choose to buy more traditional methods. I'm not making a judgment call on that. I think we make decisions in our purchasing lives, and, quite frankly, I don't care which you do.

However, when we choose to purchase organic, we all understand and appreciate that there is a premium to purchasing that organic product. This, at its core, is protecting that consumer. So we have consumer protection.

We also have producer protection, because, as was raised eloquently by the previous speaker, when a producer goes through the process to get that Canadian organic standard, there is a cost involved; there is a time commitment involved; it costs money. They make that commitment, as a purchaser, as a producer and, we, as a consumer, end up paying for it downstream. That's okay.

What I want to protect is—in the province of Ontario, as long as you buy and sell and grow in the province of Ontario and don't cross provincial boundaries, you can use the word "organic." So it is very confusing to an Ontario

buyer who sees that Canadian organic council label and says, “Okay, I’m willing to pay the premium, because I know that this has gone through a certification process.” The problem is that in the province Ontario, you can use that word “organics.” You can say that as long as you’re not moving across provincial boundaries.

So there is confusion. There is, for lack of a better word, an unfair playing field for the producer who has gone through the time and effort to get that Canadian organic label, and then sees their neighbour, their competitor, slap the word “organic” on their product but not have gone through the process. I believe we can do something about it in a very basic way.

When people say to me, “But there is an organics regulation, federally. Aren’t you duplicating it through this process with Bill 54?”

The answer is no, because as long as you’re only selling in Ontario, you have the full right to use the word “organic,” and it leads to consumer confusion. I think this private member’s bill will solve some of that confusion and will assist.

Again, while I’m happy that we’re bringing this forward again, I would like to give a shout-out to the NDP member from Toronto–Danforth because we co-sponsored this bill the last time it came forward. I think we all intrinsically, once we understand the issue, understand that this is a very simple and basic fix.

The other thing that I want to touch on briefly: Some of our organic producers in the province of Ontario are frankly quite small, so there is a concern that perhaps this Ontario regulation will cost a lot of money. In fact, if we just mirror or just say, “You must get the Canadian organic council label,” yes, it would be fairly costly. I think that there is some flexibility and some opportunity to fine-tune how we allow the Ontario organics regulation to come into place, whether it is a peer model where people are making assessments—it doesn’t have to be as costly as getting that very magic “Canadian organic” label in the process.

I really want to give a shout-out. Thank you very much for bringing this forward again. I think that we have an opportunity here today to move this issue forward. I know I’ve had many discussions with my colleagues, including the Minister of Agriculture. There’s an Ontario-made solution here. It doesn’t have to be a cookie cutter for what the federal government has done with the Canadian organic council stamp, but I think we also have an obligation, frankly, to protect our consumers, to protect our producers.

Thank you very much. Obviously, I’m pleased to support Bill 54.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It’s an honour to be able to speak to this bill brought forward by the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. We were elected at the same time and we have common views on some things.

I would like to support this bill, the organic certification bill, and I’d also like to thank our member from Toronto–Danforth and the government member from Dufferin–

Caledon for bringing this forward in different Parliaments, in different iterations.

I have an admission to make: I’m a farmer but I’ve never grown organic. I believe it’s a choice, and I would like to echo the member from Dufferin–Caledon: When people go to purchase food, they should be confident that what they’re purchasing—that they’re getting what they’re paying for. If your choice is organic, you should be confident that you are buying food that is produced organically. That is currently not the case in Ontario. That’s why this bill should go forward.

It has surprised me that it hasn’t gone farther. We have a new government, and hopefully it will go forward. Quite frankly, I am a bit refreshed by the language I’ve heard from the government members today because it’s not often you hear the current government talk about how regulations are actually a good thing sometimes. All we hear—and I’ve heard the Premier say that they’re going to cut regulations in the agricultural sector by 25%. Well, if you’re going to cut regulations by 25% yet you’re going to increase regulations on organic, that is going to be quite a feat—quite a feat.

We all realize that—and I can tell you stories, being a farmer, where regulations are a problem.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: I am the nephew of the Minister of Agriculture, but I can’t pick my family, okay? He’s a good guy, but I can’t pick my family.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The House will come to order.

Mr. John Vanthof: I apologize, Madam Speaker.

But when we have the battles back and forth about regulation, we have to be careful what we’re really talking about, because it’s not, in many cases, the regulations themselves that are good or bad; it’s how they are applied, when they are applied, and that they are applied consistently.

1440

I can give you examples of an abattoir: Because they produce three different product lines, they have three different audit processes at the same time. For a mom-and-pop abattoir, that does not make sense; for Maple Leaf Foods, it’s a bit of different story. But that’s not necessarily regulation—

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Those are federal.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, but that’s not necessarily regulation; that is to make sure that, for the regulations, the way they’re applied makes sense. I believe that both the member who moved it and the members who spoke to it have said that they want to have regulations that make sense. But we have to be careful—very careful—especially with food regulations, because what might look like something that doesn’t make sense when you look at it through a very small, narrow vision, you might find that, down the road, that lack of regulation is going to hurt something else.

I know I’m getting off-topic, Speaker, but I support this. People need to have confidence in their food. We need to have confidence that, when someone goes and buys

organic produce, they are sure that it's organic. But we need to have confidence in our whole food system.

When I hear the government saying, "We're going to slash regulations in our food system by 25%," I shudder. I truly shudder. As a farmer, as a father, as a consumer, I shudder. Are there ways to do things better? Obviously. No one is perfect. No one is perfect. But when you set arbitrary rules—and that's exactly what this government has said. They are going to slash regulations in the agricultural sector by 25%. Well, folks, there is not 25% bad regulations in this province in the ag sector. There isn't.

Can we do things better? Yes, I'll be happy to work with the uncle to make things better—happy to. But you need to be careful, because the few things that you need to be careful with are food and water. We've got experience here when the regulations with water didn't go well, and we all paid the price—some with their lives. We don't need to do the same thing with food.

We need to implement this regulation for organic products. We need to do it as quickly as possible. But we need to be very careful, when we're looking at regulations, that you don't take out regulations that look like, "Oh, we don't really need them today"—most regulations were put in for a reason. We need to make sure that the way that they're administered makes sense for both the consumer and the producer.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: It's a real pleasure to rise today and speak on behalf of Bill 54, An Act to regulate the labelling and certification of organic products, put forward by my seatmate the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

It's interesting to hear the debate, because we get to talk on Thursday afternoons—I think a lot of us who are here most Thursday afternoons find that it's one of the more interesting times of the week, because we cover a real variety of different topics, and you don't hear as much repetition as you hear maybe when speaking on some of the other bills.

Today, speaking about organic farming, we're learning that there are regulations that take place on the federal level that are already established by the Canadian Organic Standards, and those cover Ontario farmers who call their product organic if it crosses the borders outside of Ontario. But within the province, if they're selling the product to consumers within the province of Ontario, they can call the product organic, it can say "organic" on the label, but the consumers don't really know if it is organic or not, and there have been many, many cases where products have been found not to be organic.

In fact, I read an article where they spoke about Interpol, the international organization. You wouldn't think that they would be so concerned, but they confiscated tons and tons of produce that was labelled "organic" that they found to be not organic.

We know that it's a growing market, and that's part of our concern. We've heard that many other provinces,

probably most other provinces, have provincial regulations to deal with the issue, and that Ontario is maybe lagging a little behind, and that's why we're having the discussion.

We know that "organic" means, obviously, that you're not using pesticides, or you may be allowed to use certain types of things. We know, just with medication as well, that people will say, "Oh, I don't do chemicals," but a lot of medication comes from plants and could be almost considered organic as well.

We know that there are more weeds and less of a yield of the crop. Obviously, it costs the organic farmers more because they don't get as much of a yield, but it also costs the consumers more because they have to pay more for the product, hence why people might be tempted to call their product organic when it's not organic.

I had heard once in the discussion previously—this is the second or third time that this bill is getting putting forward—the minister of consumer safety and corrections, who represented Dufferin–Caledon, as well as the member from the New Democratic Party—what's the riding for Mr. Tabuns?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Toronto–Danforth.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Toronto–Danforth. Sorry, I had a lapse there.

They put it forward previously. I don't know if it was during that debate that I heard there are some concerns that pesticides on a neighbouring farm could blow over or come across, so maybe you can't use the perimeter of your farm, which means you have less land to grow crops on. There are a lot of different issues that you have to think about in terms of organic.

When my four kids were very young, I, like many of you, tried to have a little bit of a backyard garden. Between the pests and the bunny rabbits that came in and ate everything, it was frustrating. I think you don't really appreciate what farmers go through until you try to grow something yourself and realize the responsibility of doing that.

I had fruit trees, and that was frustrating because you didn't want to have them sprayed, but then most of the time, you wouldn't get much of anything if you didn't spray them.

Representing Thornhill, I like to fit in the fact that I represent the riding that has the largest Jewish community in Canada. There's a lot of discussion, oftentimes, in social media and the Jewish news about kosher certification, so that's another concern for the community. There are different types of kosher certification. Then there are people who aren't particularly observant of kosher eating; we call it "Kashruth." They sometimes talk about kosher style.

The member spoke earlier about organic farmers in his community: Gerhard and Gabi Latka. When I heard "Latka," I was thinking about Hanukkah, because we eat latkes, our potato pancakes, during Hanukkah.

We know that you can get organic produce at grocery stores and at farmers' markets. There is what's called community-shared agriculture. People can get home delivery of baskets of food every week. It's a very established market.

We've heard previously in the Legislature about craft breweries and distillers, and all of these innovative new products that come out on the market and are so popular, yet people have a hard time accessing them. They have a hard time getting their product on the shelves and getting it into other provinces.

I think that here, we're promoting healthy lifestyles. We do want to support the consumers who want organic produce. We want to protect their interests and not just the fact that they're paying more and they should get what they pay for, but also, as the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane just said, that if they want healthy food for their diet, they're actually getting what it is they need. We don't know what medical problems people have or allergies that people have. Some people have different reasons why they want to eat organic.

We know that we're open for business in the province of Ontario—« ouvert aux affaires », en français. Agri-food is a major, major employer in the province of Ontario, and we want to do all we can to support our agri-food industries. We don't want to hamper them.

So I'm very interested in seeing this bill moved forward. I think we're hearing that there's support from all sides of the House here today, and that we want to support all farmers, not just organic farmers. These things, though, don't necessarily happen organically—that will be my only pun for the day that I'll allow myself. Sometimes we do have to get involved.

1450

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry has two minutes for a reply.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Southwest, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane and my seatmate from Thornhill. It is, from what I'm hearing, in the best interests of everybody to make sure the standards are there so consumers have the confidence that when they pay more—because it is worth more for those products—that they're getting what they're paying for.

As I say, I don't buy much in the way of organic foods, but I appreciate in my travels through the countryside the extra costs—because when you look, you can pick out an organic field of soybeans quite readily.

In my riding, there's also, in Inkerman, a seed company, and they specialize in organic products. They have a huge market in Japan. It's interesting, because they sort the seeds by roundness, by colour, by size. The market is there. They ship them over. Anything that doesn't pass as being round enough or the right colour, they simply dump into the standard soybean produce that everybody else buys.

While I wonder about somebody worrying about the roundness or the shape of a soybean, there are people in the world who are willing to pay more for that, so that's great. We have farmers who benefit from that. But it is time-consuming, it is expensive, and certainly the administration around that and proving that your product is organic is a challenge.

We want to make sure as well that our regulations are not onerous. We're adopting, basically, the Canadian standards. We want to make sure that we don't end up making our producers any less competitive than they are today.

Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the speakers who spoke in favour today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Orders of the day?

KEEPING STUDENTS SAFE ON SCHOOL BUSES ACT (HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT), 2018

LOI DE 2018 RENFORÇANT LA SÉCURITÉ DES ÉLÈVES DANS LES AUTOBUS SCOLAIRES (MODIFICATION DU CODE DE LA ROUTE)

Ms. Wynne moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 56, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of seat belts on school buses / Projet de loi 56, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les ceintures de sécurité dans les autobus scolaires.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to begin by acknowledging our visitors in the gallery. These are all people who are very concerned with public policy, so I know they have had a really good afternoon listening to the different issues that are being discussed. They also care deeply about the safety of children and are very interested in doing everything we can to make children safer.

I also want to especially thank Wendy Weston, my colleague who works with me, and Peter Supierz-Szczygłowski, who is my wonderful OLIP intern, who really jumped in. When you work with an independent member, you get lots of experience, so he's had a terrific time and he's invaluable to us.

Madam Speaker, I'm going to be talking today about making school buses in Ontario safer for our children. I'm going to draw on my own experience, both as a mother and as a politician. I'm going to start in 1989 when, every weekday for four years, I would take my youngest child, Maggie, by the hand and I would entrust her to a school bus. She would board a small school bus to head to another neighbourhood to her school. The ride, with pickups along the way, took about 30 minutes. She was five years old attending what was then a half-day kindergarten program in French immersion.

The school was not a long trip from us, but every mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, auntie or uncle who has responsibility for putting a child on a school bus in the morning knows that there's just that faint whisper of anxiety when you entrust that child to the school bus.

We have 18,000 school buses that drive the roads in this province every day, Madam Speaker, and another 2,000 that are the smaller white school buses for children with

disabilities. It's a very, very strong cohort of people who drive those school buses—they're saintly, actually, the people who drive our school buses—and they do everything they can, but I think we can do more.

There are more than 800,000 students who board those school buses in Ontario every day, and it's our responsibility as elected officials to do everything we can to keep those children safe, because collisions happen. Since 1984 in Canada there have been 10,480 documented injuries. As recently as this September, there was a collision in Innisfil. A school bus crash in central Ontario left three high school students with serious injuries. There were no fatalities—thank goodness—in this particular case, Madam Speaker, but those collisions happen, children are injured and children are killed.

Before I continue, I want to just acknowledge the roles that I have played as an elected representative in Ontario. I know that there will be some calls from government about the things that I could have done or should have done, so I just want to address them up front. I was privileged to serve as Minister of Education from 2006 until 2010, and Minister of Transportation in 2010 and 2011. In both those roles, the issue of school bus safety was raised, particularly when I was Minister of Transportation. I asked for advice on whether there was evidence that would demonstrate that seat belts in school buses would increase safety for children. More than once we had that conversation, because it was counterintuitive to me that school buses would not be safer, counterintuitive to me and every mom I knew that school buses didn't need seat belts.

In every instance, the response that I received was that the best evidence available was contained in a report by Transport Canada from 1984. That report found that “if lap belts are installed on current designs of school bus seats, a greater potential for head injury may exist.” The testing that was done in 1984 tested lap belts on front-facing seats and determined that those belts could increase the risk of head injuries during severe frontal collisions. That was the information that I had before me when I was Minister of Education, when I was Minister of Transportation and when I was Premier, and that is why I and politicians across this country were persuaded not to change the law and require that seat belts be installed and worn on school buses.

We can spend time questioning why we, as elected politicians, didn't have that information, but we know better now. We have more recent information. We have that information, and so we need to take action.

CBC Television's *The Fifth Estate* has recently brought to light an internal Transport Canada crash test study that was not released for nearly a decade. This 2010 study concluded that current bus safety is “not effective in side impacts.” Compartmentalization, which is the word that was used and the factor that was always talked about, the characteristic that was relied upon in the 1984 study because it had to do with the design of the seats—that compartmentalization failed to contain the dummy occupants in their seats in the 2010 report.

The 2010 report went on to say that “compartmentalization is effective in protecting children in frontal impacts but is not effective in side impacts, rollovers or events where there is significant vertical lift,” and that “countermeasures are needed to prevent ejections and to reduce the risk of injury when a child's head strikes the side wall or window frame of the bus.” The bottom line, Madam Speaker, is that we have new research information.

The report also says that there's more to be done, and that is what needs to happen now. We need to take those conclusions that point in a certain direction and do the work to make sure we change the rules around school buses. That's why I've brought forward this legislation now.

If passed, this bill would require the installation of three-point seat belts on all new school buses, all school buses travelling for more than 45 minutes and all school buses travelling on the 400 series or equivalent highways by 2020, and it would further require the retrofitting of all school buses by 2025. Ce projet de loi rendrait obligatoires les ceintures de sécurité à trois points dans les sièges faisant face à l'avant des autobus scolaires.

1500

This bill is about the safety of children. It is my call on Ontario to take a lead in Canada to make school buses safer for those 800,000-plus students who travel on the school bus every day in Ontario.

I recognize, Madam Speaker, that there will be a cost to operators when they are required to install seat belts. Those costs are estimated at about \$7,000 to \$10,000 for a new school bus to add a seat belt, and \$10,000 to \$15,000 to retrofit a school bus. This would be a significant transition for the school bus industry. I think it's reasonable to expect that, in the name of children's safety, the government would work with businesses to help fund and help to offset those costs and support compliance.

Having said that, whatever that conversation would be between government and the operators, let's remember that since 1999 there have been 16 deaths and 6,068 documented injuries on school buses. It's impossible to put a price on any one of those lives. In 2012 already, because of side-impact crashes in Chesterfield and in St. Lucie in the United States, the US National Transportation Safety Board came out with a position that lap/shoulder belts provide the best protection in all crash modes. Already in the United States, there are eight states that have laws requiring seat belts on school buses: California, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York since 1987, Texas, Indiana and Connecticut.

Whether we're talking about school bus safety, whether we're talking about climate change, whether we're talking about education policy or poverty reduction, evidence is the best underpinning to good government policy decisions. When new evidence comes to light, it's then the responsibility of elected officials to incorporate that new evidence into government decisions.

I have spoken, Madam Speaker, with a number of organizations that support this legislation, like the Ontario Safety League. Brian Patterson was with me this morning

at my press conference. What he said is, "In my 15 years with the Ontario Safety League, school bus safety restraint has been a constant concern and question, and this will be a step in the right direction."

I spoke with the Independent School Bus Operators Association, who are the operators and have, of course, a lot at stake in terms of businesses. They also support, with the caveat that they need to have further conversation, the installation of three-point seat belts.

The Ontario School Bus Association says, "As an association, we support using three-point belts on school buses. As experts in operating student transportation fleets, we look forward to the opportunity to work with stakeholders to ensure that many operational, driver and funding applications are addressed, as well as ensuring that the regulatory framework supports the ongoing safety of the industry."

Madam Speaker, I think that whether we talk to the school bus operators, parents, students, teachers or the people who drive the school buses, we know that there's more that we can do now that we have more evidence.

I look forward to hearing my colleagues' comments, and I hope for support from all sides of the House on this. This is fundamentally a non-partisan issue. I recognize that private members' bills rarely become government policy, but my hope is that all parties can recognize that action is necessary.

The federal government has committed to reviewing this question, but of the three million children who ride school buses every day in this country, 800,000 of those are Ontario children. I believe that we have an opportunity to lead the way. As the largest province in the country, I believe that if we take this stand, if we create some momentum on this, it will be compelling to other governments across the country, and it will be compelling to the federal government to move forward.

I'll just conclude, Madam Speaker. In 2015, according to the preliminary Ontario Road Safety Annual Report, there were two deaths on school vehicles. In 2016: three deaths. Enough. There's more that we can do. Now that we know, let's take action.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? I recognize the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Miss Kinga Surma: Etobicoke Centre, Madam Speaker.

I want to thank the member from Don Valley West for introducing Bill 56, the Keeping Students Safe on School Buses Act. I can appreciate the member's desire to improve the protection of Ontario's most vulnerable: children. The safety of children is something we can all agree on, as the member said, regardless of political stripe.

As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, safety is always top of mind. I have met with stakeholders to discuss safety when it comes to children and their routes to and from school, as well as their safety when getting on and off the bus. More than 800,000 students travel in school vehicles each day to school in Ontario. Their families trust us to provide them

with the safest conditions possible, and we do not take that responsibility lightly.

A bus is not permitted to be driven on the road unless the driver has conducted an inspection of the vehicle and completed an inspection report within the previous 24 hours. During the 12-month period between January and December 2017, ministry enforcement officers conducted over 4,000 bus inspections. Ministry enforcement officers monitor the safety of buses by inspecting all buses to make sure they are mechanically fit; confirming that bus companies have met their legislative obligations—which include periodic inspections; and ensuring that drivers are properly licensed and trained.

It is extremely important to look for ways to improve Ontario's record of road safety in a respectful and productive manner. It's important for motorists, parents, caregivers and students to know how to keep children safe when they are on and around school buses, and it is important that both levels of government come up with strong policies and legislation that improve upon bus safety.

Transport Canada is responsible for setting the safety requirements for new vehicles and to determine which vehicles are required to be equipped with seat belts. Therefore, it's clear that elements of the bill may cross into an area of federal jurisdiction. We should continue to work with Transport Canada to determine the best approach to enhance school bus safety in Ontario. We need to keep that dialogue ongoing.

Transport Canada's 2010 internal report concluded that seat belts, both three-point and lap belts, could help prevent serious injuries and fatalities during collisions. I am supportive of the bill's intent to protect our school children based on these recent findings, but there are areas that I would like to see further discussion around.

I want to ensure that we carry out these changes in a way that continues to protect our children while being mindful of the increased burden this may create for industry and school boards across the province. There are approximately 20,000 school buses in the province. The cost to retrofit the entire fleet could be considerable. We will need to work closely with industry to determine an appropriate transition date to ensure a reasonable amount of time to retrofit existing buses and make sure that there is no disruption in service. We need to ensure that the federal government maintains this as a priority.

We know that school bus stakeholders have supported seat belts on school buses and we know that it will be extremely important to work with all affected stakeholders to determine and manage any impacts that these proposed changes may have on the duties of bus drivers.

These are issues that can be further discussed as the bill moves through the legislative process. I am open to and I welcome discussing all the topics mentioned above with any member and any stakeholder, just as I am willing to speak to any member and any stakeholder about their transportation concerns. As I mentioned at the beginning, safety is always our number one priority. We are always

working towards improving safety, particularly when it comes to our children.

Once again, I thank the member for the introduction of the bill, and I support the passing of second reading.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): My apologies to the member. I know she is from Etobicoke Centre. My apologies.

Miss Kinga Surma: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I am very pleased to join the debate today on Bill 56, the Keeping Students Safe on School Buses Act, that was put forward by the member for Don Valley West. I think we here can all agree, it sounds like, that the safety of our students in transport is really paramount, given that, as others have mentioned, over 830,000 students take the bus to school and back every day in Ontario. I want to thank the member for Don Valley West for putting this issue on the agenda.

1510

I want to start by saying clearly that those of us in the official opposition support any measure that will improve the safety of children on school buses. I am glad, again, that we have this opportunity to discuss this today.

As was reported by the Canadian Press, since 1984 there have been 23 deaths of schoolchildren involved in bus crashes, including one between 2008 and 2016, the most recent year available. There have also been thousands of injuries, injuries that could have been prevented had seat belts been employed. Really, if we can prevent even a single death or injury through smarter safety regulation based on the best evidence, then it is incumbent on all of us to help make that change.

As the member from Don Valley West noted, the issue of seat belts on school buses really took on a renewed urgency following the reporting that was done by CBC's The Fifth Estate in their October 14 episode, Unbuckled: School Bus Safety. I've been going over the transcripts of that documentary recently again to refresh my memory and understand a bit better what the issues were that they raised. I'm going to go through it again here.

The Fifth Estate's investigation revealed that the 2010 Transport Canada report, which was called, as has been previously mentioned, Optimizing the Protection of School Bus Passengers, had never been released to the public—quite a shocking revelation, because that report sought to identify and prioritize the principal causes of serious injuries that have been documented for school bus passengers involved in collisions between 1992 and 2010.

It makes several recommendations and calls for measures to improve safety on school buses. It noted that, as noted previously, compartmentalization, the long-held principle of school bus safety, was effective in most head-on collisions but offers very limited protection in side crashes and rollovers. Three-point seat belts, like the kind discussed in this bill, were put forward in the report as additional countermeasures because they have proven to be extremely effective at reducing injury and fatality rates in motor vehicle crashes.

Madam Speaker, the report by The Fifth Estate brought up some very serious questions about why Transport Canada, the federal ministry responsible for regulated bus safety standards, did not release their internal reports or act on other information that showed seat belts could save lives.

I thought I would mention here that there's a former MPP of this House, who is now the NDP MP for London—Fanshawe, Irene Mathyssen, who actually raised this issue in the House of Commons the day after the report was revealed by the CBC. She said this:

“Mr. Speaker, a 2010 Transport Canada report revealed that school buses not only failed safety tests but not enough was done to prevent serious injuries to our children. This information was kept from Canadians for almost 10 years. That means both Conservatives and Liberals failed to protect and inform families. In the meantime, Canadians put their kids on school buses to go to class, on field trips and day camps.” She said, “This problem needs to be fixed now,” and she asked the Liberal government what they were going to do to ensure safety on our school buses.

The Liberal federal transport minister, Marc Garneau, had, I think, avoided a few interviews with CBC at the time, and didn't seem to be aware of the report from his own ministry, but he has since asked the department to “take an in-depth look at the question of seat belts on buses, a fresh look based on all the evidence that has been collected since all the way back....” Just last week, the Bluewater District School Board wrote to Minister Garneau to encourage him to expedite that review.

Speaker, we don't know why that 2010 Transport Canada report never saw the light of day. Maybe some of the members opposite the aisle who were part of the Harper government could shed some light on that. But one thing is for sure: The governments in both Ottawa and here at Queen's Park have a responsibility to ensure the safety of our children. I believe that all of us, again, can agree on that.

This is going to mean rigorous research and testing at the federal level, as well as making sure that our provincial regulations keep pace with all available information, as this bill, I believe, attempts to do.

We also need to look at other jurisdictions. Ten US states require seat belts on school buses and four of them mandate the three-point belts. We need to look at the experience of those jurisdictions as we move forward.

Here in Ontario, a number of organizations, as pointed out by the member for Don Valley West, have come out in favour of seat belts on school buses, including the Canada Safety Council, the Ontario Safety League, parent groups and school trustees. There is a growing consensus, without doubt, that we need to do better than rely on 1984 research and we need to improve school bus safety.

The Ontario School Bus Association, for example, has long advocated for updated Canadian school bus occupant research and publicized data. They've said, “It is critical that the school bus industry and general public have full access to current data that outlines all factors to be

considered when exploring occupant restraints on school buses.”

I’m going to move on. I want to point out that there are a lot of details that will have to be worked out, should this bill pass—I think the member from Don Valley West noted that—and we will be supporting this bill. What worries me is that our current government is singularly focused on deregulation. That worries me because there are things happening already, like the rollback of workplace inspections that keep people safe on the job. It is definitely cause for concern that much of the regulations needed to make this bill effective would be left to that government. I hope that we’ll be able to work together to get this work done.

I also want to mention that in a school system, an educational system, which is quite starved for cash already, the process—this government is looking for billions of dollars in cuts right now, 4% of the education budget cut. We know there are cost implications with this bill, so I will want to see, absolutely, a commitment from this government on how this will be funded.

Millions of parents across Ontario wave goodbye to their kids each morning. Increasingly many of them do, because they’re going greater distances as some of our rural schools have been closed. We know that school buses in Ontario are safe, generally, but there’s so much more that we can do. It is important to our child’s education. Kids and parents have waited long enough.

We’re very proud to be able to support this bill as it moves forward.

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

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I’m really proud today to stand in support of Bill 56. I have the great privilege of representing the riding of Orléans. As I’m speaking to say “aye,” I would like to also say that the members from Ottawa–Vanier, Scarborough–Guildwood, Ottawa South and Don Valley East are all supporting this wonderful bill—

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: And Thunder Bay.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: —and Thunder Bay. Basically, our caucus is supporting this bill.

Vous savez, à Orléans, c’est une population qui grandit. On a doublé au sein de la population depuis que j’y ai aménagé. Je suis arrivée à la fin des années 1990, début de 2000. On était environ 60 000 personnes, et maintenant on est plus de 126 000 habitants. Un fait très important, c’est que non seulement y a-t-il plus d’habitants, mais on a plus de familles et d’enfants qui ont besoin du système scolaire et du système d’autobus à tous les jours pour se rendre à leurs écoles. Il y a beaucoup d’écoles qui ont été bâties dans les dernières années, et on en est fiers, mais on doit maintenir la sécurité de nos enfants.

Je suis aussi une maman. J’ai une fille de 24 ans, qui célébrait son anniversaire le 27 novembre dernier. Lorsque Monica partait, chaque matin, il y avait toujours ce sentiment en moi qui me disait : « J’espère qu’elle va se rendre à l’école de façon sécuritaire. »

J’ai beaucoup, beaucoup d’égard pour nos jeunes, pour les transporteurs et pour les conducteurs d’autobus. Mais ce qui est important, c’est le fait que maintenant, grâce à la nouvelle révélation de ce rapport, qui existe depuis 2010, qui malheureusement n’avait pas été publié et partagé avec nous tous—je dois dire merci à l’émission « Fifth Estate » qui a eu vent de cette étude.

1520

Cela a fait un changement. Ce que ça nous dit c’est qu’en 1984, d’après la dernière étude, ce n’était peut-être pas la bonne façon de procéder. Aujourd’hui, avec l’information que nous avons, nous devons regarder à améliorer la sécurité de nos enfants dans les autobus scolaires.

Pour moi, c’était important d’apporter ma voix à ce projet de loi parce que, comme je disais, à titre de maman—et je parlais avec ma collègue d’Ottawa–Vanier, qui a eu quatre enfants. Elle disait que tous les matins, elle était toujours un petit peu hésitante. Elle avait peur de voir ses jeunes—parce que dans nos autos, chaque jour, qu’est-ce qu’on se fait dire lorsqu’on commence à conduire? Qu’il faut mettre notre ceinture de sécurité.

Je pense qu’avec l’information qui a été partagée avec nous maintenant, il faut se responsabiliser. Je pense que ce que la députée provinciale de Don Valley West nous dit, c’est qu’il faut collaborer. C’est certain que Transport Canada a un rôle à jouer et que le ministre fédéral a un rôle à jouer, mais je pense que pour l’Ontario, on est fier d’être toujours un chef de file. Je dois vous dire que depuis les derniers quatre ans, l’Ontario a toujours été un chef de file.

Ce que j’espère, c’est que le gouvernement actuel veut demeurer chef de file. C’est pour ça qu’ils vont encourager la discussion avec le gouvernement fédéral, les pourvoyeurs et les organisations pour vraiment structurer une belle discussion qui ferait en sorte qu’on améliorerait la situation pour nos enfants lorsqu’ils prennent nos autobus scolaires.

Donc, pour conclure, parce que j’ai juste cinq minutes, madame la Présidente : comme parlementaires, parents ou grands-parents, je pense qu’on a une responsabilité de prendre toutes les mesures possibles pour s’assurer qu’un élève ne risque pas de se blesser, ou tristement de perdre la vie, à bord d’un autobus scolaire.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Speaker, it’s really interesting. I’ve been in this Legislature now for seven years. To hear comments from the NDP with regard to slamming our government on what we’re attempting to do and trying to do because we’ve been faced with a \$15-billion deficit is a little bit rich, to the point where I often would think that the NDP are so negative that they would demand a bacteria count on the milk of human kindness.

Having said that, I listened to the former Premier, the member from Don Valley West, with regard to her bill—and it’s an honourable bill; it truly is.

Many years ago—and to the member—you might remember a fellow by the name of Bill Dana. He was a US comedian, and he was known as José Jiménez. He did a

commercial where he was actually sitting on a stool, and he was talking about seat belts and how important—that was just a single-strap seat belt back then, and they were trying to get people to use their seat belts. After he did his advocacy for the seat belt, he went to stand up, only to find that there was a seat belt attached to him on that stool. Then he says, “The National Safety Council, they think of everything.”

To the member from Don Valley West: Well, you know what? You had 15 years to get this right. My concern is, I remember that I put forth a private member’s bill with regard to school bus safety, and that school bus safety was installing cameras on school buses to catch blow-bys. Listen, our government—and I know you are as well, to the member—is very concerned about the safety of our children. We’re with you 100% on that. We are. But you know what? If it was such a priority, why was it that we had to scratch, claw and dig hard to try and get the member’s bill with regard to school bus cameras to capture the blow-bys? We’ve seen startling evidence of other cameras catching cars passing school buses with the lights flashing and the stop arm out, putting children in harm’s way, yet they dragged their feet. The previous government dragged their feet on that particular bill. They dragged it so hard, and then, finally, they decided, “Okay, you know what? We’re going to put that bill in another bill.” The bill that they put that in was the cannabis bill. Cannabis and school bus safety and cameras. I thought, “What have they been smoking?”

Now we go further and we talk about three-point seat belts in buses. You talk about school buses—and I get it; okay? However, we think about how earlier this year there was a horrific crash out west involving the Humboldt Broncos. Now, it wasn’t a school bus, it was a coach bus. Would seat belts have saved the lives of some of those people? To the member from Don Valley West, I think you would agree, if there were seat belts on that bus it might have saved some lives because, if I recall, 16 died and another 13 were seriously injured on that bus. It was absolutely awful.

So we look at this and we say that you had lots of time to get it done before, and now you’re putting it in. You dragged your feet on the—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I’m sorry to interrupt the cross-talk, but I will remind the member to direct his remarks to and through the Chair, and I will remind all members to come to order and be respectful while the member has the opportunity to speak. Thank you.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you.

Again, we want to be able to work with parents and we also want to be able to work with the student transportation sector to get it right. We do want to build a stronger, better Ontario for all of our students.

The member talked about the cost involved. I believe her numbers are somewhere between \$10,000 and \$15,000 to retrofit the 20,000 school buses that carry over 800,000 students per day throughout the province of Ontario. Well,

you can do the math on that. She also indicated that by 2025, I think it was, or some number in there, to purchase new school buses, the cost would be between \$5,000 and \$7,000 per bus. Okay, I get that. My concern is, who’s going to pay for that as well?

Now, can you put a price on student safety? I know the member commented on that earlier, and the answer to that is, well, no, you can’t. I get that. My children are grown, but I have grandchildren, and all of us in here either have grandchildren or children who would be, in fact, affected by that.

Again, I think that the former Liberal government—and I want to talk about something else, Speaker. There was an article by the CBC that the member is quoted in, and in the article it says, “A 2010 Transport Canada report” found “school buses ‘failed’ safety tests and did not do enough to prevent ‘serious injuries’....” It was not made public until the CBC asked for it in September of this year, yet the study was in 2010. We know who was in power in 2010. My question is, why didn’t they ask for that particular report while they were in power? Why did it have to be the CBC to bring that forward? They could have done it, but they have their reasons and we may not know what their reasons are. Again, I stand here questioning the real motive.

I want to reiterate that the Doug Ford PC government stands behind our children; safety is first and foremost. Again, we’ll always stand up for student safety, front-line workers and Ontario small businesses.

1530

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I’m happy to have the opportunity today to speak to this bill. As the parent of a kid in preschool who takes the school bus for field trips, it is a point of concern for me personally as well, as I know it is for the families of the 800,000 children who travel on school buses daily to and from school.

In my riding of Parkdale–High Park, people are passionate about social issues and about social change. One such constituent is Lise Anne Gougeon. Lise Anne has made it her mission to ensure that no child is hurt on a school bus and that no family suffers the loss of their child just because they weren’t wearing a seat belt on the school bus.

Lise Anne reached out to me. She educated me on the importance of having seat belts, although as a parent, I already knew that and supported it. So before I go on further with my remarks, I would like to thank Lise Anne and recognize her advocacy work on this issue.

Lise Anne is a parent in one of our local public schools. She has personally pledged to make the effort to look into school bus safety on behalf of the community and parents in Parkdale–High Park. I remember that when Lise Anne came to my office, I was completely blown away and so impressed by all of the work that she did. She put together statistics and she found reports, one of which cited that it had been known since the 1980s, when seven children died

in a school bus crash, that six of them would have survived had they worn a seat belt on the school bus.

Lise Anne had even researched the procurement process of busing contracts, regulations related to bus safety and information pertaining to the funding of school transportation. In our conversations, she wrote to me later saying that all of these areas provided an opportunity to work toward changes needed to install seat belts and to keep kids safe. I would like to thank her for all of her work that she has done.

In one of the backgrounders that Lise Anne had prepared, she outlined that decision-makers at each level need to work together, as this is not only a provincial issue; there is a federal component as well. We also need to be working together with our local school boards on this. It was a great pleasure to work with Lise Anne on this issue, and I'm very, very glad to see this issue move forward.

As for the bill itself: Absolutely, the safety of our children should be top priority. I commend the member from Don Valley West for bringing this forward. I know we've heard a little bit in this House about, "Why hasn't this been brought forward?", but I'd like to say that it's here now, so let's work on it. Let's move forward. It's better late than never. In fact, now that it's here, there's a greater urgency to ensure that the bill gets implemented as soon as possible.

I'd like to offer some feedback, if I may. I know that Lise Anne and others share this as well. In the bill, there are the timelines of 2020 and 2025. I would like to say: Why wait? Why wait seven years? Seven years is a very long time. As the member mentioned, it's seven years of knowing what the risks are. It's seven years of 18,000 school buses on the road and 800,000 children on those buses. Even if we can prevent one collision, if we could act sooner, I think that would be absolutely needed.

I know I'm running out of time, so I will just move along and say that, absolutely, I fully support this bill. There are a few things that we need to work out regarding the implementation. I am concerned, given that it's this government that will be in charge of the implementation, and so far, when it comes to children—like the action around the cutting of the provincial advocate for children—we've seen that this government has not made them a priority. But I look forward to working together with you to make sure that this is mandatory in all of our school buses in our province.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Don Valley West has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to thank the member for Etobicoke Centre, the member for Davenport, the member for Orléans, the member for Chatham-Kent-Leamington and the member for Parkdale-High Park for their comments.

I want to just pick up where the member for Parkdale-High Park left off, and that's on, "Why wait?" Madam Speaker, if this can be done faster, we should do it faster. I was trying to be realistic in my conversations with the school bus operators and some of the people on the front

line about the need for a transition period. I know that there will be a need for some time, so that was why I built in those dates, but if we can go faster, let's go faster.

Madam Speaker, there is an urgency associated with this issue because of new information. I say to the member for Chatham-Kent-Leamington: I debated in the dark of the morning when I first heard the CBC report and my stomach sank. I thought, "Why didn't I have that information in 2010 when I was the Minister of Transportation? Why didn't Transport Canada send that report to every Minister of Transportation across the country?" It was at that moment that I said that I couldn't have known that that report existed, but I know now, and so that's why I'm bringing forward this legislation.

But I did debate, because I thought, "If Kathleen Wynne puts her name on that legislation, does that mean it's the kiss of death for the legislation?"

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Yes.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: Yes, according to the member for Chatham-Kent-Leamington, that's the case. But I implore the government: Put this idea in any legislation you want. It doesn't matter. Remove my name from it. Expunge my name. It doesn't matter. This is about children's safety.

We have more information now than we had in 2010. We have more information now than we had eight months ago. So let's move on this, regardless of party affiliation. I can guarantee you that if I'd had this information in 2010, we would have already been there.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

SAFEGUARDING OUR INFORMATION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LA PROTECTION DE NOS RENSEIGNEMENTS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We will deal first with ballot item number 37, standing in the name of Mr. Crawford.

Mr. Crawford has moved second reading of Bill 55, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to the disclosure of confidential information. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): To which committee, please?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The bill will be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. That's agreed? Okay.

ORGANIC PRODUCTS ACT, 2018
LOI DE 2018 SUR LES PRODUITS
BIOLOGIQUES

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. McDonell has moved second reading of Bill 54, An Act to regulate the labelling and certification of organic products. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The bill will be referred to the Committee of the Whole.

KEEPING STUDENTS SAFE
ON SCHOOL BUSES ACT (HIGHWAY
TRAFFIC AMENDMENT), 2018
LOI DE 2018 RENFORÇANT LA SÉCURITÉ
DES ÉLÈVES DANS LES AUTOBUS
SCOLAIRES (MODIFICATION
DU CODE DE LA ROUTE)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Wynne has moved second reading of Bill 56, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of seat belts on

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Returning to the member: The bill will be referred to which committee?

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: Social policy, please, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The bill will be referred, then, to the committee on social policy. Is it agreed? Okay.

Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: I recognize you, too, Speaker. It's great to see you. I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

The motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until Monday, December 3, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1540.

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 Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
 Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
 Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short
 Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	
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, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Downey, Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	
Dunlop, Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Orléans	
Lecce, Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa- Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (IND)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Stan Cho, Jill Dunlop
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Stephen Lecce, Gila Martow
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Stephen Crawford
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stan Cho
Stephen Crawford, Doug Downey
Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
Jeremy Roberts, Sandy Shaw
Donna Skelly
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Dave Smith
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Jessica Bell, Chris Glover
Christine Hogarth, Logan Kanapathi
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Dave Smith, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Parm Gill
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Jane McKenna
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Robert Bailey, Rima Berns-McGown
Michael Coteau, Mike Harris
Faisal Hassan, Jane McKenna
Christina Maria Mitas, Sam Oosterhoff
Amanda Simard, Gurratan Singh
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler
Toby Barrett, Catherine Fife
Goldie Ghamari, Jim McDonell
Norman Miller, Suze Morrison
Michael Parsa, Peggy Sattler
Kinga Surma
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Randy Hillier
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kaleed Rasheed
Will Bouma, Paul Calandra
Lorne Coe, Randy Hillier
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Présidente: Nina Tangri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Deepak Anand
Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Select Committee on Financial Transparency / Comité spécial de la transparence financière

Chair / Président: Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Doug Downey
Roman Baber, Doug Downey
Catherine Fife, Robin Martin
Lindsey Park, Ross Romano
Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Sandy Shaw
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim