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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 11 December 2025

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 11 décembre 2025

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Let us pray.

Prières.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): And now a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

KEEPING CRIMINALS BEHIND BARS ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 VISANT À MAINTENIR LES CRIMINELS DERRIÈRE LES BARREAUX

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 9, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act to enact the Constable Joe MacDonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund Act, 2025 and to amend various other Acts / Projet de loi 75, Loi édictant la Loi de 2025 sur le Fonds Joe MacDonald de bourses d'études à l'intention des survivants d'agents de sécurité publique et modifiant diverses autres lois.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: It is an honour to rise in this House to speak, on behalf of the good people of Toronto Centre, on a bill that is entitled Bill 75, Keeping Criminals Behind Bars—a headline-catching title, as many of the government bills tend to be.

This morning, I'll be sharing my time with the members from Oshawa and St. Catharines.

This bill with its catchy title is one that I'm eager to debate because the issue of community and public safety is so important—and one that every single one of us is tasked with thinking about and then giving thoughtful action to those concerns.

We want every Ontarian to feel safe in their community, and I mean every single person—from the elementary school child to the grandfather on their way to the masjid; to students at Jewish day schools; to young people on their way home from their first day of work; or a woman in her home, trapped with her abusive partner. But this also should extend to the concept of safety, the action of safety—to those who are using drugs; who are unhoused; who are transitioning out of incarceration; and people who are currently in provincial detention, oftentimes in jails.

This government has a responsibility to keep Ontarians safe, and they do this by ensuring the justice and corrections systems are properly funded and run—something the

government fails to do year after year, according to the accountability officers of this province.

To truly address community safety, this government must invest in a multi-pronged approach—something that this government has failed to do, despite being in power for eight years.

Upstream community supports ensure the diversion of unsafe and criminal activity. During the IPV committee, we heard from organizations about how positive parenting programs, emotional regulation instruction in schools, and after-school programs all reduce community violence. And we have known for years that increasing OW and ODSP rates above the poverty line would massively increase well-being and decrease exploitive crime.

There are many other things that reduce criminality: getting people off the streets and out of encampments, with accessible, safe, affordable housing; adequate treatment beds for mental health and addictions, instead of the months-long wait-list that we now have—and that wait-list is even longer if you happen to be in northern Ontario or rural communities. We need more supportive housing to help people who cannot live independently, so that they can stay housed. OHIP-covered mental health supports must be expanded to ensure that that service is available to people who are in crisis, before they harm themselves or others.

I'm describing services that make up the social safety net of Ontario. And I'm just scratching the surface.

What I'm saying is that the social determinants of health are exactly the same as the social determinants of safety.

The CBC published an article on Monday about the trauma of jails and the horrific overcrowding that is there. They interviewed a formerly incarcerated woman named Sue. She spoke about how traumatic her time in jail was, but also about the fact that it opened doors to services that then changed her life. These services allowed her to graduate from high school, receive addiction treatment, access affordable housing. However, she wondered why she had to go to jail and endure those horrific conditions in jail before she was eligible for those services.

If this government really wants to keep criminals behind bars, then they must invest in and fix the broken courts system to speed up access to trial. After all, you cannot get a guilty conviction if you cannot get someone to trial.

Fixing the courts and clearing the backlog reduces the time that people are in remand—and right now, 80% of men in detention are in remand; 85% of incarcerated women are legally innocent and held in pretrial deten-

tion—where they are traumatized in overcrowded and unsafe jails, increasing the likelihood of them creating new, unsafe situations.

Fixing the courts is what the government needs to do—if the government were serious about public safety—to create more jail space for people who truly pose threats to safety to be held in remand, instead of being out on bail without supervision or any compliance enforcement measures. Fixing the courts is how you keep people in Ontario safe, and you do this to reduce overcrowding, which is proven to create extraordinary stress and horrific violence in jails. You fix the courts to ensure there are fewer cases being thrown out due to unconstitutional delays, so that guilty violent offenders are in jail and off the streets.

The government's tough-on-crime rhetoric is hollow after eight years in power, as its underfunding of the corrections system has caused long-term damage, high burnout and low morale among corrections staff.

The Solicitor General talked about how he was good at listening—I agree; he is—but he hasn't been good at acting on those words that have been given to him by OPSEU and the corrections officers.

Fixing the jails will actually increase safety for everyone there, and you do this by investing in employees and not just bringing in contract guards. You fix the jails by investing in sufficient staff to meet prison needs, including for rehabilitation programs. You fix the jails with investments in adequate staff to keep contraband, including illegal drugs and weapons, out of our jails—something that has been pointed out by the media through their investigations.

Global News published an article on Monday quoting Norman Taylor, an expert on deaths in Ontario jails. Mr. Taylor said, "It's a broken system and the current government lacks the will even to try to repair it. We've got jails that are so crowded people are sleeping three to a two-bed cell, one on the floor, all their programming is cancelled, all their access to health care is limited. About the only thing that works well is contraband. Somehow that flows like gravy."

Well, the opposition is calling on the Premier to take off his conductor hat and stop his gravy train.

He can do this by shortening hiring times. I have heard from corrections workers that hiring takes so long that many applicants have found another job by the time an offer goes out.

You do this by investing in treatment-based jail programs where incarcerated people who are truly committed to making change in their lives are given the programming to do this—they help build up the accountability, and the support is there when they are out.

We used to have programs in Ontario just like the ones that I'm describing. Before COVID-19, these programs helped serious offenders—including those who were charged with the sexual abuse of minors, serious drug charges, and assaults—find healing and change for their lives in a manner that was sustained. These programs not only reduced recidivism and therefore crowding in our jails, but more importantly, they reduced violence and the

heartache of victims and their families. However, due to overcrowding across the system, these programs are no longer operational because the beds are needed for general population. However, this is extremely short-sighted on behalf of this Conservative government, because they're not looking at the life cycle of the system.

0910

Their tough-on-crime talking point rings rather hollow when 22 out of the 24 facilities are over capacity. OPSEU-represented corrections officers, who have been struggled under the weight of this underfunding, have been raising the alarm to this government for years. Half of the lock-downs—which is a tool that corrections officers are forced to use increasingly, more and more, along with segregation—are because of the chronic underfunding by this government. You cannot keep Ontarians safe—including those corrections officers—when you don't invest in the system and properly staff up. We have 10,800 inmates who are sleeping on 8,500 beds. Imagine what that looks like.

This government is talking about changing the way it treats bail—again. The challenge that we are seeing is one where the government doesn't admit that there is a problem that they can control, while they're always pointing the finger to the federal government. There is a responsibility that is split here, but when it comes to bail supervision, it is right here in the province of Ontario—and that means it's this government's responsibility.

The bail and court systems have been underfunded and uncoordinated for years, under both the previous Liberal government and this Conservative government. The legal community, including judges, has been panning the government for their failure to address the backlog, leading to the serious offences being dropped or stayed because of unconstitutional delays.

You have all heard about the Jordan rule. A significant ruling in 2016 by the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Jordan* required that if a case is not disposed within 18 months, for cases tried in Ontario court, or 30 months, for cases tried in Superior Court, it is presumed that the delay is unreasonable, and the crowns have to contest the presumption and prove otherwise or the charge will be stayed—legal proceedings against the accused are discontinued.

We are seeing record-high unconstitutional delays in access to trial. This government has no leg to stand on when they talk about how they are the only ones being tough on crime, when they're being so dumb on crime.

Crown prosecutors are carrying unrealistically high caseloads—they've been cited: A single crown prosecutor carries 100 to 200 caseloads. They don't have the time to properly assess risk during bail court. Everyone is rushed. When they get there, oftentimes it's understaffed in the courts, so they can't proceed. And this is happening more and more, with alarming frequency.

The Auditor General has indicated that an overburdened workload is a persistent challenge and often considered unmanageable, contributing to these system delays.

Currently, most of the bail granted is tied to six to seven strict conditions, according to the 2019 legal aid report, something that the associate minister denied when he spoke to the media, saying that the bail conditions are none, that everybody is just walking out—slandering what is happening in the courts and how the judges and the justices of the peace are actually giving careful deliberation.

Another serious problem with Ontario's bail system is the government's underfunding of community-based bail supervision and verification programs, which are very effective in providing case management and help with supports for those who need access to housing and mental health and addiction services.

The John Howard Society and the Council of Elizabeth Fry Societies of Ontario have been advocating for funding and support for the bail supervision and verification programs for years. They have warned the government that the demand for this service is greater than their capacity to deliver the service.

Residential bail bed programs reduce pretrial detention pressures and lead to more successful monitoring and individual outcomes. But there are only a handful of these type of bail beds in Ontario—when you compare it to the number of people who are homeless and being discharged from the corrections system without a pathway to housing. It's no wonder that the system here is so circular. And you are calling your own system a catch-and-release—a system which you've designed, underfunded and refused to fix. And every problem I'm describing is significantly higher in rural and northern communities—something, again, that the government is refusing to acknowledge.

Sureties are not bail supervision professionals. Sureties are people such as parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles. These are the people the government has been offloading their responsibility to, to keep communities safe. They're doing this offloading onto private citizens. When asked whether their ability to pay will impact whether someone is released on bail, the Attorney General couldn't provide a yes-or-no answer. This means that the Attorney General is unwilling to acknowledge if someone's inability to pay is going to create that problem for the surety.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association had this to say: "The Ontario government's proposal to require cash bail creates two tiers of justice: one for the rich, and the other for the rest of us. Innocent, but can't afford to pay to be released? You are stuck in jail for years until you can clear your name in court, even if you would" and could comply "with all your bail conditions. This proposal appears to apply to everyone, including first-time offenders with no criminal record."

The Attorney General said this about Bill 75, when asked a question about a person's ability to pay: "I don't know if it will have an effect on whether someone gets bail or not." I would imagine that if you were the Attorney General, you would know the answer to such a question before tabling such legislation.

The use of sureties allows the province to create additional burdens on communities and families. They're supposed to know where the accused is at all times. They're

supposed to ensure that you can get them to trial—to get them to work, and accompany them outside of their residence.

Imagine if your grandmother was all of a sudden responsible for knowing where you are and what you're doing. How would that impact her? How would that impact your relationship with her?

There are so many challenges here in Bill 75, a bill that must go to committee, so we can hear from the legal observers and experts; a bill that should not be fast-tracked or time-allocated—which this government has made a horrible habit of, as we have seen them do so with 12 previous pieces of legislation, all bypassing public input.

I'm going to now speak about the animal research piece in this bill.

I am happy to hear the government is making changes to the Animals for Research Act. This is good. We've all heard the stories about those dogs in London being subject to very painful and invasive procedures, all in the name of research. I look forward to this bill going to committee. This bill cannot bypass committee, where we will have the time and schedule to hear from experts and witnesses who will give us their best advice to strengthen and improve and correct this bill where necessary and needed. If this government bypasses committee and truncates our speaking time, they are going to be contributing to the unsafe conditions of Ontarians by bringing forth solutions that don't work.

Animal Alliance of Canada, who I have been in frequent conversation with about this topic, when it comes to animals and research, have praised some of this government's changes in the bill—I do, as well. We have to talk about things that are good. But they also raised concerns about the massive overreliance on the to-be-determined regulations. Simply, once again, this government is acting in secrecy. They're planning to do something after this bill is passed, and we have no way of knowing what they are thinking. They already know what they want to do; they're just not telling us. We don't have the opportunity to debate regulations in advance of them becoming public.

So show us your cards. Tell us what you want to do with this bill, truly, in regulations, because we know, in this House—even if those who are watching this debate don't know—that regulation is where a lot of this work and implementation takes place.

0920

We've seen this government, at different times, willing to move amendments—and I would say those amendments have to be done in collaboration. Enough of this government taking it upon themselves to do everything only based on their radical ideology and unwillingness to co-operate with the opposition, the third party, and the independent members. Every single one of us has something to bring to this important conversation. I really hope that this government is going to change course in the new year and bring everyone together, because public safety is one of the most important issues that we have responsibility over in Ontario.

I can tell you right now, this bill needs a lot of work, a lot of correction, and if you're not willing to do it, then the same dangerous offenders you talk about are going to be back on the streets despite your hollow tough-on-crime rhetoric.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member did indicate they were sharing their time. I recognize the member from St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will be sharing my time, also, with the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane.

It's always a pleasure to be able to rise in this House and speak on behalf of the residents of St. Catharines and—personally, with Bill 75—a lot of Ontarians.

I rise today to speak on Bill 75, the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act, a broad piece of legislation touching multiple areas of public safety in Ontario. As the shadow minister responsible for the Solicitor General, it is my responsibility to examine what this bill will actually mean for communities, for justice, and for public safety—not just what the government claims it will do.

A core duty of government is to protect people and maintain reliable public services. That includes our courts, our emergency services, our roads, our public spaces, and the supports that prevent harm before it occurs.

Ontarians deserve to feel safe walking home at night, driving to work, cycling with their children, or sleeping in their own homes.

But safety is never the result of a single law. True safety requires stable housing, accessible mental health services, addiction treatment, functioning courts, timely bail hearings, adequate police staffing, and community-based prevention programs. It requires a government willing to look honestly at what is failing and correct it—not just react with headlines and slogans.

Speaker, Bill 75 attempts to touch many areas: animal research, bail reform, dangerous driving penalties, coroner processes, scholarships for survivors of fallen officers, and record checks. Some of these measures have merit. But merit alone is not enough to fix the systems that the public depends on.

Speaker, the people of Ontario tell us the same things everywhere we go. They want confidence that if they report a crime, a court will actually hear the case in a very timely manner. They want to know that they can escape violence at home and get support. They want to know that their loved ones won't overdose alone on a sidewalk. They also want to know that homelessness is not a life sentence. Above all, they want public safety that works for all Ontarians.

So when a government introduces a bill called Keeping Criminals Behind Bars, the public rightly asks, "Will it actually improve safety, or is this another attempt to distract from the systemic failures this government has ignored for years and the previous government ignored for years?"

Schedule 1 restricts the breeding of cats and dogs for research and prohibits certain invasive research practices, with exemptions.

No one wants to see animals harmed unnecessarily. Recent reports about dogs being experimented on in London disturbed the public and raised important ethical questions.

There are strong reasons to scrutinize animal research. But this legislation has significant loopholes. While it bans breeding for research within Ontario, it still allows animals to be imported from outside the province. It still allows animal care committees to approve invasive research under broad criteria. In other words, we may not be ending questionable practices—just moving them kind of out of sight and behind closed doors.

Advocacy groups like the Canadian Institute for Animal-Free Science have said this bill could be a meaningful step, but only if it closes loopholes and genuinely shifts research practices, rather than creating symbolic change without real effect.

Schedule 2 introduces upfront cash bail, a dramatic change from the current promise-to-pay model used across most of Canada.

No one disputes that dangerous individuals should not be released. Public safety depends on accurate, timely and fair bail decisions. But Ontario's bail system is in complete crisis, and this bill does not do anything to fix the actual crisis.

Bail hearings must occur within 24 hours, under the Criminal Code. Yet, across Ontario, this legal requirement is routinely violated. People wait days, sometimes weeks for a hearing. In one case in 2021, two people waited 12 days and the proceedings were thrown out entirely. If our courts cannot meet constitutional timelines now, how can they possibly administer a new cash-based system fairly?

Here is the uncomfortable truth: If you are wealthy, even accused of a serious offence, you can pay to walk free. If you are low income, you could sit in jail for months upon months awaiting trial, regardless of risk. That is not safety. That is inequality.

Ontario already over-relies on sureties more than most provinces. And this bill expands that reliance, with wage garnishment and property seizure if a surety cannot pay. Often, sureties are parents, siblings or grandparents stepping up because they don't want to see their loved ones jailed before trial or for a length of time.

Imagine a grandmother serving as a surety for her grandson, now at risk of losing her home. What exactly does that achieve for public safety, may I ask?

Experts have told this government what is needed:

- fix your bail courts;
- fund legal aid;
- expand community-based supervision;
- invest in housing, mental health care, and addictions supports; and
- address the root causes of crime.

Cash bail does none of these things; instead, it risks increasing remand populations, worsening overcrowding, and deepening the very problems our justice system already cannot handle.

Speaker, this government calls it the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act, but what it actually does is keep poor people behind bars while those with money walk free.

Cash bail doesn't make us safer; fixing bail courts does, funding legal aid does, and making sure people get timely hearings does.

Right now, dangerous offenders can slip through the cracks while first time, low-risk individuals sit in overcrowded jails simply because their families cannot afford thousands of dollars. This is not justice. This is a two-tiered system, and Ontarians deserve much better.

I'm going to touch on schedule 3. It codifies an existing scholarship fund to support the children of police and public safety officers who die in the line of duty. Supporting these families is an honourable goal, and I hope the government will continue to expand eligibility and invest in the well-being of those who sacrifice so much for our country.

0930

Schedule 5 amends the Highway Traffic Act to introduce tougher penalties for dangerous driving, including indefinite licence suspensions for those convicted of dangerous driving causing death. On the surface, this sounds like progress. But these provisions mirror those in last year's Bill 197, if we all do recall—provisions that have still not been proclaimed into force.

Government has to pay attention to the bills they pass so quickly, so that we can make sure—dangerous driving and road safety is one up front.

Speaker, how can Ontarians trust a new set of penalties when the government won't implement the ones they've already passed?

At the same time, the government continues a pandemic-era policy allowing drivers charged with serious offences to plead down to lesser non-criminal offences. This policy was meant to ease court backlogs when courts were partially closed during the pandemic. The pandemic is long over, but the policy remains. The result: Drivers responsible for fatal collisions can evade criminal consequences. Meanwhile, chronic court delays are so severe that sexual assault cases and other serious cases are just being thrown out. Announcing new penalties in this context is more performance, I feel, than policy.

And the government still hasn't proclaimed the driver's license suspension provisions for auto-theft convictions included in Bill 197—again, tough talk, little action.

Speaker, the government keeps announcing tough penalties for dangerous driving, yet the same government refuses to proclaim the laws it already passed. Last year, they promised indefinite suspensions for impaired drivers who kill someone. Those measures still aren't in force. They promised stronger consequences for auto theft—still not in force. And now they're back with more headlines without any action.

Families who have lost loved ones don't need political theatre. They need a government that actually implements its own laws.

Ontario deserves real road safety, not recycled announcements.

Speaker, schedule 5 also expands police powers to impose immediate roadside suspensions and impoundments for suspected dangerous or careless driving. Immediate consequences can be helpful tools, but only when paired with due process and consistent enforcement.

Without broader reforms ensuring meaningful accountability for fatal serious-injury collisions, these changes risk becoming more symbolic additions to a system that already fails way too many victims.

Advocates for road safety, active transportation, and vulnerable road users have long asked for comprehensive reform. The Ontario NDP has tabled strong proposals—Bill 40, Bill 47—to ensure proportionate consequences even when charges are pled down. Yet, the government continues to opt for piecemeal, headline-driven amendments instead of a real strategy.

Schedule 5 does increase fines for driving while suspended, extends impoundments, strengthens penalties for commercial drivers, and limits in-vehicle device use. These incremental improvements are fine. However, they do not address the core problem: the justice system's failure to deliver timely, meaningful accountability.

Schedule 7—I've got to touch on service animals. Schedule 7 increases penalties for harming police service and other service animals, an important step. Service animals are vital to policing, search and rescue, and disability support. But higher fines only matter, again, if enforcement and prosecution resources exist. Without proper resourcing, even the best-intentioned penalties risk becoming empty threats.

Speaker, after reviewing Bill 75, it is quite clear that while the bill contains some positive elements—such as enhanced protections for service animals, codifying survivor scholarships, and steps towards improved animal research oversight—many of its central claims do not withstand scrutiny.

Public safety cannot be strengthened while our bail courts collapse under delays, while duty counsel is overwhelmed, while timelines are routinely breached, and while the government refuses to fund the very programs that reduce reoffending: bail verification, supervision, supportive housing, mental health care, addiction treatment, and so much more.

I want to give you an example, Speaker, from Niagara, about our bail. In Niagara, police routinely bring accused persons to the St. Catharines bail court expecting a same-day hearing. But because of chronic backlogs, duty counsel shortages, and lack of courtroom resources, many accused are told, "There is no time for your hearing today." One Niagara resident charged with a low-level, non-violent offence waited three full days in custody before a bail hearing, despite having a stable address in Niagara, a job lined up, and a surety—which was his mother—who was ready to pick him up. Under Bill 75, that same person would now also need cash up front to be released—something a lot of people across Ontario and Niagara are struggling with is cash at hand; everyone is seeing things rising, from the cost of living to food to your

rent—something that this individual's family simply could not afford.

Here's what that means for the average person in Niagara. A low-risk, first-time accused person sits in the Niagara Detention Centre, taking up a scarce correctional bed. His first job is lost, which increases instability and the risk of reoffending. Meanwhile, the courtroom backlog worsens because cash bail adds more administrative steps instead of reducing them. And none of this makes Niagara Falls, Welland, Port Colborne or St. Catharines any safer.

Speaker, Bill 75 doesn't keep dangerous people behind bars; it keeps poor people behind bars. It keeps people waiting, because this government refuses to fix Ontario's broken bail courts.

I often hear that the official opposition want a catch-and-release system. In my personal opinion, if the government wants to end catch-and-release, they should fix the bail courts. Ontario can't properly assess risk when bail hearings don't happen on time. Fix the system before making families pay for a government's failure. It's so important. It's important for communities like Niagara. It makes justice slower, not faster, and safety worse, not better.

So make sure that this Bill 75 is keeping the dangerous people behind bars and not keeping poor people behind bars.

Speaker, within Bill 75, we cannot claim to be tough on crime while refusing to proclaim existing road safety laws, allowing serious driving offences to be pled down, and permitting court backlogs to grow so severe that serious charges are being thrown out. We have seen this across Ontario.

High-risk offenders' charges—serious charges—are being thrown out of our criminal system. Ontarians deserve better. They deserve a justice system that works—one that is timely, fair, effective and adequately resourced. They deserve a government that does more than recycle announcements and create new slogans. They deserve a system focused on real safety, not symbolic measures.

There are positive elements, as I highlighted, in Bill 75, but there are also significant gaps. The residents, the stakeholders and the experts definitely look forward to this government travelling this to committee so that we can have a healthy debate—so that we can make sure, if you are a criminal at high risk, that you are doing the time that you need to do.

0940

Also, we need a government that's willing to make amendments to make this a strong, strong bill.

I look forward to continuing the debate at committee as we weigh those strengths, those shortcomings, and work together towards legislation that delivers the safety Ontario expects and deserves. We believe our streets, our communities and the places we work should be safe for all.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member indicated that she was sharing her time. I recognize the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to speak in the Legislature, not only on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming-Cochrane, but also on behalf of the official opposition.

I'd like to thank my colleagues the shadow ministers for the Solicitor General and the Attorney General for providing a very good overview of the details of the bill.

Although this is a place where we often disagree, I'd like to start with the things that I think we can all agree on.

The working title of this bill, Keeping Criminals Behind Bars—I think it's not a big stretch to say that we all agree with this. Criminals should pay for their crimes; I think we can all agree with this. Do all Ontarians deserve to feel safe? I think we can all agree with this.

Certainly—I know from personal experience—people on the highway deserve to know that everyone who has an Ontario driver's licence can actually drive the vehicle that they—and that's something the government is responsible for, and that's something, I think, we can all agree on.

We're actually encouraged that the government continues to bring forward bills in their attempt to keep Ontarians safer. We may question how effective those bills are—and we will talk about that a little bit later on. But I have a good working relationship and a personal relationship with the Solicitor General and the Attorney General, and I truly believe they want to make the people in this province feel safe—I think we all do, as we've already stated. But there are a few things on which we disagree—and vehemently.

Talking about keeping criminals behind bars, which we all agree with—but in 2022-23, more than half of criminal charges in Ontario were either stayed, withdrawn, dismissed or discharged because of a court system in crisis. The government may disagree with that, but that's the fact. I'm pleased—

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: He's shaking his head.

Mr. John Vanthof: I see people on the government side saying, "That's not the case." Okay. I'm really happy to be proven wrong on that.

One of the best ways to keep true criminals behind bars is to have an effective court system, to have people have their day in court as quickly as possible and deal with them.

I have a correctional facility in my riding, the Monteith correctional centre. I have toured it a few times. The vast, vast, vast majority of Ontarians have never been in a correctional facility. As an MPP, we have the ability and the opportunity, and every MPP should take that opportunity, to tour a correctional facility. I had the opportunity.

I also toured the North Bay Jail, which was truly sobering.

I'm just going to back up. We all believe that the farther north you go, the worse the services and access to services become. And that's true, in many cases—but it isn't true with the Monteith correctional centre and the North Bay Jail.

The North Bay Jail truly shocked me. The conditions in the North Bay Jail were truly, truly shocking.

When I went to the Monteith correctional centre the next day with, actually, now the presiding officer, I've got to say I was relieved.

There were things in happening in the North Bay Jail that shouldn't be happening anywhere, and it wasn't due to the staff at all; the staff pointed it out.

At the Monteith correctional centre, both times that I toured it—and I hope that has changed now. I didn't look it up this morning. The vast majority of people incarcerated in the Monteith correctional centre had never had their day in court and didn't get bail either—because that's why they were there. So this idea that bail is a revolving door and that everyone gets bail—that's not the case. Are there things wrong in our justice system? Absolutely. But the correctional centre in my riding, the last two times I toured it—the majority of the people there had never had their day in court, ever. The vast, vast, vast majority of those people were First Nation—vast, vast. There's also something wrong in our system there. I am in no way at all qualified to discuss those problems. I'm sure the member from Kiiwetinoong has a much, much broader view than I do. But it struck me.

Do you know something else that happens? Someone gets charged, from the Far North, they don't get bail, they end up in Monteith, they don't get their day in court because it ages out, and then they just get—"Oh, good-bye," miles from home, and they're stranded. And they're wondering why, in some cases, these people end up shoplifting to eat.

There are things wrong in our justice system, and I'm looking forward to working to make them better.

I think something else we can all agree on—all of us—is that police forces in this province need to have the full resources they need to do the job that they're assigned. I think we can all agree to that.

Something else we need in this province is, we actually need to help deal with the people who police have to deal with.

At one time, I used to be, for a very short time, the critic—we were critics back then—for the Solicitor General, and I had to go speak to the Ontario Provincial Police Association. I walked from Queen's Park to the Sheraton, where the meeting was held. In that walk, I saw eight homeless individuals—and that was a few years ago. I also saw five interactions with police, with those homeless individuals. They're homeless. Where are they supposed to go? Having the police move them from one place to another—until we go deeper and actually try to solve the social problem of homelessness, which is getting way, way, way worse. We need to look at the root causes as well.

0950

At no time do we want to take resources away from police forces to do the job that they signed up to do. They deal with issues and situations that we are not equipped to deal with. I often tell my local police that they have a unique job. They're one of the few people who, sometimes, you want to see more than anyone else. But when they're behind you for a speeding ticket, you don't really

want to see them at all—but I really want to see them pull over other people who are speeding. We want to have the strongest, most capable, well-trained police services anywhere—for our safety, for their safety. But there are things that they can't deal with unless we as a government, we as a province, look at the root causes of those issues.

My colleagues talked about cash bail. I'm going to tell you, I'm no expert, but cash bail is not going to solve that issue. Right now, there are so many people across this province who don't know if they're going to make it to their next paycheck. If they are accused of a crime and they end up in the system and it has a cash bail component—they're going to be there. Are they the true criminals? Maybe some of them are. But are they the true criminals we are, as a government, really wanting to focus on? Fraud in this province has doubled. I don't think that fraudsters who take money from seniors have a problem coming up with cash bail. Drug rings, car-theft rings—I really don't think they have a problem coming up with cash bail. So who are you actually going after with cash bail?

I don't think it's a secret in this Legislature that I like to tell stories. I hope that sometimes people remember the story. Do you know one of the most famous stories regarding something similar to cash bail? It's a book, a play, a movie that I am sure we have all seen or at least know of. Do you know what it's called? Can you guess? *Les Misérables*. Jean Valjean stole a loaf of bread to feed his sister's family. The French system was much more draconian than ours. He spent 19 years in prison for stealing that one loaf of bread—19 years. What's being proposed here with cash bail is the equivalent of Jean Valjean—it could be a homeless person in a homeless encampment or someone who has to choose between rent and food for their kids, and they could shoplift. And I'm not condoning shoplifting, not in any way. That person will not be able to make cash bail. Those people would be Ontario's Jean Valjeans.

Who would have thought that in 2025, right before Christmas, we would be debating whether or not to throw people in jail with no chance of freedom or even no chance of a day in court—perhaps for months, for years—for stealing a loaf of bread? Is this really what the government wants? I don't think that is what the government wants. I don't think they've thought this through.

Are there things in this bill that should be done that we agree with? Absolutely. Let's be clear. Should we be discussing how to keep Ontarians safe and how to make them feel secure in their parks, in their homes, in going to the store? Absolutely. But I don't think that Ontarians want to see themselves in *Les Misérables*—and that is where we're going here, if you really think this through.

The government can say, "You're making a pretty wild point"; I'm not.

Under this legislation, someone with no home, in a tent and with no help from the province because—I think something that maybe the government is going to disagree with. People without homes are in desperate situations,

and in the vast majority of the cases, not of their own volition.

I heard the Solicitor General, in a speech, say that if there is not room enough, we will build more jails—that's the solution. We need to have enough detention centres, jails, to make sure that the people who are criminals pay their price. But I'm not sure that we need to build more jails so that people without homes are housed for trying to keep themselves alive.

How about we look at programs so that we can take people without homes and work with them, so that we can all build the future that we all desire? That's not what that part of this bill does.

I say this sincerely: I'm hoping that, when we come back, this bill is fully debated, it goes to committee and we actually work together on the things that we agree on and try to figure out the pitfalls that we see. The government has a different philosophy on a lot of things than we do; I fully accept that. But it is our job, in the official opposition, to point out things that the government may not have thought of, or they weren't told or they weren't—and I really don't think that they thought of that. I hope it's simply an omission—and not that jails are the new solution for homeless encampments. That is not where we should be going. That's not where any of us want to go. I'm sure that's the case.

I'd like to close this by just saying, should convicted criminals be behind bars? Yes. Should we have a system where everyone has a right to their day in court and in a fair way? Yes.

This isn't brought up often on our side, but I'm going to bring it up: It must be so frustrating for our police forces to do their job, apprehending people, and have them get thrown out of the system. We should be looking at that. Those are the things we need to look at. I'm glad we're having this opportunity to be able to talk about it this morning.

1000

Again, this bill needs to go to committee so that, hopefully, some of the things that are very, very problematic can be changed, because I don't think that we want to be seen as the modern *Les Misérables*. That is where cash for bail is going, and that is something that just cannot happen in Ontario.

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

Hon. Zee Hamid: I heard the debate from the members opposite.

I have a question for them: Are they aware—through you, Speaker—that the cash bail only becomes due once the person is actually released? No one is going to be held behind bars because they can't afford bail.

Secondly, are they aware that for most petty crimes in this country, judges will typically set bail at a symbolic dollar? So if someone is caught stealing a loaf of bread, they might have bail set at a dollar, but they will still be released, and the bail amount only becomes due after their release.

No one is kept behind bars because they can't afford bail. Are they aware of that?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: The cash-for-bail system is actually going to do what we have talked about, which is, it is going to keep people behind bars because they don't have the ability to pay to be released. This—

Interjections.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I am answering the question. You've had your chance to ask your question. You have not been truthful when speaking to the media, when it comes to bail, and I've heard you—

Interjections.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock.

I recognize the member on a point of order—calmly.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: The member from Toronto Centre has used unparliamentary language and ought to be required to withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I have heard the member's point of order. I'm going to—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I appreciate the member's point of order.

The member from Toronto Centre will withdraw.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Withdrawn.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Members have the opportunity to stand in their place and ask questions during questions and responses, and I would encourage them to do so.

I return to the member for Toronto Centre to finish their response.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you very much, Speaker.

The record will show that the official opposition raised the concern that the bail courts are broken and that we are seeing an extended, long delay when it comes to those who are charged with crimes getting their day in bail court.

The crown prosecutors are overworked, overburdened, and they're not able to properly assess risk. This is really the chronic problem that the government needs to address and solve and which they have refused to look at.

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

Mme France Gélinas: I too had the opportunity to visit the Sudbury Jail. It is a dump. It's over 100 years old and has never been brought up to date. You go into the kitchen area—I have never seen that many rats in my life. You go into where the inmates are kept, and it is small. It just reeks. I had a chance to visit the nurses there—and same thing: It is overfull. It hasn't been maintained. It hasn't been renovated.

The people of Sudbury are thinking, is this a way for this government to bring in private, for-profit jails? The jail is too full. There will be more people going to jail—“Let's ask the private sector to make money off of those people.” What do you think?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you very much to the member for that question.

Observers of the legal system and the corrections system have identified that the pathway to housing more people in jails—as the government has alluded to in their comments, especially when it responds to how they plan to build more—is leading to a path of contracting out the construction of those jails and the private jail system that we see to have burgeoned out into the US.

This is where this government is taking us with this type of legislation, and it will come to fruition based on the fact that they are going to contract out the construction and the management of jails to for-profit super-jail centres, as we've seen in the US.

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

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Thank you to the members for your debate on this bill. I share a lot of the same concerns—particularly for the length of time people are being held, currently, in our correctional facilities.

I have the Toronto South Detention Centre in my riding, and I recently had a very thorough visit there. In any of the medium- and lower-security areas, everybody is sleeping three to a cell, that is designed for two. Worrying to me are the common spaces within there, which basically have 15 more people than they should, every single day. Again, the staff are doing an amazing job with the situation. What I hear consistently about is the length of time to get their day in court and the length of time people are staying there. It's supposed to be two years, but it's four, five, six years that people are waiting.

I wondered if anybody wanted to comment further on that issue with this bill.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I want to thank my colleague for the question.

Bail hearings are actually supposed to occur within 24 hours, under the Criminal Code. And yet, across Ontario, it seems like people are languishing in jails for well over—as I stated about the individual from Welland who was in the correctional service in Thorold for well over three weeks, for a small crime. People are waiting days and sometimes months, as you said, in deplorable conditions.

I think it's up to this government to make sure that when they're looking at the correctional services across Ontario and the jails that we have—minimal to medium to high security—we should be focusing in on making it not just another institution to hold people with mental health issues or other issues. They should be looking at putting monies in and looking after our correctional officers, who are often in danger, as well, in these overcrowded jails.

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

MPP Catherine McKenney: Thank you to my colleagues for that debate in response to this bill.

I always look at prevention and what that means and how that can contribute to keeping our communities safe—just simply freeing up court systems, freeing up policing for other matters.

In the city that I represent, the area that I represent, we were able to scrape off a few hundred thousand dollars to provide what is called ANCHOR—alternative neighbour-

hood crisis response. It means that we send out nurses and community social workers, rather than police, when it's a neighbourhood crisis and not a crime occurring. That, in one year, was able to divert 4,000 calls from our police service.

I just want to ask the member from Toronto Centre if they see anything in this bill that would indicate that we are looking at prevention so that we can actually keep our communities safe?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: This is a very important question, and it's one that I think all police associations are facing right now. They're being asked to do more and more with less and less, and they're being asked to do everyone's job—whether it's a public health nurse or a mental health crisis counsellor; they are having to become court support, social workers—which is simply unfair. It's downloading on them responsibilities that this government needs to do—which is invest in the social safety net. Of course, it's going to cost less if we invest in upstream diversion programs, and we want to be able to prevent violence before it happens, and this bill does nothing to do that.

1010

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

Mr. Matthew Rae: I thank my colleagues across the way for their comments this morning on a very important bill. I know the members opposite mentioned some things they like in the bill.

In Bill 75, we are proposing an exploring option to make parts of the Ontario Sex Offender and Trafficker Registry publicly available, giving communities the information they need to stay safe. I was just wondering if the members opposite would be supporting this bill because of that important piece in this legislation.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: We can complain that we all want to be tough on crime; we want to make sure that we keep dangerous people behind bars and make sure that we are not housing—that within our correctional services, we don't house people with mental health and addiction supports. We want to make sure that our streets are safe, our men and women in uniform are safe. We want to make sure that public safety is an investment that this government should actually look at—an investment that really supports programs that do not keep innocent people behind bars, but do keep the people who deserve to pay for the crime.

I also feel that there are good pieces of this bill, as I stated; it is important that we highlight those. But it's also important that we take this bill—

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Seeing the time on the clock, it is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOLIDAY MESSAGES

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: With the Christmas holidays quickly approaching, my motto has been “Buy Local, Support Local.”

Last weekend, I attended the Grandparent Connection 10th Annual Old Fashioned Christmas Craft Show in Newmarket. What a treat. My first stop was Candy by Carol. Unforgettable buttercrunch—how could I resist? The two Newmarket sisters were giving out samples of their mother’s decadent buttercrunch. Wow, what a taste. And then, hearing their story of how they make it every Christmas to sell at the market in honour of their mother—well, I was hooked, eight packages later. This is a perfect example of buying local and supporting Ontario businesses.

On November 22, I had the great privilege to attend the live production of A Christmas Carol at the NewRoads Performing Art Centre, to announce a \$53,900 OTF capital grant for Marquee Theatrical Productions Inc., a grant that supported the investment in technical equipment—in fact, it was the incredible set design that was used for this production. Well, there was definitely no “Bah, humbug” in Newmarket, as arts, culture and heritage are alive and well.

My heartfelt Christmas blessing I would like to offer—Tiny Tim’s line, “God bless us, everyone.”

MUNICIPALITIES

Ms. Catherine Fife: Waterloo region is facing a shocking reality: Our aging water infrastructure has become such a barrier that all new housing development has been forced to pause.

Ontario is in a housing crisis. We have 1,400 encampments. Removing rent control has further destabilized housing security. We all know a strong economy requires a stable housing supply—this government has done the opposite.

You can’t address the housing crisis without adequate water infrastructure, and I hope we can agree that these key investments cannot be funded off the local tax base.

We rely on the Waterloo moraine and aquifer in Waterloo region. We’re unique. We must plan carefully. But this government gave all seven municipalities responsibility for planning, causing chaos.

Municipalities are the engines of our economy. They create the conditions for jobs and innovation. They build communities where Ontarians can thrive. But they need a partner who won’t cut them down at the knees.

When necessary repairs and upgrades stall the homes we desperately need, it is a clear sign that provincial leadership is failing or missing entirely.

What is happening in Waterloo is a lesson in what happens when provincial governments override local experts.

We must support municipalities in their growth, respect local planning, and prioritize sustainable development.

CONSTITUENCY STAFF

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Being an MPP is a lot of work, but thankfully we have terrific teams by our side.

In my office, magnificent Marietta Fox coordinates everything. I think she actually spends more time in the inbox than her own home. She loves people, cannot say no, and creatively conjures up entertaining, inviting and inclusive events for beautiful Beaches–East Yorkers.

Awesome Alex McMullan is a super-savvy sleuth who can solve even the most complex cases. His political acumen is off the charts. If I go anywhere without him, constituents are deeply disappointed. Maybe he will even run against me next time.

Conscientious Colleen Staples could never let anyone down, ever. Kindness and compassion run through her veins, making her the perfect advocate for residents seeking help. She has a super-strong work ethic and environmental wherewithal to passionately lead all our climate action.

Magical Mikaela Taylor can masterfully whip up well-researched speeches, bills and more at the speed of light. She hosts stakeholder meetings and visitors in a competent and collegial manner, making everyone feel welcomed, listened to and appreciated.

I honestly feel like I won the lottery with this clever team.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

EL-TANTAWY ATTIA

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Today I rise to honour the remarkable life and legacy of Dr. El-Tantawy Attia, a man whose contributions shaped both the civic and professional landscape of our province.

Dr. Attia arrived in Ontario as an Egyptian young student at McMaster University, pursuing a PhD in nuclear engineering. He went on to build a distinguished career with Ontario Hydro and Ontario Power Generation, contributing to the nuclear expertise that continues to power our province to this day. But his legacy extends far beyond his engineering career.

Beyond his professional achievements, Dr. Attia was a foundational figure in the early development of the Muslim community in our province. He served on the board of Toronto’s first mosque, Jami Mosque in High Park, and supported the organization of the first Eid prayers held on the CNE grounds. He was a key contributor to the establishment of Masjid Toronto, the mosque just steps from this Legislature—an iconic space that Premiers and members of this assembly have visited.

Dr. El-Tantawy Attia’s civic service extended beyond his contribution to the Muslim community. In 2008, Ontario’s Minister of Health appointed Dr. Attia to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, where he served on the board and its committees for 15 years, a reflection of the trust in his leadership and—

That is why last month I introduced a motion calling on the government to establish a yearly celebratory recognition—rural Ontario week. A full week of truly recognizing and celebrating our rural communities is something I know will mean dearly to rural Ontarians. I look forward to speaking more on this when we return from winter adjournment, and I'm hopeful that this House will support it.

HOUSING

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Madam Speaker, I have more great news from Essex county, this time from the town of Amherstburg.

The government of Ontario has a multi-million dollar program called the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund. It helps build water infrastructure like sewer lines and waterlines. The government of Ontario is offering this fund to municipalities across the province.

This time, the town of Amherstburg applied for and was successful in receiving a grant in the amount of \$9 million. This historic grant will help the town of Amherstburg prevent flooding and build waterlines and sewer lines that are the basis for building homes like single-family homes, like semi-detached homes, like multi-residential homes—a home for every budget and a home for every taste. If you want to live in the town of Amherstburg, you will find a home that's right for you.

I want to congratulate the town of Amherstburg and Mayor Michael Prue for working with us to get this historic grant for Amherstburg.

I want to thank the Minister of Infrastructure—and the leadership of Premier Doug Ford—for this fantastic program. We are building homes in Amherstburg, in Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): How is it possible that we're heckling in members' statements? How does that even happen?

They asked me who the worst heckler was, and I kept my mouth shut too.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Joining us today in the Speaker's gallery, we have His Excellency John Concannon, ambassador of Ireland to Canada; Claire Fitzgibbon, consul general of Ireland in Toronto; and Cahal Sweeney, vice consul. Please join me in warmly welcoming our visitors to the Ontario Legislature.

Hon. Graydon Smith: It's always a pleasure to have my lovely wife, Melissa, here—who is also of Irish descent, so she's in good company today, in the Speaker's box.

Welcome to Queen's Park, my love.

Hon. Stan Cho: I'm so honoured to have some amazing Korean Canadian police leaders from the Toronto Police Service with us: Inspector Rob Choe; Detective Sergeant

Sin Kim; Staff Sergeant Danny Lee; and Sergeants Tim Lee, Dave Oh, and Michael Choe.

As well, from York Regional Police, Constable Eric Lee, my good buddy—and we're honoured to have his inspector, Chad Lee-Wing.

You make us proud.

Thank you so much for being at the Legislature this morning.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I'm happy to welcome a wonderful community volunteer from my riding today: Shannon McKarney.

Enjoy Queen's Park.

MPP Mohamed Firin: I would like welcome Ahmad Attia and Nour Mikkawi to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Aris Babikian: I would like to welcome a good friend of mine and an outstanding member of the Armenian community and church: Mr. Ohan Ohanessian, who received his Queen Elizabeth II volunteer medal last Friday from the Lieutenant Governor. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I'd like to welcome Giovanna Ippolito from Pacer Air Freight. Your dedication to supporting complex, high-value logistics is inspiring. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to welcome, from Mississauga—Erin Mills, my riding, my dear friend Ahmad Attia, the son of Dr. Tantawy Attia.

Hon. George Pirie: Here's a shout-out to Tania and Connor, my staff here in Toronto. It's their last day; they're leaving.

Thank you for your service.

1030

Ms. Jess Dixon: Not present in the House today, but I did want to welcome to the world—I became an auntie last night to Ziyad Marzouk Church, who arrived at 3:30 in the morning, two and a half weeks early, which was very concerning, as a Dixon, because we have a tradition of never, ever being on time or early for anything. He did greatly inconvenience his mother by arriving two and a half weeks early, right after she'd had a Chinese take-away.

Ziyad, welcome to the world. I'm so excited for Alex and Aysha. And I can't wait to meet you.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: My husband, Matt Helleman, is a very faithful watcher of question period, and I never get to say hi to him.

So hi, Matt, and merry Christmas.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd also like to extend a very warm welcome to the Irish ambassador, as well as the consul general of Ireland, Claire Fitzgibbon, and the deputy consul.

Welcome to Queen's Park. I hope you enjoy your visit.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): We'll be bringing them back; believe me.

HOUSE SITTINGS

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Point of order: I'd just like to announce to members of the House that this evening's night sitting has been cancelled.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Always full of bad news—always.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Every day, for seven weeks, I've asked the Premier to answer questions about yet another scandal, yet another police investigation involving his government.

All year, we watched the Premier go from scandal to scandal, defending ministers' use of taxpayer funds for their personal piggy bank.

Folks are making New Year's resolutions at this time of year. So I'm wondering if the Premier will make a New Year's resolution to finally hold his ministers accountable for decisions that lead to police investigations.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Madam Speaker, as you know, the government is always working with our officials to ensure that we get to the bottom of any challenge that we face.

At the same time, as we draw to a close this current session of Parliament, it's also a good time to reflect on all of the amazing things that have happened across the province of Ontario. A lot of the ministers, the members opposite—I will include them—there have been new long-term-care homes opened; amazing investments in hospitals across the province of Ontario; of course, new transit and transportation that is being built all across the province of Ontario. We've seen some promising, encouraging numbers in jobs.

So while we face a lot of challenges in the province of Ontario, given the fact that there is a very damaging trade war being waged against us south of the border, there is a lot to be thankful for in the province of Ontario. And by working together, we'll build an even bigger, better, stronger province.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I don't think that was really an answer to the question.

We've seen the greenbelt grab, the science centre mess, the secretive and costly Ontario Place deal, the infamous Skills Development Fund scandal. For Conservative insiders, this is just the grift that keeps on giving.

So how many more scandals and backroom deals are we going to see next year?

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

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, we look forward to the year ahead.

I want to wish everybody in this place a very merry Christmas and a happy new year. I hope they get to spend time with their family and friends.

We look forward to a strong 2026, a 2026 where we unlock the potential of the Ring of Fire and continue to make progress, where we make progress on new energy infrastructure that will power an Ontario that's able to continue to attract foreign direct investment—of course, that has grown, under the leadership of this Premier. That's helping to create good-paying jobs for Ontarians in every corner of this province.

We'll continue to take measures to put more money back in Ontarians' pockets. We'll continue to take measures to reduce red tape and provide meaningful opportunities for a next generation to find meaningful employment in an Ontario that stands strong on the national stage; an Ontario that is self-reliant and self-sufficient—and a Canadian workforce that nation-builds to ensure Canada is the best place to live, work and raise a family.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I think the minister should, over the holidays, go visit a soup kitchen or a food bank and see all of the people who are actually juggling multiple jobs and still end up there, or the 700,000-plus people in Ontario who cannot find a job.

Families are the ones who are paying the price for this government's failures over and over again. That's what this is about.

Every dollar that's going to Conservative insiders is taken away from workers, from public services.

The Premier may not be familiar with the stress and the anxiety that people out there are feeling right now, especially around the holidays. I know that he had a different experience: Everything was handed to him; he grew up with a silver spoon. But things are really, really tough out there.

When is the Premier going to stop putting his friends and insiders ahead of hard-working Ontarians?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, I think it would be a good New Year's resolution for the Leader of the Opposition to get out and see some of the incredible training taking place at some of the training centres around Ontario—not just show up at their Christmas party, but actually go and visit the training that's empowering a next generation to get the skill sets to land jobs in an Ontario that is actually building public transit; an Ontario that's building a new Ontario Science Centre; an Ontario that's building highways, hospitals, roads and bridges. That's what we're doing—empowering a next generation with the skills that they need.

We've heard stories in this place—but I met the folks at Oaks last night, and I reflect on Lewis's story and so many who have been given a second chance, who have turned obstacles into opportunity. That's what we're doing by supporting training in this province. We're very proud of it. And we look forward to 2026.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: I've also been meeting with skilled trade workers and PSWs and lots of workers across the province—even just last night. Let me tell you what they told me. They said, “Don’t let them get away with it.”

This is the last day for the Premier to come clean with Ontarians before he jets off on some holiday break.

More than half of the recipients of Skills Development Fund money scored poorly, and the lowest-scoring applicants raked in more funding than the highest-scoring ones. Ministry staff raised really serious flags about some of those folks, but the minister ignored their advice. He seemed absolutely dead set on giving funds to companies like Keel Digital Solutions, a company where he has close personal ties.

Will the Premier admit that his minister interfered in the Skills Development Fund to make sure that his friends and his donors got a piece of the pie?

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

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, I'll tell you some of the stories I've heard—and I actually reference the real people; I don't just nebulously say I've heard stories. I reference the real people whose stories we've heard.

I think to Ty Downey and SEIU and the important Skills Development Fund investments that have helped reduce dependency on agency staff in our long-term-care homes. I've visited those long-term-care homes. And it's not without challenges—they point to public policy things; they point to things they want our government to do. But they know they've got a government who will show up, who will listen, and who will take strides each and every day to make life better for the people of Ontario. That's what we're doing.

Or the training halls: I mentioned Oaks—again, Mark Tenaglia and Joe Williams do an incredible job. Lewis, who I met on a Bridgecon site, has turned obstacles into opportunity.

These are the real people we're meeting, the real lives we're changing, and we're proud of it.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Families out there are struggling to afford rent, to afford groceries just on any day, let alone on the holidays—the very basics. I listen every day to families who are looking for child care for their kids so they can go back to work, or affordable homes—anywhere affordable to live.

But with this government, there are always tens of millions of dollars to spare for the Premier's dentist or his campaign manager or his favourite nightclub owner or his donors or for insiders in the Conservative Party. Every day, with this government, feels like Christmas morning.

Does the Premier expect us to ignore that the minister hand-picked Conservative insiders to receive government funds?

1040

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, that's simply incorrect. Every dollar goes to training. It's in the guidelines of the

publicly accessible fund. And it's changing lives. It's helping people train.

We've made steps over each round, as I've said, to improve the program.

It's supporting people in training in the hospitality sector, which was ravaged during the pandemic, or supporting in the skilled trades.

We've seen an increase in youth registering in apprenticeships—factually, an increase. We've seen an increase in the number of women registering in apprenticeships—because you can't build a stronger Ontario by leaving 50% of the workforce behind.

But you actually have to have a plan to build. The Leader of the Opposition doesn't have that plan. She opposes each and every measure to build a stronger Ontario. That's why unions and that's why working-class people of Ontario have abandoned her and abandoned her party.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: A plan? A jobs plan? All across this province, workers are being laid off, struggling to find opportunities, and this government hasn't offered up anything. We have been waiting for seven weeks, asking for a jobs plan.

Thousands of workers have been laid off in Brampton, in Ear Falls, in Ingersoll, in Sault Ste. Marie, in Oshawa, and in Terrace Bay. The Premier has created a jobs disaster in this province.

Instead of connecting people to a good job with a decent salary, the Minister of Labour is too busy handing out training funds to his friends and his donors. That's a fact.

Speaker, the people of Ontario could really use a Christmas miracle. So will this Premier put an end to the grift and fire that minister?

Hon. David Piccini: Let's talk about a plan—a plan to unlock the critical minerals in the Ring of Fire; a plan to mine, mining they oppose; a plan to build new energy infrastructure in every corner of this province, that's re-furbishing nuclear plants, that's building small modular reactors, building new nuclear; and a plan to build public transit in this province. We've seen record investments in every corner of Ontario—a plan to build new hospitals.

They couldn't get the job done in communities like mine when they had the balance of power for years—or how about the 600 schools closed by members opposite, that we're now building? That's a plan. That's a plan that's empowering a record number of youth in the skilled trades. It's a plan that's bringing more teachers into the sector. It's a plan that's bringing more health care professionals into Ontario's health care sector. That's a plan for a stronger Ontario that we fight for each and every day.

FOOD BANKS

BANQUES ALIMENTAIRES

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

Yesterday, I asked the Premier if we could take all that surplus American booze and sell it off and give it to our food banks—all that booze that's bought and paid for that's collecting dust? We ain't getting a refund for it; it's not happening. So we can sell it off and do good, like Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and PEI.

It's Christmas, folks, and we don't always agree, as we can see in here. But there's a chance for us to do something good right now, for all of us to agree—all of us. But the irony of it is, it's not all of us who can make it happen. It's one of us—and that one of us is the Premier. He can make it happen.

So I'm going to ask the Premier again this morning: Will you sell off that surplus American alcohol that's collecting dust and use it to make sure that children and their families won't go hungry this Christmas?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: Donald Trump took aim at Ontario's economy with those unjustified tariffs, and our government has removed US-made alcohol as a response to that. It's because we stand with the workers in Colborne, in Carlisle, and in Carrying Place who make Ontario cider. We don't stand with those workers in Catskill, New York. We stand with the people who work in craft breweries in Bowmanville and Brockville. But we do not stand with the craft brewers in Boston, Massachusetts. We stand with the workers, the grape growers and the wine producers in Niagara. We do not stand for the people in Napa Valley, California.

This government will stand and protect the workers of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Ottawa–Vanier.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: À Ottawa, les banques alimentaires font face à une hausse de 101 % des visites depuis 2019, dont 37 % sont des enfants. Les banques alimentaires sont essentielles, mais elles manquent cruellement d'un soutien et depuis trop longtemps.

Pendant ce temps, le gouvernement laisse 80 millions de dollars d'alcool américain dormir dans des entrepôts, dont 2 millions de dollars seront périmés d'ici la fin du mois—une totale perte.

Nos banques alimentaires jouent un rôle vital dans nos communautés. Elles constituent un véritable filet de sûreté pour les milliers de familles et elles ont aujourd'hui, plus que jamais, besoin d'un financement adéquat de la part de ce gouvernement.

Les Ontariens ont besoin d'aide maintenant. Est-ce que le gouvernement va vendre ce stock excédentaire et utiliser les produits pour soutenir nos banques alimentaires?

Mr. Dave Smith: I understand that sometimes the opposition comes up with ideas that they think are going to help people in Ontario, when actually, what they're talking about is something that's going to cause more problems for the people of Ontario.

We know that the Trump tariffs have taken direct aim at the economy in Ontario.

This government, this Premier, will stand with the workers of Ontario—we're not going to abandon those, because we know that we've seen an increase of VQA sales of 79%. That is workers in Niagara Falls, in Prince Edward county, who have jobs today, who have the ability to buy the things they need to buy for their families, because we are standing behind and supporting the workers of Ontario.

We'll continue to stand behind all of those people in Ontario who deserve that support from us.

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

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: I have two food banks in my riding: the Kanata Food Cupboard and the West Carleton Food Access Centre—amazing people doing amazing things for their neighbours. They're supported by volunteers in the broader community. This year, food bank usage is up 25% in my riding.

My question to the Premier: If Manitoba, Nova Scotia, PEI, Newfoundland and Labrador can do it, why can we not sell our surplus American liquor that we've already paid for and put that money to good use to help people this holiday season?

Mr. Dave Smith: The reality is, there are more wineries in Niagara Falls than Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and PEI combined—and those are Ontario workers.

What the Liberals are suggesting is that our government turn its back on the hard-working people in this province and say to them, "I'm sorry, at the time of year when there is more alcohol—more of your product—being sold, we think it should be taken off the shelf. We think that the American products should be put instead."

What they don't understand, is that every bottle of Julio Gallo sold at Christmas means a bottle of VQA Ontario is not; every bottle of Samuel Adams sold means a bottle of Canadian Ontario craft beer remains on the shelf—and every single one of those workers in that industry in Ontario would be harmed because of it.

We will stand with the workers of Ontario.

FOOD BANKS

Mr. Adil Shamji: In and around Don Valley East, there are 25 food banks—25. Each week, the lines at these food banks grow longer, breaking records that were really only set the week before. That's 25 food banks, amongst hundreds across our province, where one in three visitors are going for the first time, one in three are children, and one in four could not earn enough to make ends meet, even if they already had a job. There were 8.7 million food bank visits last year, of which 30% were from children.

The Premier says he wants to stand up for workers. Stand up for these people. Our province sits on \$80 million of liquor, some of which is set to expire. It's already bought and paid for.

Will the Premier sell this unused inventory so that we can take all of that revenue and use it to support food banks, so families in my riding don't go hungry this Christmas?

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: What we're doing is we're supporting the people of Ontario—those hard-working individuals who are trying to make sure that they can make ends meet. What the Liberals are suggesting is that we tell them that we're going to turn our backs on all of those individuals who work in that industry. We're going to tell them that we don't want to sell their product—because we know that for every bottle of California wine sold, a bottle of Ontario wine is not; we know that for every New York state cider sold, an Ontario cider is not, and it remains on the shelf.

We want to make sure that the people who are working in Ontario continue to work in Ontario.

We will continue to support all of those jobs because it's the right thing to do.

We will stand with the workers in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Orléans.

Mr. Stephen Blais: As we approach Christmas, food insecurity in Ottawa is reaching levels we've never seen. The Ottawa Hunger Report shows nearly 600,000 food bank visits last year, an all-time high.

In Orléans, one of the most affluent parts of the province, the situation is just as alarming. The Orléans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre's food bank now serves more than 1,200 people every month, half of which are children. That is a 34% increase in the last two years.

While families and children are relying on food banks at record levels, this government is sitting on tens of millions of dollars in US liquor, \$2 million of which is about to be poured down the drain.

Madam Speaker, families are going hungry. This government is letting liquor go bad. So will the government sell that US alcohol that is surplus, that has already been paid for, and use the proceeds to help food banks and help families this Christmas?

Mr. Dave Smith: I appreciate the question.

I'll keep coming back to this: Our government is exploring every opportunity that we have to support the workers of Ontario. We want to make sure that what we do lifts those people up.

We know that if you take an American product and support American industry—even if it is good-hearted on their part—what you're doing is, you're harming Ontario workers.

We're not going to turn our back on the people of this province who are working hard to pay their bills. We're not going to turn our back and take away their opportunities. We're not going to say that Americans deserve more than Ontarians do. That is not the approach that we're going to take.

We will explore whatever opportunity we have to make sure that the people of this province get what they need and our workers are supported.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Toronto–St. Paul's.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Madam Speaker, I'm overwhelmed by the poppycock I'm hearing over there. We are trying to help families going hungry in this province.

Do you know what? Three food banks in Toronto—St. Paul's: Churches on-the-Hill, Hillcrest Community Food Bank, Avenue Road Food Bank—a 20% increase in demand. These are people who are bringing their families, people who are working. These are people who are lining up every day for help.

This is to the Premier: Am I hearing properly that this government would rather pour \$80 million down the drain than give that to food banks and people going hungry in this province?

Mr. Dave Smith: Let's talk about reality here. Spirits do not go bad. So if the member opposite wants to talk poppycock—she should stop talking about the numbers that she's giving.

What we are doing as a government is we're standing behind the hard-working people in Niagara Falls, the hard-working people in Prince Edward county, the hard-working people in Bruce county and in every district across this province, to make sure that those individuals who are seeing a benefit because we've taken US alcohol off the shelves continue to have that benefit—because there is nothing better for them than knowing that they have the security of their job.

Madam Speaker, we will continue to support the workers in Ontario. We'll continue to make sure that we're doing things to lift people up in this province. And we will make no apologies for saying that American-produced product is not something that we're going to put on the shelf.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: My question is to the Premier.

After months of waiting, the government's controversial intimate partner violence report was released this week.

I didn't want to say what I'm now forced to say. If committee members and staff were allowed to speak, they would confirm that I did everything in my power to prevent this outcome, because survivors deserve better.

The government's IPV report is riddled with citations that do not exist. If this was a university assignment, the government would face academic discipline based on how high their report scores with AI detection models—this government can bully and say otherwise, but survivors know what it feels like to be gaslit.

Will the Premier come clean and admit to AI's role in writing this report or will he continue to gaslight survivors?

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

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: Madam Speaker, it is completely disgraceful that the members opposite would resort to such ridiculous and factless, baseless accusations during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. It is a time that demands seriousness, integrity,

and a renewed commitment by all of us to end violence against women. We take violence against women very seriously, and the incredible work done by the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler is a testament to that.

The NDP put out a press release claiming that our report was written by AI. Well, guess what, Speaker? The same tool that they use says that their press releases were written by AI.

This entire charade by the NDP is a disgrace and it shows everyone in the province their true colours. While every other party in the House has been working together to publish this report, the NDP chose to walk away.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order. Order. The member for King–Vaughan will come to order.

I recognize the member for Windsor West.

MPP Lisa Gretzky: This Conservative government has something in common with AI large language models: It can't tell fact from fiction. Their own IPV report proves it. It claims that the coroner's inquest into the death of Windsor nurse Lori Dupont was completed in 2002, yet Lori was tragically murdered in 2005, and the inquest finished in 2007. It says a Globe and Mail editorial on the cellphone ban was published six months before the ban even existed. And it even cites the Child Development Institute but links to the website example.org.

These aren't simple human errors. They are AI hallucinations, signed off by a government selling off the stories of victims without their consent. And the report's next step is to figure out what the next step is.

Why does this government keep disrespecting women and girls by failing to take IPV and GBV seriously and refusing to implement any of the years-long recommendations right now to save lives?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: The member from Windsor West did not show up to committee once, did not participate once; walked out of the committee when they had the opportunity to review the report. They walked out. Women and people who are victims put their stories out for everybody in this House to hear, and those stories are reflected in the report. While everyone in this House had the opportunity to vet it and participate, they walked out on those women of Ontario. Our government would never do that.

We will work to make sure that we have the resources in place and the supports in place to help women—and you can see that through Ontario-STANDS, in the \$1.4-billion investment we've made. You can see that in the organizations that we are investing in to help women rebuild their lives.

These are real people, and they are reflected in the real—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

GREENBELT

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: This government is infamous for delays—the Eglinton LRT; the extended producer responsibility requirements; this House's excessive

summer break; currently, their proposed endless winter break; and now, the overdue greenbelt review.

My question to the Premier: Can he please provide Ontarians with a timeline as to when he will start and when he will complete the mandatory 10-year greenbelt review, which is due in 2025?

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

1100

Hon. Rob Flack: First of all, I think everyone knows we had a winter election—as of that, we are taking time to get the framework put in place so we can do a proper review.

Again, that being said, the greenbelt is enshrined in legislation for generations to come. I repeat: The greenbelt is enshrined in legislation for generations to come. The decision was made. The decision is final.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: None of us wanted that ridiculous snap winter election, but here we are.

Speaker, my question to the Premier: Can he tell the good people of Ontario when he will reinstate the Greenbelt Council, how the appointment process will evolve, and what their mandate will be?

Hon. Rob Flack: Madam Speaker, I would say that the February election worked out pretty well for this side of the House, don't you think?

I will say the framework is in place. We're putting it in place again. The greenbelt is enshrined in legislation for generations to come. The decision was made. The decision is final.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mrs. Daisy Wai: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Mines.

Ontario is experiencing historic growth. More businesses are choosing our province, and we continue to lead North America in attracting major job-creating investments in advanced manufacturing. But with the new opportunities come increased demands for energy. Families and workers want to know that Ontario will have the power needed to support this prosperity. They want confidence that small businesses and growing industries can rely on clean, affordable and dependable electricity every single day.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is ensuring that Ontario's energy system continues to meet the needs of a growing province for decades to come?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member from Richmond Hill for that question.

Earlier this week, we passed Bill 40, an important piece of legislation to ensure reliable energy growth in this province.

Ontario is growing at a pace that we have not seen in generations. More families are calling this province home,

and more businesses are picking Ontario over any other jurisdiction in North America.

Speaker, this kind of growth requires power—not just any power, but clean, reliable and affordable power.

This is exactly what Bill 40 delivers. This legislation provides a clear mandate to our independent energy planners: keeping our system reliable as demand surges; protecting affordability for households and small businesses; maintaining our position as a clean energy leader; and, for the first time, ensuring the system actively supports economic growth when planning for energy.

Speaker, while the opposition talks down Ontario's economy, we are building it, and we won't stop doing that.

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

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I want to thank the parliamentary assistant for that answer.

Ontario is leading the continent in clean energy expansion, from new nuclear generation and refurbished facilities to groundbreaking investments in energy storage and grid modernization. These initiatives not only secure the reliable power that families depend on, but they also help ensure that major employers continue choosing Ontario as the best place to grow and innovate.

Speaker, I've heard that my constituents in Richmond Hill are proud to see the work our government is doing, but they also want confidence that our government is keeping affordability front and centre.

Can the parliamentary assistant elaborate on how Bill 40 will protect affordability for families and small businesses?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: For years, Ontario paid the price for Liberal decisions that plunged our energy system into chaos—contracts that were too expensive, generation that we did not need, and soaring hydro bills that hurt families and drove jobs out of this province. We will never go back to that.

Bill 40 ensures that every major planning decision is grounded in what matters most for the people of this province. Ontario already benefits from one of the cleanest and most affordable electricity systems in Canada, and Bill 40 protects this advantage.

When we attract new businesses, invest in job creation projects and open new mines, we are reducing pressure on household bills by bringing more investment into the system—more jobs, more customers, and lower costs per family.

Speaker, our government is delivering on a system that is clean, reliable and affordable, not just for today, but for the future of this province.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Premier. The Ontario NDP has been calling for a public inquiry into Metrolinx and the Eglinton Crosstown LRT since 2022. After years of Metrolinx delays, blown budgets and secrecy, this government still refuses to call a public inquiry so that we can learn what went wrong before we

repeat it on the Lakeshore East line or anywhere else. People in Oshawa and Durham deserve better GO service and not their own Eglinton Crosstown disaster.

Right now, the only people getting a smooth ride are the lawyers, with multi-million dollar lawsuits piling up while riders are stuck in traffic and communities are left in limbo.

Public money should be going towards building transit and running trains—not paying for Metrolinx's legal defence.

My question is this: Will the Premier finally stand with riders instead of Metrolinx insiders and commit to a full public inquiry into Metrolinx's mismanagement?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We've had a record year at Metrolinx. Just in October of this year, over 75 million users were on the GO network, between UP Express and our GO Transit services. We've increased services across all of our lines, including the member's, at Lakeshore East—over 638 trips a week. Just last year, we increased—by over 300 trips on a weekly basis, across our network. And we marked a historic achievement by ensuring that we have weekend service to the Kitchener GO line, all the way to Kitchener. We have been making record progress on GO Transit.

Since 2022—let's review the NDP record. They voted against every one of our expansions of GO Transit into areas like Bowmanville and others. They voted against programs like One Fare that would save the same members that that member is talking about \$1,600 a year as they transfer onto the TTC or other participating transit networks.

We're going to continue to invest in public transit, despite the opposition of the NDP and Liberals.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Scarborough Southwest.

Ms. Doly Begum: The minister knows very well that Metrolinx is not accountable—and it isn't just about one project; it's about the overall secrecy and their sheer arrogance across Metrolinx. They ignore and disrespect the public and, frankly, this government. They waste billions of tax dollars on every single project that either collapses or drags on for way too long. They hide major issues, triple the cost, all under this government's watch—a government that not only stays silent, but goes on to shamelessly defend Metrolinx's executives who are making fortunes on the backs of hard-working Ontarians.

In fact, this morning, when we asked the government agencies committee to call Metrolinx for a hearing, their government members voted our motion down.

So I ask again to the minister and to this government: Why won't they call a public hearing or call Metrolinx for a public inquiry so people can get the answers they deserve?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Riders are seeing historic expansions in service levels across our entire GO network. If you look at our lines, we have increased service every single month, and we've set a record, as I

said, in the month of October, with the highest usage of GO Transit and UP Express in history.

That's because we've been investing in our transit system—\$70 billion over the next 10 years. That's the largest expansion anywhere in North America—the Ontario Line; the Scarborough subway extension, which happens to be in that member's riding, which she has not supported in the House when she has had the chance.

1110

Whether it's the inauguration of the Finch West LRT that happened this past week, that is going to bring over 220,000 people within a transit line in northwest Toronto, or whether it's our projects that we are launching across the province—whether it be the Hamilton LRT, the Mississauga-Brampton LRT, the Ontario LRT, or projects that are happening in every corner of this province—we're investing in public transit, but we're also making it more accessible. That's why last week, we announced the two-year extension of the One Fare—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

PUBLIC TRANSIT

MPP Andrea Hazell: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

After years of delays and billions of taxpayer dollars spent on the Finch West LRT, we are facing a project that has totally failed to deliver on its promise of rapid transit. Let me say it again: rapid transit. This service is now slower than the buses it was meant to replace—shame.

Rapid transit is supposed to be fast, safe and reliable, to encourage ridership. The Finch West LRT is neither fast nor reliable, and we're still waiting to make sure it meets all safety standards. This is equally true for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, which has become a symbol of inefficiency, incompetence, and a complete failure to taxpayers in Ontario.

My question to the Premier: How much longer will Ontarians have to suffer the consequences of your continued failed leadership? Will you take accountability and fix the mess?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Interjections.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I don't know if I can be as exciting as that, but I'll try.

Madam Speaker, since 2002, we inaugurated the first rapid transit line in the history of—in Toronto for the first time.

Let's look at the record of the previous Liberal government: From 2003 to 2018, not a single transit line was inaugurated in the city of Toronto.

But guess what? When we got elected, we made a commitment. We made a promise to get shovels in the ground, to get LRTs built and subways built across the city. And that's exactly what we're doing.

We're bringing 230,000 people within walking distance of that transit line, and that's what we were so proud to—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Madam Speaker, hot off the press are ongoing articles with concerning headlines. "Line 6 is so slow"—it's just only faster than people walking. "Treat it like the rapid transit it is and not a sightseeing legacy of a trolley train."

Another quote: "Riders are right to expect better.... If our LRTs move too slowly, riders will stay in their cars," worsening congestion. "This is unacceptable." Do you know who said that? The chairman of the TTC.

Madam Speaker, the dysfunctional relationship between Metrolinx, TTC, Toronto, and the Minister of Transportation is evident in their recent meeting. They cannot even decide on an agreement—shame, shame, shame.

So I ask the Premier, can you explain why you continue to fail the people of Ontario? When will you do the right thing and deliver on your promises—not just to your donors, your friends, and your insiders?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I urge that member to reach out to the chair of the TTC, who she referenced, and ask them to implement the signal priority on the Finch West LRT line, which we are more than happy to work with them to do.

It should also be noted that it was the TTC that asked for the speed reductions through the 18 intersections—to a 25-kilometre limit.

We'll work with the TTC and do whatever is needed, but that member should also speak to them and encourage them to implement the signal priority, encourage them to modernize and make more efficient the LRVs that are working through that line.

Madam Speaker, building transit is something we take very seriously and we're going to continue to improve upon every single day.

The people of northwest Toronto are happy that they have a transit line that is now operational.

After years and years—decades—of being ignored by the previous Liberal government, who built absolutely nothing for those residents and for the city of Toronto, we're getting shovels in the ground and we're getting transit built.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

MPP Mohamed Firin: Speaker, my question is for the honourable and wonderful Minister of Transportation.

Families in my community of York South—Weston are feeling the pinch of rising costs. They want to see more common-sense solutions that will keep costs down and make their lives easier.

With many residents in my riding and across the GTHA relying on public transit to get to work, school and appointments, it's important that we find ways to make transit more affordable.

Thanks to our government's One Fare program, riders have been saving hundreds of dollars every year. By eliminating double fares, our government is ensuring that people are keeping more money in their pockets.

Speaker, can the minister explain how our government will continue to make transit more affordable and convenient for communities?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you to that member for raising this very important point.

Under the Premier's leadership, our government is delivering on our promise to protect Ontario and the people of this province.

By expanding the One Fare program for an additional two years, we're continuing to save transit riders across the province over \$1,600 a year and making travel across the GTHA more affordable and more accessible. One Fare allows riders to pay only once when transferring between regional transit organizations, whether it be the TTC, GO Transit, Brampton Transit, Durham transit, MiWay, Peel TransHelp, York Region Transit, and other participating transit agencies. Since its launch, we have executed over 62 million transfers, which has saved over \$200 million to transit users across the province.

Madam Speaker, this is about putting more money back into the pockets of hard-working Ontarians and ensuring that we have fair, accessible transit services across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary?

MPP Mohamed Firin: Thank you to the minister for that response.

Residents in my community of York South–Weston are excited about the savings that One Fare offers. They tell me how this program has reduced their monthly expenses and made travel more convenient.

The extension of One Fare is a key component of our government's plan to strengthen our regional transit system. It complements the historic investments our government is making in new transit lines and GO expansion.

Speaker, can the minister share more details on how One Fare and other major transit projects will transform travel across the region and support Ontario's economy?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you very much to the member again.

Our government's vision is clear: We are building a world-class transit system that will transform, integrate transit networks across communities, help reduce congestion, and drive economic growth across our province. Expanding One Fare is a key part of that for the next two years. It will ensure that riders can travel seamlessly through the GTHA and save \$1,600 a year—back into their pocket, to spend on things that matter.

But affordability is just one piece of the plan.

We are embarking upon the largest transit expansion in North American history—the Ontario Line; the Scarborough subway extension; the Yonge North subway extension; the Finch West LRT, which we just inaugurated this weekend; the Eglinton Crosstown West extension; the Hazel McCallion Line; and the Hamilton LRT. These are transformational projects that will transform the way we

move around this province, around our cities, and how we integrate and connect everyone across this province into one system.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier.

Last week, the Auditor General confirmed that two million Ontarians do not have access to primary care. This is not only bad for those people, but it's also a problem for municipalities, because access to primary care is critical to attract new business, create jobs, and grow the economy.

And what we are seeing is that more and more municipalities are feeling pressured into using property tax revenues to recruit physicians. They're offering \$100,000 signing bonuses and other cash incentives, at a cost of \$6.3 million per year.

My question: Why is this Premier downloading health care costs, which is a provincial responsibility, onto municipal taxpayers?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The member opposite raises a very important point, and that is, why are we investing in primary care \$2.1 billion? We have seen, in 2024, 78 new or expanded primary care teams all across Ontario and in 2025, 80 new primary care expansion teams across Ontario.

1120

As we expand access for our primary care—and I have to say, Ontario actually leads Canada in attachments; we are at 90%, but we intend to make sure that every Ontarian who wants to have access to a primary care practitioner has that opportunity. How do we do that? I'll share more in the supplementary, but it obviously includes ensuring expanded medical practices across Ontario.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, forcing municipalities to enter into bidding wars to recruit new physicians is not strategic and it's not equitable. It creates a Hunger Games, a race to the bottom. It means that access to primary care is determined by how much a municipality is able and willing to pay, not by which municipalities have the greatest need.

Speaker, will this government immediately adopt the recommendations of the Auditor General and take responsibility for implementing a coordinated provincial approach to the recruitment and retention of primary care providers?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: In fact, Speaker, we already do that, of course, with our primary care expansion teams.

Practice Ready Ontario is a program that didn't exist two years ago. We now have physicians from other parts of the world who want to come to Canada and have the opportunity, through Practice Ready Ontario, to practise in smaller, often more northern and rural communities.

In our first tranche we have actually seen almost a hundred new physicians in Ontario practising and getting to their full licences sooner. We have seen, through expan-

sion in every single medical school, more seats available, more residency positions available.

Of course, I can't not talk about the new medical school in Brampton that has already started and has learners and post-secondary students in those classrooms getting ready to be part of our Ontario workforce.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mr. Stephen Blais: Madam Speaker, last year a beautiful young girl in Ottawa named Juliet, who has Down syndrome, thrived in French immersion. With proper EA support, she succeeded academically. She earned awards. She showed exactly what true inclusion looks like when children are given the chance to achieve their best.

This year, it's completely different. Because of funding shortfalls, her school can only provide 30 minutes of support a day. And without that support, her teacher now gives her colouring pages, not math, so that she has something to do while the other children learn.

Her father said it in a way that none of us should forget: "She went from thriving to being just a bum in a seat." That's not inclusion. That's not dignity. That's not the education Ontario promises every child.

Madam Speaker, when will the Premier provide the funding needed to ensure students like Juliet receive real, meaningful support to flourish, not colouring sheets just to keep them busy?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question because it's exactly what we've been talking about now for weeks. We want an education system that focuses on students, parents and teachers and provides the necessary resources. That is, in part, why in his area we fired the school trustees: because they were spending too much time fighting each other and not enough time focusing on what's important, student achievement.

As I've said on numerous occasions, it doesn't matter that we're funding education to the highest level. It doesn't matter that we've hired thousands of teachers and EAs and support. What matters is the results that we're getting out of our education system.

And it is exactly why we brought in Bill 33. Unfortunately, an arrogant and out-of-touch Liberal party voted against that bill. It allows me to step in on behalf of parents, students and teachers to ensure that all kids have access to the highest level of education. It shouldn't matter who you are or what your level is, everybody deserves the right to have an education system that is focused on them. For far too long, that was not the case in the province of Ontario, and that's where we're going to double down to make sure we maximize resources for students, parents and teachers.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: We need to be honest about the situation in Ottawa because Juliet's parents don't need spin, and Juliet won't benefit from a blame game.

Two of this government's most senior political operatives—the deputy chief of staff to the Premier, and the chief of staff to the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery—are both trustees on the Ottawa Catholic School Board, the school board Juliet attends. If the Premier insists on blaming the board, or the minister does, they are in fact blaming their own senior political operatives. Even with that level of political influence on the Ottawa board, they cannot provide the funding for special education that children like Juliet need and deserve.

Madam Speaker, how can the Premier, or his minister, look parents in the eye and pretend that this is acceptable? Will he finally admit that the system is chronically underfunded, and is leaving children with disabilities to effectively be bums in seats instead of students in a classroom?

Hon. Paul Calandra: The member should know—when I was in his community just last Friday, when we announced significant resources for all of the boards there to build on to additional schools and to expand others—that what we are focused on is ensuring that there are maximized resources for classroom education. I actually have said on a number of occasions that what I want is for parents to hold me accountable: hold the Minister of Education accountable for showing leadership back in the Ministry of Education.

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Now, if an arrogant, out-of-touch Liberal from Ottawa would stop yacking, as he is right now—he should be embarrassed, right? He should be embarrassed because the leader of the Liberal Party failed students. He made schools unsafe. It was him who took police out of our schools to make them unsafe. It was he who closed down 600 schools across the province of Ontario.

When health care was suffering in Ottawa, what did he do? He closed hospitals, fired nurses and couldn't get the job done. Arrogant, out of touch, ineffective is the history of the Liberal Party of Ontario. We'll bring it all back—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

BAIL REFORM

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Speaker, my question is for the Associate Solicitor General for Auto Theft and Bail Reform.

Speaker, people are tired of seeing the same pattern repeat itself: a violent offender commits a crime, is released on bail and then reoffends within hours and within days. This broken bail system is leaving families anxious, communities on edge and police officers increasingly frustrated. Ontarians deserve better.

Under the Premier's leadership, our government has been consistent, urging the federal government to strengthen the bail rules and make meaningful improvements to the Criminal Code.

Speaker, can the Associate Solicitor General tell the House what steps he is taking to get real bail reform across the line and make our streets safer?

Hon. Zee Hamid: I thank the excellent member from Markham–Thornhill for the question. To be blunt, people across Ontario are sick and tired of seeing the same repeat offenders get a pass from our justice system. They’ve had enough. They want change, and they want it now.

Speaker, the federal law needs to meet the standard Canadians expect. That means cracking down on crime and keeping—

Interjections.

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

We have three minutes and 27 seconds—three minutes and 27 seconds before we start throwing people out at the end of the year.

I apologize. I will acknowledge the associate minister once again.

Hon. Zee Hamid: Thank you, Speaker. As I was saying, the federal law needs to meet the standard Canadians expect. That means cracking down on crimes and keeping violent, repeat offenders where they belong, behind bars. While Bill C-14 is a good first step, we all know a lot more needs to be done. Too many violent, repeat offenders continue to walk free, threatening our communities and putting public safety at risk. That cannot continue.

Since day one, our government has been pushing for real change that keeps dangerous, violent criminals behind bars and out of our communities. We will keep pushing the federal government to do the right thing and enact meaningful bail and sentencing reform.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member from Markham–Thornhill.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Associate Solicitor General, for that wonderful response.

While the federal government’s new Bill C-14 is a good first step, it just doesn’t go far enough. The Ontario public have been very clear on what they want to see: They want safer communities, they want real bail reform and they want the repeat offenders off our streets. Our government is speaking up for victims and backing our police so that repeat offenders stay behind bars.

1130

Madam Speaker, can the associate solicitor general tell the House what additional action our government is taking to protect our communities from violent offenders on our streets?

Hon. Zee Hamid: I see some front-line officers in the gallery today, and I thank them for their service and everything they’re doing.

This morning, we had debate on the second reading of the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act. If passed, this bill will help keep repeat offenders off our streets and keep our communities safer.

The main changes are:

- requiring full bail cash ordered by the court to be paid up front by the accused or their surety upon release;

- granting the province stronger tools to collect unpaid bail money, including taking it directly from their wages or selling their assets and putting liens on their property;

- creating a provincial database of sureties so courts can keep an eye and check who is guaranteeing an accused person’s release; and

- building up dedicated provincial teams to prosecute bail violations and improve oversight.

Speaker, we will keep working every single day to keep Ontario safe.

TENANT PROTECTION

MPP Catherine McKenney: Between January and October of this year, only 49,600 homes were started. That is barely 33% of this government’s own target. That is a massive failure to deliver housing supply when people desperately need homes.

At the same time, they were happy to deliver cuts to tenant protections and eviction safeguards at the very moment people need stability the most. The Federal Housing Advocate has found that eviction-first policies worsen homelessness.

Speaker, when experts and people with lived experience say that these policies cause harm, why does this government keep choosing displacement over prevention and eviction over housing stability?

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

Hon. Rob Flack: Thank you for the question. What this government is focused on is creating the conditions to build more homes. We are in a generational housing crisis; we acknowledge it. That’s why we brought forth Bill 17 and Bill 60, and we’re going to put those good deeds to work.

That’s why we reduced the HST for first-time homebuyers. That’s why we see rental starts at a record high in this province for three years. That’s why we see 17,000 new rental starts year over year, up 38%. We’re creating the conditions to get more homes built faster.

At the end of the day, I think you have to realize that we will protect the dream of home ownership. This government was elected to protect our economy, and we will be relentless in creating those conditions as we build faster, smarter and without delay.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Orléans has given a notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to the question given by the Minister of Education regarding special education funding. This matter will be debated on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, following private members’ public business.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I would now like to ask the pages to assemble in front of me.

As we wind down the fall legislative session, it's time to express our gratitude to the remarkable group of legislative pages who have been with us for the past four weeks.

To our pages: You have been trustworthy, hard-working and really essential to the smooth functioning of this chamber. We have been extremely fortunate to have you with us.

You leave Queen's Park with new friendships, a deeper understanding of parliamentary democracy and memories that will last a lifetime. You will return home to your studies for at least a week, and in time, I have no doubt that you will make important contributions to your communities. We expect great things from each and every one of you. Perhaps one day you will return here as a member of this very chamber. Wherever your paths lead, we wish you every success. In the meantime, happy holidays and all the best in 2026, as I know most of you will be heading off to high school next September.

I invite all members to please join me in thanking this outstanding group of legislative pages.

Applause.

DEFERRED VOTES

PROTECT ONTARIO BY CUTTING RED TAPE ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO EN RÉDUISANT LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES

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

Bill 46, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Call in the members. It's a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1135 to 1140.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I'd ask the members to return to their seats, please.

It's a Christmas miracle.

Hon. Steve Clark: It took seven weeks.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I know. Yes, it only took seven weeks.

On December 10, 2025, Ms. Khanjin moved third reading of Bill 46, An Act to amend various Acts.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Gates, Wayne	Pinsonneault, Steve
Anand, Deepak	Gélinas, France	Pirie, George
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gilmour, Alexa	Quinn, Nolan
Babikian, Aris	Glover, Chris	Racinsky, Joseph
Begum, Doly	Gretzky, Lisa	Rae, Matthew
Bell, Jessica	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rakocevic, Tom
Bourgouin, Guy	Gualtieri, Silvia	Riddell, Brian
Bressee, Ric	Hamid, Zee	Sabawy, Sheref
Calandra, Paul	Harris, Mike	Sandhu, Amarjot

Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Holland, Kevin	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Stan	Jones, Sylvia	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Ciriello, Monica	Jones, Trevor	Sattler, Peggy
Clark, Steve	Jordan, John	Saunderson, Brian
Cooper, Michelle	Kanapathi, Logan	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	Kernaghan, Terence	Smith, David
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Graydon
Darouze, George	Leardi, Anthony	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Denault, Billy	Lecce, Stephen	Stiles, Marit
Dixon, Jess	Mamakwa, Sol	Tabuns, Peter
Dowie, Andrew	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	McGregor, Graham	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dunlop, Jill	McKenney, Catherine	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fife, Catherine	Oosterhoff, Sam	Vanthof, John
Firin, Mohamed	Pang, Billy	Vickers, Paul
Flack, Rob	Parsa, Michael	Wai, Daisy
Ford, Doug	Pasma, Chandra	Williams, Charmaine A.
French, Jennifer K.	Piccini, David	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pierre, Natalie	

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

Nays

Blais, Stephen	Hazell, Andrea	Shamji, Adil
Clancy, Aislinn	Hsu, Ted	Smyth, Stephanie
Collard, Lucille	McCrimmon, Karen	Watt, Tyler
Fairclough, Lee	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	
Fraser, John	Schreiner, Mike	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 86; the nays are 13.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

COMMISSIONER FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LE COMMISSAIRE AUX DROITS DÉMOCRATIQUES

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

Bill 78, An Act establishing a Commissioner for Democratic Rights / Projet de loi 78, Loi créant le poste de commissaire aux droits démocratiques.

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

The division bells rang from 1146 to 1147.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): On December 10, 2025, MPP Glover moved second reading of Bill 78, An Act establishing a Commissioner for Democratic Rights.

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

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Rakocevic, Tom
Begum, Doly	Gilmour, Alexa	Sattler, Peggy
Bell, Jessica	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike

Blais, Stephen	Gretzky, Lisa	Shamji, Adil
Bourguin, Guy	Hazell, Andrea	Smyth, Stephanie
Clancy, Aislinn	Hsu, Ted	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Collard, Lucille	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Fairclough, Lee	Mamakwa, Sol	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	McCrimmon, Karen	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	McKenney, Catherine	Watt, Tyler
French, Jennifer K.	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	

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

Nays

Allsopp, Tyler	Ford, Doug	Pirie, George
Anand, Deepak	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Quinn, Nolan
Babikian, Aris	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Racinsky, Joseph
Bresee, Ric	Gualtieri, Silvia	Rae, Matthew
Calandra, Paul	Harris, Mike	Riddell, Brian
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Holland, Kevin	Sabawy, Sheref
Cho, Stan	Jones, Sylvia	Sandhu, Amarjot
Ciriello, Monica	Jones, Trevor	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Clark, Steve	Jordan, John	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cooper, Michelle	Kanapathi, Logan	Saunderson, Brian
Crawford, Stephen	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Dave
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Darouze, George	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Denaault, Billy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Dixon, Jess	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Downey, Doug	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dunlop, Jill	Parsa, Michael	Vickers, Paul
Fedeli, Victor	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Firin, Mohamed	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.
Flack, Rob	Pinsonneault, Steve	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 35; the nays are 62.

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

Second reading negated.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Point of order: I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, before the session ends, I really want to take a moment to thank everybody here, and the people that keep us going here in the Legislature.

I want to first start by thanking my team, my caucus. The incredible official opposition shadow cabinet here and our House team in particular, thank you for everything you have done every single day in this very short, condensed and intense session.

I want to thank the official opposition staff. They are the engine that keeps all of us going, helping us hold the government to account and serve the people who we represent.

I want to thank the hard-working assembly staff, starting with you, Madam Speaker. The Clerks, the broadcast and recording and translation services, the press gallery—all of you—the counsel, librarians, kitchen and maintenance staff: Thank you all. I really do want to wish you a restful and safe holiday.

I want to thank our pages, who are an incredible team. Can I just say, you are amazing. I feel like we're going to be seeing you back here in these seats one day.

Speaker, the work doesn't stop today. I truly look forward to hitting the road tomorrow and for the next couple of months, meeting Ontarians where they're at and bringing their voices back to Queen's Park here in the spring.

Happy holidays. I hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday. Thank you.

Applause.

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

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of our caucus to say a few words of thanks for this place, for all of you, even though it doesn't seem that way sometimes. We're all here. We're all trying to do the best that we can—I believe.

I want to thank our caucus in particular, especially Lucille, who puts up with me—the member from Ottawa—Vanier, I'm sorry—not that I'm singling anybody out. Mon ange gardienne est du côté, right? These folks are my guardian angels. They keep me—they have a hard time sometimes, but the people who are behind me are always ready to do what it is they have to do. They work together as a team. Their staff work together as a team. I feel very blessed to be able to lead them in here and to have them as friends and colleagues, as well as all of you.

As for the assembly staff, the Clerk, the folks at the table, people who routinely give me notices of dissatisfaction to fill out: You do amazing work. The people who keep us safe, the people who keep us fed, the people who keep this place clean, the people who make this—this is a very, very special place. I think we all know it.

I'm going to finish with a story that I tell every year, but I want to thank the pages first. You guys are great. It's so much fun having you here. You keep us grounded. You could never get away with what we get away with in here at school, so I hope we haven't set a bad example, especially today.

So there was a page about 10 years ago from Windsor—Tecumseh. Her name is Mira Gillis. She left here and she went to be a page in the Senate in Ottawa, and then she went to the London School of Economics. I'm not sure what she's doing right now. I've seen her a couple of times on a plane. When she came here, I asked the question that I've asked a lot of you: "What's the most interesting thing about this place, besides me?" It never works out. She said, "You know what, I came here and I was scared. I was really scared because this place is so big and far away, and you're all so important." Then she said, "And then I got here and I realized you're just like one big family." My jaw dropped because she's right. As I said—I'm going to say it again, folks—we are one big family, a dysfunctional family. We put the "fun" in "dysfunctional."

I want to thank you very much. Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, happy Kwanza.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize MPP Shreiner.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: On behalf of the small team in the corner here, I want to wish everyone happy Hanukkah, merry Christmas, happy new year and happy holidays.

One of the things that I love about this place is the relationships we're able to develop with each and every one of you across party lines. I know we all have our differences and our disagreements and our intense debates—I can be as intense as anyone—but at the end of the day, we're all here to serve the people of this province. It's an honour to do that work. I value the relationships we develop with each and every one of you. I hope you go home safe to your ridings and have an opportunity to spend time with family, friends, constituents and the people who are close to you during this break time.

Speaker, I want to congratulate you on finishing your first year as the first woman Speaker in Ontario history.

Applause.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I want to thank all the journalists for sticking around during scrums. You know, when you're last but not least, it's nice to know that you usually stick around for me.

I want to thank everyone at the table. You're kind of our de facto House leader over there, keeping us in line with what we do.

I want to thank each and all the staff who work here, especially the folks who clean the bathrooms every day because that is such important work, and those of you who keep us fed, keep the place running and make us look good for the public.

I also want to say to my team, who I know is up in the office watching: We may have the smallest team here, but because of your great work I think we punch well above our weight here in this corner of the House.

Happy holidays, everyone. We look forward to seeing you in the spring.

Applause.

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

Hon. Doug Ford: Thank you, Speaker. As a matter of fact, I'm going to start off with you, Speaker. You've done an incredible job, not just in being the first woman Speaker; I think we were all proud when we brought guests in. I've never seen the place look so good in my entire life. You cleaned it up, and—just get those lights on the outside of the building for us next year. But in saying that, Speaker, thank you so much.

I want to thank the Clerks and, of course, our pages. You're just wonderful young people. You're going to have such a bright future. You're going to be leading this province, no matter if it's in the private sector or the public sector. One of you, or maybe a few of you, may be standing right here, may be standing right at this desk. Unfortunately, Vic is still going to be here 30 years down the road, but it's all good.

You know, the legislative staff and all our staff here—but let's not forget, all of us, the people that are sitting back in our ridings. Without the people in our ridings, we

wouldn't even be here. When the phone call comes in, they're picking it up.

I love our team, just like each and every one of you. You are leaders. I never lose track that I would not be sitting here if it wasn't for each and every one of you.

Now, my favourite people in this building: my friends up in the media. Let's use Colin as an example. I've known him since 2010. As much as the tough questions come, you see his kids come in one day and you put that all aside because they have families as well. They need to earn that paycheque. They're no different than us. I just want to thank you for everything you do, as well.

Right here, in the Legislature—yes, we go back and forth. When the pages come into my office and we chat, I say, “Do you ever see, when we have a break, how the opposition—we're going over there, and we're talking back and forth?” Our great leader from Guelph, I'm coming up to pay you a visit, to visit a police station. This is how it works, even though we may disagree back and forth.

Then, the leader of the third party mentioned the young lady that said, “Boy, they're so powerful.” People come up to, I'm sure, each and every one of us: “You have so much power.” We have zero power. We have massive responsibility, and when we work together, we can do incredible things even though we disagree.

So I just want to thank everyone here. I want to wish everyone merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, happy holidays. Just think of this: There's no place in the world that can stand here and say, “We have 110 nationalities.” No matter if it's Hanukkah or Ramadan or whatever it is, we always respect everyone's religion, race, creed, colour. That's what makes Ontario the greatest place in the entire world.

I just want to say God bless each and every one of you. We're very grateful, each and every one of us, for sitting here. Have a very safe holiday.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Before we go, I would like to also say thank you to the incredible team of people that make this place hum every single day, make it beautiful, make it function; and to each and every one of you for making my first year as Speaker so memorable and so enjoyable.

I wish each and every one of you a healthy, happy and safe holiday season. Merry Christmas, and I look forward to seeing you in the new year.

On that note, a recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1201 to 1300.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I beg to inform the House that in the name of His Majesty the King, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Julia Douglas): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to proclaim Ontario University Athletics Week / Loi proclamant la Semaine des sports universitaires de l'Ontario.

An Act to amend the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006 / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur les parcs provinciaux et les réserves de conservation.

An Act to amend the Marriage Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur le mariage.

An Act to proclaim the month of September as Ethiopian Heritage Month / Loi proclamant le mois de septembre Mois du patrimoine éthiopien.

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

An Act to make statutory amendments respecting the transfer of jurisdiction within The Regional Municipality of Peel and the appointment of Deputy Provincial Land and Development Facilitators / Loi apportant des modifications législatives en ce qui concerne le transfert de compétences dans la municipalité régionale de Peel et la nomination de facilitateurs provinciaux de l'aménagement adjoints.

An Act to amend various Acts / Loi modifiant diverses lois.

An Act to proclaim the month of October as Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month / Loi proclamant le mois d'octobre Mois de la sécurité et de la protection de la vie privée des enfants en ligne.

An Act to proclaim Hospitality Workers Appreciation Day / Loi proclamant la Journée de reconnaissance des travailleuses et travailleurs de l'industrie de l'accueil.

An Act to enact the Buy Ontario Act (Public Sector Procurement), 2025, to repeal the Building Ontario Businesses Initiative Act, 2022, to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to the installation of certain signs and to amend section 10.1 of the Legislation Act, 2006 with respect to certain provisions of the Protecting Condominium Owners Act, 2015 / Loi visant à édicter la Loi de 2025 visant à encourager à acheter ontarien (approvisionnement du secteur public), à abroger la Loi de 2022 sur l'initiative favorisant l'essor des entreprises ontariennes, à modifier le Code de la route à l'égard de certains panneaux et à modifier l'article 10.1 de la Loi de 2006 sur la législation en ce qui concerne certaines dispositions de la Loi de 2015 sur la protection des propriétaires de condominiums.

An Act respecting the adjustment of the boundaries between the City of Barrie, the Township of Oro-Medonte and the Township of Springwater / Loi concernant la modification des limites territoriales entre la cité de Barrie, le canton d'Oro-Medonte et le canton de Springwater.

An Act to revive Gilda Investments Limited.

An Act to revive Marbro Holdings Ltd.

An Act to revive Social Asset Measurements Inc.

An Act to revive Andrew Zawadowski Medicine Professional Corporation.

An Act to revive 2512681 Ontario Inc.

An Act to revive Thistle town Lions Club.

An Act to revive Five Senses Productions Inc.

An Act to revive 2708634 Ontario Ltd.

An Act to revive 1581766 Ontario Ltd.

An Act to revive Ludger Michel Estates Limited.

An Act to revive 2163694 Ontario Ltd.

An Act to revive 730159 Ontario Ltd.

An Act to revive Sur-Leen Farms Limited.

An Act respecting Groves Memorial Community Hospital.

An Act to revive Honey Harbour Community Church Inc.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 74

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members, it has been brought to my attention that Bill 74, An Act to Amend the Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000 with respect to the disclosure of information obtained from the sex offender registry, currently ordered for second reading, is identical to the provisions contained in schedule 3 of Bill 46, An Act to amend various Acts, which passed at third reading earlier today.

This raises concerns respecting standing order 55, which provides that, "No motion, or amendment, the subject-matter of which has been decided upon, can again be proposed during the same session." Standing order 55 captures an ancient parliamentary principle which is known as the "same question rule." House of Commons Procedure and Practice explains this rule as follows at paragraphs 12.89 and 12.90 of the fourth edition:

"A decision once made cannot be questioned again but must stand as the judgment of the House. Thus, if a bill or motion is rejected or adopted, it cannot be revived in the same session.... This is to prevent the time of the House being used in the discussion of motions of the same nature, with the possibility of contradictory decisions being arrived at in the course of the same session....

"However, a motion on a topic similar to the topic of another motion already negatived or adopted is admissible, provided it is different enough to constitute a new question. Furthermore, no procedural rule prohibits moving a bill that amends or revokes an act passed during the same session."

The provisions of Bill 74 are identical to those contained within Bill 46. Now that the House has made its decision on the question of Bill 46, should Bill 74 be permitted to continue through the legislative process, the House would be asked to pronounce upon the same question a second time. In addition to being a superfluous use of the time of the House, further consideration of Bill 74 would put the House at risk of making contradictory or incompatible decisions in the same session.

I'd like to note for the benefit of all members that while the principle behind the "same question rule" is common among many of the Parliaments that we regularly look to for guidance and precedent, the application of the rule in

the practice of our Legislature has evolved somewhat differently from that of the other Parliaments.

Erskine May, the preeminent authority on Westminster parliamentary procedure, describes the traditional approach to the “same question rule” at paragraph 28.17 of the 25th edition as follows: “There is no general rule or custom which restrains the presentation of two or more bills relating to the same subject, and containing similar provisions. But if a decision of the House has already been taken on one such bill—for example, if the bill has been given or refused a second reading—the other cannot be proceeded with if it contains substantially the same provisions.”

This practice is echoed in House of Commons Procedure and Practice, fourth edition, at paragraph 12.90, which provides: “Although two similar or identical motions or bills may appear in the notice paper, only one motion or one bill may be proceeded with. Thus, if a decision is taken by the House on the first bill, for example, to defeat the bill or advance it through a stage in the legislative process, then the other similar or identical bill may not be proceeded with.”

Members will be aware that Bill 46 was introduced and given first reading on June 4, 2025, and given second reading and referred to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy on November 24, 2025. Bill 74 was introduced and given first reading on November 20, 2025, and since that time it has not proceeded further through the legislative process.

A strict adherence to the guidance of the parliamentary authorities would have required that as soon as the motion for second reading of Bill 46 was adopted, any further consideration of Bill 74 would be out of order.

However, the practice of this House has evolved such that when two identical or substantially similar bills stand on the orders and notices paper at the same time, the “same question rule” comes into effect only when a final decision is made on one of the bills. In other words, when one of the bills is either defeated at second or third reading or passed at third reading, the other bill is rendered out of order.

We saw this most recently in the 43rd Parliament at page 788 of the Journals for December 12, 2024, when a bill relating to Group of Seven Day and a private bill were both ruled out of order following the passage of identical bills at third reading.

This interpretation of the rule, supported by many years of practice, provides the greatest possible opportunity for consideration by the House. It avoids the risk of premature intervention by the Speaker while it is still possible for the House to make the ultimate determination on how best to proceed on the subject matter in question.

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On May 18, 2011, at pages 457-458 of the Journals, Speaker Peters delivered a ruling on the rule of anticipation, which is dependent on the same underlying principle as the same question rule. In explaining why the rule of anticipation is not strictly observed, Speaker Peters noted “that Speakers prefer to adopt the approach that ... accentuates members’ ability to submit motions and bills,

and to then debate, speak to and vote on them.” This is applied in practice such that the House is allowed the greatest possible opportunity for deliberation.

Now that the House has made its final decision on the question by adopting the motion for third reading of Bill 46, it would be out of order for the House to proceed with any further consideration of Bill 74 in the current session. Accordingly, I have directed that Bill 74 be removed from the Orders and Notices paper.

In the future, should any member be concerned about a potential violation of the same question rule, I encourage them to bring it forward as a point of order.

And I would like to clarify, this rationale is also reflected in our approach to the same question rule. The rule is applied in practice such that the House is allowed the greatest possible opportunity for deliberation.

Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Michael Parsa: That was a fantastic job, Speaker.

Joining us today in the west gallery is Rouzbeh Rahnavard, a member of the national volleyball team of Canada, joining us with his mother, a good friend of mine, Zahra Alavi. And his former coach and one of his mentors is here with him as well: the-one-and-only, coach Nasser Pishva.

Welcome to Queen’s Park, and good luck. Go, Team Canada!

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): And I’m sure you will represent us well. Congratulations.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I’m so happy to introduce Thurkathave Arulendran. She’s an amazing woman, community leader, realtor and volunteer.

She’s also accompanied by Elaiyaraja Kaliyaperumal, Vinothini Elaiyaraja and Thanikasalam Gunawathi.

Welcome to Queen’s Park.

This is their first time in Queen’s Park. They are up there.

Mr. Dave Smith: I just want to recognize Rachael up in the public gallery. She is one of our fantastic Ontario Legiskaters and one of the best female players we have on the hockey team.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I hope we get you back next year.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I beg to inform the House that today, the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated December 11, 2025, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Steve Clark: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 7, when the House adjourns today, it shall stand adjourned until 10:15 a.m. on March 23, 2026; and

That when the House adjourns on April 23, 2026, it shall stand adjourned until May 4, 2026; and

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be authorized to meet during the winter adjournment at the call of the Chair.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The government House leader has moved that, notwithstanding standing order 7, when the House adjourns today, it shall stand adjourned until 10:15 a.m. on March 23, 2026; and

That when the House adjourns on April 23, 2026, it shall stand adjourned until May 4, 2026; and

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be authorized to meet during the winter adjournment at the call of the Chair. Agreed?

I recognize the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I am so sorry. I will go back to the government House leader.

Hon. Steve Clark: I know the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane is a bit excited to get up and speak, but if you'll just indulge me for a few moments, I'd appreciate it.

First, given the fact that Premier spoke this morning, Speaker, I do want to thank the House. This has been an incredibly successful session of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. We've been able to collectively pass 12 government bills, six private members' bills, seven private members' motions, 15 private bills, and we held 55 committee meetings.

I say respectfully that in a session of Parliament, no matter whether it adheres to the original parliamentary calendar under the standing orders or it's amended by a government, when we are here, we have been able to do an incredible amount of work for the people of Ontario.

I also want to take the opportunity, as I did between the recess, as I did with the media, to thank the two-way conversation that we had with the official opposition, with the third party and with the independents. We might not have always agreed, and I can speculate that we might not agree with my motion today, but there was very respectful two-way conversation back and forth. For that, I want to thank the House leaders and all of the other members of the Legislative Assembly.

I feel very strongly that the government, using the standing orders, has the right to implement government legislation. Our government's record, both in this session of Parliament that we're adjourning and the session before: We went to the people, Speaker. I'll come back to that in a few moments. We went to the people in February, and for a third time, we were given a very strong mandate to develop a plan to protect our province, to protect Ontario. We are never going to be the 51st state. Under the

leadership of Premier Ford, as long as I stand here as a member of his government, I'm going to defend the government's right to work hard and get results for our constituents.

On the motion—and I'd be more than happy to hear what the other parties have to say, but I do want to say one thing. I was very open and transparent that it was the government's intention to table this motion with a return date of March 23, and I gave my reasons why. I think the most important people in this province are those that elect us to come here.

Interjection.

Hon. Steve Clark: I know the member for Waterloo doesn't agree with me because she was just heckling me. Again, I'll get, through you, Speaker, to the member for Waterloo. I'll get to her point in a moment.

I think now that the government has had this very, very successful session, now is a time for us to go back to our ridings to do two things: to help implement these very important policies that the government has put forward as their agenda in this session of Parliament, but also to ensure that we sit down with those people who marked an X in front of our names earlier this year to consult with them.

We have a lot of challenges in this country, and one of the biggest ones is Donald Trump and what he'll continue to do to Ontarians and Canadians. I think it's very, very important that we continue that very open dialogue with our constituents to ensure that we come back to Parliament, if the motion passes, on March 23 with a renewed sense of vigour to ensure that we do the right thing to ensure that those priorities that our constituents tell us to do get implemented in this session of Parliament.

To speak to the heckling on the other side about vacations and breaks, I would tell you this, Speaker: I was elected in this House in 2010—March 2010 by-election. No matter whether it was our government or a previous government, every single time I left this place, Speaker, every single time, I worked every day for the people of Ontario, whether I was in this chamber or whether I was back home in Brockville, and I will continue to do that. I will continue to do that just like I've done from the first day I got involved in the politics in the early 1980s. Every time I'm back home, I work hard, and I get results, and I listen to people.

1320

So this decision that if you're not sitting here in the Legislative Assembly that you're somehow on vacation, while it's a great thing for the opposition to say because it's a great sound bite, it can no further be from the truth when we leave this place.

Interjections.

Hon. Steve Clark: And if the member from Waterloo wants to continue her rhetoric, she can have the floor. But I will tell you this again, Speaker, over her shouts and her heckles: that I will continue, as is every member of the PC team. We'll go back to the ridings, we'll refocus on the people that matter, our constituents, ensuring that their priorities and their dreams and their hopes are imple-

mented just like the 12 bills, the six private bills, the seven private members' motions, the 15 private bills and those committee hearings, which are so very important.

Speaker, I'm pleased to table this bill on behalf of our government. But make no mistake; the work for legislators is not over, and we'll continue until the House resumes, if the motion passes, on March 23.

Keep heckling.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in this House and today as opposition House leader.

I don't think it's going to be a surprise that I am going to speak against this motion to delay the return of the House. I'm not going to speak against the part that we should adjourn today; I think we are all ready to go home.

In some ways, I would like to echo the government House leader. I think, from our side, particularly in my relations with the government House leader, with members on the government side, with members on all sides, we have a pretty good personal relationship. We definitely differ on philosophical issues and differ very strongly. But on a personal note, if our breakfast table every morning is any indication, we have members from all sides stop and talk to each other at breakfast, and it's really important. We jab each other, but we don't attack.

Having said that, it's also not unique that members on the government side work when they're in their riding, as members on the opposition side do. Anyone who wants to get into this line of work, public service, knows that you're on all the time when you're home, when you go to the grocery store, when we all organize meetings, but we're on all the time. And that is something we sign up for. That is part of our job, and on all sides. The way that you connect with people is that you are accessible, by phone, by email but also when you're walking down the street. Why do we all go to so many events? I don't know how many events everybody else goes to, but I try to go through at least three every weekend in three different parts of my riding, and my riding is seven hours long and five hours wide. And it's not unique. We all do that.

I live a long ways away from here. Members who live in Toronto, they have events every night. I'm far enough away that if someone calls: "Hey, John, the Legion is doing something," well, I'm in Toronto. It's seven hours home.

Okay. So everyone has different challenges and we all work very hard. I'm not disputing that at all. But we also have a role to do here. And while the government passed a lot of legislation, I wouldn't say that they have been that successful at actually getting everyone's voice into that legislation. They're good at passing legislation quickly, and in the history of this government—correct me if I'm wrong, and other people will know—how many major bills have they had to rescind? Like, rescind; like, "Oops, can we just make this disappear?"

The government wins elections, and that's a measure of success. But creating bad legislation, that isn't. That will be your legacy. And that is something you can actually

change. That's something you can change by being actually thoughtful with how this place works.

Now, I get it. I get it. You don't like question period. So anything that you can do—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: One member is saying, "Oh, we love question period." Well, obviously your front bench doesn't.

So, I get it. I hardly ever get a question, but I love question period. But, come on, it's obvious that the government doesn't like question period, so whatever they can do to get less questions, less question periods, they seem to think it's to their advantage. But I don't think it's to the advantage of Ontarians, because it's our job to hold the government to account. They shouldn't be afraid of question period, if they had solid legislation and ethical government. Quite frankly, if you look at question period in this last session, that's an example that—at least in our opinion and the opinion of many Ontarians—that hasn't been the case.

So I get it, that the government doesn't like question period. And let's be honest—I'm trying to be as honest as possible here—as long as the public doesn't pay attention, they can skate—and not "legiskate," Speaker, but skate, right? Because as long as people aren't paying attention—but there will come a time when people will pay attention.

The speed of putting bills through, the number of bills you put through is not the measure of good government. A measure of good government, I would say, is that you don't have to rescind bills. We just went through the dissolution of Peel, and then the dissolution of the dissolution, and then—I don't know what the last one was called. Your government treats the legislative process like baseball. You know? Strike: "Oh well, we'll write another piece of legislation." Strike: "We'll write another."

Again, you win an election and you have the right to put your agenda forward. But if you actually used this place to its maximum potential—used the structure to its maximum potential—you wouldn't have to redo bills, like redo whole bills. You would go through the committee structure, use the committee structure the way it's supposed to be used, actually have reasoned debate at committee and actually have reasoned debate here. And when people say, "Wait a second, this one won't work," actually make an amendment. Accept an amendment. There have been a few bills where the government has had to make a whole bunch of amendments themselves, because it went so fast that they couldn't catch their own mistakes.

But please, quit trying to act like you have all the answers, that you're the only ones that have all the answers, because we all know that's not how it works. I don't have all the answers. You don't have all the answers. This place is put together the way it's done so that we, despite our differences—and you're the government; you have the right to put your agenda forward. We're the official opposition—and the other opposition parties as well—to criticize. And where that criticism is relevant and accurate, hopefully, when a bill is being developed, you

go, “Oh, never thought of that. How about we change that?” That’s how this place is supposed to work.

1330

You know what? To make good legislation takes time. Now, we don’t want to sit here forever. We just had the Speaker make a good ruling about not wasting the time of the Legislature by debating two bills that were exactly the same—I’m paraphrasing, but something like that. We respect that ruling. None of us wants to waste the time of the Legislature, of the staff. We do not want to hold back the province while we debate minutiae, but we’re not debating minutiae here. We’re debating laws that will affect this province for many, many years. We should take the time to do it right, and we’re not.

Anyone who is going to tell me that this government has got a great record of putting forward legislation that it doesn’t have to retract again—that is something that is just not the case. They have got a terrible record of that, regardless of whether I disagree philosophically or not with their legislation.

The legislation about the region of Peel—I am not an expert. Actually, I know very little about the region of Peel. I know it’s a great part of the province. I know a lot of people from the region; it’s a great part of the province. But I do know that if you make a bill saying, “Oh, we’re going to dissolve,” and then, “Oh, we’re not going to dissolve” and “Oh, now we’re going to kind of semi-dissolve,” I do know that’s not serving the region of Peel because you never actually took the time to figure out how it’s supposed to work.

Perhaps if the first time you put the legislation forward you had actually gone through the committee process, taken the time, perhaps you would have gotten it right, or close to right, the first time. Because all legislation is a living document. Legislation is a living thing. That’s why we have a Legislature. You don’t set down a bunch of rules and then say, “Hey we don’t have to come back for the next 100 years because we came up with all of the ideas.”

That’s why these parliamentary systems were developed, because many years ago, when we had—we have a monarch, and I’m supportive of our monarchy, but many, many years ago, the monarch made all the decisions. That’s when we developed the legislative process, because that didn’t work that well in that case.

Now, the government House leader talked about that we need to do everything we can to defend this province, this country, against the threat from our former friend—hopefully our friend again in the future—President Trump, and the people who support him. I agree. I agree, and there are many people in the United States of America who also agree. I don’t know if you’ve heard about the No Kings protests. Well, what they’re protesting against, really, is that one or a couple of people make the legislation that everybody has to live under, as opposed to using the processes that were developed. That’s kind of—not to the same degree, but it is kind of what the government is doing here too.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: They are. They’re shortening; they are eliminating as much scrutiny, as much accountability as they can.

As an incumbent politician, am I going to benefit from being home until March 23? Yes. Yes, as an incumbent, I’m going to be at every event. And actually, I’m going to meet with people from all sides because I like to listen to the opinion of people who I disagree with. I do, because I learn from that, and sometimes I change my opinion. That’s what we should do as a group as well. Sometimes you don’t have all the ideas and somebody on the other side says, “Have you thought about this?” But that is not what you’re doing as a group, because you eliminate every chance you get to listen to the other side—every chance you get.

I haven’t looked it up—I would like to; I’m going to, at some point, look up how many questions in this session that the Premier has actually answered. Because, to me, the Premier of the province should at minimum answer the lead questions from the leaders of the official opposition and the third party—at the minimum. That is what accountability is. That is what leadership is. That is not happening. And by making even fewer question periods, it becomes less obvious. It’s stuff like that that leads to making bad legislation and legislation that doesn’t last.

You have a right; you have the ability to put through your agenda. You have the choice to try and make your agenda last by putting forward, putting through as solid legislation as you can, and then allowing that legislation full scrutiny in the Legislature before it becomes the law of the land.

You have the tools—you put the tools in place, actually. Your government has put the tools in place. I believe when I started here—and I might not have the numbers exactly correct, but it’s with this government that the rules were changed so you can introduce legislation on a Monday and basically have it passed the next week. Well, great, but you have run the risk of passing bad legislation. Just because you can ram it through the House doesn’t mean that it’s good legislation, and that’s what you’re choosing to do again by making the upcoming session as short as possible.

There is one thing that I give credit where credit’s due, and I got a note that you’re breaking up the one five-week session. I give credit where credit’s due: That’s a good thing.

I can’t remember—no, I can remember. I don’t know how it’s done currently, but it used to be that when you get elected—I was elected in 2011—you get a crash course on how the Legislature works from the Clerk. I knew nothing about this place, and I remember the Clerk at that time was Deb Deller. I really like Deb Deller. We had all the new MPPs from all parties—this wasn’t a partisan thing; it comes from the Clerk. She was explaining how the Legislature worked, and she said, “There’s a three-week session and then you have a week break, and you’ll need to regenerate a bit. And then there’s a four-week session and you’ll have a week break, and sometimes there’s a five-week session. I would advise that after five weeks,

you not book any meetings for a couple of days because you will need to recharge.” And I think anyone here knows that, right?

But I was a dairy farmer. I’m sitting in the back of the of the room thinking, “Wait a second.” When we started milking cows, I started from scratch, right? Any business knows this, when you start. My wife and I milked cows in one stretch for five years, seven days a week. And I’m thinking, “These jokers can’t work for five weeks? What a bunch of wusses.” I actually didn’t use “wusses” in my head, but it’s unparliamentary, what I was thinking. But after my first five-week session, I was ready to kill people, including my own people. The Clerk, Deb Deller, was right.

1340

The fact that you’ve broken up this five-week session—I agree with that, because we do need to recharge. I don’t disagree with the government House leader that you need to be able to recharge. But we also need the ability to be able to hold the government to account. You actually need us to do that. You need to hear the other side.

I’m going to close with this: Often stakeholders, individuals, community groups—and I think this happens with all governments—actually don’t tell you exactly what they think because they’re afraid to offend you. Everyone is afraid to offend the government because the government holds, in many cases, the purse strings, so you never get an unvarnished opinion of what people are really thinking. I truly believe that. You never get an unvarnished opinion. Very few people will come up to Premier Ford, have a good discussion with him and tell him he’s out to lunch on something. That’s just human nature. But by minimizing the time in the Legislature, you are minimizing the opportunity—and it is an opportunity—to hear from the other side. That is to the detriment of all Ontarians. That’s why I’m speaking against and will be voting against this motion.

Thank you very much for paying attention.

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

MPP Tyler Watt: I will be sharing my time with the member for Toronto–St. Paul’s, the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, the member for Don Valley East and the member for Ottawa South.

First of all, I just want to wish everyone Merry Christmas and happy holidays. Coming up on my one year as a new MPP, it has been a wild ride, but it’s been really awesome to get to know everyone in every party.

Being newish, still, to here, I’ve asked some more senior colleagues of mine, is this normal the way that this government operates? The way that we just speed through legislation—80% of bills have been time-allocated, meaning we have less time to debate them. Pretty much no bills go to committee, so the other parties can’t put forward amendments. And even on the rare occasion that it goes to committee, the government votes down every single amendment that’s put forward.

Today the Premier had a lovely speech at the end of question period saying that we need to work together, that

it’s better when we work together. But this government doesn’t work together. They only do their own thing.

Interjection.

MPP Tyler Watt: You rushed—this government rushed into an early winter election to protect Ontario from Donald Trump. We sat for seven weeks, and then we took off five months. We came back, sat for another couple of weeks, rammed through a bunch of legislation, and now we’re going to be off for an extended winter break.

Listen, I am so excited to get back to Nepean and to be able to meet with constituents. But it is important to them that their elected officials are up here representing them, that they are sharing their voices and concerns. Trust me, I get tons of emails every single day from constituents that are worried about legislation and the direction that this government is going in.

On top of that, there are a lot of scandals going on right now. Every day we’re learning something new about the Skills Development Fund. It’s best that we can actually stand in here, ask the question directly to the Premier and try to hold them accountable. I can’t help but wonder if this extended break has something to do with that. Anyway, I’m going to end it there, and I’m going to pass it off to the member for Toronto–St. Paul’s.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Toronto–St. Paul’s.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I too am finishing up my first I guess year in office—not even, but 2025—and it has been really interesting to watch the process and how things evolve. I too have watched from afar for years and years, but seeing the process first-hand is fascinating. I have to say that we’ve spent the past months debating bill after bill at breakneck speed, many of them. The House asked again and again to rush legislation, as if scrutiny was some kind of an inconvenience, rather than a cornerstone of our democracy.

But as we approached the end of this session, we were all wondering, how long is this recess or break going to be for? Understanding what’s been happening across the aisle and the scrutiny that this government has been facing day after day in question period, we all kind of guessed that there was going to be a long recess. It would be that much easier for the government to take its time; get out of the spotlight, so to speak; get the media away from this place for a while and regroup; figure out what they’re going to do; do some damage control; and then come back hoping that maybe we’d all forgotten.

Let’s see: We’re coming back March 23. My colleague from Etobicoke–Lakeshore did some quick math for us and figured that this session is going to be eight weeks instead of 13, so we’re short five weeks as was previously scheduled.

It raises a question of, why? Well, if I were to think about it logically, I wouldn’t want to be in the spotlight that much if I were this government right now. That’s reason number 1.

Reason number 2: scrutiny of the bills. You would think if the bills were as solid as we hear, as well-crafted and beneficial as the government claims, then why the rush?

Why wouldn't they want us to languish in their brilliance? Why the refusal to allow members the time to fully analyze the consequences? I guess they wouldn't want to, right? Why the need to push everything through before committees, experts, government backbenchers, can properly understand what is being voted on? It's all adding up to just getting out of the spotlight and taking the attention off them.

I just have to wonder, always, also: If this government is so proud of its agenda, why are they so afraid to come back here and defend it, day after day? We are elected to work. We are elected to debate. We are elected to hold power to account. That is the job that Ontarians sent us here to do. Yet this government is choosing deliberately to delay the Legislature, to shorten sittings, to limit debate, to avoid the very scrutiny that strengthens public policy. Delaying this Legislature is not just a scheduling choice; it's a disservice to the people that we represent and it's an avoidance of responsibility.

And again, if the government is so confident that its bills are visionary or transformative or, as they like to say, the best path forward for Ontario, then why the relentless rush? Good legislation can withstand debate. Good legislation can stand on its own because it's built on sound policy and because it can survive transparency.

But Speaker, the problem goes even deeper than legislative speed. While this government prolongs its recess and dodges accountability in this chamber, important committees aren't working. They're not meeting, including the very committee that I sit on, and that is the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. And just like the previous session, before it ended, we asked that we carry on our meetings and have the chance to meet the appointees, the candidates for the critical government agencies that we make decisions on—they make huge decisions for our communities—to meet throughout the session break, so we can all interview the candidates, have a chance to see where they stand, if they are appropriate, if they are beyond a donor or insider. Many of them are—I can tell you, probably 90% are connected in one way or another.

But no, just today, the committee voted, "Nope, we're not going to sit again. We're not going to sit during the break. Whoever we appointed is going to get through without one second of scrutiny." Not one second. Tell me how that's good governance. Tell me how that serves the people of Ontario, when you're taking away an opportunity to look at the appointees to committees that make massive decisions.

In my riding of Toronto—St. Paul's, these are people who are appointed to the Landlord and Tenant Board—huge issue in my riding: AGIs, issues with renters, problems with affordability and with people worried about being evicted from their homes. And for the Human Rights Commission, you name it—all kinds of people that have a huge impact, the decisions they make, but they are just automatically appointed by this government with absolutely no oversight.

We've seen far too many of these types of circumstances there now, where the appointees are filled not

those with the strongest experience or expertise, but with the strongest political connections and the most dollars, not necessarily the merit. Is that who we want making decisions that affect millions of Ontarians? I can tell you, Speaker, it is not just the standard my constituents expect, it's not the standard that this Legislature expects and has upheld for decades and it's certainly not the standard that Ontarians deserve.

1350

Now, if there is a silver lining—I take great offence to hearing people in the public say, "Oh, they're on a break. They're not working." That is poppycock because what we do is go back to our ridings and continue the work that we did prior to the session—and we do on Fridays and weekends—to listen to our constituents, to hear their concerns, to continuously meet with them and advocate. We had all that work, and we'll continue to do all that work to bring it here to inform the legislation that this government is crafting so that we can advocate for these people in committee of all kinds and during question period. That's our job—to take their voices and amplify them here—and we're being denied that by five more weeks this session, and who knows how many more weeks in the sessions to follow. But the silver lining is that we are going back to our constituency. We are going to hear those voices again. We are going to come back stronger.

We're not going to forget about the skills development slush fund scandal. We're always going to be watching it from wherever we are. We're going to remember the AGIs that are being dealt to tenants who are struggling. We're going to remember the food banks that, hopefully, do get this money from the \$80 million that the government is willing to pour down the drain before they want to give it to a food bank—we won't forget that. So if they're not addressing the urgent issues here, we are going to continue to address them for you.

I want to thank the people who I've met here on the other side of the aisle. I have been getting to know some of you and intend to do more of that. So I look forward to that positively in the new year.

I wish you all the very best happy holidays and a really, really happy 2026. Thank you.

And now, to my colleague.

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

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I rise today to really express my firm opposition to the proposed changes to our calendar for this year. I find it quite amazing, I have to say. The opening remarks focus on the reasons that we're here to serve the people that elected us. I actually take that privilege to heart.

When I got elected for the first time in February, I had worked 27 years in health care—something I loved—which, by the way, is work every single day of the year, all the time, when you're working at a hospital.

But, you know, I think this was the biggest surprise for me. I was going back to June and remembering how we were informed, at that time, that this last session we just had was going to be shortened—that we weren't going to

come back until near the end of October. I was disappointed, genuinely, because I actually take it to heart. It's my job to listen. I encourage people to send me information into my inbox, talk to me at events. I try to hold true to that and come here and share what matters to them. And here we are again: Either you just don't care what the people of Etobicoke–Lakeshore have to say to the government, or you don't think their views could help to make the laws we're forming better. I don't really understand that.

The other thing I've been trying to figure out since I got here is the special role of opposition in our democratic system. Yes, there's a special role for governing, and some of you have done that. But some of you have done opposition, and you know it's actually a special role to bring other ideas, to open up some ways that we can think about things. Again, I've tried to take that very seriously since the day I came in this Legislature on behalf of my own community.

Now, the other thing that I am frustrated with, with this move, is it doesn't just reduce our time right in here. It doesn't just reduce our debate time in the Legislature. It means that we're also not meeting with a whole bunch of stakeholders that make time to come and meet with us here at Queen's Park. We do these one-on-ones in our offices all day long here, when we're not in this chamber. We hear the perspectives of farmers, of firefighters, of miners, of people working in health care, people working in education. It informs us, and we're accessible to all. That, we are giving up with this.

The other thing is committees. I'm a member of the public accounts committee. That reviews the contents of Auditor General reports. It's meant to be more non-partisan and help to give us a sense of how we can improve our systems of government, how we improve the management of programs. The way we develop and deliver child and youth mental health services was a really important discussion this year. The way we manage things like the Skills Development Fund—being very serious about it; it's taxpayers' money to the tune of \$2.5 billion. We're just trying to make things better. Now that committee also will not sit during this period of time.

Responses to petitions, responses to questions to the table: There is a requirement that government actually respond to the people that took time to put their questions in. It's based on sitting days. So the less sitting days, the less time. Now nobody will get a response to a petition until way after March because we only just sat for six weeks. All this means that people, the people that voted for us, the people that brought us here—we're limiting all of the ways that they can help to guide and inform what we're doing.

The silver lining is that, of course, I love spending time in the community of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, and I'll spend tons of time doing that. I will travel around for my critic roles, around this province, for hospitals, mental health, addictions, homelessness. I will go to as many communities as I can as well in this time, and I'll make sure that I'm well informed when I come back in March.

At the same time, I really feel we owe it to people. The feds are back at the end of January. Why are we not back until March? With that, I'll turn it over to my colleagues.

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

Mr. Adil Shamji: I rise today to register my strong disapproval of this motion, to any delay to the resumption of the next Parliament. Look, the reality is that in 2025, our Legislature sat for fewer weeks than any other Parliament since 2007, and it sat for such a short period of time against the backdrop of an Ontario that very much needs its elected leadership to stand up and fight for them.

In the last election, the government said they were here to protect Ontario, but we have a health care crisis, a housing crisis, an affordability crisis. We also have a Premier who barely answers questions during question period, who rushes through legislation without following due process, who is leaving unfinished business on the table and is not doing the work to actually fundamentally address the crises that we face.

Of course, whenever Parliament is not in session, it is an incredible opportunity to be present in our communities. I fully intend to do that and to stand up for my constituents. But my constituents also expect me to stand up to fight for them here in this Parliament. If this motion passes, it robs my constituents of that opportunity for me to stand up for them.

So I'm here to say on behalf of the people of Don Valley East, on behalf of the Ontario Liberal caucus here, that we want to be here. We want to work across party lines. We want to bring great ideas forward. Yes, we want to bring trust and accountability to our politics so that Ontario citizens get the democracy, the Parliament and, most importantly, the results that they deserve, and this government has not delivered.

With that, I want to turn it over to my colleague from Ottawa South.

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

Mr. John Fraser: The news that we are not coming back till March 23—I mean, I can't say I didn't expect it. But what it does is it doesn't respect this place. All these folks here who help us—you, Speaker, the table, everybody here. We'll only end up sitting—if this government does it the way they're doing—16 weeks.

You've got to ask yourself, why is this place not important to the government? Because it's not. Committee is not important. Question period is not important. No? The Premier treats question period like it's a spare in high school. That's what it's like. It's like a spare. Why is that?

Here's why. Here's exactly why. Number 1, the Skills Development Fund: the story of money to strip club owners, to bars and nightclubs, to dental practices, to people who have steered us in the wrong direction and had forensic audits.

1400

Then we have people who took us for a \$2-million ride in the pandemic—took our money and gave us something that wasn't what we ordered, and we still gave them

money. They don't want to answer those questions. They don't want to answer those questions here or when the media is gathered out there. That's number 1.

The Skills Development Fund: It's wrong. What's happening there is wrong. There are people who don't have a job, there are people who can't feed themselves, there are people who are just trying to pay the rent or get their kids clothes and we're shovelling hundreds of millions of dollars out the door to people with no strings attached, based on their connection to the government.

The other reason is—it's almost eight years. This government has been in power for almost eight years and it's in decline. Why is it in decline? Because we've had eight years of class sizes that kept growing. We've had eight years of special education being starved—literally starved—in this province. And the mental health crisis in our schools—eight years of that; it hasn't been addressed. All you have to do is look at the EQAO results, the scores. It's all on them. They don't want to answer that. They don't want to answer in here, they don't want to answer out there, they don't want to answer in committee.

This place is the centre of our democracy here in Ontario. This is a thing that people fought and died for. This is a thing that we all have to honour and hold high because it's important. It's important that the people's voices are heard here, on that side, on this side, over here, back there. When we're not here, it's not happening.

It's wrong, you all know it's wrong, and we will not be supporting it.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I will be sharing my time with the member for Kiiwetinoong.

I am rising today to speak in strong opposition to this motion. I have to say, with this proposed delay to the return of the Legislature in 2026, next year is shaping up to look very much like what we experienced this year in Ontario. The standing orders of the Legislature map out legislative sittings of 24 weeks each year. In 2025, this Legislature has only sat for 13 weeks.

It's not just a question of filling those weeks, Speaker. It's a question of doing the business that the people who elected us to serve in public office expect us to do.

Last year, maybe the government could have said, "Well, we had that election and that caused the changes to the sitting schedule of the Legislature." But remember that election. That was an all-hands-on-deck "Elbows Up" election: "We are one Team Ontario. We've got to work together to deal with the existential threat to our economy posed by Donald Trump." People were concerned about that. People we talked to during the campaign wanted to see MPPs work across party lines and fight for the well-being of the people of this province.

So, what happened after election day? It was a month and a half later before we got into this Legislature and took our seats, and we sat for six weeks, Speaker.

Then, looking forward to the return of the Legislature after Labour Day, which is what the standing orders require, this government decided that we were only going

to come back here after Thanksgiving. It was another six-week delay before we got back into the Legislature. That impacts the time that we have, as legislators, to do the people's business.

But this government has come up with a new way of moving legislation through this place. We have limited second reading debate to six and a half hours, which is the minimum time allowed for debate in this place. We have skipped committee all together. We have excluded the voices of the people of this province from any ability to participate in making the laws that are going to affect people in Ontario. We have then come back to this place for a third reading debate that is typically only two hours, for 36 minutes.

So, yes, the government doesn't need all those weeks that are set out in the standing order because they've got this new way of fast-tracking legislation that limits the ability of MPPs to bring the voices of the people that we represent to legislative debates, and it excludes the public from participating in law-making in this province.

I get that this government finds democracy to be very inconvenient. I get that accountability and transparency are not high on their priority list. And it's no wonder, Speaker. They come here day after day. The Premier is called to account as to what his Minister of Labour was doing with the Skills Development Fund, doling out public dollars to Conservative donors and insiders, to strip club owners, to companies that are being investigated by the OPP anti-rackets squad, to people who have had a record of falsifying documents in the public. I understand why the government wants to minimize the number of question periods; they want to minimize the number of sitting days. But that doesn't make it good for the people of this province.

We need to ensure that people have opportunities to bring their stories to the floor of this Legislature through their MPPs, who are here to advocate on behalf of the people who elected us. We have lots of stories. Just like my riding in London West, I am sure that people are hearing from constituents around this province about the real concerns that people have with jobs and the economy right now. This Premier is a jobs disaster—another issue that government does not want to take responsibility for. They have done nothing to come up with a jobs plan to deal with the rising numbers of people who are unemployed and looking for work. Businesses are not posting jobs anymore. We are seeing fewer vacancies, more people looking for work and the unemployment numbers just keep going up and up. Certainly, they are in London, Speaker.

We know that people across this province are struggling with cost of living, struggling with food insecurity. We're seeing a record number of people going to the food bank. In London, we just got a report saying that one in three households are now food insecure. Forty-three per cent of the people who are using the services of London Food Bank are children. Many people who go to the food bank are on social assistance, understandably, because our rates are so meagre that people can't afford rent and groceries

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think, actually, the story that the member from Kiiwetinoong just shared with us—it's very personal, very politically driven, because we need legislation to address these personal situations that he has the courage to share with us. We should have the courage to show up to find solutions. And the House leader, in his introduction of this March 23 return date, said the people expect us to work. Yes. You know what? The people of Ontario expect us to work in this place because this is the only place where you can make laws, where you can correct the injustices that are happening across this province. You can't do it in the riding. You can learn in your riding, and we're supposed to take what we've learned in our riding and bring it back here and propose solutions.

That's what we've been trying to do through our leader's advisory council on tariff response.

I talked about this yesterday: The owl is on that side of the House. The government is supposed to embrace the wisdom of having the responsibility of being in power. You should look at this owl a few more times. And our job is the hawk: We're supposed to hold you to account. We cannot hold you to account if we are not in our places here. This is all by design.

When a government shows you who they really are, you should believe them, Madam Speaker. We have seen reduced committee work. We have seen fast-tracked legislation, omnibus pieces of legislation. We have seen this government craft legislation that is designed to fail because you failed to do the public consultation. One quick example here is Bill 72, which you didn't take to committee. I met with the Ontario Construction Secretariat, and they were desperate to inform this piece of legislation, and what they're asking for is a robust pre-qualification framework for contractors engaged in publicly funded construction and infrastructure.

Our northern members could talk about who's getting contracts in this province and who's not taking care of our roads, but this is Brian Barron—this is the Ontario Construction Secretariat—who says that “A modernized procurement approach centred on comprehensive pre-qualification offers a constructive path forward. In jurisdictions that have this prequalification-based model, there's reduced cost escalation.” We should care about that. Higher quality workmanship: We should care about that. Healthier local economies: In a tariff war, we should care about this and improved alignment with government policy.

What we've seen is this government just ram through this institution. You've changed the rules of engagement several times now. A piece of legislation should not pass in six and a half hours at second reading. It's ridiculous that this is the state of Ontario right now. The democratic process matters. What you have done, just by this one example of Bill 72—I mean, the minister is here. I hope the minister hears the call from the Ontario Construction Secretariat for a pre-qualification framework for contractors. I hope that you hear that, but I won't get a chance to have this conversation with you in the very public and transparent way when I'm back in my riding. The current low-bid award model in public procurement is not working. This is just one small example to anchor the very emotional story that our colleague shared with us.

1420

There is a growing trend here in this place: We are not sitting as much as we should. We have only sat for 28 days—28 days in this session. You are shutting us out for 102 days. We only sat for 51 days in total in 2025.

I mean, there was the self-serving, opportunistic election that you called. The fact that you've now changed the rules—and this Premier, who saunters into this place to have a chat, to gossip, but can't stand or sit in his place and answer a question of His Majesty's official opposi-

tion—shows a special new level of disdain for democracy.

Also, a Premier who rules this province based on polling is the very definition of populism. We've seen what happens in the United States when you have a leader of the free world who thinks that the rules do not apply to him, and that is our reality right here.

So the House leader can pretend that this is business as usual. This is not business as usual. This is a backsliding of our democratic rights as parliamentarians. When you silence us, you silence the people that we serve. When you reduce our attempt to hold you to account, you are showing who you really are.

We are in a very dangerous place in the province of Ontario. In politics, being deceived is no excuse. Do better.

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

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: I'm often asked about the politics we see south of the border: What are my thoughts, what are my fears and what can be done to protect Canada? My response has been the same for some time now: Let's do everything we can do to protect our own democracy.

I've spoken in this place about how democracies are threatened, and we see the steady erosion of democracy in the United States. At first, it seemed like seemingly innocent steps that those in power take to reduce the participation, the contribution and the opinions of those who are governed.

In Canada, we have a strong parliamentary process. However, the government of the day has the authority to not only introduce legislation that should make people's lives better, but they also can choose to do otherwise. Bills are normally introduced, debated, studied at committee, amended, debated again and then voted upon. We make sure that we are fully educated, that we understand the impact and the consequences of whatever bills we choose to vote for or against. We make sure we understand. But not this government.

I have to give a shout-out to my NDP colleague, who I think got it right: The government doesn't care what the people of Ontario think. There's no need to study bills at committee; they're just perfect the way they are—no need for experts to provide their opinions, no need for Ontarians to provide their thoughts and concerns. The government knows what is best for the people and doesn't require anyone else's thoughts or inputs. Does that sound like anybody else you know? It sounds pretty authoritarian to me.

Historical democracies were weakened in just this fashion. The very foundation of our parliamentary system requires the government to legislate and for the opposition to challenge the government. Our own Legislative Assembly of Ontario rules describe our democratic process as follows: “In Parliament, members of provincial Parliament represent their constituents and participate in the legislative process—they introduce bills, propose amendments to current legislation, and vote on bills and motions” in order to make the laws that the people of Ontario will abide by.

But this government continues to take steps to subvert the will of the people, the very people who elected us all to represent them in this place. Don't care what people think about your legislation? Well, limit debate. Don't care what experts think about your legislation? Well, skip committee. Are you tired of the people of Ontario discovering just how rich insiders, donors, strip club owners, family dentists, former Conservative staff members, friends, organizations under criminal investigation continue to get millions? Shut down Parliament. Speaker, the people of Ontario elected this government to challenge Donald Trump, not to imitate him. And here we are, Speaker.

Shutting this Legislature down for five more weeks is not democracy, because with no accountability, you cannot have democracy. Incremental changes can lead to places that we as a province don't want to go. It's my responsibility to step up and say when I see those incremental changes happening, so we don't end up like that frog in the boiling water where the temperature is increased degree by degree so they don't recognize it until it's too late. This is not a good move, Speaker.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: I'm just gathering my thoughts here. One of the things I find fascinating in this Legislature—of course, it's such an honour to be here, so I like to study different things in this building. The member from Waterloo was talking about the owl, so yesterday I started looking at the other small details in this chamber. One of the inscriptions that was engraved, I believe, when we were celebrating the millennium of this building was actually the inscription right over there, which says “gubernatio bona fructum parit,” which basically means “good government bears fruit.” It's a Latin phrase, and it's one of the two phrases that were put in, I think, as a reminder to all of us, everyone who serves in this House, that we have a responsibility to be that good government for the fruits that's necessary for this province, for our society, for the people of this province.

When I come here every single day, every single time I'm able to have this privilege to stand here, I'm reminded of the people who sent me here because we owe that responsibility to those individuals, every single constituent. This morning, I was actually quite happy to hear the Premier speak about power versus responsibility, because he differentiated and said that we actually don't have power here, that we have responsibility. And I couldn't agree more; we have a responsibility. We have a responsibility to do a job, to make sure that we stand up for the good people who sent us here.

When I see that our government continues to just trample upon the rights of Ontarians, we are truly using power that you have attained without standing up for the responsibility that you have been given by the people of this province. Speaker, we spoke about democracy, and we understand the different pillars of it. We hear this government talk over and over again about this election and how the people

of Ontario have sent them to this House and therefore they have this majority government to do whatever they want.

1430

Democracy has many pillars. Elections are one of them. The fact that you keep forgetting that you called an election, which you prepared for in advance using people's tax dollars for ads that—the Auditor General was like, “No, this is that's not how it's done.” You called this election in the middle of one of the coldest winters we've had in decades, where we had one of the lowest turnouts, and then you prop yourselves up for that. I would not be proud of that.

And then you come here and forget all the other pillars of democracy. When we talk about that good government, that responsibility that you have to bear fruit for the province—you have all the responsibility to uphold the rights of Ontarians. There have been legislations that have trampled on the rights of educators, of parents, of students. What happened with Bill 33? What happened with Bill 60, with tenants? The fact that we have the LTB that still has backlogs with small landlords—there are people across the province who are struggling.

And then we saw this government give SDF funding to a hand-picked, selected few who were lowest rank, just because those individuals benefited the government and, therefore, they're just doing the quid pro quo. It just really boggles my mind whether we are really standing up for democracy, whether we have that true understanding of what responsibility we have as legislators in this House.

Speaker, the leadership that this government had, the majority government—they have the power to do some amazing things. This morning, we created an opportunity for the government to do just that. We brought a motion in the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, SCOGA. We just asked for something that is within the jurisdiction, within the purview of the committee, which is to call any agency that is within the oversight of this government and ask questions.

Right now, what's happening with all the transit construction, transportation construction across the province that's handled by Metrolinx has been a disaster. We asked the government members to just think deep and give themselves some time, give us some time, to call Metrolinx—the agency that is within this government—to come out and answer some questions so that we can uncover what's going on, what the secrecy is behind closed doors with Metrolinx.

Right now, we are experiencing the failures within the Finch LRT. There must be something going on. And this morning I realized that it would be my last opportunity of this year, because we are going to adjourn today. So we put something together to make sure that we can do that in committee, even though we've been calling for it for three years.

The government members voted it down. They didn't even take the time to speak about it or understand why it's necessary or explain why they're going to vote it down.

And I just don't understand: What is it that the government is so afraid of in calling an agency that is dealing with people's tax dollars, people's hard-earned dollars?

When we go back to the idea of responsibility and the power that you actually have, you have a tremendous amount of power to get construction going, to build transit. But you're not doing that. Not only are you not doing that; you're not keeping those who are in charge of making it happen accountable. You're not even standing up for transparency. I just don't understand why this government continues to defend Metrolinx and these kinds of organizations that are not doing the job.

So, when I hear that the government wants to adjourn for—how many days was it?

Interjection: It's 102.

Ms. Doly Begum: It's 102 days. And then we're going to come here for a few weeks and then go back for the Easter weekend—two weeks, I believe.

For me, I feel that it actually hurts my constituents: the people in my riding of Scarborough Southwest who have questions, who are worried about their rent, their groceries, their mortgages, their transit system. We don't know what's going on with the Scarborough subway extension, and I hear members of the government brag about the Scarborough subway extension even though we don't know what took place just a few months ago and what Metrolinx is hiding about that.

Interjection.

Ms. Doly Begum: Yes, it's just unbelievable how the government just wants to bury its head—

Interjection.

Ms. Doly Begum: —“their heads,” I know it's plural; English is not my first language, so I'm with you on that. I just don't understand how you can continue to go ahead and defend the decisions that are hurting people and defend organizations and agencies that are also hurting people.

Speaker, when I see these kinds of motions that actually take away from all of us, take away the opportunity for all of us to do our job, you're hurting every single Ontarian—every single Ontarian who sent you here, sent all of us here. That's not responsibility. You're not taking responsibility. You're not doing the job right. Going back to the inscription, that does not bear fruit. That is not good governance because you are actually making policies that will hurt Ontarians for decades to come.

And we have seen that already. We have seen that with the environmental policies. We have seen that with education policies, with housing policies. I could go on about housing. I could go on about what the government did with a lot of environmental policies. My colleague here talked about his own riding and the fact that he grew up in the conditions of the health care system that continues to fail us across the province.

We talk about the GTA. I talk about Scarborough. But in northern Ontario, in many parts of our province—my colleague the member from Nickel Belt talks about her

riding and how long it takes for an emergency vehicle to come. When we're here, we can take that opportunity to pass legislation that will actually help people, make that happen. The fact that we still don't have clean drinking water in northern Ontario in my colleague's riding and the fact that we have a government that will continue to throw that responsibility to the federal government, even though the actual infrastructure building is within the responsibility of this government—you have that opportunity to do that.

Do you know the difference it would make to the lives of so many people, especially young people, especially in northern communities, if they had clean drinking water? Every time I talk about this, I find myself emotional but also in shock that it's something that is true in Ontario, that kids in Ontario do not have clean drinking water. We as a government, as parliamentarians who have the power, we cannot even make that happen. This government, a majority government, has the power, but they refuse to do that, Speaker.

One time, the member from Kiiwetinoong came in and was very emotional and upset. I asked what was going on and he told me about the suicide pact that a group of young people made. A suicide pact: kids who decided that they just don't see anything left for them. And you know who has the ability to actually make a difference and change that for those kids? A good government. A good government that we expect from here, from this very place. There are a lot of people who have expectations of us to do that job, to do better for the people of this province. I cannot believe there is one kid in this province who will think of taking their life because they do not see a future.

Speaker, we must do better. We must do better because good government bears fruit, and this government has the ability to do that. Let's do our jobs and make sure we stand up for the people of this province. They deserve better.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 32(b), the time allotted for the afternoon routine has expired. I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Clark has moved that, notwithstanding standing order 7, when the House adjourns today, it shall stand adjourned until 10:15 a.m. on March 23, 2026; and

That when the House adjourns on April 23, 2026, it shall stand adjourned until May 4, 2026; and

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be authorized to meet during the winter adjournment at the call of the Chair.

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.

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

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I appreciate all the input, but it is a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1441 to 1446.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All members will please take their seats.

Mr. Clark has moved that, notwithstanding standing order 7, when the House adjourns today, it shall stand adjourned until 10:15 a.m. on March 23, 2026; and

That when the House adjourns on April 23, 2026, it shall stand adjourned until May 4, 2026; and

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be authorized to meet during the winter adjournment at the call of the Chair.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until they are counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Firin, Mohamed	Rae, Matthew
Anand, Deepak	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Riddell, Brian
Babikian, Aris	Gualtieri, Silvia	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bresee, Ric	Hamid, Zee	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Holland, Kevin	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Ciriello, Monica	Jones, Trevor	Smith, Dave
Clark, Steve	Jordan, John	Smith, David
Cooper, Michelle	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Graydon
Crawford, Stephen	McGregor, Graham	Smith, Laura
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tangri, Nina
Darouze, George	Pang, Billy	Thompson, Lisa M.
Denault, Billy	Piccini, David	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dixon, Jess	Pinsonneault, Steve	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dowie, Andrew	Pirie, George	Vickers, Paul
Downey, Doug	Quinn, Nolan	Wai, Daisy
Dunlop, Jill	Racinsky, Joseph	Williams, Charmaine A.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Nays

Begum, Doly	McCrimmon, Karen	Smyth, Stephanie
Bowman, Stephanie	McKenney, Catherine	Vanthof, John
Fairclough, Lee	Rakocevic, Tom	
Mamakwa, Sol	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 48; the nays are 10.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

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

Hon. Steve Clark: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Clark has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Carried on division.

In that case, I hope that all members have a very safe and happy holiday.

This House stands adjourned until 10:15 on Monday, March 23, 2026.

The House adjourned at 1449.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, OOnt

Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Donna Skelly

Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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

Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong

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

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

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

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

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