

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 103

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 103

2nd Session
41st Parliament

Thursday
5 October 2017

2^e session
41^e législature

Jeudi
5 octobre 2017

Speaker: Honourable Dave Levac
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Dave Levac
Greffier : Todd Decker

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



ISSN 1180-2987

Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 5 October 2017 / Jeudi 5 octobre 2017

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act, 2017, Bill 160, Mr. Hoskins / Loi de 2017 renforçant la qualité et la responsabilité pour les patients, projet de loi 160, M. Hoskins	
Ms. Cindy Forster	5545
Ms. Daiene Vernile	5546
Mrs. Gila Martow	5546
Mr. Gilles Bisson	5547
Hon. Liz Sandals	5547
Ms. Cindy Forster	5547
Hon. Michael Gravelle	5548
Ms. Daiene Vernile	5549
Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn	5549
Mrs. Cristina Martins	5550
Mr. Lorne Coe	5551
Mr. Wayne Gates	5551
Mr. Arthur Potts	5551
Mrs. Gila Martow	5552
Mrs. Cristina Martins	5552
Mr. Lorne Coe	5552
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	5555

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mrs. Julia Munro	5555
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	5555
Mr. John Yakabuski	5555
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	5555
Ms. Ann Hoggarth	5555
Ms. Sylvia Jones	5555
Hon. Jeff Leal	5555
Hon. Deborah Matthews	5555
Hon. Michael Gravelle	5555
Hon. Liz Sandals	5555
Mr. Percy Hatfield	5555
Mr. Han Dong	5555
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris	5556
Mr. Todd Smith	5556
Hon. Jeff Leal	5556
Mr. Victor Fedeli	5556
Mr. Bill Walker	5556
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	5556
Mr. Bill Walker	5556

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Energy policies	
Mr. Todd Smith	5556
Hon. Brad Duguid	5556
Fiscal accountability	
Mr. Victor Fedeli	5557
Hon. Charles Sousa	5557
Hospital funding	
Ms. Jennifer K. French	5558
Hon. Eric Hoskins	5558
Long-term care	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	5559
Hon. Eric Hoskins	5559
Manufacturing jobs	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman	5560
Hon. Brad Duguid	5560
Children's mental health services	
Mr. Michael Mantha	5561
Hon. Michael Coteau	5561
Women's health services	
Ms. Sophie Kiwala	5561
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris	5561
Workplace Safety and Insurance Board	
Mr. Robert Bailey	5562
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	5562
Employment standards	
Ms. Cindy Forster	5562
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	5563
Post-secondary education	
Ms. Ann Hoggarth	5563
Hon. Deborah Matthews	5563
Wind turbines	
Mr. Jim McDonell	5564
Hon. Brad Duguid	5564
Hon. Chris Ballard	5564
Poverty	
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	5564
Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn	5564
Child care	
Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers	5565
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris	5565
Opioid abuse	
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	5566
Hon. Eric Hoskins	5566
Visitors	
Hon. Steven Del Duca	5566

Norman Jamison	
Mr. Toby Barrett	5566
Legislative pages	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	5566

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Hon. Tracy MacCharles	5567
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	5567

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

Wasaga Beach	
Mr. Jim Wilson	5567
Commemoration of fallen soldiers	
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	5567
National Day of the People's Republic of China	
Mr. Han Dong	5568
Conestoga College	
Mr. Michael Harris.....	5568
World Teachers' Day	
Mr. Wayne Gates	5568
Community Recognition Awards	
Mr. Yvan Baker.....	5569
PANDAS/PANS	
Mr. Robert Bailey	5569
Events in Ajax–Pickering	
Mr. Joe Dickson	5569
Oshawa's Teaching City initiative	
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	5570

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

Strengthening Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, 2017, Bill 166, Ms. MacCharles / Loi de 2017 sur le renforcement de la protection des consommateurs ontariens, projet de loi 166, Mme MacCharles	
First reading agreed to.....	5570
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	5570

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

Ontario Agriculture Week	
Hon. Jeff Leal.....	5570
World Teachers' Day	
Hon. Mitzie Hunter	5572

Ontario Agriculture Week	
Mr. Toby Barrett	5573
World Teachers' Day	
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	5573
World Teachers' Day	
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	5573
Ontario Agriculture Week	
Mr. John Vanthof	5574
Visitor	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	5574

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

GO Transit	
Mrs. Gila Martow	5574
Pesticides	
Mr. Michael Mantha.....	5575
Public transit	
Mr. Han Dong	5575
School facilities	
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	5575
Water fluoridation	
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	5575
Long-term care	
Mr. Bill Walker	5575
Hospital funding	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	5576
Elevator maintenance	
Ms. Ann Hoggarth.....	5576
Hydro rates	
Mr. Bill Walker	5576
Provincial truth and reconciliation day	
Mr. Michael Mantha.....	5577
Dental care	
Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	5577

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS /
AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC
ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

Life Leases Act, 2017, Bill 155, Ms. Hoggarth / Loi de 2017 sur les baux viagers, projet de loi 155, Mme Hoggarth	
Ms. Ann Hoggarth.....	5577
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	5579
Mr. John Vanthof	5580
Mrs. Cristina Martins	5580
Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5581
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	5582
Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	5583
Mrs. Gila Martow	5583
Hon. Dipika Damerla	5584
Ms. Ann Hoggarth.....	5584

**Honouring our Veterans Act, 2017, Bill 100,
Mr. MacLaren / Loi de 2017 rendant hommage à
nos anciens combattants, projet de loi 100,
M. MacLaren**

Mr. Jack MacLaren	5585
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	5586
Hon. Mitzie Hunter	5587
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	5588
Mr. Michael Mantha	5588
Hon. Jeff Leal.....	5589
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	5589
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	5590
Hon. Michael Coteau	5590
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	5590
Mr. Jack MacLaren	5591

**Nick's Law (Opioid Abuse Awareness), 2017, Bill
161, Ms. MacLeod / Loi Nick de 2017 sur la
sensibilisation à l'abus d'opioïdes, projet de loi 161,
Mme MacLeod**

Ms. Lisa MacLeod	5591
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5593

Hon. Eric Hoskins	5594
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	5595
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	5596
Hon. Reza Moridi.....	5596
Mr. Bill Walker	5597
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	5598

**Life Leases Act, 2017, Bill 155, Ms. Hoggarth / Loi
de 2017 sur les baux viagers, projet de loi 155,
Mme Hoggarth**

Second reading agreed to	5598
--------------------------------	------

**Honouring our Veterans Act, 2017, Bill 100,
Mr. MacLaren / Loi de 2017 rendant hommage à
nos anciens combattants, projet de loi 100,
M. MacLaren**

Second reading agreed to	5598
--------------------------------	------

**Nick's Law (Opioid Abuse Awareness), 2017, Bill
161, Ms. MacLeod / Loi Nick de 2017 sur la
sensibilisation à l'abus d'opioïdes, projet de loi 161,
Mme MacLeod**

Second reading agreed to	5599
--------------------------------	------

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 5 October 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 5 octobre 2017

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRENGTHENING QUALITY
AND ACCOUNTABILITY
FOR PATIENTS ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 RENFORÇANT
LA QUALITÉ ET LA RESPONSABILITÉ
POUR LES PATIENTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 4, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 160, An Act to amend, repeal and enact various Acts in the interest of strengthening quality and accountability for patients / *Projet de loi 160, Loi visant à modifier, à abroger et à édicter diverses lois dans le souci de renforcer la qualité et la responsabilité pour les patients.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I had about 10 minutes on this bill yesterday that I kind of spent on pieces of the act. Over the last few weeks—well, I'd say over the last seven years—I have had numerous patients come into my office with issues around their health care, but it seems increasingly so. I'm now getting them coming into my office every week.

I want to share a couple of emails from patients who have either been into my office or called my office. They want the legislators to know their health care stories, because they believe that if they don't tell you their stories, nothing is ever going to change.

I got this one email, on September 24, from a woman. It's around our home care system and, frankly, the lack of home care that is available to both our seniors and patients coming out of the hospital. This woman says, "I had a bilateral mastectomy on ... June 13. I was to spend one night in the St. Catharines hospital, but because I had an arterial line put in, due to safety in case I had a heart attack or stroke during surgery I ended up staying two nights" in the hospital—not very long, actually, having had a bilateral mastectomy.

"When home care came in before I left the hospital, the lady said I would have to go to the office to have my dressing changed. I was upset, but too tired and too sore to argue.

"So on Friday morning I had to get up and go to the other side of the city. I was in so much pain, every bump, railway track almost killed me. Then I sat in the waiting room for ... 20 minutes" in a dressing clinic in Welland. "There were seniors hacking and coughing in the waiting room. After surgery, I was worried about C. difficile or MRSA.

"The halls and the rooms were not clean. The floors were ... dirty. The rooms were messy. I honestly was worried about getting infection." This was at a clinic, right? A clinic that is run by CarePartners, a for-profit provider that actually operates in 14 areas of the province.

She says she was also upset because she had a male nurse who came in to change her dressing. "There were female nurses there. I think it was ... tactless. I had just had a mastectomy, very insecure about myself. A female nurse should handle these types of cases." I'm assuming this woman is an older woman as well. "Each room did not have supplies" so they had to keep going in and out of the room looking for things.

"I have severe osteoporosis, six herniated discs, one fractured disc. Fibromyalgia, MS, have had two heart attacks, two strokes, nine knee surgeries including knee replacements, both elbows done, three rotator cuffs and almost every other type of surgery. I have major chronic depression. I could write pages of health issues. I was so upset about having to try to get ready to go to have a dressing change. I called to speak to the lady who told me I could not have home care again, and told her I wanted home care" to come to my house, that "it was too much for me to go out. She said no," I would have to speak to a "supervisor. My husband and I were on a three-way chat with the supervisor for ... 20-25 minutes discussing this issue as she did not want to" give me home care "either. I finally said I was going to call the MP or MPP and things changed.

"Both men at the centre were nice"—the male nurses, she's speaking about—"but it was very degrading to me."

"They did not have the proper tube bandage so they took a pair of disposable underwear and cut the crotch out and used that" for a dressing for her mastectomy.

"If they cannot keep you in the hospital for proper post-surgery care" then at the very least "they should come to your house."

"Very upset with the service I received.... I have so many complaints about the centre"—the dressing centre—"and the staff. Management were not pleasant at all. I was ill going through breast cancer and a mastectomy and they are arguing with you. Very frustrating.... I

am too stressed still to remember everything except the service was terrible.”

We followed up with this woman after she sent the letter. She basically said that it was so difficult for her to focus after having that surgery, she was really put out mentally and physically by having to attend at a dressing the clinic on the other side of town so soon after her surgery. She was not placing any blame on the personal support workers or the health care workers, but on the bureaucracy of the LHIN and the CCAC. I want to thank her for actually bringing those concerns forward.

Then I got a letter about a fellow by the name of Doug. He is a veteran serving in the Canadian military for 20 years. He had surgery on his right knee after it went septic in December. He was in the hospital in Welland for almost a month. He got out on January 23. He says a cement block was inserted and now his knee is giving out. He has been told that the knee replacement surgery is not going to happen until July.

So I'm assuming we're talking seven months that he's having to wait to have his knee fixed. He probably already waited six months to have the first surgery, and now he's being told that he has to wait seven months because they can't get him in to do that surgery. He's a veteran. He's asking that, on behalf of himself and other veterans in the country, the surgery be undertaken sooner rather than later.

Once again, here's somebody who cannot access the appropriate health care that they need in a timely way. We believe, as New Democrats, that this is because of the funding cuts that have happened in our hospital system and in our health care system: the frozen budgets that have happened, budgets that haven't looked after the rising inflation, haven't looked after the increase in population, haven't even taken into account our aging population, right? The government needs to do something about this. When people are actually coming to your office and writing you letters about their issues, we need to do something.

I've got another one here. This is on long-term care. The member from London-Fanshawe has been talking about long-term care over the last few months here. This is actually about a man who is suffering from acute myeloid leukemia. His doctor says “his remaining time is measured in months.” The problem is, he lives in Welland and his wife is in a long-term-care bed in Niagara Falls because there are no long-term-care beds available in Welland for his wife to be transferred to. Because he's having chemotherapy, he is too ill to actually make that drive every day from Welland to the Falls—it's probably 20 minutes to 25 minutes—so now he can't see his wife. These people have lived together for many, many years, and she has been in Niagara Falls since September. Now it is almost the middle of October and he is not able to see his wife. That's because we have 1,400 people on the wait-list in Niagara for a long-term-care bed, part of those 30,000 people who are on wait-lists across the province because this government has not had a plan to develop any new beds.

0910

I think the last nursing home that was built in this province was probably in 2007 or 2008, around the time when a nursing home was built in my riding. That actually took nine years from the day it was announced to the day it was built. It was a nine-year period. That wasn't adding any new beds; that was just putting back in place beds that had been cut when older nursing homes had closed in the Welland area.

Those are my comments for the moment. Thank you for the opportunity to share some stories with the legislators on people in my riding.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments? I recognize the member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Good morning to you, Speaker, and good morning to our colleagues. I'd like to also say good morning to the folks who might be watching at home right now.

Just to give everyone a recap: We are talking about Bill 160. We're a few hours into the second reading debate of the Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act. This is a very comprehensive bill with a number of parts to it. In fact, there are 10 pieces of legislation that are included in the bill. I just want to go over them quickly with you.

There's the Health Sector Payment Transparency Act. This is going to make it mandatory for the medical industry—that includes pharmaceutical companies and medical device manufacturers—to publicly report payments they make to health care professionals and organizations: doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses and medical staff. If they are getting a meal or a trip or research grants or fees to make a speech from a medical company, it's going to be mandatory for that information to be posted publicly to a database so the public can see who is getting what.

You might ask the question: How widespread is this practice today? Quite honestly, the answer is: We don't know. But what we do know is that this practice has been going on for years, but because the medical industry has never had to report it, there's no way for us to gauge the extent of the impact on our health care system. We want to bring transparency to our health care system and we want to ensure the public knows if their health care provider is getting freebies from a drug company. By the way, legislation like this has already been passed in France, Belgium, Denmark, Portugal, Slovakia and the US.

The next piece to this is the Health Protection and Promotion Act. This is going to allow the regulation of recreational facilities—and I see I'm out of time. I'll continue afterwards.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm rising to say a few words on Bill 160, the Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act.

Sometimes we end up repeating ourselves here a little bit, just a tiny bit, so just to say again that I used to

practise as an optometrist. For many years, I was in a medical centre attached to a hospital, working with a lot of specialists. It was a very medical office. I understand a little bit about what we're trying to achieve in terms of improving our health care, but there are going to be some changes. We do want to make sure that we're going to be educating and consulting with the public health units, family council associations and long-term-care associations to make sure that everybody is clear on what the new legislation is going to mean for their sector.

The member opposite just mentioned legislation in terms of health care professionals, specifically doctors getting compensated by pharmaceutical companies. Nobody wants to think that their doctor is prescribing a medication or a treatment based on some kind of dinner or gift from a company. I've worked with medical professionals for three decades, and I can tell you, I can't give even one example where I felt that that was the case.

I think we do have to recognize, though, that our health care professionals spend a lot of time and their own money travelling to get to meetings so they can educate themselves on new treatments, on new medication. I think this government is going to have to have that discussion some day on whether they're going to make it more complicated, more difficult and more expensive for doctors to be educated. It is the pharmacare that normally does the education. Then we are going to have to come up with another system, because we certainly don't want our doctors to not be cutting-edge and not know about new studies, new treatments and new medications that are out there.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Always listening to the stories that people have to write about their interactions with whatever is what this place is all about. I want to thank the member for Welland for bringing that forward.

The sad part is that we're getting all the same letters; we're getting all the same phone calls. People are bumping across us at events and when we go shopping and telling us such stories. I was just the other day having a chat with somebody whose mother has been three years in an ALC unit at Timmins and District Hospital because she can't get a long-term-care bed at one of the long-term-care institutions in Timmins. That's just not acceptable: having to wait three years in an ALC, an alternate-level-of-care bed in a hospital, which is vastly more expensive than paying to put that same individual in a long-term-care system. From an economic point of view, it doesn't make sense, but also from a programming point of view.

I have a good friend of mine, Lucile Carrier, who is currently an ALC patient at the hospital. She has started to develop Alzheimer's or some form of dementia. She's been stuck almost about a year now in an ALC bed at Timmins and District Hospital. What has been frustrating is that the system and the CCAC and the LHIN, when it comes to assessing people, are moving people who are on the list directly from the community into the long-term-

care bed and leaving those people who were unfortunate enough to end up in ALC beds there because they have a place to stay. But that's not fair, because in Lucile's case, she needs programming; she needs stimulation in order to be able to deal with her condition. She is still very conscious, very coherent of what is going on around her, but leave her in that place long enough, it's not going to be good for her.

Why are we not, instead, saying "first bed available"—because in Lucile's case, I think she's number one on the list to be transferred, or number two. Why don't we transfer her into a long-term-care bed and then have somebody from the community replace her in the ALC bed? It shows to what degree we have a crisis in our system, and we need to respond to it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to be able to respond to the comments from the member for Welland on the Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act.

One of the things that falls under the purview of the Treasury Board Secretariat and the President of the Treasury Board is what we call open government. I'm responsible for our government's open government project. That means, amongst other things, that we endeavour to have open data, open information. To put that in everyday words, that means that where possible, we're trying to open up information and make it accessible to the public. It was the taxpayer dollar that collected that information. It should be available to the public.

Of course, with health care, our challenge usually is that a lot of the information we have is private. It's about individuals and their health. You know that as a nurse, Speaker, that you can't reveal that information. But in this very particular case, it isn't information about patients; it's information about doctors, and it's information we don't have. So the purpose of the legislation with respect to payments, meals, trips, meetings, events, that doctors receive from pharmaceutical companies—we don't have that information. We're perfectly willing to post it and make it public. First of all, we have to be able to collect it, because we simply don't know the magnitude of those payments. This legislation, if passed, will enable us to do that.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'll return to the member from Welland to wrap up.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm going to tell you one more story in my two minutes because I think it's really important to talk about the crisis that we actually have in health care and what happened to this young man, 59 years old. He went into the emergency department with pain in his toe. He already had an amputation done the year before. He was a diabetic. He went to the emergency department. He laid in the emergency for three days from Monday to Wednesday. He was supposed to have a surgical consult by an orthopedic surgeon. That consult never happened. He was transferred into a medical bed at the St. Catharines site. An infectious disease specialist

walked by his room, saw his leg sitting elevated on a pillow, and went to the nurse and said, “What is the matter with that man? Why isn’t anybody looking at his leg?” She said, “What are you talking about?”

0920

It turns out the man had flesh-eating disease; he had necrotizing fasciitis. He ended up with a second above-the-knee amputation, because he lay in an emergency department for three days, where they’re not staffed to be looking after patients around the clock, 24 hours. If you’re in the emergency department, you’re supposed to be there looking after emergencies as they come through the door. They’re not staffed like they are on the units, for 24-hour care.

This is one of the issues that are happening in our system. Because of understaffing and underfunding, people are losing limbs.

There’s something wrong with this, Speaker. I raise the story because I know the family, and they asked me to raise the story here in the Legislature so that things would hopefully improve in health care for our family members.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It’s great to be here this morning and to have an opportunity to speak on this important legislation. I’ll be sharing my time with the member for Kitchener Centre, the member for Davenport and the Minister of Housing.

Thank you very much for this Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act. This is an important piece of legislation; there’s no question about it. There are a number of aspects to it, and I want, in the brief time I have, to just speak about some of the key elements of the legislation.

What we all understand in this Legislature is that the people of Ontario deserve health care they can rely on, health care they can trust. What we are very clear about is that transparency itself allows the public to have access to information in order to be engaged and to make informed choices about their health and the health of their families, which is critical on a day-to-day basis.

Ensuring that there is transparency within Ontario’s publicly funded health system very much does increase public trust—there’s no question about that—as everyone really does deserve access to information that can support them in being confident that they are receiving the highest-quality health care. That is why our government is so strongly committed to strengthening transparency in health care in the province of Ontario.

We are introducing this new legislation that, if passed, would make information on payments from the medical industry to health care professionals and organizations available to the public. We think that is absolutely crucial. It would require the medical industry to annually report payments that are submitted to health care professionals and organizations. As has been mentioned before, this would include paid meals, travel, research grants, and fees for services such as consultations or sponsored speaking engagements.

If passed, this new legislation would allow for the payment information to be publicly posted on a database, which would give Ontarians insight into the extent of private sector funding in the health care system.

We do not yet know, if you ask the question, what the extent is of this. We don’t yet know the extent of industry transfers of value to health care. But if passed, these changes would allow us to have a better understanding of these transfers of value. This would arm patients with the knowledge that they want and deserve, to make informed decisions about their own health care. It is very, very crucial that people have the right to do that.

The province deserves openness. The people of Ontario deserve openness and accountability, and we are working to make that the norm. France, the United States, Belgium, Denmark, Portugal and Slovakia have all addressed these issues through legislation, so we are aligning ourselves with a growing movement. We are leaders nationwide, as it turns out, as we are the first jurisdiction in Canada to move forward on this.

But we’re not going to stop there; we don’t think that’s nearly enough. If this bill is passed, it will not only increase transparency but will strengthen health system accountability and enhance the quality of care for patients. It would guarantee, for example, that all long-term-care-home operators are providing safe and quality care for residents. My mother was in long-term care for seven years. I was very closely attached, in touch, in communication on a daily basis with the long-term-care operators. They did a magnificent job with my mother, but there still were challenges to make sure that everything went forward the way that we wanted it to.

We do need a stronger inspection program with more robust enforcement tools, including financial penalties and new provincial offences. That would give ambulances the ability to transfer patients to more appropriate care settings, such as mental health facilities, to best address their individual needs. It would reduce overcrowding in emergency departments and provide the best care for patients in the most appropriate settings when they call 911 for assistance. It would protect Ontarians in their day-to-day lives by regulating recreational water facilities like splash pads and wading pools, and personal service settings like barber shops and nail salons.

The proposed changes under the Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act will roll out important initiatives that will help Ontario’s health care system to continue serving all Ontarians today and into the future.

Just briefly back to the Long-Term Care Homes Act: The safety and the quality of life of Ontario’s 78,000 long-term-care residents remains one of our government’s top priorities. As I said, I referenced my own mother’s experience in long-term care. While we know that the vast majority of long-term-care homes are in compliance with provincial rules and regulations, those that have recurring issues certainly cannot be tolerated. These proposed changes would enhance our oversight system for long-term-care homes.

With those words, I will now pass my time off to the member for Kitchener Centre.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I spoke a little earlier this morning on this particular bill, beginning with information on the transparency piece, and you just heard my colleague the Minister for Northern Development and Mines touch on this.

Speaker, there are 10 elements to this very important review of this legislation, and I'd like to move on to the next one. I want to go through all of them. It's important to have some detail and background on how exactly this is going to work.

The Health Protection and Promotion Act is up for review. This is going to allow the regulation of recreational water facilities—as you heard my colleague say, things such as splash pads and wading pools—to protect the health and safety of young children. These changes are also going to include personal service businesses like barber shops, nail salons and tattoo parlours. We need to better inspect these locations and ensure they are free from infections. These changes are going to bring us in line with other jurisdictions across Canada that are already doing the same thing.

We're also including the Long-Term Care Homes Act. We know that the vast majority of long-term-care facilities are in compliance with provincial rules and regulations, but we would like to strengthen that. The legislation proposes new enforcement tools such as financial penalties and new provincial offences.

The next point is the Retirement Homes Act. We know that Ontario has a very robust oversight system, and this is enforced by the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority. After recent consultations, we know that we can improve the system by strengthening oversight powers. We want to increase transparency, accountability and governance.

The next item on the list is the Ambulance Act. We are proposing a change to the Ambulance Act to give paramedics increased flexibility so that they can deliver alternative care options on-scene to patients. This would allow them to avoid unnecessary visits to emergency departments. Currently, paramedics are bound by law to take patients only to hospitals, so if this legislation is passed, it's going to help reduce overcrowding in ERs because paramedics would be able to redirect low-acuity patients who call 911 to non-hospital officials.

I have had this conversation at length with a friend of mine, a family friend, who is a paramedic. They find it very frustrating that when they have a patient who might not necessarily need to go to an ER, this is where they are directed to go; this is where they have to go. They are looking forward to this particular change. They might be able to take them to a mental health facility or a home or a community care resource.

Speaker, I'm working my way down the list here. The next item is the Oversight of Health Facilities and Devices Act. We are proposing to strengthen the safety

and oversight of services delivered in health facilities with medical radiation devices like X-ray machines, CT scanners, ultrasound machines and MRIs. We want to modernize and ensure the safety and quality of these devices.

0930

With the Medical Radiation and Imaging Technology Act, 2017, we're proposing changes to strengthen transparency and oversight of diagnostic medical sonographers. This is going to replace the Medical Radiation Technology Act with new legislation to cover the entirety of the medical radiation and imaging technology profession.

I'm down to the last three items in this very comprehensive bill. The Excellent Care for All Act: This is going to allow the Patient Ombudsman to carry out investigations in private, away from the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The Ontario Drug Benefit Act, 1990: This proposed amendment is going to remove the last outdated reference to physicians in the Ontario Drug Benefit Act. It recognizes that other health care professionals, like nurse practitioners, for instance, can prescribe medications in Ontario. They've already been doing this. We need to make sure the legislation reflects what they are doing.

Here is the last point: the Ontario Mental Health Foundation Act, 1990. The province is proposing to repeal the Ontario Mental Health Foundation Act. This decision is based on the results of the review that came to the conclusion that this work is currently being carried out by community-based organizations.

Like I said, this is a very comprehensive bill. It's going to update our delivery of the health care system in Ontario and it's going to ensure greater transparency for patients in our province. We were guided by 43 different organizations and 60 individuals on shaping this piece of legislation. We know that it's going to give people the health care that they rely on and that they deserve in this great province.

I now pass on to my next colleague.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the Minister of Housing and poverty reduction.

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's a pleasure to rise in the House this morning to speak to the Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act. There can be nothing more important in our health care system than ensuring that all patients can have the confidence that when the health professional that they are interacting with, whatever procedures or medications are being prescribed or directed for them, that that patient can have confidence that that is being done truly in their best interest.

I have absolutely no doubt that the women and men in health professions in the province of Ontario are acting with the utmost integrity and always with the best interests of patients at heart. But we do know that some pharmaceutical companies and some other companies who sell medical products make payments to doctors, to other health professionals, to promote their devices, their prescription drugs, or what have you, to encourage those health professionals to learn more about that product and

to prescribe that product, or to direct a particular device being used. There's nothing wrong with these companies promoting their products and providing education to doctors, to nurses, to other health care professionals, but it must be done in a transparent way. It must be done in a way where a patient will have the confidence that the doctor, the nurse, the health professional they're interacting with, that what they're doing is being done openly and transparently.

With this act, requiring that the payments, the sessions, the training sessions, the training dinners or lunches—whatever the case might be—that these companies put on, they have to be reported, that people can see that these companies are doing and what the individual health practitioners are receiving. I think that's a very important reform. I believe Ontario is leading the way in this. It's going to make a meaningful impact in the way these companies operate, because I have confidence our health professionals are already acting in a way with extreme integrity.

Another very important aspect of this bill is some of the changes to the long-term-care industry and ensuring that long-term-care-home operators are providing safe and quality care for residents, with a stronger inspection program, more robust enforcement and much stronger penalties for those few long-term-care operators that aren't following the rules and the law.

Madam Speaker, any of us—and probably most of us in this chamber—at one point or another have had a loved one in long-term care. The peace of mind that you need to have to know that your mother, your father, your grandparents, your great-aunt or -uncle are receiving the care that they should be getting, that they deserve to get—that it's being paid for them to receive in a safe environment—is extremely important.

I know that, day in and day out, across this province, long-term-care homes provide excellent care to patients, but there are some instances where there needs to be more enforcement and there need to be penalties for those who aren't doing things the way they should. This act will strengthen that oversight system.

Another aspect of this bill is changes to the Ambulance Act and giving more power to paramedics and EMTs to direct patients to where they should be going, depending on what their medical needs are. This will reduce overcrowding in emergency rooms and will ensure that patients get the type of care and attention that they need. A cut on your leg perhaps doesn't necessitate a trip to the emergency room; it can be treated a different way. If there is some kind of a mental health crisis going on, again, it doesn't necessarily need to be dealt with in one of our acute care emergency rooms. This will give that additional flexibility to EMTs and to the system to direct people to the care that they need when they need it and how they need it. That's going to be good for all Ontarians.

I could speak all morning to this, but I will pass the time on to the member from Davenport to make some further comments.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Davenport.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak about this important bill. The people of Ontario deserve a health care system that they can rely on, health care that they can trust, and that's why this important bill speaks exactly to that. We know that ensuring there is transparency within Ontario's publicly funded health care system increases public trust, as everyone deserves access to information that can support them in being confident that they are receiving the highest quality of care.

One piece of this bill that I think is truly great and of note, and I know it's been mentioned here before, is the amendments to the Ambulance Act. I know that getting reliable emergency services quickly isn't just important; it can be a matter of life and death. That is why it is so important that our emergency health services are operating effectively and efficiently. The amendments to the Ambulance Act will allow us to effectively allocate our resources and also help patients by getting them the resources that they actually need.

But first, a little background: Today in Ontario, there are approximately 8,788 paramedics and more than 1,730 ambulances and support vehicles. Last year they transported nearly one million patients, and that number is growing each and every year. We know that many of the 911 calls are not of life-threatening nature; in fact, some are individuals having a mental health crisis who need specialized supports in a welcoming environment; others are seniors who do not need medical transportation, but do need reassurances and support of a medical professional. Up until now, if a call was made to 911, those individuals would be transported to an emergency room no matter the issue.

We believe that a more flexible way of managing our 911 system is putting patients first or utilizing our existing resources in the best way. The proposed changes to the Ambulance Act would allow our EMS workers to treat and release low-acuity patients who do not need additional medical care. It would also allow them to treat and refer patients to a health setting more appropriate than an emergency room. These are changes that will help reduce offload delays at our hospitals. This means ambulances will be able to spend more time available to respond to those calls where every second counts. These changes will also ensure our emergency departments and hospitals are not filled with individuals who could be receiving more timely care in a more appropriate setting.

0940

It is important to remember that emergency health services—911—will continue to provide immediate response to serious emergencies, and, in fact, this bill would enable ambulance and emergency rooms to be more available for serious cases.

It is important that we pass this bill. It would give ambulances the ability to transport patients to more appropriate care settings, such as mental health facilities, to best address their individual needs. It would reduce

overcrowding in emergency departments and provide the best care for patients in the most appropriate settings when they call 911 for assistance, including care for those in the most serious need.

These are changes that just make sense. These are changes that will allow us to better allocate our resources so that we can continue to reduce wait times for emergency care. It will help patients by getting them the resources they need instead of bringing them somewhere they may not need to go.

This is a fantastic piece of legislation. I commend the minister for his work on this piece of legislation and look forward to supporting it when it comes up for a vote in the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to rise and debate Bill 160 and, in particular, the comments provided by the members from Thunder Bay–Superior North, Kitchener Centre, Etobicoke–Lakeshore and Davenport. I think they all struck important points in their narratives.

I come to the debate as someone who has worked as a civil servant at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and also at the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat, and that's coupled with my 13 years as a regional councillor with the region of Durham, where I chaired the health and social services committee. So I've seen the perspective of EMS, and I've seen the perspective of long-term care up close and personal. I think together in this chamber we all want to work towards a health care system that upholds the safety and quality for the residents in long-term care.

I think the member from Kitchener Centre made an important point. She spoke about the breadth of consultation that has brought the legislation to this point. I would submit that that robust consultation needs to continue as we move through the stages, as you're well familiar with, with this bill. That should include, as it has thus far, a continuum with the family councils of Ontario, with the public health units here in Ontario, and also with the long-term-care association so we can arrive at a point where we're all comfortable with the direction that this legislation is taking. At the same time, the stakeholders, as we move to the committee structure, have an opportunity to continue to provide their voice on ways in which we can strengthen the legislation going forward.

This is an omnibus bill, and I'll be speaking in more detail about it for 20 minutes later.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House. But I have to address one of the things that the Liberals talked about when they were talking about health care.

One of the biggest challenges that we have in health care isn't the \$50 billion that we're spending on health care; it's how we're dividing the pie up. I've said this before in the House. What's happening with that pie is, we're giving it to the LHINs and they run their organiza-

tion. CCACs have been brought in to the LHINs now, but it's still there. They get their part of the pie, and then it goes to a private company called CarePartners.

So now that pie has been divided three times, and do you know how much money has gone to health care? Anybody? I know you're all listening to me; you're not on your BlackBerrys. Do you know how much? Nothing has gone to front-line workers. That's the issue.

So then CarePartners now takes their profit. I think last year it was millions—\$300 million. It was an incredible amount of money. Again, no money goes to front-line workers. We have a crisis in health care because we're not publicly funding our health care. We're not making sure our nurses are getting the tools they need to do their job, that they're getting the resources they need in our hospitals.

When people say to me, "Gates, you're making this up"—I went to Antica last week with my family. It was my birthday. Nobody sang Happy Birthday to me; I was very disappointed. But at the end of the day, the waitress came to me. Her father is in the hospital. He's sick; very sick. Do you know what they said to that woman? "There's no place for him to go, but we might be able to get you into a place for \$3,500 a month. Have you considered talking to your dad about selling his house to get long-term care in the province of Ontario?" This is a senior who has given his entire life to make my life better, and we're telling him to sell his house.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure to have a chance to comment on some of the remarks of my colleagues on this side of the House on this very important Bill 160.

I want to start by saying how delighted I was to hear the comments from the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and for him to bring his acuity to this House and talk at length about what this bill is doing. It will help not just all the people in Ontario but the people in his riding of Thunder Bay–Superior North.

He talked about the transparency that's evident in some of the provisions of this bill. The most important part, of course, is about protecting the safety of residents in long-term-care homes. He mentioned his mother. I thought it was incredibly sweet for him to do that and to talk a bit about the experience she had in the home. What's important to realize is that not all residents of long-term-care homes have a dutiful son who can look after them and work closely with them and the staff. We have to be sure that our system is accountable in a way that all residents—regardless of whether they have a son as competent as he is to assist—get the care, and that the transparency and accountability is there in the system.

That's why the Auditor General will have an opportunity now, if this legislation is passed, to do a value-for-money audit of all the long-term-care homes, which she currently cannot do. I think that's an incredibly important part.

Also, the member from Kitchener Centre and the Minister of Housing spoke. Most importantly, I liked the comment from the member from Davenport about how we are decentralizing care in this bill so that emergency workers have a chance to look after people on the street who don't have huge injuries; they can patch up a bruise or a rash and then decentralize the care. Then they can go and not have to be tied up in waiting in emergency rooms, tying up staff and valuable resources. They're actually out on the street, where they're needed most.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm pleased to say a few words on Bill 160, the Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act.

We're hearing a lot about new legislation that relates to health care in terms of long-term care, in terms of oversight of diagnostic testing. I think that the public is getting a little tired of us having discussions about new rules, new regulations and new oversight when they feel that front-line health care is just suffering so much. We can't just keep adding to the bureaucracy and not somehow look at ways to find more efficiencies.

We heard from the Minister of Housing, I believe it was, who said that a cut on the leg doesn't necessarily need an emergency room, and he's absolutely right. It doesn't need an emergency room. The public is asking for more clinics that are open evenings and weekends. They are asking for that. What are they seeing? Not far from my riding of Thornhill, we saw the urgent care centre at Branson close. We don't see another urgent care centre being opened in that area. If there are problems with a property in one location, obviously, before we shut it down, we have to find a place to lease and ensure that the doctors and health care workers from that centre don't just get dispersed. It's so hard to put a team together, to get that up and going again.

I hear from people who say that other provinces are funding new cancer treatments and cancer medications, and Ontario has fallen behind. Lymphoma Canada specifically is having a lobby day coming up in a couple of weeks. They're very concerned about health care for their patients and their clients in Ontario.

I think that overall there's a lot more that needs to be done. And e-Health was a fiasco in this province. We can't just talk about oversight and oversight and oversight and, in the meantime, we spend \$1 billion getting an electronic health care system going in the province and completely fail. And it is a big failure.

0950

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Davenport to wrap up.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the member from Whitby–Oshawa, the member from Niagara Falls—a happy belated birthday to him—the member for Beaches–East York and the member for Thornhill for weighing in on this debate this morning.

I think we all agree—and what I'm hearing is that the people of Ontario deserve health care that they can rely on, health care that they can trust. It's important that we ensure that there is transparency within this publicly funded health care system to increase public trust, as everyone deserves access to information so that they can be confident that they are receiving the highest-quality care.

Do I agree with the member from Whitby–Oshawa that we need to engage our stakeholders and that we need to consult on ensuring that we're actually proceeding in the right direction with this legislation? Absolutely. We definitely need to engage all of our stakeholders to guarantee, for instance, that all long-term-care operators are providing safe and quality care for residents and that we do have a stronger inspection program with more robust enforcement tools, including financial penalties and new provincial offences. We also want to make sure that the ambulances are provided with the appropriate ability to transport patients to more appropriate care settings, such as mental health facilities, to best address their individual needs.

Madam Speaker, we are committed to improving access to the right care at the right time and in the right place and to connecting health care partners and providers across the patient's journey. That's what this bill, this piece of legislation, speaks to.

If I can just read a quote from Chris Dennis, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, on what he says about this piece of legislation: "We are supportive of transparency around private sector influence in the delivery of health care and commend Ontario's leadership on this issue. Quality of patient care is paramount, and we think everyone in this sector has a role to play to ensure that Ontarians are well informed so they can make the right"—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise this morning to speak to Bill 160, the Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act, 2017.

If passed, Bill 160 would implement a number of significant changes within the health care system. For example, schedule 5 to the bill includes amendments to the Long-Term Care Homes Act, the Health Care Consent Act, the Substitute Decisions Act and the Personal Health Information Protection Act. These proposed measures are related to the use of restraints, inspections and penalties that include, among others, the following provisions.

Inspectors would be able to issue penalties to force long-term-care homes into compliance with the act but would also have the power to reduce the penalty amount if it presented unnecessary hardship on the long-term-care home. On this aspect, I believe it's important that the minister advise, as we move through the discussion of this legislation, how many additional inspectors will be needed in order to ensure that the requirements of this new framework are met.

Furthermore, the ministry will also charge a fee for inspections for recurring non-compliance in long-term-care homes. What's not clear, Speaker, is if the number of inspections will be capped at any point and instead be moved up to a licence suspension for non-compliance. We need greater clarity in that particular area.

Inspectors will also be granted the ability to revoke or suspend licences and order an interim manager to step in to run a long-term-care home. Additionally, the ministry would have the ability to claw back funding or withhold funding from a long-term-care home under the new enforcement tools. This is to the point I made earlier in the response to the earlier comments about the need for greater consultation, over and above what has occurred thus far.

Other proposed amendments in schedule 5 of Bill 160 include a change to allow the minister to suspend licences and issue orders. I would note here that due diligence cannot be used as a defence by a licensee, although they may appeal within 28 days of the order or notice. The minister may also issue additional policy and operational directives dealing with care levels, but not make them home-specific.

In addition, the fees associated with penalties will be increasing under the proposed measures, with the first offence costing \$100,000 or 12 months in jail and the second offence costing \$200,000 or 12 months in jail. The proposed penalty rates are a substantial increase from the current penalties, which are \$25,000 for first-time offenders and \$50,000 for repeat offenders.

Some of the other proposed measures in schedule 5 will be of particular interest to families, those people watching today who have a loved one with dementia. In particular, the bill would amend the law regarding secure units in Ontario's long-term-care homes. Secure units are areas within a long-term-care home that are often used to keep people with dementia safe. These units will frequently have locked doors to prevent wandering and alarms on exit doors in case a resident leaves.

To be clear, these are protective measures to ensure that those with dementia do not find themselves in a situation where they could potentially be injured. The sections of the Long-Term Care Homes Act dealing with secure units were previously drafted, but they were never brought into force, meaning that those sections in the Long-Term Care Homes Act are not currently law.

To address this oversight, the bill before us today, Bill 160, and in particular schedule 5, proposes to address this gap by legislating what would be called "confinement" and outlining the qualifications for when this confinement would be applicable for a resident, and what restrictions would apply should a resident be confined.

There are few situations in which the government permits people to be detained against their will, the most primary of which is imprisoning criminals. In order to ensure that senior citizens with dementia across Ontario are not subject to similar provisions, this gap in the legislative framework is rightly being addressed.

The proposed legislation states that residents of long-term-care homes cannot be restrained or confined due to convenience or a disciplinary measure. Further, the bill introduces specific criteria that would have to be met in order to confine a resident. Consent would be required of the patient if they are mentally capable of making the decision. Otherwise a substitute decision-maker, usually a relative, would be responsible.

If the substitute decision-maker consents to a resident being confined, the long-term-care home would have additional responsibilities to the resident, such as giving the resident written notice, verbally explaining a notice and providing an opportunity to meet a rights adviser.

But there's no clear definition of what a "rights adviser" is. Bill 160 offers no definition, so the bill only goes so far. The Retirement Homes Act states that it's the person designated by, or in accordance with, the regulations as a rights adviser. However, there's no mention of a rights adviser in the Retirement Homes Act's current regulations. I think it's clear, as a consequence, that this section of Bill 160 requires additional clarity and review.

Should the resident choose to meet with the rights adviser as set out in the proposed bill, this adviser would have to tell the resident that he or she has a legal right to disagree with being confined and apply to the Consent and Capacity Board for a hearing. At that hearing, the resident could then appeal to the board for the right not to be confined. Interestingly, a substitute decision-maker would have to give or refuse consent to the confinement in accordance with the provincial rules that currently guide how substitute decision-makers must make treatment decisions. This means that it is possible a resident may at an earlier time have expressed a clear wish not to be confined in a long-term-care home, and a substitute decision-maker would be required to follow that wish.

What is unique here is that a resident who has a prior capable wish to refuse a particular medical treatment runs the risk of harming themselves in the long term when a decision made at an earlier time must continue to be honoured. For example, a person may have a prior capable wish never to be treated with a blood transfusion, even if that is what is required to save their life years later.

1000

But here, Speaker, respecting a prior capable wish not to be confined in long-term care could introduce a risk of harm to others, as some people with dementia are not only confused but can also become aggressive. How these individuals will be treated could prove very difficult for families who want their loved ones in locked units due to legitimate safety concerns, including a risk of harm to other vulnerable residents in the long-term-care home.

Fortunately, a substitute decision-maker would have the right to apply to the Consent and Capacity Board for a hearing for permission to deviate from the prior capable wish, and consent to confinement. Such permission from the Consent and Capacity Board might be granted if the Consent and Capacity Board is persuaded that the resident, if capable, would probably give consent because

the likely result of the confinement is significantly better than would have been anticipated in comparable circumstances at the time the wish was expressed.

While it's logical to offer legal protections to persons being involuntarily detained, mirroring the legislation will likely introduce some practical issues, some of which I've raised already, and could put some long-term-care home residents at risk. Hopefully, the government will seek feedback from stakeholders to refine the bill and ensure that it strikes an appropriate balance of the liberties of residents alongside the protection of other, more vulnerable persons in the same long-term-care home.

The Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus wants to see a long-term-care system that upholds safety and quality and one that is hailed as a success for all residents in long-term care. As builders of our communities, residents in Ontario's long-term-care homes deserve no less. They deserve no less.

The government must ensure that it allows for adequate time to educate the long-term-care sector about their new legal obligations, of which there are many, as opposed to simply applying charges, penalties or, even worse, treating them as though they are a cash cow.

Meanwhile, through some of the amendments to the Ambulance Act set out in the proposed schedule 1 of Bill 160, the government is seeking to provide paramedics with increased flexibility to deliver alternate care options on-scene to patients. If these legislative amendments are adopted, paramedics will have the ability and the authority to refer patients to destinations other than hospitals, as is currently required by law. Under the proposed legislative regime, persons with mental health issues, for example, could be taken to a facility more appropriate than a hospital, such as a primary care or community-based health care facility. However, this proposed framework would require that these alternate facilities be able to operate 24 hours per day, seven days per week, similar to hospitals.

I'd like to turn now, Speaker, to the proposed legislative measures in Bill 160 that purport to address transparency, freedom of information, and privacy.

I want to be clear in discussing these aspects that the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party supports transparency and openness across the health care sector and, in fact, across all of government. Looking for ways to increase transparency and accountability for Ontario's patients and their families is a goal we all strive for and want to accomplish.

It's crucial that the private information of patients is kept secure and not used beyond the purpose for which the information was collected and intended.

With respect to schedule 4, the Health Sector Payment Transparency Act, there are aspects in this section which we support, in particular the requirement to report information about financial relationships that exist in Ontario's health care system, including health care research and education, and to enable the collection, analysis and publication of that information in order to strengthen transparency and openness.

Encompassed in the proposed schedule 4 of this bill are the reporting requirements of transfers of value paid to all regulated health care professionals and organizations. However, both the specific recipients and the threshold for reporting have been left to be determined by regulation. The proposed reporting requirements would be substantial, and to omit the specific details of the reporting requirements and the framework within Bill 160 is a significant oversight within this particular schedule. I would urge the government to look at that particular section again and I hope that we'll see some amendments.

Speaker, you will know that a national campaign called Open Pharma was launched in June 2017, calling on the federal government to mandate the public disclosure of all payments and transfers of value, such as gifts and meals, from pharmaceutical companies to physicians. In particular, the Open Pharma campaign called on the federal government to make drug companies more transparent by publicly disclosing clinical information on the safety and efficacy of drugs and medical devices, and making industry-funded research open access so that it's available for re-analysis in academic journals and other platforms.

In a recent Globe and Mail article, the federal health minister at the time, the Honourable Jane Philpott, said that any move to force the disclosure of payments to individual doctors should be left to the provinces to decide. It's clear, Speaker, as you read the omnibus bill, Bill 160, that the proposed legislation in schedule 4 is the government's response to that. But while on the one hand, the government has proposed greater levels of transparency in certain parts of the health care sector, they have also created an exemption from the application of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in Bill 160. This exemption would apply to records in the custody or control of the Ontario Health Quality Council that were prepared or obtained by the Patient Ombudsman in the course of conducting an investigation within the meaning of section 13.3 of the Excellent Care for All Act, 2010.

While the proposed measure in Bill 160 is designed to keep the information of patients private, as it should, in the event that the Patient Ombudsman must conduct an investigation, there is concern that the government will treat these legislative measures as a precedent to keep other less sensitive pieces of information out of the hands of the public in order to preclude scrutiny. This is clearly unacceptable and contrary to the broad intent and purpose of the legislation in terms of transparency and openness. The Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus will ensure that the government upholds its commitment to openness and transparency in the totality of Bill 160.

Significant portions of this omnibus bill—it's quite thick; it's several hundred pages long—have been left to be determined by regulation, the timing of which is unknown and the content uncertain, very uncertain. The ability of MPPs in this chamber to determine law through regulations gives enormous power to the minister to

enact the specific measures of Bill 160 when and how the government wishes.

Ultimately, ministers of the crown should be tabling complete bills in the Legislature to give all members of this Legislature an opportunity to participate in rigorous debate regarding the impact of the proposed new measures and amendments to existing legislation, of which there are many in this omnibus bill. The notion that ministers can table a bill and then determine substantial, specific portions through regulations at a time most convenient to the government clearly does not give other members of the Legislature the opportunity to properly scrutinize the bill in its entirety, the entire context of it all.

Speaker, it also suggests a hurried consultation pertaining to Bill 160. This legislation, as I have described earlier in my comments, will significantly alter the health and long-term-care sectors in Ontario for years to come. I believe it is incumbent on the government to conduct ongoing consultations with all sectors within the health care system impacted by this legislation, to ensure that the sector stakeholders continue to have an opportunity to have their voices heard. I would encourage the government to conduct this type of consultations with the people in groups impacted by these changes, in particular on educating the health and long-term sectors about their new legal obligation.

Education is going to be crucial, as there are significant proposed measures in the legislation, including new enforcement tools, financial penalties and new provincial offences for non-compliance. The worst that can happen here, Speaker, is to rush through major changes, create a culture of fear, make the sector even more vulnerable and, as a result, have unintended consequences within the long-term-care sector and other aspects of the health system.

In closing, Speaker, there are a variety of proposed measures included in Bill 160 that will benefit Ontario's health and long-term-care sectors, but the government must put greater effort and thought into the design and consequences of legislation, particularly when they seek to include such a large number of legislative amendments in one bill. In closing, at the end of the day, we want to make the health care system more efficient and improve the health care experience and health outcomes for residents we have the privilege of representing. They deserve no less.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing that it's almost 10:15, I will be recessing the House until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'd like to welcome the parents of Rachel Marshall and a family friend, Martha Drake. Thank you for visiting the Legislature to see the page in action.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm very pleased to introduce a number of people that a number of my colleagues and I joined this morning at the co-op breakfast. First we

have Peter Cameron, acting executive director of the Ontario Co-operative Association; Luc Morin, director and government relations committee member for the Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario; I think also here is Michelle Vieira, director of sales and member relations at Ag Energy Co-operative Ltd.

We have a number of people here from Brown and Cohen Communications and Public Affairs: Howard Brown, of course; Laura Casselman; and Blake Keidan. Welcome to Queen's Park and thank you for this morning.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's my pleasure this morning to welcome Jennifer and Darwin Groskleg here to Queen's Park. They are the parents of today's page captain, Olivia. Welcome.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my delight to introduce to the House Chad Murray and his daughter, Victoria Murray. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: On behalf of the Minister of Community and Social Services, who couldn't be here this morning, I would like to welcome legislative page Adam Pariag's mom, Rayanna Pariag, and his aunt, Jenny Foo, to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please join me in welcoming a great member of my team, Chelsea Goberdhan. She's graduating from Ryerson next Thursday. Welcome, Chelsea.

Hon. Jeff Leal: On behalf of my good friend and colleague Lou Rinaldi from the great riding of Northumberland—Quinte West, I welcome Philip Thomas and his daughter, Jillian, here today.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted to introduce three members from the Human Resources Professionals Association, who are here today for the annual awareness day reception. In the east members' gallery we have Scott Allinson, Gary Monk and Claude Balthazard.

Speaker, there's a reception immediately following question period in room 230, and we're all invited to that.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'd like to introduce Mr. Norm Tollinsky, who is the editor of Sudbury Mining Solutions, who is here in the gallery somewhere. Thank you, Norm, for being here.

Hon. Liz Sandals: There may be some overlap here with the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, but given that we have a lot of co-ops in Guelph, I wanted to point out that a couple of the co-op reps are my constituents, located in Guelph: Michelle Vieira, who is the CEO of the Ag Energy Co-op, located in Guelph; and Peter Cameron, the acting executive director of On Co-op, the Ontario Co-operative Association, with its head office in Guelph.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, not to be outdone, as one of the co-chairs of the co-op caucus, I'd like to welcome all of those who attended our morning breakfast this morning as part of the co-operative movement. On behalf of all of us, thank you to the co-op members who are here.

Mr. Han Dong: Joining us in the public gallery are two fantastic youth leaders from my riding, Allen Wang and Madeleine Wieler. They are accompanied by Robert

Xu, international student and currently a Canadian governor on the University of Toronto governing council. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to welcome Lily Hamilton, who is joining us on behalf of Plan International today through a program called Girls Belong Here. She will be shadowing me today and is here to celebrate International Day of the Girl, which is on October 11. Speaker, it's Women's History Month. I'm honoured to share my day with her. Welcome to Queen's Park, Lily.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome a part-time Prince Edward county resident. He's the vice-president of the Human Resources Professionals Association: my good friend Scott Allinson.

Hon. Jeff Leal: In the west public gallery today, I'd like to introduce Scott Duff and the great OMAFRA ministry team from the rural policy branch. Welcome.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'd like to wish our MPP Lorne Coe a very happy birthday. I understand it's his plenty-ninth.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Healthful life.

Further introductions?

Mr. Bill Walker: Seeing as we'll be away next week, I'd like to just acknowledge Sylvia Jones's 10th anniversary serving the great people of Caledon and Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have some introductions to do. First and foremost: the page captain, Greg Bannister from Brant. His mother, Patricia Bannister, is with us in the gallery. Thank you for being here on the pages' last day.

Also in the Speaker's gallery we have with us, from the Republic of Congo, honorary consul general M. Jean-Michel Itoua and Mr. Brice Dimitri Bayendissa, member of Parliament for the National Assembly of Congo. Welcome.

We also have with us in the Speaker's gallery today His Excellency the High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus to Canada, Mr. Pavlos Anastasiades, and his wife, Maria Antonopoulou-Anastasiades. Welcome to the Parliament. They're also here to celebrate the 57th anniversary of independence of the Republic of Cyprus, and there is a flag-raising at noon. Welcome and thank you. Congratulations.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd also like to acknowledge Randy Hillier and Bob Bailey, my colleagues, on their 10-year anniversary.

Mr. James J. Bradley: I don't know whether this is a point of order or a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, but I was denied entry to the Albany Club last night.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That was neither.

The member from Nepean-Carleton on a point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I am seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice to provide for the immediate passage of Bill 163, An Act to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. We do those after; the explanations come after. I have to ask this.

The member is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

Therefore, it is time for question period.

1040

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Acting Premier. We know that the opposition parties think that the \$4.6-million compensation package for the Hydro One CEO is too high. We know that the Ontario public thinks that the \$4.6 million in salary for the CEO at Hydro One is too high. We now know that the Ontario Energy Board—the OEB—thinks that the \$4.6-million salary for the CEO of Hydro One is too high. But what we don't know is: Do the Liberals think that the \$4.6-million salary for the CEO of Hydro One is too high?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm not sure why the opposition have such a tough time understanding the role of the Ontario Energy Board. They seem to want to have it both ways. When the Ontario Energy Board makes a decision that, I think, we all believe is in the public interest and do their job, they want to criticize them then. Then they talk about the Ontario Energy Board not having any role whatsoever in trying to lead consumers into thinking—

Interjection: It's about the salary, not the board.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not going to be accepting those kinds of interjections, so be warned—well, actually, I shouldn't use that word until I want to do that. Be aware that I am not going to accept those interjections.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think they're trying to lead consumers into thinking, somehow or another, that the government sets energy rates and that it's not the Ontario Energy Board.

The Ontario Energy Board has an important role to play. They're doing that role. We're proud of the role that they're playing. They're standing up for consumers, as this government did when we cut the energy rates by 25% for our consumers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: Speaker, perhaps the minister didn't understand the question, but the Ontario Energy Board has ruled that \$4.6 million is too high a salary for the CEO at Hydro One. That salary was handed to the CEO by this Premier and this Liberal government.

Two years ago, the Premier tried to defend this outrageous salary by saying that this is what they pay in corporate America and that it's actually less than American energy CEOs, so \$4.6 million is acceptable. That's what the Premier said.

But I don't think the Premier can still spin it that way, given the decision by the OEB in the last week that we're

paying way too much for all of the executives at Hydro One. It doesn't require spin.

Mr. Speaker, it's really simple: Do the Liberals think that a \$4.6-million salary for the CEO of Hydro One is too high?

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's funny, Mr. Speaker: A party that used to understand the importance of putting private sector acumen into decision-making in some of our agencies now seems to want to go in the exact opposite direction.

Hydro One is now a publicly traded company. Our role is to ensure that they have the ability to provide the best possible level of service to the people of this province, taking advantage of that private sector acumen, improving the level of service and improving the return to the people of this province of that now publicly traded corporation.

We believe that's going to be in the public interest. We believe that we're going to see—and we're seeing—improvements in our energy system as a result of that. We believe the Ontario Energy Board is doing their role and performing it very well in ensuring that that public interest continues to be served. I'm not sure where the member finds that there is some kind of a problem with—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Final supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: If I'm reading between the lines here, it seems like the minister believes that a \$4.6-million salary for the CEO of Hydro One is acceptable, and this Liberal government believes that a \$4.6-million salary for the CEO is acceptable. I can tell you that people across the province disagree with this Liberal government—vociferously disagree.

Bill Kelly from CHML in Hamilton put it pretty well, I thought. He said that the Ontario Energy Board's recent decision “slapped down Hydro One” because they wanted ratepayers to “cover what they called ‘administrative costs,’ which is a sly way of saying that they wanted more money to give increases to their already overpaid executives.” In fact, in the OEB ruling, they decided that the budget needed to be cut by \$30 million.

So why did it take the Ontario Energy Board, and not the Liberal government, to slap down these high-priced executives at Hydro One?

Hon. Brad Duguid: This is far from the first time that the Ontario Energy Board has asked one of the energy agencies to reduce their rate-increase asks. In fact it's very, very normal; it has happened almost every single year in every single application. I can share with the member a list of dozens of times where this has happened.

The Ontario Energy Board is doing their job; they are looking out for consumers across this province. This government is doing our job by lowering energy rates across this province for those very consumers. I ask the member opposite to do his job and tell it like it is: that the energy board is simply doing what is in their job

procedurally, to ensure that consumers' interests are looked after, and, at the same time, we have an energy system that is being improved on a daily basis by this new publicly traded company.

I think that's good news for the entire province.

FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Last month, there were two legislative reports on the state of Ontario's finances. They were described as blistering and scathing. Those descriptions, Speaker, are well deserved.

Both of the Legislature's—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. The member from Beaches–East York, come to order.

As I indicated to both sides, I'm not going to tolerate the interjections, and you'll see how quickly I'll deal with them if I have to.

Continue, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Both of the Legislature's independent officers openly challenged the ministry's credibility. The Financial Accountability Officer said that the minister is using “unlikely assumptions” to make his debt claims. In fact, they said that if any of these wild assumptions fall short, the government's targets would not be achieved. They particularly took issue with the government's overly optimistic growth projections.

If the FAO doesn't believe the minister's numbers, why should the people of Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Economists independent of government across Canada have cited this: Ontario is leading the way in economic growth in our country. The Conference Board of Canada has cited that we've outperformed and had the most transparent levels of reporting than any other government in Canada.

This member opposite continuously degrades and talks down the outstanding achievements of Ontarians and businesses in our province that are creating wealth, creating greater prosperity, and hiring for more jobs. We have the lowest unemployment of any part of this country, and we are overachieving every single year that we put forward our budgets, to the benefit of Ontario.

We've reduced the deficit to under \$900 million just last year, and we're going for it: We're balancing the budget this year, next year and the year after that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the minister: The FAO's comments were strong enough, but the Auditor General painted an even more damning picture of the minister's financial reporting. For the second year in a row, the auditor wouldn't sign off on the province's books without a big asterisk.

The auditor went further, stating flat out that the statements are “significantly misstated.” She says our deficit last year was \$1.4 billion higher than claimed, and our debt is a whopping \$12.4 billion higher. She warned us

and the markets and investors that we need to be able to rely on government figures being accurate, but “this year they cannot do so.” That’s her quote. You cannot rely on their numbers.

Again we ask—and I know they’re belittling the auditor; I can hear their comments again. But we ask: If the AG and the FAO don’t believe the minister’s numbers, why should we?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Investors around the world believe our numbers. The people of Ontario and throughout Canada who buy our bonds believe our numbers. We have the highest liquidity of trade in bonds of any government across this continent, in fact.

Our debt-to-GDP has been reduced—and it continues to reduce—below 37%, again overachieving our targets. Our accumulated deficit—which is a representation of the historical activity of Ontario’s budgets—today is at around 27%, the same as it was 25 years ago. Our interest on debt as a percentage of revenue today is 8%. When he was in power, when the Progressive Conservatives were in power, Mr. Speaker, it was 15% of our revenues.

We are overachieving, and we continue to do so. We are using the same standards as we’ve always done, including what the Auditor General has done even as recently as three years ago.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the minister: If the minister is comfortable using, “significant misstatements” and “unlikely assumptions,” then it should be no surprise to hear what else he continues to claim.

They continue to say, “We’re leading the G7 in economic growth.” But Ontario is not number one, Speaker. There are 27 US states ahead of us.

The minister continues to claim that manufacturing exports are up, but StatsCan just last week reported that Ontario manufacturing sales suffered their largest decline in eight years.

Here are some of the recent headings: “July Trade Deteriorates”; “Exports Languish”; “Ontario Residents Hit by Manufacturing Downturn”; “International merchandise exports fell”; “Manufacturing sales slip.”

Speaker, given all these examples, plus the Financial Accountability Officer’s and the Auditor General’s criticism, how can anyone trust anything this government says?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, facts do matter, and that side of the House—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Well, we’re there. From now on, we’re going into warnings for those interjections. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order. You brought us to this point. Warnings are on.

Finish.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, facts matter. This member opposite is citing sources—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Charles Sousa: He’s citing references from years past, recognizing that as of today, Ontario is ahead of the curve. Our unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in 16 years, at 5.7%.

That’s not to say that we’re not continuously looking at stimulating economic growth around all of Ontario, recognizing some regional disparities exist. That member opposite and that party voted against those measures that improve prosperity, stimulate new growth and continuously balance the books.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Acting Premier. In my community of Oshawa, I have constituents come into my office all the time to tell me about their long wait times in the ER. Lakeridge Health Oshawa is no different than hospitals in Tillsonburg, Etobicoke, Brampton, Toronto or Peterborough, which just announced that it will open 24 beds, without help from this Liberal government, just to try to keep up with the number of people who need care.

In February 2017, the occupancy rate of Lakeridge Health Oshawa’s acute care beds reached 92%. Does the Premier have a plan to fix this unhealthy mess that she has helped create in Oshawa?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Of course, unlike the party opposite, which simply opposes all of the plans that we have for addressing capacity and wait time challenges across this province, and different than the party who opposed our \$500-million investments in hospitals earlier this spring, we do have a plan.

With Lakeridge specifically—and they are facing challenges, because as the member knows, it’s a rapidly growing area. We’ve given them a planning grant so that they can actually plan not just for today but also 20 and 30 years into the future for that entire region of Durham. In fact, we’re doing the same in Scarborough. But for Lakeridge itself, specifically, they’re working together with Ontario Shores to open up a brand new behavioural support unit which is specific. They’ll be providing 20 beds for ALC patients who have mental health needs so that they can decant those out of hospital to a more appropriate setting.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Again to the Acting Premier: Lakeridge Health in Whitby is also over capacity. In February, it reached 102%. I would like to remind the Premier again that a maximum of 85% capacity is considered safe.

The Premier has said over and over again that she makes decisions based on evidence. The evidence that Ontario's hospitals are facing an overcrowding and hallway medicine crisis is out there. The evidence is piling up, literally piling up in the hallways. Why is the Premier refusing to act on the facts?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm gratified that the member opposite mentioned the Ajax-Pickering hospital, which is part of the Lakeridge Health corporation. Lakeridge Health received, this year alone, a \$6.6-million increase in their operating budget to allow them to make modifications and continue to provide that high-quality care. But also, when it comes to Ajax-Pickering and staying in line with the discussion on mental health beds specifically, we're opening 20 new acute care mental health beds at the Ajax-Pickering site as well, in addition to what we're doing at Ontario Shores.

We're listening to the local community, we're listening to the hospital leadership, and we're making those multi-million-dollar investments on the operating side and on the capital side to make sure that they are able to competently address, with the highest-quality service, those particular needs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Again to the Acting Premier: In Oshawa, as elsewhere, it's not just acute care beds that are over capacity. Mental health beds are also locked in a constant state of gridlock. Both Lakeridge Health in Oshawa and the Lakeridge facility in Whitby registered capacity numbers in their mental health beds of 115% last winter.

The Premier cannot defend this, but can the Premier tell the people of my community when help from this Liberal government is coming?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I would hope that the member opposite would understand and believe that 40 brand new beds for mental health, 20 of them for ALC patients who have specific mental health challenges, 20 acute—which is through Ontario Shores, in concert with the Lakeridge site in Oshawa, as well as 20 new acute beds at the Ajax site.

But the NDP, in a single year in 1994, announced a \$53-million cut to 10 of Ontario's psychiatric hospitals: in Hamilton, in Brockville, in Kingston, in Thunder Bay, in London, in North Bay, in Penetang, in Toronto, in St. Thomas and in Whitby. That represented up to a 17% cut in the operating budget of some hospitals—a \$4.7-million cut in Hamilton alone; a \$5-million cut in Whitby alone; \$6.3 million in Kingston.

In the end, the NDP was forced to backtrack, so instead of \$53 million, they only cut \$20 million—in a single year, Mr. Speaker.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, the Minister of Health said that the vast majority of long-term-care homes in Ontario are meeting the province's minimum standards of care

set out in the various acts that apply to them. But what the minister and the Premier failed to realize, it seems, is that this is not good enough.

Families with loved ones in care have been coming forward, speaking up for months to tell this Liberal government about the heartbreaking conditions in some of these care homes. Does the Premier not care what families are telling her, or is she just out of touch with what's really going on in this province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The NDP continues to disparage not only our hard-working front-line workers in long-term cares across the province, but also does not understand that we are, in fact, listening to Ontarians and we are listening to residents of long-term-care homes who call long-term-care homes their home. We have an obligation and a responsibility, which I take very seriously, to ensure that we're providing the highest quality of care.

Again, I need to ask the question of whether that party is going to vote for or against the new legislation that has just been proposed last week, which actually will increase our ability to further inspect homes, will increase the penalties and fines available to government to impose upon those non-compliers and give other powers to the government so we can ensure that not only is there compliance with the act, but that these homes are of the highest quality possible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, this is what's happening in long-term care: seniors are being left in beds for 18 hours, getting a bath just once a week, constant short-staffing and a lack of consistency in care. Vulnerable seniors are not even getting the basic help they need to make it to the bathroom on time. These are just a few of the thousands of stories described to me in the past few months by families with loved ones in care.

How can the Premier continue to claim that everything is fine in these homes when she hears from families themselves that there is a crisis happening right under her nose?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: That is precisely why this week I issued three "cease admissions" to long-term-care homes in this province, because they weren't complying with the act and because there were director's orders against those homes for issues such as a fall taking place and that fall not being reported to the proper clinical authorities, the physician who would then do the proper assessment. These are critically important activities that need to be taken, that need to be done in adherence with the act.

1100

But, Mr. Speaker, it's also important to recognize that we're seeing that impact from our annual inspections of 100% of our long-term-care homes. We're seeing that since 2014, the average number of compliance orders issued during an annual inspection has actually gone down by more than 50%.

We are seeing the improvement—the inspections are working—but we need to identify and act on those that are not in compliance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The three cease-admission orders in London, Mississauga and Fergus are indicators that there are systemic problems in long-term care. Over and over again, we have told the Premier and her Minister of Health the heartbreaking stories of neglect, and even abuse, in long-term-care homes.

Over and over again, we have called for the Wettlaufer inquiry to be expanded, so that we can get an honest picture of what's happening in the long-term-care system, identify the systemic issues and fix them. But over and over again, the Premier and her minister have ducked our questions and refused to expand the inquiry which would help thousands of people. They are content to ignore the problems in our long-term-care system.

Can the Premier tell us: When will there be enough evidence for her to take this issue seriously?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We are taking it seriously—and we've been taking it seriously for a lot longer than the member opposite and her party have been raising this in a partisan fashion and fearmongering across this province.

People in their long-term-care homes don't need to be afraid of the quality of care that they're receiving—with a few exceptions, which we're addressing effectively. They need to be afraid of what the NDP is doing in fearmongering and suggesting to Ontarians that their loved ones are not safe in long-term care homes.

I think it's reprehensible. I think it's completely inappropriate—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from London–Fanshawe is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I think it's completely inappropriate to be elevating it to that level of conjecture and fearmongering across this province.

If they believe in supporting the long-term-care sector, why did they vote against our \$80-million investment in this year's—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Acting Premier. Two weeks ago, I stood up in this Legislature and asked the Premier to change her policies that are driving jobs out of Ontario, including the 1,300 layoffs that have been announced in Oxford over the last 10 months.

Business after business warned this government that the high cost of operating in Ontario would force them to close their doors or move.

Yesterday, 200 more layoffs were added to that total, as Firestone announced that they are closing their doors

after 81 years, and shifting their remaining production to North Carolina.

Will the government now finally admit that their policies are driving jobs out of Ontario, and take action today?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Let me respond to that question in two parts, Mr. Speaker.

I want to start off by saying that we share the member's concerns for that community. They've been hit by a couple of significant layoffs in the last month or so, and we're very aware of those challenges. In fact, we'll continue to work with local authorities there. Our focus will be on helping those workers find other opportunities, and we'll continue to ensure that our training, colleges and universities—now our MAESD—will be engaged in that as well. We'll work—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington is warned.

I'll keep doing it.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm not sure why he'd be heckling me at this time, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about something very important to one of his colleagues.

I look forward to working with my colleague, as will my colleague minister, to help in any way we can.

In the supplementary, I'll address the issues about Ontario's competitiveness.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, 1,500 layoffs in Oxford in less than a year, and 2,800 CAMI employees on strike, trying to keep their jobs in Ontario—the government can try to spin this however they want, but that's the impact of your policies.

The people of Oxford are doing everything we can to support our local businesses, but this government just adds more and more burdens until the companies are forced to close their doors. How many more people have to lose their jobs before you're going to take real action and keep our businesses and our jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, now it's time for me to bring the member into the real world, because that is not the real world in Ontario or even anything close to it.

This province is growing faster than the G7s on average. We have an unemployment rate in this province that's at a 16-year low. We have created 760,000 net new jobs since the global recession. For the member to talk down the work that's being done in this business community and in this province to create jobs is absolutely inappropriate and absolutely wrong.

I understand there are challenges in that particular community. There have been a couple of very significant layoffs. We will work with the member to help those workers, but the best thing we can do is stay on track—to keep building this strong economy in Ontario, keep leading the G7 and keep that unemployment rate at record lows. We're determined to do that, and we—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

In a letter you received from Chief Elaine Johnston from Serpent River First Nation, it said that if a family lives in Sault Ste. Marie, Blind River or Elliot Lake, they have direct access to Algoma Family Services children's mental health services. However, if a family lives on a First Nations community, they receive no children's mental health services from Algoma Family Services. Minister, why is this?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank the member for the question. I've been in this position now for just over a year and have had the opportunity to visit many of our indigenous communities across the province of Ontario. In fact, two weeks ago, I was at Treaty 3 and met with the chiefs in Kenora. I signed a historical document out there, moving toward an agreement between our indigenous partners and the government of Ontario to put the resources and the control back in the hands of the community, so that young people from the indigenous communities can get the services they need and they deserve where they live.

This is the first time in the history of this province—in fact, this country—that we've made a type of agreement that will put the responsibility and the ownership of the responsibility to look after children back into the hands of the communities, where it should be. I'm very proud of this government's direction with regard to that policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again to the Minister of Children and Youth Services: Algoma Family Services has indicated that they don't have the expertise or resources to provide any services to First Nations in my area or to indigenous children who are in the care of Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services. This is why Nogdawindamin has submitted a proposal to your ministry to fund the delivery of culturally-appropriate children's mental health services to my area's First Nations communities. Your ministry simply answered that there is no money for this.

Minister, every child matters. Why is there no money for direct treatment of children's mental health on First Nations in my area?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, we brought forward Bill 89 this year. Again, it was a historical document. It was the first document in the history of this country that acknowledges that a cultural approach to working with communities is necessary. It actually acknowledges that systemic racism does exist, and indigenous communities have been victims of colonialism here in the province of Ontario and across this country.

When we moved forward with that bill, the NDP supported it. The Conservatives did not support that bill, Bill 89. We still don't know today why they didn't support that bill that raised the age of protection and moved forward to build a framework to put those resources back in the hands of the community.

Mr. Speaker, you'll see, as we go forward here in Ontario, that those resources will be put back in the hands of the community. It's the first government in this country to do just that.

WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is to the minister responsible for the status of women. This past week, I received a very concerning call from my daughter. She was walking down the street in Ottawa when she came across a protest. She was walking by the Morgentaler Clinic. We know, in recent months, protest activity outside of several abortion clinics across Ontario has escalated to the point of harassment and intimidation. My daughter, who was simply walking down the street, felt it, and she called me about it—let alone the women and health care providers who work in these clinics. This is not right. And we know that it is happening all across this province.

1110

Mr. Speaker, as a woman, a mother and a member of this government—we have a responsibility to act. Yesterday, the government introduced legislation that would, if passed, do just that. Can the minister please tell us about our government's plan to keep these women safe?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for raising a very important question.

Speaker, as a woman and a mother with a young daughter, I have an obligation to not only my daughter but to all women in this province and their daughters who make a difficult choice. It is my belief and our government's belief that every woman in Ontario has the right to make decisions about her own health care and that they should be able to do so freely, without fear of bullying, intimidation or harassment.

In fact, that is why our government introduced safe-access-zone legislation yesterday that sends a very clear message that we will not tolerate any form of harassment against women exercising their fundamental right to choose. These proposed access zones would help ensure that women across Ontario have safe access to health care services and that their privacy and dignity are protected.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I know that the women across this province and the staff at these facilities are relieved to hear about this government's actions and work towards this.

However, I would like some further information about the legislation.

The difficult decision that these women make is not one that is ever made easily. It's a very difficult decision they live with for the rest of their lives. The reasons for making such a decision are deeply personal and are entirely up to them and no one else. We have a responsibility to ensure the privacy and emotional well-being of these women who make a choice about their own physical and emotional health. This responsibility, of course, also extends to health care providers.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: How can we ensure that there is safety in every clinic, in every home and on the street?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: The member raises a very good point.

I can tell you that yesterday the health care professionals and advocates in the room were very supportive of the proposed changes we are making to protect their patients and themselves. In fact, they applauded. They were telling us how much this legislation was needed to stop women from being harassed, intimidated and bullied.

This legislation would, if passed, provide for the creation of safe access zones of 50 metres, which can be increased up to 150 metres, around abortion clinics.

We can't just stop there. We also have a duty to protect the safety and security of the staff who offer women's reproductive services, which is why this legislation would also implement safe access zones of 150 metres around the homes of the staff.

Speaker, we're moving forward with this legislation because we take this seriously, because we have a responsibility to the women in this province.

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, the WSIB recently made significant changes to its hearing aid program without properly consulting audiologists and WSIB recipients. Before the summer, the Minister of Labour committed to looking at ways to fix the mess the WSIB has created. However, months later, the official opposition is still hearing from patients right across this province who cannot access the hearing aid that works best for them. We've heard stories of individuals limiting their time with loved ones because the hearing aid they are now forced to use is affecting their quality of life and hearing.

Deputy Premier, Ontario hearing aid patients are asking you to put them first and reverse the WSIB changes that are not benefiting anyone. I ask the Deputy Premier today: Will you act?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for that important question. I think a number of us in the chamber have been asked about exactly the same thing. What we need to ensure is that the WSIB is operating in the best interest of workers at all times. It's an organization that was put in place to ensure that if somebody is hurt on the job—our preference is that the injury does not

take place in the first place; we work hard on prevention. Should that injury take place, and from time to time those injuries can include hearing loss, we need to ensure that the services that are provided to the worker are services that meet the needs of the worker, whether it's a return to work, whether it's a recovery from illness.

The information that the member has brought forward was a change in policy at the WSIB. It was an attempt to ensure that the services that are brought forward in terms of hearing aids are the ones that are best to meet the needs of the injured worker.

We have talked to the WSIB about this, we remain in conversation with them and we hope we can reach a resolution. I'll address the rest in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert Bailey: To the Minister of Labour again: Just one single audiologist from my riding of Sarnia-Lambton alone has sent over 30 appeals to the WSIB in the last few months. It takes an average of three to six months to receive an answer. In my riding, I have met with more than a dozen affected constituents and received over 200 handwritten petitions on this issue. I can only imagine how many other patients and constituents are being impacted right across this province.

To the minister: Let's do what is right and what's fair, and make sure that injured workers in Ontario have access to the hearing aids that they need without further delay. Will the minister deal with this issue today?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I appreciate the question from the member. He and I have had a number of exchanges about health and safety in his own riding. I have always found the member to be very sincere. He brings issues to me first. He doesn't try to hijack the House when he brings these things forward.

I'm committed to continue to work on a variety of issues with the WSIB, because I know they're brought forward sincerely. In this case, what I think you have is an organization, the WSIB, that thinks it's doing the right thing; that has looked at what exists today in terms of hearing aids that are available to members of the public, to citizens of Ontario, who need to avail themselves of the services of the WSIB and have tried to provide that service in as effective and efficient a manner as they possibly could. However, you have a number of citizens who think that this is not working for them.

I believe that, working with the member, we can sort this out and everybody can get what they need at the end of the day.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Deputy Premier. This morning, the Liberal government made it clear they don't intend to support the NDP's push for paid leave for victims of intimate partner violence, despite clear evidence that too many women are afraid to escape because they simply cannot afford to.

We heard from Unifor's Sue McKinnon at the Bill 148 hearings this summer, who described one woman's night-

mare: She packed her life in a basket and fled with her three children. She was in constant fear of making sure her kids were fed, safe and had a roof over their heads, and she still had to make mortgage payments on a home that her partner destroyed.

Why is this government ignoring women who say paid leave will help them escape with their lives?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I appreciate the question, but we are doing anything but ignoring women in the province of Ontario.

If you look at the impacts of Bill 148, a lot of the advantages that will be gained by the passage of that bill, should the House presume to do that, will be aimed directly at women who haven't been treated in the past in the workplace the way they should. That's the whole point of this.

I was in Hamilton this morning speaking at the YWCA. As a result of us taking Bill 148 out after first reading, we were able to hear from people around the province of Ontario. One thing they brought forward was something that the member is bringing forward again, and that is domestic violence. People need to know that when they need to take time off in the eventuality of that, their job is not in jeopardy and they're not at risk of being fired. That's exactly what we do with leaves in the province of Ontario.

I believe if we work together on Bill 148, we can bring forward a bill that will exactly meet the needs of these women.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Back to the Acting Premier: New Democrats have repeatedly called for paid leave for victims who need it. The member from London West introduced two pieces of legislation; your government is stalling it. New Democrats introduced amendments to Bill 148 during the clause-by-clause; the Liberal government voted against those amendments.

1120

The NDP leader, last week, the member from Hamilton Centre, introduced a bill that would have 10 days' paid leave for victims of sexual and domestic violence so that survivors can afford to take a leave, so they can afford to have time off to file police reports, and so they can have time off to testify in court proceedings against their abusers. But the Liberal government refuses to support this. Why is that?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Once again, I appreciate the question, but the information being brought forward to the House simply is not accurate in this regard.

I was out in Hamilton this morning, talking publicly about the reason we took Bill 148 out in the first place; the way that we have listened to the people of the province of Ontario; and the way we are bringing forward up to 17 weeks of job-protected leave.

What we do in cases of compassionate leave, or these types of leaves, is that the province, under the Employment Standards Act, under the Labour Relations Act, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, provides

the job protection. It says to the individual, "Your job is not in jeopardy during this period of time."

We then turn to our federal counterparts in Ottawa, which I have done, Speaker, and we ask them to provide the income during that period, under employment insurance.

We're doing the right thing here; we're doing right by women. With the support of the House, we'll get to where we need to get to.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question today is for the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

Ontario has one of the most highly skilled workforces in the world, and this is thanks in large part to the incredible transformation of our post-secondary system that we've undertaken in the last 14 years.

As I'm sure all of us will agree, increasing access to post-secondary education by removing unnecessary barriers is one of the best ways that we as a government can help improve the life outcomes of Ontarians.

As such, Mr. Speaker, can the minister please inform this House how we have removed barriers and increased access to post-secondary education in our province since 2003?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It has been a remarkable 14 years for post-secondary education in Ontario.

Members of the opposition have said they don't believe that cost and income are real barriers to post-secondary education. That couldn't be further from the truth. We know that participation rates for kids from higher-income families are far, far greater than for lower-income families. That's why we have moved forward with an extraordinary transformation of student assistance, of OSAP.

This year, over 200,000 students in Ontario are getting free tuition, and there's help for hundreds of thousands more students. That's almost one third of our students who are getting free tuition, and another third are getting help as well, Speaker.

The number of students attending has also gone up dramatically, by over 38%. We've made investments, and they're paying results.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thanks to the minister for her answer.

When our government was first elected, our post-secondary sector was in desperate need of significant investments to make sure that its institutions could continue to provide the world-class education our students expect and deserve. But we know that world-class education and instruction require world-class facilities and faculty.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, can the minister please share with this House and all Ontarians some examples of significant investments our government has made to

improve Ontario's colleges and universities in the last 14 years?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said, enrolment has gone up by 38%, but grants to colleges and universities have almost doubled: They've gone up by 85%. That allows our colleges and universities to hire top-tier instructors and deliver state-of-the-art programming. We've invested heavily in the physical structure of their facilities as well.

Speaker, when the Conservatives were in power in 2003, their last year of power, they spent about \$100 million in capital for colleges and universities. We have, on average, invested \$300 million a year on colleges and universities. We've done that so that we've been able to build important projects such as the Software and Informatics Research Centre at UOIT in Durham and the Bata Library Research and Innovation Cluster at Trent. These are just two examples of the extraordinary investments we have made.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim McDonell: To the Deputy Premier: The government is no stranger to the Nation Rise Wind project in the township of North Stormont. If it has been paying any attention, it would know that the municipality doesn't want it and the local residents don't want it. The minister has admitted that the province doesn't need the power that Nation Rise or any other wind or solar contracts that are still being offered, signed and imposed on unwilling communities will generate. Nation Rise scored zero on all the IESO's rated criteria, yet it was still offered a contract. It is unwanted, unneeded and unjustifiable.

What is this government waiting for? Why will it not cancel?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The Minister of Energy and the previous Minister of Energy have put in place a process now that very much takes into consideration the local concerns about these projects. But time and time again, the party opposite's true colours come out. Any time there's any resistance at all to any renewable project, they're up on their feet talking about how they don't support renewable, clean energy.

We do have to start thinking of the big picture here. We need to start thinking of our kids and the health of our population. That's why, while local concerns are very, very important and we've taken measures to ensure that voice is heard, we're very proud to be the first jurisdiction anywhere in the world to eliminate coal and move to cleaner sources of power. That is going to help our kids live longer. That's going to save lives in this province. It's helping to build a very strong clean-tech sector here in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim McDonell: Back to the Deputy Premier: It's clear that we just don't need the power. All the

independent experts who have taken a look at this government's energy record have gasped in dismay at the total mess that you've made. Only this government can force clean, green Bruce Power to vent steam to reduce generation, spill renewable water resources over dams, pay wind and solar companies more than the power is worth, cause an eight-terawatt surplus in generation, sell the surplus for a loss and then proclaim that everything is just fine.

We already have a surplus of power today before Nation Rise is even built. This province doesn't owe the owners of Nation Rise a contract, but it does owe the citizens of North Stormont a duty to listen and to represent them.

North Stormont is an unwilling host. Which part of "unwilling" does this government not understand?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you for that important question and the ability to once again stand up and defend green energy in this province, because I'm not sure if the party opposite actually believes in green energy.

This government takes concerns regarding the environment and human health very seriously. Let me say that our ministry adheres to a very strict renewable energy approvals process. There's not a single renewable energy project that the PCs have ever spoken in support of here in this House. They have no plan to help Ontario families and businesses make sustainable choices and lower—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward-Hastings is warned.

Your time has expired. New question?

POVERTY

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Acting Premier. Last week, the Daily Bread Food Bank released their annual Who's Hungry report, and Toronto families were shocked by how dire the situation has become. Food bank visits in Toronto are at the highest level since the 2008 recession, with seniors listed as the fastest-growing group of food bank users, up 27% from last year. The average length of dependence on food banks has gone from 12 months to 24 months, with Scarborough families seeing a 30% increase in food bank visits.

These figures are heartbreaking. People are skipping meals so they can pay the bills and keep a roof over their heads. When will this Premier take off her blinders and see that this province is in crisis?

1130

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister responsible for poverty reduction.

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to thank the member from Windsor West for the question. All Ontarians believe that no one should have to make the choice in this province between feeding themselves or their child or

paying some other bill. We have a moral responsibility to ensure that all Ontarians have access to safe and good food.

We know, through the research we have done, that there's a number of initiatives that need to be done. We've worked on improving income support programs. If approved, the increase in the minimum wage is going to provide Ontarians a better living wage so they can pay for those needs that they need to. We're working on preventing homelessness in this province to ensure people have a safe place to stay, which includes supports that assist them with all their other daily needs.

I'm happy to answer more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Again to the Acting Premier: This government can say they are taking steps to address inequality with a \$15-an-hour minimum wage and basic income, but the Liberals have had 14 years to make life better in Ontario and they have failed. In fact, the Daily Bread Food Bank explicitly states, "While on paper the economy may be doing well, in the real world, many people are not."

We know what the Conservatives have said when times get tough. The last Conservative government told low-income families they could just buy dented cans and eat baloney sandwiches to save money. In eight years, they never once raised the minimum wage from \$6.85.

New Democrats will not stop fighting to raise families up, even though this Liberal government keeps pushing them down. When will the Premier get her priorities in order and actually start fighting for Ontarians?

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to thank the member from Windsor West for reminding the House about the damage the Conservatives did during their time.

I'm working in my ministry on the food security strategy which we'll be consulting on later this fall. Last week, I met with the director of the Daily Bread Food Bank, which is actually in my riding. She said her number one ask on food security is affordable housing. We've extended rent control to all Ontario tenants to make sure all Ontario tenants are treated fairly. We're investing in homelessness prevention initiatives across the province to make sure people have a place to stay, and the other supports, including access to food, to have a dignified life.

We've been taking action for 14 years, and we will continue to deliver on fairness for all Ontarians.

CHILD CARE

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ma question est pour la ministre responsable de la Petite Enfance et de la Garde d'enfants.

For 14 years, our government has been a real champion of child care, taking action to make sure that we all have access to quality and affordable child care. We know there was a lot of work to do because this file was not a priority when the party opposite was in power. I know, as a working parent, how important it is to have

good child care options, and I think I want to know exactly how much these investments have contributed to the life of families in Ontario.

Can the minister tell us what the plans are and what the government has been doing to meet the needs of families in this province?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the hard-working member from Ottawa–Vanier for this very important question.

When we came into office, the party opposite had no real plan for child care, had made no real investments, and had made no real commitments to improve child care for Ontario families.

Speaker, we have been making child care our top priority for 14 years. For 14 years, we have been investing in early years and child care. In fact, when we came into power, less than 10% of the children in Ontario had access to child care spaces.

We have doubled the number of licensed child care spaces in Ontario since 2003. In fact, recently, we committed to doubling the number of spaces again. We have also doubled child care funding in Ontario to close to \$1.5 billion a year.

We're transforming the way we're delivering early years and child care. Unlike the party opposite, we're working hard to get it right.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Thank you to the minister for all the work that she does on this file that is so important for all working parents across Ontario. It's very encouraging, I think, that we are continuing to work so hard on this file to address the needs of all Ontario families. For the last 14 years, I think we've made huge strides on the file of child care. I know that, for the Premier, it's an important file for her as well.

I think it's important for all Ontarians to know that the party opposite does not really have a plan on child care, and I think it's very important that we all know that. I'm proud to be a member of a caucus that believes in child care and that believes that working parents have a right to have child care options for them, and I know my constituents in Ottawa–Vanier believe that as well. Many of them are young parents and continue to want to have child care options.

Can the minister tell the House about this government's plans for the next few years?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I am pleased to answer the member's question. When the party opposite was in power, there were no ministries dedicated to child care. When the party opposite was in power, there was scarce funding for child care. When the party opposite was in power, there were no commitments or investments made to improve child care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Policy, please.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: That says volumes about the party opposite. They criticize and attack our hard work—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I said it once; I'll say it again: Policy, please.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: They have no plan or track record, but for us, the commitment to our children will never stop.

The Premier made a historic commitment to ensure that 100,000 more children have access to licensed child care over the next five years. The party opposite are the last people we take advice from. They've consistently voted—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sit down. That's disappointing.

New question.

OPIOID ABUSE

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Minister of Health. Yesterday, the government announced an opioid emergency task force to deal with the growing crisis around opioid abuse and overdoses. In addition, the government announced \$220 million to fight the opioid crisis. Given that I've been calling for a task force since last February, I've openly supported these announcements and I thank the minister personally.

Today, the assembly will debate Nick's Law, which would dedicate a portion of the Ontario's advertising budget to opioid awareness and education. In just 36 hours, we've had over 24 signatures on a petition calling for this law to pass. As a show of good faith, I'm hoping that the minister will support this. Can he speak to it?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the member opposite's advocacy on this critically important subject. It is true; we have had quite a number of conversations, and she has been a powerful, appropriate and tremendous advocate with regard to Ontario facing a public health emergency with regard to opioids. I know that she's doing it from the right place in the spirit of wanting to make a difference and contribute to all of our efforts to diminish and eventually end this crisis.

I look forward to the debate this afternoon on her bill. I applaud her for also focusing on the reality that, among the many touchpoints we have to impact this, public awareness and education is a critically important aspect of that.

Thank you for the question. I look forward to talking more in detail in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I think I misspoke. It was 2,400 signatures that we got in 36 hours.

Nick's Law is named for Nick Cody, who was a teenager when he died from an overdose from what his dad said was just "one bad pill." The stories I hear every day would sink your heart. Kids as young as 10 years are taking pills that could contain a deadly dose of fentanyl.

Yesterday, I was shocked that carfentanil has appeared on the streets of the city of Ottawa. Just to put this in perspective, it is 10,000 times more powerful than morphine and even stronger than fentanyl. It's being found on the streets in our city, so we have to be much more diligent.

Will the minister commit to an immediate public health advertising campaign to warn Ontarians against this deadly and potent drug that is now making the rounds in Ottawa?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We have committed to such a public health awareness and education campaign, and in fact we are implementing it. We're already working with our public health units, providing them with the updated and necessary materials so that, through their ability, including with their partners across Ontario, they can provide that critically important information.

We're working with the Ministry of Education and other ministries to ensure, in the correct way and impactful way, that we are able to reach high school students and those in colleges and universities. We're working with the Minister of Advanced Education.

We're also working with our pharmacists to ensure that, at the point of contact when an opioid prescription is either provided for the first time or renewed, that individual also has the requisite information.

And we're working with our bar owners and our nightclubs so that at that point we're able to reach those individuals appropriately with the right information; and, most importantly, with our harm reduction workers for that same purpose.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Transportation on a point of order.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, I didn't have the chance earlier today to welcome two guests, Cathy and Peter Kiteley, who are here in the gallery. I believe they are the parents of my legislative assistant and issues manager, Alana. Welcome to Queen's Park.

NORMAN JAMISON

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have a point of order from the member from Haldimand-Norfolk that we would want to hear.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I wish to inform this House, with sadness, of the passing of my predecessor, former MPP Norm Jamison, NDP member for Norfolk from 1990 to 1995. To those of us who knew Norm, he was a true gentleman. Friday, October 6, is Norm's funeral, and the flag here at Queen's Park will be at half-staff.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): God rest his soul.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have another sad announcement. With a heavy heart, this is the last day for our pages. I would beg that we offer our thank you for the work that they've done.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Well done. Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Keep the pages. I'll give up 20 members on the other side.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm glad we saved the jocularity for another time.

There are no deferred votes, so therefore we will recess until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1143 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I have a very long list. I hope you will indulge me while our guests enter the chamber this afternoon—many here to support some legislation I plan to introduce.

First, from the Ontario Home Builders' Association, we have Joe Vaccaro.

From the Ontario Real Estate Association: Rui Alves, Jeremy Chaput, Stacey Evoy, Dreena Gilpin, Jamie Hofing, Tim Hudak, John Meehan, David Reid, Heather Scott, Lindsay Stevens and Matthew Thornton.

From the Real Estate Council of Ontario: Tim Barber, Mike Cusano and James Geuzebroek.

From Tarion, we have Howard Bogach, Lea Ray, Tim Schumacher, Jennifer Shiller and Siloni Waraich.

Finally, from the Travel Industry Council of Ontario: Tracey McKiernan and Richard Smart.

Welcome all to Queen's Park this afternoon. Thank you for being here.

May I add, too, I believe my Deputy Minister for Government and Consumer Services, Kevin French, is joining us as well today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Welcome. I will not say anything about introducing a former member, but because you didn't say anything like that, I will wait for the rest of the introductions today before I do mine.

The member from Ajax–Pickering has an introduction?

Mr. Joe Dickson: If you say so, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If I thought you were standing for that purpose, I will acknowledge you, and if you're not, you can—

Mr. Joe Dickson: I was just waiting to get an instruction sheet, Mr. Speaker, but I will proceed, if you so desire.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If you have one, I will pass the microphone to you.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Both Catholic and public boards have been recipients of Ontario-grown and Durham farm fresh scrumptious apples to all Ajax and Pickering—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will now stand and interrupt the member because I think he misinterpreted. My invitation was to introduce guests. To make a statement or—

Mr. Joe Dickson: Mr. Speaker, I'm like Panasonic: slightly ahead of my time. I will now wait for instructions from you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have a feeling it's going to be an interesting afternoon. Anyway, I'm only at introduction of guests at the moment.

I have one who is arriving shortly, as has been mentioned: the former member from Niagara South in the 36th Parliament, MPP for Erie–Lincoln during the 37th and 38th Parliaments, and Niagara West–Glanbrook during the 39th, 40th and 41st Parliaments, Mr. Tim Hudak, who will be joining us shortly.

I kind of liked how we pretended he was in the Speaker's gallery. Like I said, it's going to be an interesting afternoon.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WASAGA BEACH

Mr. Jim Wilson: I rise today on behalf of the town of Wasaga Beach, its citizens and the thousands of visitors and tourists who come to the community every year.

The government's refusal to properly maintain the beachfront areas is negatively affecting the economic well-being of this beautiful community. Wasaga Beach is recognized in the Guinness Book of World Records for having the longest fresh water beach in the world. This designation will be lost if the beach is not cleaned up and maintained properly. Many areas of the beach are now overgrown with weeds and other vegetation, and many public parking areas are in a state of disrepair.

Wasaga Beach does not have traditional industry for jobs. The community relies on attracting visitors to its beachfront for economic growth and jobs. The current state of much of the beach area does not present an attractive picture for visitors to the community.

In addition, washroom facilities at the beachfront have needed upgrades for many years. The province has promised new washrooms on a number of occasions, but has not delivered. These investments are needed to help grow the economy in Wasaga Beach and ensure the beach continues to be one of the most popular destinations in the entire province.

Many citizens and visitors have signed my petition asking for the beach to be maintained properly. It's time the government acted on this situation. The current state of the beachfront is unacceptable and must be cleaned up. The residents of Wasaga Beach are waiting. And they know that the election is just around the corner.

COMMEMORATION OF FALLEN SOLDIERS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Today I'd like to speak about an overdue honour for Ontario's Silver Cross mothers. These are the women who have lost sons or daughters in combat—while serving their country, Canada.

The Silver Cross is also known as the Memorial Cross. It was instituted way back in 1919.

Other provinces have come up with an innovative way of showing respect for the families of our military personnel who have paid the supreme sacrifice. It's a

licence plate known as the Memorial Cross plate or the Silver Cross plate. Saskatchewan introduced them back in 2014. British Columbia made them available last year.

Here's what Rear Admiral Art McDonald, commander of Maritime Forces Pacific, had to say about them: "The Canadian Armed Forces are delighted and humbled that the government of British Columbia has decided to honour those who have died as a result of their military service to Canada and the sacrifice of their loved ones who were left behind in such a meaningful way. This Memorial Cross licence plate will be a daily reminder of the sacrifices members of the Canadian Armed Forces and their families make for their country and I welcome this thoughtful initiative...."

The medal itself used to just be given to mothers and widows, but recent changes now allow Canadian Armed Forces personnel to designate up to three Memorial Cross recipients. If three licence plates were issued to each family, it wouldn't break the bank in Ontario.

My constituent Theresa Charbonneau lost a son, 23-year-old Andrew Grenon, on the 3rd of September, 2008, while he was serving with the PPCLI in Afghanistan. She deserves to have an Ontario Silver Cross licence plate, just like the parents in Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

I call on this Liberal government to do the right thing and introduce these licence plates in Ontario.

NATIONAL DAY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. Han Dong: It's my pleasure to rise today, as the member for Trinity–Spadina and as an immigrant who was born in China, to acknowledge China's national day on October 1.

On Sunday, I had an opportunity to accompany our Premier; the consul general of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency He Wei; my colleagues the honourable members from Scarborough–Agincourt, Scarborough–Rouge River and Toronto–Danforth; and Chinese community leaders to raise the Chinese flag here at Queen's Park.

Mr. Speaker, in the past five years, our Premier, Kathleen Wynne, has led two successful delegations to China, and she is going on her third one this coming November. This government continues to strengthen the important relationship between this province and China.

On September 25, I had the opportunity to meet with the founder of Alibaba, Mr. Jack Ma, at the Gateway '17 conference. More than 3,000 small business owners and entrepreneurs went to the conference to explore new partnerships and opportunities in the Chinese market.

Prosperous trade relations between China and Ontario will continue to provide good-paying jobs and business opportunities for all Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, this province would not have achieved so much in the past 150 years without the hard work of Chinese Ontarians. Please join me in thanking them for all they have done for this province.

CONESTOGA COLLEGE

Mr. Michael Harris: As a proud graduate of Conestoga College, I stand to recognize one of the province's leading post-secondary institutions as they celebrate 50 years of equipping students in Waterloo region and beyond with the tools to open doors to a bright future and a world of opportunities.

Founded in 1967, Conestoga College is a leader in polytechnic education, offering education and training opportunities to directly serve and meet the needs of our labour market. In meeting those needs, Conestoga helps students fuel our local economy as they grow roots, work, invest and raise families in our region's communities.

Almost half of our area's workforce, 193,000 people, have been educated at Conestoga College, and of course I am proud to say I am one of those.

With over 13,000 students across eight campuses, 65% of Conestoga graduates stay in the area, contributing over \$2.3 billion each year to our regional economy.

Conestoga College also offers opportunities for career growth for those re-entering the workforce or wanting to expand job skills through ongoing leadership in continuing education.

Conestoga College has had a hand in making Waterloo region the internationally renowned centre of technology and innovation it is today, with graduates going to work at local companies such as BlackBerry, Christie Digital, Linamar and OpenText, to name a few.

1310

Speaker, we are indeed proud to have Conestoga College in Kitchener–Conestoga, and we congratulate them on this significant milestone of 50 years—50 years of providing an education to students locally and all over the world, and 50 years of building communities and careers that help shape the future of our great province.

Congratulations to Conestoga.

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Mr. Wayne Gates: Today, I'd like to rise to recognize World Teachers' Day. On this day every year, we celebrate the incredible work that our teachers do.

I know that in Niagara, we have some of the best teachers in the province. I'm proud to say that not only my wife is a teacher, and also a principal, but also my two daughters. Chantel is a teacher, and Tara works with special-needs kids in the Catholic school board. Jacqueline is a student at Brock.

I want teachers to know that the tremendous amount of work and extra hours they put in don't go unnoticed. They are not just employees of school boards; they are volunteers, mentors, counsellors, coaches and friends.

There are not many professions that have a profound impact on our communities like teachers. This is why it's so important that as legislators, as MPPs, we stand up for our teachers in this province.

That being said, teachers can only do so much with the resources they are given. In Ontario, we have seen higher

class sizes, reduced resources, sweltering classrooms and violence—violence—in our schools. We have teachers come into my office and tell us that they have experienced violence from students, and it has had a devastating effect on their lives.

These are issues that must have action taken on them. I know that my colleagues and I will continue to fight and bring awareness to the issues facing teachers, so we can ensure that they are able to do the best job they can for our children.

As we celebrate World Teachers' Day, we must ensure that every child in the province has the opportunity to get a good education. We know that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Gates: —for First Nations children to ensure that they have the same educational opportunities as all children in the province of Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Gates: —all across the province for the wonderful work they do—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. You didn't hear me?

Mr. Wayne Gates: No.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, I'm sorry. I should have been louder. Thank you.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARDS

Mr. Yvan Baker: One of the things that makes Etobicoke Centre such a wonderful community to live in is the people who work so hard, who volunteer, who give their time and their money to help make other people's lives better.

Since I was elected, I have carried on a yearly tradition of recognizing people who made a positive difference in the lives of others, at my annual Community Recognition Awards. The awards are given to people living, working or volunteering in Etobicoke Centre who have made a real difference in the lives of other people in our community.

The recipients recognized come from a range of ages and backgrounds, and they contribute in a range of ways, from caring for seniors to engaging youth to volunteering in their parish.

I'm pleased to announce that the nominations for the 12th annual Community Recognition Awards are now open. There are a number of categories to be nominated for: outstanding volunteer service to the community, outstanding volunteer service to seniors, outstanding volunteer service to the community by youth, and outstanding service by professional staff, employers or employees.

Nominations can be submitted to my constituency office at 416-234-2800 or by emailing me. The deadline for submissions is November 15. I encourage everyone watching to submit a nomination for someone in our community.

After we have collected the nominations, a committee of volunteers will select the recipients. I will have the opportunity to recognize these folks at the Community

Recognition Awards on January 14, during my annual New Year's levee.

I'm honoured to represent our community in Etobicoke Centre, and honoured that we have so many wonderful individuals. Let's recognize them.

PANDAS/PANS

Mr. Robert Bailey: I stand today to recognize that, thanks to the work of members of this Legislature, this Monday, October 9, will mark the first official PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day in Ontario.

Pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal infections, or PANDAS for short, and pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome, or PANS, are serious illnesses that are impacting the lives of young children across our great province.

The PANDAS/PANS term refers to the sudden onset of debilitating symptoms, including obsessive-compulsive disorder, tics, anxiety, depression, irritability and regressive behaviour in children that cannot be explained by any other neurological or medical disorder but that often occur following a common strep infection.

Unfortunately, PANDAS/PANS is often misdiagnosed due to the lack of awareness both by the public and the medical community.

The treatments for PANDAS/PANS vary by the needs of the child, but they do exist and may be as common as antibiotics or anti-inflammatory medications. But the condition must first be diagnosed correctly.

It's imperative that there be greater public awareness of this serious children's disease. Recently, I introduced motion 64 in this Legislature, calling on the government to strike an advisory council on PANDAS/PANS to advise the Minister of Health on research, diagnosis, treatment and education relating to this disorder. It's my hope that the members of this House will support this important initiative and that by October 9, 2018, the advisory council will have started its important work on this debilitating problem.

EVENTS IN AJAX-PICKERING

Mr. Joe Dickson: Both Catholic and public school boards have been recipients of Ontario-grown and Durham farm fresh scrumptious apples for all Ajax and Pickering schools from myself and our MPP team on our 10th MPP anniversary this very day of this very week. I thank you for supporting us, as your provincial member in the Legislature, and I say thank you to each of you.

These apples are enjoyed by our principals, all of the great teachers and all of the hard-working support staff. This was completed with a personalized letter to each principal and their school on Tuesday and Wednesday and today of this week. It has taken us a total of three days to deliver all of them.

Also this week in Ajax was our MPP's 10th anniversary of personally distributing packages of Dad's cookies, which are always delicious for a resident running to

the GO train station first thing in the morning on the way to work or school. This is a thank you to everyone. We started this morning at 5:45 a.m. and we ran out at about 8:05 after delivering some 3,500 packages of Dad's cookies. If you are from Ajax, Pickering, Whitby, Oshawa—or, for Mr. Leal, even Peterborough—or anywhere else, and caught the GO train in Ajax, you received a special treat this morning.

Finally, I just wanted all of the Ajax–Pickering schools, educators and staff to know how much they are appreciated and how much their efforts to educate our children are truly appreciated.

OSHAWA'S TEACHING CITY INITIATIVE

Mr. Lorne Coe: College and university campuses across Ontario continue to create communities that build and develop living knowledge. It's present in the classrooms from the contributions of students and certainly from the expertise of faculty members.

In Ontario's 21st-century economy, both the public and private sectors are looking for the most effective means to apply this knowledge to the benefit of our local communities. Partnerships between universities, colleges and local businesses have the greatest potential to develop these solutions, in particular the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and Trent Durham's campus in the city of Oshawa.

An ambitious initiative to effectively apply the knowledge being developed on campuses is the city of Oshawa's Teaching City. It combines the knowledge-generating capacity of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and the civil engineering department at the University of Toronto to develop modern solutions to 21st-century challenges.

Through this initiative, Oshawa's workforce will be equipped with adaptable skills necessary to tackle modern challenges. If partnerships like Oshawa's Teaching City continue to be fruitful, there's no end to what Durham's local communities can achieve.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

STRENGTHENING PROTECTION FOR ONTARIO CONSUMERS ACT, 2017 LOI DE 2017 SUR LE RENFORCEMENT DE LA PROTECTION DES CONSOMMATEURS ONTARIENS

Ms. MacCharles moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 166, An Act to amend or repeal various Acts and to enact three new Acts with respect to the construction of new homes and ticket sales for events / Projet de loi

166, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois et édictant trois nouvelles lois en ce qui concerne la construction de logements neufs et la vente de billets d'événements.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: The bill proposes amendments to various statutes that would, if passed, expand consumer protections for travel services, event tickets, new homes, and other real estate.

1320

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's my honour today to rise in the House in celebration of Ontario Agriculture Week, which is acknowledged every year during the week leading up to Thanksgiving. What better time of the year to recognize the dedication of our farmers, who work hard each and every day to put the highest quality of food and drinks on our tables? With more than 200 diverse foods growing in Ontario, from quinoa and kale to ginseng and callaloo, we all know that good things grow in Ontario. Just look at the Foodland Ontario logo the next time you are at your local farmer's market, grocery store or on-farm market.

When consumers choose local food, they are helping a strong farm and food sector, which supports good jobs throughout our wonderful province. Mr. Speaker, did you know that 65% of all the food grown in the province is purchased by Ontario-based food processors, adding value to good things that grow in Ontario? That's why our government is making a significant investment to help support the continued growth of Ontario's food processing sector.

I was recently at Sofina Foods, one of Ontario's largest meat processors, to announce that our government—your government—is investing \$5.3 million through the Jobs and Prosperity Fund to help Sofina expand its processing facility in wonderful Mitchell, Ontario, and bring an innovative turkey-processing facility to Ontario. This will create approximately 100 new jobs and retain 60 more in the wonderful communities of Mitchell and Dublin.

As you can see, when our entire agri-food sector prospers, it fosters economic growth and creates jobs in communities across this great province.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, Agriculture Week is celebrated with events across the province. I had the pleasure of kicking off celebrations last week with my colleague from Northumberland–Quinte West at John Millar Farm in my riding of Peterborough, where I announced that our government is investing almost \$500,000 to fund 19 local

food projects through our Local Food Investment Fund. Thanks to our government's support, the Millar farm, the only licensed egg-grading facility in Peterborough county, will be expanding its egg storage facility, which will improve energy efficiency and increase capacity. I recommend Millar eggs to everybody throughout the province of Ontario. This project is expected to help the farm generate \$36,000 in local food sales, allowing them to access new market channels, including farmers' markets and high-end restaurants.

This week, I also had the opportunity to show my support for our craft beverage producers at the Ontario craft beverage reception organized by the Wine Council of Ontario. We're supporting our beverage alcohol producers by opening up farmers' markets and grocery stores as additional retail avenues for their consumers.

I also had the opportunity to meet with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the voice of over 36,000 Ontario farm families, to discuss their priorities for Ontario's agri-food sector. I would like to once again thank the OFA for supporting Ontario's push for a comprehensive business risk management, or BRM, review.

And, just yesterday, my parliamentary assistant and the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell was one of the judges at the Nathan Phillips Square Farmers' Market lunch challenge, where student chefs made lunch from local food products available at the market. But, boy, oh boy, from what I hear, those creative young chefs made judging a very difficult assignment for him.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario's agri-food sector has historically been and continues to be the cornerstone of this great province, a major force in our province's economy, building and contributing to our high quality of life, envied around the world.

To that end, to celebrate Ontario's 150th anniversary, we are honouring our rich agricultural heritage by recognizing farm families and communities who have been continuously connected to agriculture for more than 150 years. Why? Because for more than 150 years, Ontario farmers have served as a building block for the prosperity of our province.

Applications for the Ontario 150 Farms commemorative sign are open until Tuesday, October 31, and I encourage eligible farms, farming families and farm communities to apply to be honoured through this wonderful initiative.

Mr. Speaker, farmers remain committed to helping feed Ontarians, Canadians, and the rest of the world. By 2050, the world population is projected to be nine billion people. Ontario will be called upon to meet that challenge. This provides a great challenge and a great opportunity for innovation and growth in our agri-food sector. Our farmers are already stepping up, recognizing and fulfilling today's global demands and creating specific meats, produce and other agricultural food products and beverages to meet the needs of consumers around the world and right here at home. They are doing their part to keep our economy strong.

We also know that Ontario farmers are deeply rooted in tradition, yet progressive and innovative. They are

constantly mastering new tools and technologies, creating new methods to be more effective to help make their farms profitable, while growing the highest quality and safest food possible in the world.

That is why each year our government invests approximately \$75 million in agri-food research and innovation, which helps strengthen Ontario's competitive edge.

Innovation is why the Premier's challenge to industry is paying off. As you recall, in 2013, Premier Wynne issued an agri-food growth challenge, encouraging the industry to double its rate of growth by creating 120,000 new jobs by the year 2020. It was a bold and ambitious target, and I am proud to report that we are well on our way to achieving it. Since issuing the challenge, more than 57,900 jobs have been created, adding \$3.4 billion to Ontario's GDP.

There's more. On the topic of food innovation, my ministry is always seeking ways to open up the world of food diversity to all Ontarians. Our government has made it a priority to raise awareness of the diversity of foods produced here in our province, and Ontarians don't have to look far to find many of their favourite world foods grown and produced right here at home.

We are also working to better understand where demand currently exists for world foods and where opportunities continue to grow, through our Bring Home the World campaign. Improving access to world foods will improve both convenience and choice, and help support economic growth and job creation in every part of this province.

We're all committed to supporting our farmers and our agri-food sector. I want to take a moment to acknowledge the unseasonably wet and cool weather conditions experienced across Ontario this past spring and summer. I understand the stress experienced by our farmers and agri-tourism businesses. I have personally visited some of the most affected areas in Peterborough county and North Gower, which is near Ottawa.

Our government is committed to supporting Ontario farmers. That is why my ministry has a variety of business risk management programs available for growers to cover the loss and damage due to risks beyond their control. Mr. Speaker, our government is helping impacted growers. As of late September, we have provided more than \$29 million in claims for replanting and losses due to insured perils, including wet weather.

Let's give Ontario farmers our support and thanks, not just today or this week, during Ontario Agriculture Week, but all year long.

Before closing, I'd like to remind everyone that the Premier's annual food drive kicked off earlier today, so look in your cupboards and take a trip to the grocery to make a contribution to your local food bank. Let's all chip in to make this Thanksgiving memorable for everyone, and thank Ontario farmers for bringing us the bounty we enjoy with our families.

Learn more of what is in season and check our great recipes at foodlandontario.ca. You can also show your

support for our farmers by tweeting, using the hashtag #OntAgWeek in conjunction with #ontarioag. I encourage all Ontarians to show their support for Ontario's farm and food sector and thank a farmer or visit a farmers' market this Thanksgiving weekend.

1330

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I am pleased to rise in the House today in recognition of World Teachers' Day. I want to thank all of the teachers and education workers across the province for the important work that they do each and every day to support Ontario's students.

We have some of the best teachers and education workers in the world. I know that their hard work is helping our students succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I have made it a priority to visit at least one school every week. Even today, I was at St. Bruno/St. Raymond. I have visited teachers and education workers in their classrooms, from Windsor to Thunder Bay to Ottawa and Cornwall, at over 70 schools across the province.

On each of those visits, I saw remarkable educators who do so much each and every day in their work with children and youth in this province. Carrie Wilson, a teacher at Northeastern Elementary School in Sudbury, demonstrated a reading and spelling exercise with students in an integrated classroom designed to support students with learning disabilities.

In Oakville, last spring, I visited St. Mary Catholic Elementary School, and I had the opportunity to meet Maureen Asselin and her students, who were learning math in a new way that the students were really engaged and excited about.

On my visit to eastern Ontario, I saw how Mrs. Courte has inspired her students to be creative in their design of a mousetrap car at Collège catholique Mer Bleue.

In Sault Ste. Marie, I visited the Urban Aboriginal School and saw how Kim Edmond encourages students in learning activities that reflect their culture and history.

The outstanding work of teachers and education workers that I see during those school visits is also clear in our data. Earlier this year, I was proud to announce that our high school graduation rate increased to 86.5%. Mr. Speaker, this is the highest level in Ontario's history. That means that more students than ever before are graduating from our publicly funded education system with the skills and knowledge that they need to reach their full potential.

Since 2004, about 217,500 more students have graduated high school than would have if the graduation rates had remained at the 2004 level. That's roughly equivalent to the populations of Kingston and Thunder Bay combined.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario's students continue to perform well locally and globally. In fact, 71% of elementary students are achieving our high provincial standards in literacy and numeracy. As part of the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment, Ontario students

performed at the Canadian average and above the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development average in mathematics, reading and science. In fact, no jurisdiction outperformed Ontario's 15-year-olds in reading in the latest OECD assessment.

We could not have achieved these results without the dedication of our teachers and education workers who work tirelessly to support all students. Their commitment, expertise and hard work continue to make Ontario's publicly funded education system one of the best in the world.

But, Mr. Speaker, supporting students is about more than graduation rates and PISA scores in math and reading. Ontario has one of the best publicly funded education systems in the world because we are committed to promoting well-being and equity.

In order to better support teachers and education workers so that they can continue the outstanding work they are doing in classrooms, I recently visited a number of schools to announce our next steps.

First, we are strengthening well-being supports for all students, educators and staff in order to make schools across the province more inclusive, safe and welcoming environments. Our \$49-million, multi-year plan will focus on the cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of all students, along with their sense of self and spirit.

One of the ways we can promote well-being is by making sure students have access to breakfast, because we know it is the most important meal of the day. When I recently visited St. Paul Catholic School in Toronto, I saw how the entire school community was working together to do that.

Next, the Premier and I announced that we will begin a refresh of the Ontario curriculum from kindergarten to grade 12 using transferable skills like collaboration, creativity and citizenship as the foundation. As part of the refresh, we will also review student assessment and reporting with our education advisers and we'll seek input from students, parents, educators and the public. These are important changes. We know we can only realize success with the engagement and input of teachers and education workers who will help shape this transformation.

Finally, I unveiled Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan. It is a three-year strategy aimed at identifying and eliminating discriminatory practices, systemic barriers and biases at all levels in our system in collaboration with our partners: teachers and education workers.

Working together with the recently appointed equity secretariat, our education equity plan aims to enhance school and classroom practices, governance and human resource practices. We will overhaul data collection, integration and reporting, and advance leadership and organizational culture change within the Ministry of Education.

We know these are bold changes and we will need the help of our partners to make them a reality. As I have said before, without partnership, professional collaboration and respect, we cannot make important advances

toward the goals we all share. Our teachers and education workers are all working incredibly hard to create the best possible learning experience to position our students as the next generation of engaged and resilient citizens.

I believe that by working together, we can do more to support student achievement, equity and well-being, and improve outcomes for all students in Ontario.

As we celebrate World Teachers' Day today, I want to once again say thank you to all the teachers and education workers across Ontario for your outstanding work. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your passion. Thank you for your dedication to ensuring that our students are successful and on a path to reaching their full potential. Happy World Teachers' Day, and thank you for your ongoing commitment.

ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK

Mr. Toby Barrett: Depending on the weather, we recognize that so many farmers spend Ontario Ag Week trying to get their soybeans combined, get the tobacco dried down, harvest fruit and vegetables and get some winter wheat in, all the time dealing with mud and frost and equipment breakdowns, thinking about next year's crop of weeds and worrying about this year's input costs and crop prices, forward crop prices and trade issues. It's a very, very complex business.

Across the province, there is recognition of Ontario's Agriculture Week. I'm especially pleased to report that it wraps up so much of Ontario's fall fair season. We're right in the middle of the Norfolk County Fair and Horse Show. Leading up to this Thanksgiving is the famous Burford fair—Speaker, both of us have attended that one—hard on the heels of the Caledonia Fair and so many, many other fairs that go back to springtime.

Fairs aren't just rides. I know there's a ride I was looking at the other day at the Norfolk fair. It's called Pharaoh's Fury. Anyone I have talked to who has ridden on it with their kids gets sick to their stomach. Maybe it's the candy floss.

Fairs are so much more and have been so much more for well over 100 years as far as celebrating the bounty and the best that we can grow and produce, and breed with respect to livestock—again, an ongoing raising of awareness of agriculture.

1340

Again, building on the local plowing matches and the IPM we've all recently attended, and Canada's Outdoor Farm Show, I should point out that Ontario Ag Week was the result of an MPP from this Legislature, Bert Johnson. It's a great concept to encourage people to get involved and to realize where your next meal comes from and, in many ways, where the next meal comes from for the seven billion other people in the world who have mouths to feed. Thank you.

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Mr. Lorne Coe: It's an honour to rise this afternoon and recognize the countless contributions that teachers

like my daughter make every day both in and out of the classroom.

World Teachers' Day is an annual event that highlights the work of millions of teachers and education workers around the world. Teaching Ontario's next generation requires immense generosity, compassion and, of course, hard work. We see the evidence of that every day. For the thousands of teachers across Ontario, this is no small task. Each and every day in the classroom, teachers and education workers use innovative techniques to engage students and explain difficult concepts, all the while taking the time to understand the needs of individual students and allowing them the ability to satisfy their curiosity in a variety of subjects.

In order to meet the needs of an increasingly demanding and changing world for students upon their graduation, Ontario teachers and education workers strive to evolve their teaching methods and improve the quality of education. It's irrefutable that both teachers and education workers are the backbone of the education system in Ontario. Only with them can every student be granted the opportunity to achieve their best.

Today, on World Teachers' Day, I would encourage all Ontarians to consider the impact that teachers and education workers have on students' learning and their future success.

Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to honour our teachers and education workers in the province of Ontario.

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to recognize Ontario educators today on World Teachers' Day. It is my privilege to serve in this Legislature as an MPP, but I came here by way of the classroom, and it was my honour to teach for over a decade.

This year's World Teachers' Day theme is Teaching in Freedom, Empowering Teachers. Many of our professors and higher-learning educators are part-time and working in precarious placements. Why aren't we ensuring they can teach in predictable, stable, full-time positions? It isn't freeing or empowering to shortchange our educators in our post-secondary institutions. UNESCO has recognized that there are many conflicts that challenge the ability of teachers to do their jobs, including budgetary restrictions that affect many teachers in much of the world, undermining both their freedom and empowerment. I'd like to delve into that.

I believe education is the great equalizer and should be funded fairly and equitably. It shouldn't matter where you live or how much your parents make; every student deserves access to appropriate learning supports and resources and deserves to be safe and supported while they learn. Teachers and education staff deserve the same.

We are not funding education fairly. Special-needs students are not appropriately supported. Our schools fundraise for tools and supports. Teachers often make up

what difference they can. They pay for trips, snacks, art supplies, shoes and soccer balls. They teach in under-resourced classrooms and do their best every day.

Speaker, some of my teacher friends wanted the government to think about a few things on this World Teachers' Day. They wanted me to share that teachers don't believe the government cares. While they are left to deal with so much challenge in the workplace, they don't want hollow praise or words about gratefulness; they want you to fund education so that they can do the job they are supposed to be doing. They want you to fund education so that students can be successful and not go to school fearful or riddled with anxiety as they face the violence plaguing our classrooms. They don't want their students afraid of being hit or hurt; they don't want to be hit or hurt themselves. They want to be able to teach.

On this year's World Teachers' Day, on behalf of Ontario's New Democrats, I want to sincerely thank teachers for the invaluable work that they do every day. But more than that, New Democrats will always fight for strong public education. Educators shouldn't have to wear bite-proof and bullet-proof Kevlar in classrooms. Teachers shouldn't be fearful to go to work. Teachers should be respected and protected. They should be recognized as highly educated professionals with the capacity to change the world and inspire bright futures, instead of being forced to teach to standardized tests and checklists.

Fairly fund education. Keep teachers and staff safe. Support our schools. Respect public education, not just on World Teachers' Day—every day.

ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK

Mr. John Vanthof: On behalf of my NDP colleagues and our leader, Andrea Horwath, it's an honour to help recognize Agriculture Week—such a great statement, among education—in the province of Ontario. For most, I think the purpose of Agriculture Week is to help them stop and recognize the important role that the people who work in agriculture play in this province. There are over 700,000 people who work in that sector here, which is an incredible number. It's one of the biggest drivers in the province.

But for me, and I think for many of my NDP colleagues, Agriculture Week is about the cornerstone of the people in the sector, and that's the farmers. For them, Agriculture Week likely will be about the weather because it's been a really tough summer. Lots of times there have been tough summers, but this has been a really tough summer. Farmers always contend with that, but the last few weeks of our extended summer, while others were talking about the heat and complaining about heat, there was no farmer in Ontario complaining about the heat because those few weeks of extended heat for many people in the agriculture sector saved the summer. It's incredible how big a difference those couple of weeks of heat made.

Farmers are an incredible breed, and one I'd like to recognize. The OFA organized a tour of Beverly Green-

houses this summer. One of the owners, Dale VanderHout, gave us a tour. He was talking about a different management practice they'd implemented. He said, "You know what? The plants just seem happier." That spoke to me because I'm a farmer. Farmers want their plants and their animals—they want everything to be happy because that's how they make their living. That's why they keep fighting with the weather and fighting with the elements.

Lastly, I think we all need to thank the people who continuously do that. Rest assured, the farm families of Ontario will continue to work. They will work tirelessly until the crop is off so that we can all eat the great food that is grown in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements and responses.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just before we move to petitions, I will reintroduce the person I introduced who wasn't there who is now there, the former leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, the MPP for Niagara West—Glanbrook and the others before that because he's been around for so long. Tim Hudak is here. Thank you very much, Tim, for being here. He's now with the Ontario Real Estate Association.

It's therefore time for petitions.

PETITIONS

GO TRANSIT

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

"Whereas GO train horns are currently allowed to sound until 11 p.m., five days a week;

"Whereas people who live on the GO train routes are being disturbed by these horns, waking their children and themselves and disrupting the general peace;

"Whereas the city of Markham unanimously voted to silence the horns and were overruled by Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca;

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

"That the Liberal government of Ontario respects the wishes of the residents, Mothers Protesting for Silence and local politicians and reverses the decision to allow train horns to blow before 5:30 a.m. and after 8 p.m., five days a week. To replace them with buses or reschedule the said train times."

I'm affixing my signature and giving it to page Emerson, who's on his last day.

1350

PESTICIDES

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further petitions? I recognize the member from Manitoulin Island.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Nope, you want to try Algoma–Manitoulin.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“That it should consider either (a) changing the body of the Pesticides Act and/or (b) the related regulations, to limit all use of pesticides by utilities only to extreme circumstances and only on noxious non-native invasive weeds or plants which are displacing native varieties and only when all other options have been eliminated (rather than pesticides being used as part of standard operating procedure to sterilize regrowth on land on their rights-of-way as a means of reducing labour costs); and (c) consider partially restoring to individual municipalities (lower or upper levels) the authority to determine when and where utilities may use listed pesticides in these extreme circumstances within their jurisdictions.”

I agree with this petition, sign it, and give it to Nicola to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Han Dong: I have a petition.

“For Increased Community Consultation Regarding a New Rapid Transit Station in Liberty Village.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas constituents in Liberty Village demand and deserve increased community consultation with Metrolinx and the city of Toronto regarding their plan to build a rapid transit station in the neighbourhood;

“Whereas the current transit options out of Liberty Village are outdated, insufficient and uncomfortably crowded;

“Whereas the proposed location for a rapid transit option in Liberty Village does not effectively serve the community;

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

“Compel Metrolinx to comply with increased community consultation for rapid transit infrastructure in Liberty Village.”

I agree with this petition, sign it and give it to page Rachel.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Lorne Coe: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the public secondary school plan for Aurora east needs to be built to reflect local demands;

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

“Say yes to building the high school that was planned for Aurora East, located at Bayview and Borealis; and

“Say no to forcing children to attend the next-closest public secondary school, which is over five kilometres away, forcing a dependency on vehicular transportation and negatively impacting healthy living...”

I affix my signature to the petition and provide it to page Javan to take to the table.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition given to me by Dr. Lesli Hapak, a periodontist in my riding. It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, to update Ontario fluoridation legislation.

“Whereas community water fluoridation is a safe, effective and scientifically proven means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

“Whereas recent experience in such Canadian cities as Dorval, Calgary and Windsor that have removed fluoride from drinking water has shown a dramatic increase in dental decay; and

“Whereas the continued use of fluoride in community drinking water is at risk in Ontario cities representing more than 10% of Ontario’s population, including the region of Peel; and

“Whereas the Ontario Legislature has twice voted unanimously in favour of the benefits of community water fluoridation, and the Ontario Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Municipal Affairs and Housing urge support for amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and other applicable legislation to ensure community water fluoridation is mandatory and to remove provisions allowing Ontario municipalities to cease drinking water fluoridation, or fail to start drinking water fluoridation, from the Ontario Municipal Act;

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

“That the Premier of Ontario direct the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Health and Long-Term Care to introduce legislation amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and make changes to other applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I’ll send this up to the Clerk with my good friend Alessandro.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s 627 long-term-care homes play a critical role in the support and care for more than 100,000 elderly Ontarians each and every year;

“Whereas nine out of 10 residents in long-term care today have some form of cognitive impairment, along with other complex medical needs, and require specialized, in-home supports to manage their complex needs;

“Whereas each and every year, 20,000 Ontarians remain on the waiting list for long-term-care services and yet, despite this, no new beds are being added to the system;

“Whereas over 40% of Ontario’s long-term-care beds require significant renovations or to be rebuilt and the current program put forward to renew them has had limited success;

“Whereas long-term-care homes require stable and predictable funding each year to support the needs of residents entrusted in their care;

“We, the undersigned, citizens of Ontario, call on the government to support the Ontario Long Term Care Association’s Building Better Long-Term Care pre-budget submission and ensure better seniors’ care through a commitment to improve long-term care.”

I fully support this. I affix my name and send it with my good friend, page Duncan.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “Nurses Know—Petition for Better Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas providing high-quality, universal, public health care is crucial for a fair and thriving Ontario; and

“Whereas years of underfunding have resulted in cuts to registered nurses (RNs) and hurt patient care; and

“Whereas, in 2015 alone, Ontario lost more than 1.5 million hours of RN care due to cuts; and

“Whereas procedures are being off-loaded into private clinics not subject to hospital legislation; and

“Whereas funded services are being cut from hospitals and are not being provided in the community; and

“Whereas cutting skilled care means patients suffer more complications, readmissions and death;

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

“Implement a moratorium on RN cuts;

“Commit to restoring hospital base operating funding to at least cover the costs of inflation and population growth;

“Create a fully-funded multi-year health human resources plan to bring Ontario’s ratio of registered nurses to population up to the national average;

“Ensure hospitals have enough resources to continue providing safe, quality and integrated care for clinical procedures and stop plans for moving such procedures into private, unaccountable clinics.”

I sign this petition and give it to page Greg to deliver.

ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we’ve seen rapid growth of vertical communities across Ontario;

“Whereas elevators are an important amenity for a resident of a high-rise residential building; and

“Whereas ensuring basic mobility and standards of living for residents remain top priority; and

“Whereas the unreasonable delay of repairs for elevator services across Ontario is a concern for residents

of high-rise buildings resulting in constant breakdowns, mechanical failures and ‘out of service’ notices for unspecified amounts of time;

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

“Urge the Ontario government to require repairs to elevators be completed within a reasonable and prescribed time frame. We urge this government to address these concerns that are shared by residents of Trinity-Spadina and across Ontario.”

I agree with this petition and I will send it down with page Michael.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current Liberal government took office; and

“Whereas over half of Ontarians’ power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment; and

“Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss; and

“Whereas the market rate for electricity, according to IESO data, has been less than three cents per kilowatt hour to date in 2016, yet the Liberal government’s lack of responsible science-based planning has not allowed these reductions to be passed on to Ontarians, resulting in electrical bills several times more than that amount; and

“Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and deny Ontarians the option to choose affordable natural gas heating; and

“Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills; and

“Whereas the ill-conceived energy policies of this Liberal government that ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and the independent electrical system operator (IESO), and are not based on science have resulted in Ontarians’ electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians’ energy bills.”

I fully support this. I affix my name and send it with page Andy.

1400

PROVINCIAL TRUTH
AND RECONCILIATION DAY

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Good job, Speaker.

This is a petition to proclaim June 21 as a statutory holiday in Ontario:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: Proclaim June 21 as a Statutory Holiday Called Provincial Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Ontario.

“Whereas June 21 is recognized as the summer solstice and holds cultural significance for many indigenous cultures; and

“Whereas in 1982, the National Indian Brotherhood (Assembly of First Nations) called for the creation of a National Aboriginal Solidarity Day to be celebrated on June 21; and

“Whereas in 1990, Québec recognized June 21 as a day to celebrate the achievements and cultures of indigenous peoples;

“Whereas in 1995, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recommended that a National First Peoples Day be designated;

“Whereas in 1996, the Governor General of Canada proclaimed June 21 as National Aboriginal Day in response to these calls;

“Whereas in 2001, Northwest Territories became the first province or territory to recognize June 21 as a statutory holiday; and

“Whereas in 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendation number 80 called on the federal government, in collaboration with aboriginal peoples, to establish a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a statutory holiday;

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

“To designate June 21 of each year as a legal statutory holiday to be kept and observed throughout Ontario. This day should serve to create and strengthen opportunities for reconciliation and cultural exchange among Ontarians. The day should facilitate connections between indigenous and non-indigenous Ontarians in positive and meaningful ways. This day should solidify the original intent of National Aboriginal Day as a day for Ontarians to recognize and celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition. I present it to page Rachel to bring it down to the Clerks' table.

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition. It reads:

“Whereas lack of access to dental care affects overall health and well-being, and poor oral health is linked to

diabetes, cardiovascular, respiratory disease, and Alzheimer's disease; and

“Whereas it is estimated that two to three million people in Ontario have not seen a dentist in the past year, mainly due to the cost of private dental services; and

“Whereas approximately every nine minutes a person in Ontario arrives at a hospital emergency room with a dental problem but can only get painkillers and antibiotics, and this costs the health care system at least \$31 million annually with no treatment of the problem;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to invest in public oral health programs for low-income adults and seniors by:

—ensuring that plans to reform the health care system include oral health so that vulnerable people in our communities have equitable access to the dental care they need to be healthy;

—extending public dental programs for low-income children and youth within the next two years to include low-income adults and seniors; and

—delivering public dental services in a cost-efficient way through publicly funded dental clinics such as public health units, community health centres and aboriginal health access centres to ensure primary oral health services are accessible to vulnerable people in Ontario.”

I affix my signature and send it to the desk with Rachel.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time allocated for petitions has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

LIFE LEASES ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LES BAUX VIAGERS

Ms. Hoggarth moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 155, An Act respecting life leases / Projet de loi 155, Loi traitant des baux viagers.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: It is always a privilege to stand here in the House and represent the voices of my constituents. Today is no different.

One topic that comes up in this House again and again is how we can best serve our senior citizens, how we can find ways to protect them, support them and ensure that their golden years are stable and fulfilling.

For many of us, when we define the Canadian dream, it is to work hard, build a family, buy a home, make a meaningful contribution to our community and enjoy a comfortable, secure retirement.

As we all know, reality can be quite different from our dreams. Life has a way of pushing the best-laid plans

aside and forcing us to change our goals to adapt to what life has in store.

Sometimes, we cannot afford to buy that dream retirement home. Perhaps that family that we counted on being around in our golden years are busy are building their own lives or are no longer living.

What never changes, even as we age, is our desire for independence, for a sense of community and the feeling of belonging, and the security that comes with living in one place for a long time.

Life leases were designed to make the transition to our senior years smoother and less stressful and to give people a community to call home. Life leases are a housing option, almost universally marketed toward seniors, which are similar to condominiums in that you pay a large sum up front, followed by monthly maintenance or occupancy fees. Like retirement homes, many offer meals, social and recreational activities and a level of health care.

The first life lease projects in Canada were built in the late 1970s, and today there now more than 300 complexes across Canada, with approximately 135 in Ontario. The majority of these are owned and operated by religious or cultural community groups, but there is a growing number of corporate-run facilities.

Life leases can vary widely in their purpose, services and business models. Most life leases operate well and are run with the residents' best interests in mind; however, there are exceptions, and these can cause a great deal of anxiety in the lives of these senior residents.

The purpose of this bill is not to standardize all life leases under one model, as this could disrupt existing arrangements and discourage future developments. This would also serve to ignore the fact that our province is blessed with a vastly diverse population that cannot fit under any one person's concept of community.

It is my hope that this bill will improve protections by providing that certain information be clearly disclosed to ensure frequent and productive communications between tenants and sponsors, and to help seniors better plan their lives and protect their investments.

My office has continually heard from more and more seniors—not just from Barrie but across the province—with concerns about life leases. Having met and consulted with many, I listened to their feedback, and I am pleased to revisit this topic with a bill that I believe addresses many of their concerns.

In most of Canada, including right here in Ontario, life leases are governed almost exclusively by contract law. Manitoba is the only province with comprehensive legislation on the subject, and their act has formed the basis for Bill 155.

In my home riding of Barrie, I've had many constituents share with me their stories and their concerns over how their life lease communities are run. In one instance, life lease holders saw their monthly fees increase dramatically and without notice, while the reserve funds for their relatively new complex had dwindled. They learned that this was done in order to pay for the development

and maintenance of another, much older life lease project nearby.

This is the sort of blatant misuse of reserve funds and disrespect for life lease holders that I am aiming to prevent with the legislation I am proposing today.

This bill will prohibit reserve funds from being used on any complex other than the one from which they are collected. It also requires that tenants be given ample notice of increases in their fees.

1410

When a roof begins to leak, when a sidewalk crumbles or when an elevator stops working, it goes without saying that money will be needed to pay for these repairs, which is why having a stable reserve fund for life lease complexes is of paramount importance. Perhaps, like condo owners, these seniors in life leases should have the peace of mind that their building's management team is well trained and competent, not just someone's relative who is given the job because of their relationship. This is why we must legislate a requirement for life lease sponsors to maintain a reserve fund to pay for any unforeseen major repairs or replacement of assets. This fund must be funded at a stable and secure level at all times on the first occupancy date of the complex.

One of the most common complaints I have heard from life lease residents is on the lack of transparency and respectful interaction with complex management. Much like a condominium board, a vigilant and engaged residents' association could provide valuable oversight to ensure that a facility's management staff are held to the same high standards as condominium managers.

With this in mind, this bill requires that the sponsors hold at least four general meetings a year, so that tenants can share their concerns. At least one of these would serve the purpose of an annual general meeting to review the financial situation and the projected budget for the complex's operation. These meetings will ensure that life lease holders have a venue to have their voices heard and their issues dealt with.

A key concern that I heard many times was about the disclosure of information about the refund that tenants or their estates will receive upon termination of a lease. Estate planning is a stressful and time-consuming endeavour for seniors. This bill seeks to reduce that burden for holders of life leases. Currently, there are several ways that refunds can be determined, which range from getting no money back at all to actually seeing a profit determined by inflation and/or the increased market value of the unit. It is not the goal of this bill to decide the model that a life lease community uses to determine refunds. However, seniors deserve a transparent and accepted method to protect the return on their investment.

Life lease complexes are not just a place for our seniors to live. They are more than the bricks and mortar of which they are made. These complexes allow our seniors to maintain their independence while enjoying fewer responsibilities, like not having to mow the lawn or shovel the snow.

One of the real attractions of living in a life lease complex is the sense of community it provides for our seniors. We know that a vibrant and active community can help give a senior a healthier and happier lifestyle. There's a peace of mind that comes from knowing there's always a neighbour nearby when you need a hand. Living in a community with people who share your values and lifestyle can also provide great comfort in a rapidly changing world.

Some seniors do not want to pay rent in an apartment building or retirement community. As former homeowners who value investment in property, they see renting as an unwise use of their money, with very little return. Life leases help them to safely maintain their capital for the future.

One of my constituents, a man whose parents were living in a life lease, spoke with us about the benefits of their experience and where there was room for improvement. His parents' investment in their life lease unit is guaranteed and, as a result, they feel more secure in their financial stability. Without fear that their rent or condo fees would unexpectedly increase, they are able to prepare for the day when they may have to move on to long-term care, and would have some resources to do so through this plan.

My constituent also spoke highly of the amenities and the activities offered to his parents and their fellow residents. Life leases often offer classes such as woodworking, senior fitness, live entertainment sometimes broadcast directly to their suites, library services and onsite retail stores to provide basic essentials. Many even offer a level of personal and medical care, including assisted bathing, on-site nursing and physiotherapy.

Despite the benefits his parents experienced, my constituent feels there is room for improvement. They felt that they had very little input into the operation of their life lease. While their building did have a residents' association, it only dealt with trivial matters such as when and how to set up and take down the Christmas decorations. He expressed that his parents wished to have a voice in the important matters of the building, to ensure the long-term sustainability of their complex, just like the rights that condominium owners have.

Residents, many of them with varied work experience and skills, would be an asset to these facilities. With a real voice, they will be as committed to their building and investment as they were to their own homes. This bill gives them the well-earned opportunity to have that voice.

Life leases, if regulated properly, can be of great benefit to our society. One senior living in a life lease in Barrie put it this way: "The chance to live completely independently, yet amid like-minded people, is a cause to celebrate." Let's not let such celebrations be marred by an unregulated industry.

Today, we have the opportunity to secure protections for senior citizens throughout the province. We have spent a great deal of effort to protect the rights of renters under Bill 124, condo owners with the Condominium

Act, and the new home warranties plan that will make Tarion more protective of home buyers. It is time that we make sure seniors who have invested their life savings in these life leases have equal protections.

Life lease projects are a fantastic housing option for thousands of seniors throughout Ontario, but we must make this option better by ensuring that these projects are governed by rules and regulations under the force of law.

Today, I call on this House to support this bill, and ask you to vote in favour of the Life Leases Act, 2017. Ensuring safe and affordable housing for these seniors is our moral duty and a way to enrich the standard of living in our province for these seniors.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise this afternoon to speak to Bill 155, the Life Leases Act.

A significant issue for Ontarians, but in particular seniors, continues to be affordable housing. This challenge is exacerbated by the backlog of repairs required in public housing. In conjunction, the focus on condominium building, and the resulting lack of apartment construction, has pushed the market rates of rents upwards in most major cities.

For seniors living in Ontario, living in an urban core is no longer a priority, especially if they are able to find a local community that suits their needs. An option which is growing in popularity in different parts of Ontario is life lease developments. As the member from Barrie did point out, they can be found across Canada but are primarily in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. It's estimated that there are 300 life lease developments in place at the present time.

A particular advantage of the life lease style of residence is that an individual is able to purchase a right-to-occupy apartment below market price and pay a monthly maintenance fee.

At the time when life leases were not as widespread as they are today, several purchasers of units did not have legal oversight of their contract. Some individuals have faced problems because important items were not clearly laid out.

While Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta have legislation governing life lease residences, Bill 155, as it should, would do the same in Ontario.

However, I am concerned that there seems to have been little consultation on this bill thus far. Clearly, this is a real, complex issue. I would urge, at the very least, engagement with the Ontario Ministry of Seniors Affairs Liaison Committee. The Ministry of Seniors Affairs Liaison Committee is chaired by the assistant deputy minister of that ministry. It allows for communication to happen between the government and seniors organizations in Ontario on topics of proposed legislation, policies and programs.

The Ministry of Seniors Affairs Liaison Committee's mandate is, among others, to identify issues and concerns of Ontario seniors with provincial government services in an aging society.

Given the knowledge and expertise that resides with the members of this committee, I'm confident that we would receive, and in particular the member for Barrie would receive, the advice required to strengthen this proposed legislation.

1420

As written, the bill does not provide any real certainty for seniors. For example, the information that the landlord is required to disclose to the tenant is either estimated or projected, so it potentially could all be varied. This includes the estimated entrance fee, the projected completion date, the estimated amount of other fees to be charged, and the estimated amount of the refund to be received on termination of the lease. As a consequence, it's absolutely critical that a public education campaign is undertaken to explain the provisions and nuances of the bill and how seniors and others could be affected.

Once again, the Ministry of Seniors Affairs Liaison Committee would be a good sounding board for advice on what communication features could potentially be included in a communications plan.

In closing, Speaker, this legislation is long overdue. It establishes a very important framework to protect seniors about to enter into a life lease agreement. At the end of the day, this is about enhancing the quality of life and supporting the needs and values of seniors in our communities across Ontario. After all, they built the communities we all live in today.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in the House. I really like Thursday afternoons because we get many opportunities to talk about bills that are near and dear to us, or issues that have been brought forward to us by our constituents—in this case, the member from Barrie, regarding life leases.

When this bill was brought forward—in our part of Ontario, a great province, we have issues with seniors being able to find housing—I had never heard of this concept. So thank you for bringing this bill forward once again. I had the opportunity to do some research on it and see how, why and where this type of arrangement would work.

For many, it is a good arrangement. We often talk about regulation, about whether there's too much regulation or not enough regulation. Well, in this case, regulation is a good thing. When people are investing in something for their own protection, for a big part of their lives—and a part of their lives where they don't want to spend their time worrying about what's going to go wrong next. That's one of the benefits of this type of arrangement. A seniors' community needs to have the assurance that when they decide to participate in a life lease—the thing they're really looking for is a great place to live, a quality place to live, with no surprises, and the only way we are able to provide that is with regulation.

It has also come to my attention that things we assume are very well regulated—because they have something to do with what you would think would be the public interest—often aren't. This would be an example.

Am I going to say that this bill is perfect? No. Has there ever been perfect legislation drafted? Have we ever had the perfect private member's bill—except if I bring one forward? Just kidding.

This private member's bill brings forward an issue that needs to be discussed. It brings forward an issue where regulations need to be instituted.

If I have any criticism of this, it is that this issue is something that—and I'm very confident that the member is doing it because the member is a member of the government. This is an issue that the government could perhaps bring forward, and this is a tool for a member within the government to do that. I appreciate that. We're in full support of this going forward, but we would also like to urge the government to demonstrate that they take this issue seriously and look at this issue themselves.

We commend the member from Barrie for bringing this issue to the forefront. We all, in our ridings, have heard horror stories about lack of housing and, certainly in my part of the world, people who live in substandard housing because there's just a lack. This is a pretty good idea for a lot of people.

Again—and the member said it in her remarks, and I agree—there are good examples where this works very well. But the role of government, unfortunately—the vast majority of all types of housing or whatever type of business transactions that occur are good, and the same with the health care system. The vast majority of transactions in the health care system are good. But when they're not, they're incredibly tragic.

That's what regulations are for: 95% of regulations are to stop the 0.5% of people who are the bad actors. That's why you need regulations. This is certainly an area that needs strong regulation.

I would like to certainly offer my support, and if I'm going to—yes, I'm going to wrap up. Six minutes.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: When you can, John. When you can.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Minutes are ticking off.

Mr. John Vanthof: In closing, I would like to say, once again, that this member has brought this issue forward. It behooves the government of which she is a part to actually move on this issue and protect the seniors and anyone else who is involved in a bad life lease transaction.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to start off by thanking the member from Barrie for introducing this piece of legislation to protect seniors across our province. I agree with the member from Barrie, and with members on all sides of the House here this afternoon, that we continuously need to serve and protect our seniors. We know that our seniors deserve more. They have spent their lives building our province up and making it the great place to live that it is.

I also know that my community of Davenport is home to many, many seniors, and many of them don't want to leave their homes. They want to stay in their commu-

ities. They want to stay where their friends are and be in the communities that they have built, and don't necessarily want to move into a retirement community or long-term-care home. I can see why the life leases that were described by the member from Barrie would be a useful tool and a desirable option for seniors across our province.

It's important to note that the majority of life leases operate well and are run with the residents' best interests in mind. But as we know, with all new tools, there are sometimes growing pains—or those who want to exploit our seniors for their own gain. That is why I'm so glad the member from Barrie has presented this bill to bring clear disclosure and improved communications on both sides.

I found it interesting to learn from the member that life leases are governed almost exclusively by contract law in Ontario, and that Manitoba is the only province with comprehensive legislation on the subject. I think that this bill is strong because it brings us in line with a standard that is proven to have worked.

I also like that this bill doesn't standardize life leases under one model, but instead improves protections by providing that certain information be clearly disclosed to ensure frequent and productive communications between tenants and sponsors, and to help seniors better plan their lives and protect their investments. Seniors have provided so much to our province, and we have the duty to ensure that the deals they enter into are properly documented and disclosed.

1430

I again want to thank the member from Barrie for introducing this bill and providing this House with the opportunity to secure protections for senior citizens in my riding of Davenport and across Ontario. I know that life lease projects are a fantastic housing option for thousands of seniors throughout Ontario, and that we can make this option better by ensuring that these projects are governed by a core group of rules and regulations.

I know the importance of safe and affordable housing for those who have spent their lives building Ontario up. That is why today I will be voting in support of the Life Leases Act, 2017.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 155, An Act respecting life leases, introduced by the member from Barrie. I want to start by saying that I support the intent of this bill to protect our vulnerable seniors, and I appreciate that the member from Barrie has brought forward this bill to address this issue.

Life leases are an interesting option for seniors. They're designed as an option between owning a home and renting an apartment. They're intended to provide a stable, affordable place for seniors who may not be able to live in their own home anymore. In fact, the number of projects being built in Ontario makes it clear that seniors are choosing life leases. They may be particularly attractive because our housing shortage in Ontario limits

other options. We've heard a lot of conversation about the "missing middle" and the need for more rental units. Given the shortage of those options, seniors need an alternative. Life leases give them another option.

In most cases, it appears that choosing a life lease unit is cheaper than moving into a condominium. However, unlike a condominium building, where residents are also the owners, in a life lease the resident only buys the right to occupy the unit, not the unit itself. The property and the unit are still owned by the private company.

As was mentioned earlier, in most life leases the purchaser will provide a significant initial payment up front. This means that if there are challenges with the management of the property and the amounts charged, the senior is limited in their ability to move. Many of our seniors are on fixed incomes, so if they move into the unit expecting the monthly fees to be a certain amount and those fees increase dramatically, the senior may feel trapped and be forced to give up other necessities in order to pay for the cost of shelter.

We understand why these seniors need extra protection. Unfortunately, I don't believe this bill, as written, will provide all the protection these seniors need.

This bill requires the landlord to provide the estimated entrance fee, projected completion date, estimated amount of monthly fees to be charged and the estimated amount of the refund that the tenant would receive upon termination of the lease. The key words are "projected" and "estimated."

There are clauses in this bill that now protect seniors if a project is not completed by the projected date. However, what about cases where the project is delayed but the value has increased, so the life lease holder wants to continue to hold the lease? We've seen that many times with condo buildings in Toronto. In this bill, it seems to me that if a landlord actually wanted to break the agreement, all he would have to do is miss the projected completion date. I would think that if a completion date is missed by a certain time period, it should be the life lease holder's option to cancel and not be automatic, as it appears to be.

One of my other concerns is with the number of costs that are "estimated." I understand that it may not be possible to put exact amounts on some of these items. No one would have predicted the hydro increases that we have seen over the last few years in Ontario. If businesses were locked in to very small increases without any ability to recoup those extra costs, they are going to have trouble with maintenance and other repairs. In fact, that is exactly the situation that this government has created for the rental housing providers by applying rent control to all units and eliminating the above-guideline increases for utility costs. They've seen the impact of that already, as 1,000 planned rental units have been removed from the pipeline.

At the same time, there needs to be some protection for seniors. They are going to receive a piece of paper that gives their estimated monthly costs and think that they can bank on that, when in reality there is nothing in

this bill that prevents that cost from being doubled or tripled.

Perhaps the bill could require a range of increases, so a landlord could say that increases will be between 0% and 5% and that they would be required to keep in that range. It would provide knowledge for the land leaseholder and flexibility for the company. Perhaps the landlord could be required to provide a maximum percentage increase and only be allowed to go a certain amount above that. There are a number of options, and I think we need extensive consultation with both the landlords and the life lease holders to find the right solution. What we shouldn't have is seniors purchasing life leases, believing they are protected, and then finding out that's not the case.

I want to say again that I support the intent of this bill. The member for Barrie has done a lot of work over the last year to address some of the concerns we discussed the last time we debated life leases. She has added a cooling-off period and a requirement for the entrance fee to be paid into a trust account, both of which I recommended last year. It is nice to see that during these debates, we can actually work together and make legislation better, and I want to commend the member for that.

There are still some areas of the bill where I believe we can make this bill more effective, such as the estimates that I mentioned earlier. I believe that in order to get these issues right, the bill requires significant consultation with those that will be impacted.

That raises another concern. A year and a half ago, we supported the earlier version of this bill on second reading so it could get to committee and have the extensive consultations that it needed. Today, we are planning to do the same thing. I'm disappointed that the government hasn't addressed this in the 20 months since the previous bill was passed. Last spring, the government introduced a bill to amend the Residential Tenancies Act and didn't include anything on life lease communities. They announced a 16-point housing plan, and there was nothing to protect seniors who live in life lease communities.

I encourage the government to listen to the member from Barrie and to take steps to protect those seniors, and I want to commend the member for raising this issue and for the work she has done in strengthening this bill over the last 20 months. I hope that the government will agree and send this bill to committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: As the critic for both seniors' affairs and home care and long-term care, I am pleased to rise and speak to the Life Leases Act, as it has a strong impact on seniors across Ontario and implications for long-term care.

Currently, there are no regulations in place for life lease holders or tenants of these properties that lie somewhere between renting a piece of real estate and owning it. It's very important that this government is finally introducing legislation to implement regulations where

the finances and aspects of disclosure between the life lease holder and the sponsor or the landlord are concerned. The rights and the dignity of seniors, who are the major demographic who enter into these agreements, need to be protected and explicitly defined in this bill.

In my community of London-Fanshawe, there is a vibrant, growing, aging community of seniors. When a senior makes a difficult and challenging decision to move out of their home and into a new home, whether it's an apartment, a condominium or a life lease unit, they deserve to have all the information about their security, safety and finances up front. If this bill becomes law, the government owes it to our province's seniors to make it abundantly clear what the risks and the potential disadvantages of moving into a life lease unit are.

There are certain attractive qualities for people interested in moving into a life lease unit. Many of these units and complexes integrate a community approach and allow seniors to participate and engage in social activities. Many life lease properties have meal plans and recreational activities built into their programming; freedom from the responsibility of a mortgage; the possibility of exemption from land transfer taxes; and fewer responsibilities where home upkeep and maintenance are concerned and the responsibilities that come along with owning a large asset such as a piece of real estate.

But the design and approach of life leasing properties is entirely dependent on the individual sponsors and groups who run them and the owners of the properties themselves. As there are currently no regulations in place for tenants who are life lease holders, people are often left to lodge complaints with the ministry, but by the time they have identified a problem, they are already locked into a contract.

The purpose of this bill is to establish a process for life lease holders to ensure that seniors' rights are protected, as life lease holders are not protected under the Residential Tenancies Act or the Condominium Act.

Despite paying a large sum to move into one of these properties, life lease holders do not own the unit they live in and are not guaranteed security in the long term, or the return of their entrance fee. While there are certainly many benefits associated with living in a life lease unit, such as active, independent living, many of its terms are potentially problematic and worrisome.

1440

Many contracts that tenants enter into stipulate that sponsors or landlords only require 30 days before ending a lease, and there are various reasons that the sponsor can decide to terminate the contract.

If a tenant becomes unable to look after themselves, they can be required to vacate the premises, which presents many problems with aging seniors.

While there are limited units or complexes that provide different levels of care to seniors living in life lease units, many will not allow family members or caregivers, part-time or full-time, to live in the residence, as it makes the life lease unit unmarketable or interferes with its age requirements.

The considerable entrance fee that seniors pay is not necessarily returned, and is contingent on inflation and what is considered market value at any given moment. Again, this is something that should be made explicitly clear to seniors and prospective tenants.

Another major problem is with the subletting of life lease units. Many sponsors have specific criteria where subletting a unit is concerned, and more landlords forbid it outright. In the event where landlords do allow a tenant to sublet their unit, they are often not allowed to be part of the process of selecting a subtenant and, as I touched on earlier, a landlord may stipulate that the original tenant is able to live independently in order to be eligible to sublet.

A central contradiction here is that the life leases are targeted towards seniors, and seniors will be aging in these units or complexes, and will likely encounter health complications. If a tenant is forced to spend an extended period of time in hospital, for instance, the landlord may terminate the contract, as the tenant is no longer able to live independently.

Again, while certain life lease properties have various levels of care already built into their programming, oftentimes landlords stipulate that family members or home care workers are not permitted to live with tenants who may require additional help with their day-to-day lives. Seniors who find themselves in need of additional care may require entrance into long-term care and will find themselves on a waiting list of nearly 30,000 people.

I hope this bill, if passed, addresses the issues which, frankly, are discriminatory and sometimes ageist towards seniors in the way that it's set up. Seniors often have complex needs associated with their health and, subsequently, housing. The government has a responsibility to address the rights of seniors when considering implementing the various regulations for life leases.

I commend the member for bringing this issue forward. It certainly is important, and when we get it to committee, I hope the complex issues that I've described are considered. When it comes to aging in your home, not everyone can, if there are these kinds of restrictions with regard to caregivers being able to look after someone under the life lease contract.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It gives me pleasure to enter the discussion on Bill 155 from my good friend the member from Barrie. Listening to her 12-minute lead-off, obviously she has a passion for this bill. I know that she has talked to me and other members a number of times about how important this was for her and her constituents.

Frankly, I had heard of life leases, but until I did a little bit of research to speak in support of this bill—I certainly learned a lot, the same as the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane, as he admitted as well. I certainly learned some stuff about what the real meaning of life leases is, and I think that, in itself, will help me if I come across issues. Frankly, I haven't run across any specific issues with life leases in my riding. There

probably are some life leases, I would admit and I would suspect, but certainly I haven't been approached with any of those issues.

What is life lease housing? Life lease buyers are often seniors—and we've heard that a number of times today—who are looking to move into a smaller home. Some reasons why people choose life leases include such things as less home maintenance responsibilities. That's why it caters well to seniors: They don't have to have that responsibility. In many cases, it's access to social and recreational programs that are conducted within that complex, and sometimes care and meal services offered by sponsors on that particular site. You know, every site could be different, as I learned, Madam Speaker, which is okay.

The sense of community is also very, very important. I especially find that—Speaker, I'm sure you do too—during election times when we go knocking on doors, we find some seniors who welcome the opportunity to have a face-to-face conversation. This will allow some of these folks to have that at their doorstep.

The other piece, I think, is the affordability piece. In many cases, this is more affordable than condominiums, and once again, it relieves seniors from a lot of pressure so that they can focus on their well-being.

When a person buys a life lease, they sign an agreement with a sponsor. The agreement does not give the buyer property. Instead, it gives the buyer the right to occupy the unit until they sell the life lease or pass away. That's a very broad statement. What the member is trying to do is put some definition around the legality and how things would work, so that it protects the occupant of the life lease, because in many cases—you know and I know—sometimes seniors don't have the capacity to understand some of those issues. Having something that's inscribed in law, even if they don't understand it—the agreements will help them to deal with it and navigate through it.

What does the right to occupy really mean, Madam Speaker? In life lease housing, you do not own that property, as I said before. You own an interest in that property. The life lease interest gives you the right to occupy, which means to live in, a unit rather than owning the unit itself. That gives the occupier of the property some security, but it also leaves some freedom. Frankly, I think, at the end of the day, it's also good for the sponsor of the property because it really clarifies the playing field.

Madam Speaker, I want to again thank the member for bringing this to our attention. I think it's an enormous initiative. Hopefully, we can navigate this through the system and incorporate it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I am very pleased to rise and say a few words on Bill 70 that the member from Barrie put forward—sorry, it's Bill 155, ballot item 70, Life Leases Act.

We're all learning a lot today so that's a big plus. Life leases are apparently something between renting and

owning property, where people put a certain amount of money into a complex, they pay the maintenance fees and then it's theirs until they have to move, but there's no value inherent in it for them to pass on to family members or their estate.

You could certainly see all the problems that could arise from this kind of arrangement if somebody managing it is doing it for monetary purposes or unscrupulous purposes. You would hope it would mostly be run by non-profits, community groups, cultural groups, religious groups, who really are doing it a little bit more for the community or for the more vulnerable people in the community who need a little bit more support. But that being said, we do want to offer people a lot of options, seniors specifically, in our community—offer them options, and we need to regulate these options so that people aren't taken advantage of.

I look forward to learning more about life leases, and hope that we can advance and hear some more at committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm delighted to rise here today and speak to this bill. I want to begin by congratulating the member from Barrie for championing this cause. As many of us know, she has been championing this cause for a long time now. I applaud her because a lot of members may talk about an issue and complain about an issue, but the member from Barrie just decided to do something about it, and so I really want to congratulate her. She is also very tenacious, Madam Speaker, because as we all know, this is the second go-round. This is the second time she is introducing this bill on this very important issue.

1450

As many members have pointed out, the tricky thing with the life lease is it sort of falls between outright ownership and outright renting. It's this creature that is in between these two, so sometimes when you are a hybrid, a number of acts already do apply to life leases. Some of the provisions of Ontario's many laws do apply, but there are certain areas where it gets tricky because it's not entirely renting and it's not entirely ownership. There are certain areas that certainly merit looking at whether we need to provide further protections. I have to say that I really, really applaud the intent of the bill because what it's trying to do is plug a gap.

I also very much like the idea that was raised by the member from Whitby–Oshawa, which was about shopping this bill with my ministry's seniors liaison committee. Thank you so much. That's a really good idea. That was something I was going to say but you beat me to it. It's a good idea.

A bill like this is a very complex issue. There are a lot of potential unintended consequences. It's a very good idea. It's trying to fix certain gaps that are real. But we want to make sure that, obviously, there are no unintended consequences. Some of the things that the bill is

trying to do, particularly around the reserve fund—the example that the member raised about reserve funds from one set of life lease payers, the funds being siphoned off to be used to maintain another building—are sort of egregious. The fact that something egregious like that can take place—that example is a powerful reminder as to the gaps that this bill is trying to plug.

I do want to say one thing: I want to thank the member for not only shining a light on this very important issue, but also that the Ontario government has taken some steps in order to raise greater consumer awareness. As I was saying to the member, and the member from Barrie has said this many times, sometimes seniors may buy a life lease and not know all of the implications, not be entirely sure. It's a very sophisticated financial product that they're entering into and they may not always know all of the fine print.

The Ontario government has actually released something called the Life Lease Housing Resource Guide. I know we're not allowed to use props. I just want to say I have a copy of it on my desk. It's an excellent resource guide, and I would encourage anybody planning to get into a life lease arrangement to definitely first read this resource guide.

Once again, I want to thank and applaud the member for shining a light on this very important issue.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Barrie to wrap up.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd like to thank all the colleagues around the House: Whitby–Oshawa, Timiskaming–Cochrane, Davenport, Oxford, London–Fanshawe, Northumberland–Quinte West, Thornhill and Mississauga East–Cooksville.

I agree with the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane. A lot of people do not know about this option, and it is an option, I believe, that instead of being used less, will be used more. Seniors will sell their original home and have some money. This is a way of them taking their money and putting it into a life lease.

Hopefully, if their arrangement is done properly, when it's time for them to go to long-term care or if they pass away, there will still be some resources there for them. It does not run out because they have no way of making more money, so it gives them the security of knowing that when it's time to go into long-term care, they have some resources.

Seniors do not believe that putting your money into rent is a good investment. Unfortunately, seniors' resources can run out very quickly if they pay rent.

So I think this is something that we need to put into legislation. There are so many different ways that it's done. We need to look into it. There are lots of things that need to be fixed in it, as the member from Whitby–Oshawa pointed out, and I do believe that the minister also pointed—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. We will vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

HONOURING OUR VETERANS
ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 RENDANT HOMMAGE
À NOS ANCIENS COMBATTANTS

Mr. MacLaren moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act respecting identification for veterans / Projet de loi 100, Loi concernant l'identification des anciens combattants.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: The purpose of this bill is to identify veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces by allowing the word “veteran” to be put on their driver’s licence or photo card and have the word “veteran” highlighted in bright yellow. The idea is that as Canadians see the veteran’s identification and become aware that a person is a veteran, they will be able to shake the veteran’s hand and say, “Thank you for what you do, and thank you for what you have done. Thank you for fighting for and protecting our democracy and our freedom.”

Freedom isn’t free. The freedom we enjoy in Canada today was hard fought for on battlefields over many centuries, dating back to the Magna Carta of 1215. We cannot relax or become complacent because there are always those who would take our freedoms away from us. Again, we turn to you—our proud veterans—to protect and preserve the wonderful thing that we hold so dear, that thing we call freedom. Freedom means we can work and play and live with our families in our communities the way we want. That is why Canada is the best country in the world. For that freedom, I say to our veterans, “Thank you. You have fought and you have sacrificed, and we are safe. Thank you for our freedom.”

I want to tell you some stories of people who experienced suffering and loss on battlefields.

My mother, Mary MacLaren, was married to a soldier who fought and died in World War II. His name was Bruce Murchison. He was a signals officer. He was on the front of a landing barge at Juno Beach on D-Day, June 6, 1944. His barge hit a mine and blew up. He was killed. They had been married for one year.

My mother’s brother Howard Ralph was a pilot with the RCAF in North Africa. He got lost on a reconnaissance mission. He ran out of fuel and crash-landed and was killed.

The four young men on my mother’s street in Ottawa were all killed in the war.

My mother never really recovered from World War II. She had dark times and battled depression for the rest of her life.

Albert Drummond worked on our family farm when I was about five years old. Albert would park his false teeth on the windowsill of the summer kitchen and come into the farmhouse for lunch every day. He taught me how to eat gravy sandwiches. Albert was a veteran of World War II. My father said he was shell-shocked. He

was a loyal and hard worker on our farm, but he liked to work alone, whether it was in the bush or in the field. He was a bothered man. Every once in a while, Albert would go on a bender. He would drink heavily for a few days, or a week. If he ran out of money, he would ask my father for money so he could buy more whisky. Albert was a good man, whom we all respected. He was a casualty of war. He fought for our freedom.

1500

I met Jozsef Polgar and Laszlo Farkas at the Diefenbunker in Carp last October. It was the 60th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution, which lasted five days in 1956. Jozsef and Laszlo were part of the famous Hungarian freedom fighters who valiantly fought back against the Russian occupiers of Budapest. They were a small militia who blew up 216 Russian tanks with Molotov cocktails and drove the Russians out of Budapest. A week later, the Russians came back with 3,000 tanks and 100,000 soldiers. The revolution was crushed. Jozsef and Laszlo had to run for their lives, first to Austria, and then to Canada as refugees in 1957.

Laszlo recently said that they fought because “we did not care if we lived or died. We did not want to live without freedom.” Both men worked and prospered in Canada, but both men have a serious concern about the direction of Canada. They see that we are regressing into a socialist system of government. They see Canadians giving up their personal freedoms. They are bothered. Remember, Jozsef and Laszlo fought and were willing to die for freedom.

Recently, I had the privilege of attending a fundraising event for homeless veterans at the Legion in Kanata. Four soldiers walked from Petawawa to Kanata over four days, a distance of about 90 miles, to raise money to help veterans who are living on the streets. These are veterans who are suffering from PTSD from their terrible experiences in wars in Bosnia and Afghanistan. They are among the homeless on our streets.

The program to help these homeless is called Operation: Leave the Streets Behind. It is a joint program between the Royal Canadian Legion and Veterans Affairs Canada that offers assistance in medical needs, assistive devices, emergency transportation, and emergency assistance in many ways.

The fundraiser was a big success, as the four young men received many very generous cheques from local Legion branches.

The mission statement of Operation: Leave the Streets Behind is: “To ensure that every veteran who is homeless finds the help that he or she needs to leave the streets behind.”

There are several hundred homeless veterans living on the streets in Ontario. This is a sad and tragic reality. The horrors of war have hurt so many veterans.

Scott Atkinson is a career soldier and a veteran of the wars in Bosnia and Afghanistan. He told me that he fell 60 feet in a night operation in the mountains of Afghanistan and suffered many broken bones. He also said that he suffered from PTSD from some of his horrific experi-

ences in Bosnia. Scott is planning on retiring from the armed forces soon and he will then attend Algonquin College, where he will study to be a social worker. He wants to work with veterans who are suffering from PTSD.

Scott was an inspiring man to talk to. He is proud and bears the scars of fighting for freedom in far-off lands. And now he is going to fight to help veterans at home to cast off the demons of PTSD. Thank you, Scott, for what you do.

The third Invictus Games were held in Toronto last week. They are international Paralympic-style sports games for wounded military veterans. Prince Harry started these games in 2014. There are 12 competitive sports including swimming, track and field, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby; 15 countries participated, including Afghanistan and Iraq.

Scott Atkinson competed in these Invictus Games. He said that it was a rewarding and positive week of competing and sharing time with other wounded veterans from other countries and from Canada. It helped all the veterans to heal and be positive about the future. Invictus in Latin means “undefeated.”

We should all take the time to appreciate the good life we have as Canadians here in Canada, the greatest country in the world. Canada is great because we have freedom. That freedom means that we can work and live and play with our families in our communities the way we want. This wonderful freedom is defined in our Constitution and is ensured by the rule of law. But freedom is not free and never has been. It was won on battlefields by our soldiers—by veterans—who walk amongst us today.

We should take time to talk to our neighbours, our veterans, who fought for our freedom, who won our freedom. Many of them bear the scars of war and suffer from their battles. Talk to them, listen to them and say, “Thank you for our freedom.”

Our veterans have served us well in the past, they serve us well today and I fear we will need them even more in the future to preserve and protect our freedom.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: To all our veterans: Thank you for your service.

My father was a veteran. He served in the Second World War. He got out for a few years, but then he re-enlisted and became a career soldier. I grew up on army bases in Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland.

When we were in Nova Scotia, my dad served for a year overseas as a peacekeeper on the Gaza Strip. My brother spent a career in the Royal Canadian Air Force. All I did was join the army cadets and the air cadets, and I spent some time in the Royal New Brunswick Regiment, the RNBR.

I’ve been a member of Branch 255 of the Royal Canadian Legion for 30 years, serving several times on the executive. Of course, that was back when I lived in

Windsor full-time, seven days a week, and I had a few spare hours to contribute.

I have the greatest respect for those who served. Our veterans are my heroes. I’ve lost more than a few drinking buddies at the Legion over the years—I guess I really shouldn’t say that because not all of them drank; some never did, and some gave it up a long time ago.

Second World War veterans are now into their nineties, and those who fought in Korea aren’t far behind. They were at war back in the 1950s. Those vets are now in their eighties.

Some 12,000 Canadian served in combat roles in Vietnam; at least 134 were killed. We lost 158 Canadians in Afghanistan; one of them was from Windsor. Corporal Andrew Grenon was 23 years old. He and my son were friends. Andrew was with the 2nd Battalion of the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry, the PPCLI. He was one of three Canadians killed on the 3rd of September, 2008. Five others were injured when their light armoured vehicle came under attack in the Zhari district of Kandahar province.

He was on his second tour in Afghanistan. He had been wounded twice during his first tour and he was due to return home in a couple of weeks when he was killed. A few days before, he was awarded a medal for bravery, the Canadian Expeditionary Force Commander’s Commendation for bravery. His actions then prevented the outbreak of a riot and saved the lives of two soldiers.

1510

Andrew was no ordinary soldier, Speaker. He was known to write poetry and prose. He wrote this in Afghanistan in 2006, on his first tour. It’s titled *Why We Fight*:

I’ve often asked myself why we are here.

Why my government actually agreed to send troops to this God-forsaken place.

There are no natural resources. No oil, gold, or silver.

Just people.

People who have been at war for the last 40 plus years.

People who want nothing more than their children to be safe.

People who will do anything for money; even give their own life.

I look into the eyes of these people.

I see hate, destruction and depression.

I see love, warmth, kindness and appreciation.

Why do we fight?

For in this country, there are monsters.

Monsters we could easily fight on a different battlefield, at a different time.

Monsters that could easily take the fight to us.

Surrounding these mud walls and huts is a country in turmoil.

A country that is unable to rebuild itself.

A country that cannot guarantee a bright future for its youth.

Why do we fight?

Because, if we don’t fight today, on THIS battlefield,

then our children will be forced to face these monsters on our own battlefield.

I fight because I'm a soldier.

I fight because I'm ordered.

I fight, so my children won't have to.

Speaker, Andrew's mother is Theresa Charbonneau. She is our Silver Cross Mother. She attends our cenotaph and memorial services. She is a friend to all in military circles. She is a very special lady.

Other provinces recognize the loss that parents such as Theresa Charbonneau have had. In Saskatchewan and in British Columbia, they have a special licence plate. Saskatchewan started issuing them in 2014, and BC made them available last year. I've asked the ministers responsible to make it happen in Ontario. Theresa Charbonneau and I are still waiting.

The red tape in Ontario doesn't send a positive message. When other provinces honour the families of those who gave their lives in combat for their country, Ontario remains snarled in bureaucratic red tape. They don't even charge extra for these special plates in Saskatchewan. They're free in British Columbia, because of the sacrifice that has already been paid.

The Memorial Cross, or Silver Cross, has been granted in Canada since 1919. Here's a quote from Rear Admiral Art McDonald, Commander, Maritime Forces, Pacific, when the plates were issued in BC last year:

"The Canadian Armed Forces are delighted and humbled that the government of British Columbia has decided to honour those who have died as a result of their military service to Canada and the sacrifice of their loved ones who were left behind in such a meaningful way. This Memorial Cross licence plate will be a daily reminder of the sacrifices members of the Canadian Armed Forces and their families make for their country and I welcome this thoughtful initiative...."

Speaker, I call on this government again to make these Memorial Cross, or Silver Cross, licence plates available to those who qualify here in Ontario.

The medal itself used to be given just to mothers and widows, but recent changes now allow Canadian Armed Forces personnel to designate up to three Memorial Cross recipients. This won't break the bank in Ontario; we just need the leadership from this government. We've been waiting patiently for two years. Our military families have been waiting. Theresa Charbonneau, the mother of Andrew Grenon, has been waiting. If they can do it out west, there's absolutely no reason why we can't do it in Ontario.

The bill in front of us this afternoon is designed to show more respect for our military personnel. If the Royal Canadian Legion certifies an applicant as a veteran, that person can then have his driver's licence stamped, indicating he is a veteran.

Speaker, when I was a kid, a veteran was one who served in combat, or who had a supporting role during combat. Not so anymore. These days, as long as you've

served in the military and had an honourable discharge, you are considered a veteran.

In Ontario, we have the poppy licence plates, but we're still waiting on the special plates for Silver Cross Mothers, those who lost a son or daughter or a spouse during combat while serving our country.

Let's do it. Let's make it happen, and let's not wait to be the last province in Canada to bestow this honour.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I'm honoured to rise in the House today to speak to this very important bill. I want to thank the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills for bringing this bill forward. It's an opportunity for us to thank our veterans, and we can't do that enough. It really is an important debate that we're having today.

Our government completely supports our veterans who have risked their lives to make our country safe and free. They showcase the very best of what Ontario has to offer, and they deserve our utmost respect.

Each year, I have an opportunity to visit with our veterans at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 258. I try to go there after all my duties and responsibilities as a local member have been fulfilled on Remembrance Day. I sit with the families and I sit with the veterans and talk and really listen to their stories. Every year, I learn something new from our veterans and their families.

One year, I met a young man, Jim Roberts. He lives in my community in my riding in Scarborough–Guildwood. He was born in Manchester in 1930, and he lived near the dockyards. He was bombed out, in fact, in 1940, in that blitz. He served in the British Armed Forces, and he came to Canada in 1957 from UK. He says that he had \$50 in his pocket. He became a master electrician and he had three children, all of whom went to university and graduated. He said that if he had a motto, his motto would be, "Privileged to be called Canadian."

I think of individuals like Jim Roberts and the life that they have lived, one of service and honour. He was a small-business owner as well, and still remains very, very active. In fact, he was in this chamber last May to celebrate his 87th birthday with us here.

I also think about just last Friday, when I had an opportunity to visit the Pan Am centre in Scarborough to witness the Invictus Games. It was such an inspiring occasion. Yes, there was fierce competition in the pool as everyone did their best. But what I was most proud of during the medal ceremonies was how veterans from all over the world—every nationality, every background, every ability—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Afghanistan was there.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Everybody was there.

I witnessed a man walk to receive his medal. He was amputated from the knees down. He rose on those two knees to receive his medal with pride. His back was erect. I was very proud.

I was very proud that we live in a country that is one of the greatest countries in the world. We're in this country because of the sacrifices of so many who fought

for the freedoms that we hold so dear. So we have to take every opportunity to honour them. Any proposal that will provide a way for us to show our appreciation for their sacrifice is something we have to look at and take very seriously.

I know that we're very proud in Ontario of a veteran graphic plate. This program has been here in Ontario, and it uses the image of a poppy and the word "veteran" to acknowledge those who have served.

These veteran graphic plates are for veterans who have served in the Canadian forces, including the reserve forces and the forces of the Commonwealth or its wartime allies; they have served in the merchant navy or Ferry Command during wartime; they have served in NATO operations or as members of the United Nations peacekeeping force; as a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or another Canadian police service; they have served in the Vietnam War in the forces of the United States or its allies during this war and were a Canadian citizen at the time of such service; or they are currently serving members of the Canadian forces, including the reserve forces.

1520

My own cousin is serving in the Canadian forces. He is a technical person who helps to keep the planes in tune. I know that he has spent his life and committed his life to this type of service.

Speaker, we must honour our veterans. We must take every moment, every opportunity to say how proud we are of our veterans. The graphic plate program that we have here in Ontario with the universal symbol of the poppy is one way that we acknowledge that service. I'm proud that there is no charge for that service for men and women to participate in this program.

I am sure that the Ministry of Transportation would be absolutely honoured to work with veterans to develop suitable images that could be placed on a driver's licence and a photo ID card should that be the will of this House and the direction that we take, but I want to say that it is an honour for us to acknowledge our veterans through the veterans graphic plate program. It's just a small, small way for us to say thank you and to recognize their service. We can never match the sacrifices that they have made and their families have made, but we can always remember them and say thank you. I'm honoured to have had this opportunity to speak to this very important bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I am very pleased to rise today to say a few words on Bill 100, the Honouring our Veterans Act, put forward by the member from the Trillium Party who is here presenting a private member's bill. Basically, the suggestion put forward by our colleague is to have a yellow line underneath the photo identification on a driver's licence or government ID to say that this person was a veteran and served our country with honour. The suggestion is that it should be bilingual, of course, and say "veteran/ancien combattant."

This is done in other provinces and jurisdictions. It's not just to make the person feel that their service has

been recognized; it's also to provide them with some ID that, yes, they are a veteran, and potentially to allow some businesses to perhaps offer discounts to veterans or other timely treatments and services, which just leads me to say that it's one thing for us to get up today—we're hearing a lot of heartfelt patriotic speeches; we all want to show appreciation for those in our own communities and across the province who have served our country—but it's also to recognize that words aren't enough. We need to provide support, either emotional support, psychological support, health support or even long-term-care support for our veterans.

Of course we all support showing appreciation, but I think we need to do far, far more. Perhaps what we need is some type of programming where people who are able to can interact with kids within our schools to tell their stories first-hand and answer the kids' questions and maybe even just play a game of Scrabble with the kids or do some art programs.

I think that there's a lot of support here from all three parties. I look forward to hearing from community members. Hopefully we're not just going to hear from veterans' groups and veterans themselves and their families, but we'll hear from other people in the community to make other suggestions for how we can thank and recognize our veterans.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to commend the member for bringing the bill forward. It gives me an opportunity to talk about the vast and many Legions that I have across my riding: Branch 189 in Blind River; Branch 211 in Bruce Mines; Branch 5 in Chapleau; Branch 561 in Elliot Lake—of which I'm a proud member as an associate member, thanks to my Uncle Eldon, who had served in the Cold War in Germany; Branch 39 in Espanola; Branch 514 in Gore Bay; Branch 194 in Hornepayne; Branch 177 in Little Current; Branch 242 in Manitowadge; Branch 432 in Massey; Branch 374 in Richards Landing; Branch 576 in Spanish; Branch 182 in Thessalon; Branch 429 in Wawa; and Branch 169 in White River—you can tell that I'm busy on Remembrance Day. The lucky winner will be Blind River, that's where I will be this year.

I want to highlight many of the veterans in my riding, but today I'm just going to try to talk about two. Mr. Roy Eaton is a very respected individual from the Legion up in Little Current. He serves as MC for the Decoration Day ceremony, which has been held since 1921, which has been hosted by Branch 177 and Branch 514 on Manitoulin Island. They've got a beautiful cenotaph down there. Roy is always one to promote legionnaires, their activities and a lot of the things that they do for the island. He never misses an opportunity to talk about them.

Also, from Elliot Lake, Bob Manuel: You might know this name because he's very well-recognized. When you think of Bob, over the years he was involved in all levels of the Royal Legion, particularly in Espanola. He's been

honoured with many awards and recognitions, including the Canadian peacekeeping medal, the Canada 125 medal and the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal. He has received all kinds of certificates and served as Legion president for Elliot Lake. He has just been a true, true legionnaire. When you think about him, you think about his work that he did for National Peacekeepers' Day, which is a bill that was passed in 2007; you think of the work that he's done for Vimy Ridge Day, which was a bill that was passed in 2010; you also think of the dedication of Highway 108 that was commemorated in his name to the memory of Vimy Ridge that was done in his name as well.

I want to try to get this in, in my very short time. There was a plaque that was put in in regard to Bob which reads, "the efforts of Bob Manuel who was instrumental in establishing Vimy Ridge Day in Canada. Vimy Ridge was a defining moment in Canadian history and is often referred to as the moment when Canada became a truly independent nation. Bob began his quest to have the battle recognized in 1998 and subsequently enlisted the help of MP Brent St. Denis to shepherd a bill through the House of Commons. Bill C-227 was passed unanimously in the House in October 2002 and the Senate April 3, 2003, and given royal assent the same day to become a nationally recognized day to honour the 3,598 soldiers who gave their lives in the three-day battle. Four Canadians were awarded the Victoria Cross. Bob was also instrumental in having National Peacekeepers' Day declared for the 9th of August to recognize those men and women who have given their lives in various peacekeeping missions around the world. Highway 108 to Elliot Lake has subsequently been named 'Vimy Ridge Highway.'"

When you think of Bob, there are a few words that come to mind: inspiring, amazing, a proud legionnaire and also a proud Canadian. When I think of Bob, I think of a comrade who I'm going to miss but who is always with me. Bob passed away last year on Good Friday.

When I go into classrooms and I talk to students, particularly on the days leading up to Remembrance Day, I tell them, "Those wonderful people wearing the hats and the blue blazers, walk up to them. You don't need to know their names, but just walk up to them and say, 'Thank you.' They will know why."

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to say how supportive I am of the private member's bill being brought forward by the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills. Just to give you a bit of background, I'm an associate member of Branch 52 of the Royal Canadian Legion in Peterborough. I am also a member of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment foundation from Belleville, Ontario, the home of the Hasty P's.

The reason I mention that is, in 2013, my son Braden and I went with the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment to the 70th anniversary of Operation Husky, which was the landing in Sicily. While we were there, Braden

and I and many other Canadians got the opportunity to visit Agira. Agira is the Canadian war cemetery in Sicily. There are 450 Canadians that are buried in Agira.

1530

It's interesting, last week, we talked about heat in classrooms, but during our tour in Sicily—10 days, 40 Celsius each and every day. But what was more remarkable: There were four veterans of the landing in Sicily in full military uniform there for 10 days, 40 degrees Celsius, representing Canada so admirably during the ceremonies.

I also had the opportunity in April 2015 to be in Hong Kong—the opportunity to pay my respects at the Commonwealth cemetery in Hong Kong. I just want to mention—I'll never forget this—standing by one gravesite in Hong Kong. The young man, Private Dupont from Pembroke, Ontario, was 16 years old when he signed up with the Royal Canadian Rifles in September 1939. He made the supreme sacrifice on December 24, 1941, at 18 years old, for the defence of Canada.

I want to thank the member for bringing this forward today.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I, too, would like to thank the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills for bringing forward this important piece of legislation and providing each one of us the opportunity to say thank you to not only veterans but current soldiers, and, as importantly, the families that they have.

It's been said that freedom is never free. My colleague mentioned earlier in his remarks that we will rely again on our veterans to preserve our freedom. I want members to actually hear that and think about that, because he is right. You just have to look around the world at the volatility and the troubling spots in the world where we have soldiers.

My colleague Randy Hillier—his son went to fight in Syria against ISIS. A friend of mine, Jody Mitic, who is now a city councillor, lost both of his legs in Afghanistan. My husband's best man—the best man at our wedding; his name was Ricky—served in Bosnia and had severe PTSD.

It's also been said by a writer, José Narosky: "In war there are no unwounded soldiers." I know this because my great-grandfather, my grandfather, my father and my husband have all served in the Canadian Forces. Each year, my daughter lays a wreath on behalf of Canada's youth for the Barrhaven Legion Branch 641. I'm proud of their military service.

I also had great insight. For a number of years, my husband was the deputy chief of staff to Peter MacKay. He went to Afghanistan twice—non-combat. He would always send me photos when he was in Afghanistan, and sometimes in very dangerous circumstances, to show us that little girls were going to school in Afghanistan because of Canadian soldiers. I always want to make that point, when we talk about our veterans and soldiers, that in the world, they have made change. We have made

change in World War I, in World War II, in the Korean War and in the Bosnian conflict; we made change in Afghanistan; and right now, we have soldiers who are making change around the world. They come back as veterans, and the member rightfully said that no veteran should come back to this country homeless or without opportunity, and we must be able to thank them appropriately. That is the right thing to do, in my humble opinion.

My first private member's bill, actually, had to do with veterans, and one of the things I felt lacking—and I'm going to wrap it up very quickly—one of the things I have always felt lacking in Ontario, particularly because we do have the Highway of Heroes, which is a wonderful initiative and a great outpouring of support, but I've always felt we should have had, because we have so many soldiers coming from this province, a parliamentary assistant or a minister responsible for our veterans and soldiers.

With that, Speaker, I just want to conclude by saying that I know a number of members had the opportunity to talk about the Invictus Games; I had the opportunity to go on Saturday. I always get quite emotional because of our connection to the military in my family, but I was so proud to see our soldiers fighting for this common goal of challenging themselves in sport. I cried the minute I saw the folks from Afghanistan there because it was such a beautiful moment of synergy with our soldiers and those who fought alongside them coming to our country.

I remind members, it is said that freedom is never free. We must always remember that, particularly as our freedom is to assemble here and speak our minds.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I, too, want to stand to speak in favour of Bill 100, the Honouring our Veterans Act. This is a great idea whose time has certainly come and whose time is now. The federal Veterans Ombudsman has been calling for a national identification card since 2013. And we know that the veterans in Ontario have not been recognized for their service on their official government identification for too long.

I, too, have the honour, Speaker, of serving as honorary colonel in the very famed Algonquin Regiment, and I can tell you that when we sit in the mess hall with these men and women, you just know the pride that swells in them when they put their uniform on. When we go to the firing range in Burwash or are up at the firing practices in Gogama, these men and women swell with pride. This is yet one more opportunity for them to have a chance to say, "This is what I'm doing. This is what I do for my country." It's just one very small way that we here in the Legislature can continue to pay tribute to our veterans.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Michael Coteau: It's a pleasure to speak on this important bill. Like my colleagues on this side of the House—we're very supportive of moving forward on engaging people to figure out exactly how we go about

doing this. It's something that I think is great, in principle. It's important that we recognize the extraordinary work and the sacrifice of many Canadians to preserve our democracy here in Ontario and in Canada.

My mother's side of the family comes from Yorkshire, England, from a small town named Barnsley. When the Second World War came forward, some of my family members went off to fight. In fact, my grandfather's brother Joseph Hawley was fighting in World War II and went missing in action, so they didn't see him again.

I know there was a lot of sacrifice that was made throughout many parts of the world during both world wars.

I think it's important for us to recognize the sacrifice and the contributions of Canadians, of Ontarians.

When I was at the Toronto District School Board with you, Madam Chair, we raised money to preserve a Victoria Cross from one of our TDSB students, to preserve that legacy—if you can remember, the Topham Victoria Cross—to preserve that cross here in Canada, because there was a British collector who wanted to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to bring it to England.

Even in this Legislature, even outside of these very doors—I don't know if people notice, but there's a plaque right outside, on the left, and it's a reference to the No. 2 Construction Battalion. I want to read it into the record because I think it's an important piece of history that honours our veterans, which is located right in this building. It says, "In honour and memory of the coloured men of No. 2 Construction Battalion who volunteered their services and lost their lives in the Great War 1914 to 1919. Erected by the coloured people of Canada." It's right outside our doors and not many people notice it. If you haven't had the opportunity to look at it, it's a great plaque that's right there to the left, right in front of our door.

1540

I want to thank the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills for bringing this forward because I think it's an important piece. The last thing I wanted to throw in—I've got 10 seconds—is that I think this is a great opportunity for us to identify veterans because there are a lot of people who go out and pretend they're veterans. This is a good thing for—if someone is going around saying that they've done this and to be able to look at them and say—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's an honour to rise today to represent my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, especially when it comes to our proud military and the veterans to whom we owe so much. The bill tabled by the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills provides a small but important token of our appreciation.

In my community, my first experience with the military was during the ice storm in 1998. We were a newly established township, just a few days old, when disaster hit: middle of January, with no electricity for over a week, and in many areas for over a month. Our local

SD&G Highlanders stepped in and, with their keen organizational skills and human resources, partnered with the local municipalities. They established communications, checked on the thousands of homes to ensure all were okay, patrolled roads and helped restore the crippled power system, even intervening to help organize the hydro crews.

Another incident in my riding happened during the early stages of the military operations in the Afghan war. Marc Léger of South Glengarry was one of the first Canadians killed during these operations.

Residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry have volunteered since the early beginnings of our great country to help keep this country free. Our militias were on hand to stop the advance of a superior force, the American force, at Crysler's Farm on their way to attack Montreal during the War of 1812. Over 100 Glengarrians were killed during the First World War, and many more during the Second World War.

Claude Nunney, a British home child from North Lancaster, just two and a half miles from where I grew up, was wounded a number of times, returning to the front time after time. He was the most decorated Canadian during the First World War, receiving the Distinguished Conduct Medal at Vimy Ridge, the Military Medal at Avion, and was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for operations at the Drocourt-Quéant Line—just one of the many Canadian heroes.

Every Remembrance Day that I've been honoured to attend, I have been touched by the many stories of heroism. Eric Urquhart recounted his family's contribution. His brother Kenneth was killed during the Second World War. He was named after his older brother Kenneth, who was killed during the First World War. Eric himself was a Spitfire pilot.

Speaker, Canada's history is full of such stories. I agree with this bill, and I look forward to seeing it pass later today. In times of need, Canadians have always been able to turn to their military, whether it be during times of war or during times of peace when disaster strikes. They have been called and have been all over the world. They were one of the first countries to be in Haiti after the earthquake that struck a number of years ago.

Canada's military is a very proud military, and one that has been called on and will continue to be called on as time goes by. We are there, ready at a moment's notice. As I mentioned, during the ice storm, these people left their homes to help other people that were in a time of need. That's what we see in the Canadian military.

I certainly agree with this, Speaker. It's the least we can do. And lest we forget.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills to wrap up.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I would like to thank the members from Windsor–Tecumseh, Scarborough–Guildwood, Thornhill, Algoma–Manitoulin, Peterborough, Nepean–Carleton, Nipissing, Don Valley East and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for their very thoughtful words.

We have much to be grateful for in this land that we call home, this land called Canada. Our forefathers settled here in an untapped and ungoverned wilderness and built an economy and a country that is the envy of the world, a country where a man's right to freedom is enshrined in law. But that freedom is under threat. It has always been under threat, and it always will be under threat. We have needed to fight to protect that freedom, and we will always need to fight to protect that freedom.

The brave men and women of our armed forces have fought these wars for us. They have won the battles. We have our freedom. They have stood us proud. But they bear the scars of war, some of which will never heal.

Today, we stand to say thank you. Thank you for fighting for us. Thank you for your sacrifices. Thank you for our freedom.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

NICK'S LAW (OPIOID ABUSE AWARENESS), 2017

LOI NICK DE 2017 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION À L'ABUS D'OPIOÏDES

Ms. MacLeod moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 161, An Act to raise awareness of opioid abuse /
Projet de loi 161, Loi visant à sensibiliser le public à
l'abus d'opioïdes.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is my pleasure and my honour to be able today to address the assembly to talk about a public health crisis that we have in the province of Ontario, and that is most notably the opioid, fentanyl and carfentanil crisis that is gripping our community.

I would first like to start off by acknowledging that today and this week have been mental health and addictions week, so I think it's appropriate that we're having this particular conversation, this important conversation, today here in our assembly prior to us leaving for the break week in our constituencies.

This bill is named after Nicholas Cody. Nicholas was just a young man when I was first elected. He had been dabbling with drugs, and his mum and dad came to see me. Back then, about 12 years ago, we weren't really talking much about alcohol, drugs, mental health, addictions and other things, and it was very difficult to find Nick the appropriate assistance. Throughout the years, I would follow the family and see how he was doing. Eventually, he passed away from a very bad pill a few years ago.

That wasn't my only experience. Back in early 2012, there had been a rash of fentanyl overdoses, including a couple of fatalities by some young kids who were stealing fentanyl patches and sniffing them or smoking

them. I worked very hard with the Ottawa police, as well as the Royal Ottawa mental health hospital to bring an opioid resource centre to our community. Naively, I thought, “Well, we fixed that problem.” The problem is, however, that since last February, as I have learned, the counterfeit drugs on our streets are being laced with fentanyl, which is more powerful than morphine. Kids as young as 10 years old and 12 years old are taking these drugs. Some of them are dying the first time they take the pill because they’re so potent and they’re so deadly.

Last February, I read a post on social media that was sent to me by a family friend. It was an open letter from a man named Sean O’Leary. Over Christmas of last year, Sean came home to an overdose in his garage by one of his daughter’s friends. They were able to bring the young fellow back to life through a naloxone kit. But Sean’s troubles were only starting because that’s when he recognized the fact that his own daughter, Paige, was using these dangerous opioids, and he was finding out how many kids were actually overdosing and then coming back to life through this naloxone, or they were dying—absolutely tragic.

Sean brought me to a meeting and I got to meet three kids, all 17, two girls and a boy. The boy had been using these drugs. He’s been in and out of detention. Another girl witnessed the overdose of a friend in the garage. Finally, the one that has stuck with me more than any story I’ve heard about drug abuse was a 17-year-old girl who told me she started taking drugs at the age of 10. She told me she had overdosed multiple times, and when I asked her how she felt about coming so close to death, this is what she said: “When I’m high, I don’t care if I die. When I’m not high, I think about the pain I’ve put my family through, and I just want to die.” Seventeen years old; this is what these drugs are doing to people—and youth, in particular—at such a young age.

1550

Sean started this group called We the Parents. That’s when I got rekindled with Steve and Natalie Cody. After all of those years of trying to work to help them, and them losing their son, I got to work with them again. They’re trying desperately to spread the word, to prevent kids from taking that first pill, so that when they go to a party they know that that bowl of pills—they should just stay away from it. They want that conversation, which is why, over the summer, when I was working with them and suggested that I wanted to put a bill forward that talked about more awareness and education in Ontario for our youth, they suggested it be named after Nick, the first youth I met who was struggling. I was happy to do that.

Since February, I have discussed on multiple occasions and many times in this House—going back and forth through questions or through statements and even here right now—the need for a task force on this opioid emergency. I was proud to be in the room just yesterday, when our Minister of Health for the province of Ontario announced that they were going to initiate that.

I have been an advocate for more naloxone kits, equipment not only for our first responders, but I believe

they need to be in our schools as well. I think it’s important that any parent actually right now who has a child anywhere between the ages of 10 to 110 actually gets a kit. My husband and I have one, ourselves, in our car.

I’m pleased to say that my husband, Joe Varner, is the national capital chair of St. John Ambulance. Just today, at lunchtime, he was there saying thank you to the trainers for their first aid. They were being taught naloxone kits, thanks to Sobeys and Ottawa Public Health. And I would be remiss not to say thank you to Dr. Isra Levy of Ottawa Public Health, who I know has been working hard trying to catch up on this.

I’ve also talked about the need for more detoxification beds, better treatment resources and more treatment beds for rehabilitation. That is sorely lacking. We’re trying to catch up in the province of Ontario, but it’s an area where I believe it’s needed.

Remember the girl I told you about, who was 10 years old? She told me that when she was about 14, she wanted to detox. She was sent to a detoxification centre where 50-year-old men were also being detoxed. I don’t think that’s right. I think that there needs to be special detoxification units simply for our youth. If they are prepared and they want to go, they need that help.

I’ve been very open and I’ve communicated quite a bit about that, but I think one of the things—and this is what this bill, Nick’s Law, is about. It’s saying that we spend \$56.6 million on government advertising; 10% of that is \$5.6 million. It’s the same amount of money that we paid for the fair hydro ads. It’s the same amount of money that we paid for the ORPP ads, and the ORPP was scrapped. I’m suggesting that we take that same 10%, that \$5.6 million, and invest it into greater education and awareness with this crisis.

And here’s the kicker: This new fentanyl that’s been in our province for about two years, which is more potent than morphine, more potent than heroin—it’s about to get a lot worse. It’s about to get way worse, because just yesterday they found that the most deadly type of fentanyl, which is 100,000 times or 10,000 times more potent than morphine, carfentanil, is on the streets in Ottawa. We need to warn people that this drug is out there and just one dose—not 10, not 20; one dose—could kill. If there is one thing we want to ensure with Nick’s Law, it is that the kids today at 10, 11 and 12 years old, not just 17, 18 and 19 years old, know that these drugs are out there. They could be sold for as little as \$3. They could come in a little pink heart. You can take one and die.

That’s why I had Steve and Natalie Cody and their other son, Darren, here to talk about this, so that we could encourage the government to provide enough awareness and education so that no other Ontario family has to go through what they have when they lost Nick, who was just a teenager.

My request of this assembly is to continue the debate on this opioid crisis. It’s to continue the debate on how we can best reach our youth, and other people as well,

but particularly our youth, so that they know the dangers of taking that one pill when they're at a party; so that they know that this could be potentially fatal; so that we can reach parents and others to say there is a way to assist people.

There is no one silver bullet or magic bullet that is going to fix this crisis overnight. I will have people say to me, "Lisa, your bill is only about advertising or awareness. What about more beds?" Yes, we need more beds, but we need to prevent people from actually going into those beds, and the best way to do that is to communicate. That's what Nick's Law wants to do. It wants to start there. It's a whole spectrum. You want to prevent, and so that's where your awareness comes in. You want to treat, which is where your naloxone kit comes in and then the treatment beds. Then you want to help people detox so that they can have assistance, and then you want to have community resources. We need all that, and that's why I think it's going to go very nicely hand in glove with the government's task force that will look at all parts of this issue.

So to the pages here today, you are going back to your communities next week. You're all going right across the province of Ontario. You can be our ambassadors for what you have learned here today in this debate and the questions the minister and I have exchanged about how dangerous these can be.

I have to tell you something in last 30 seconds I have: Before I met Sean O'Leary, I never would have guessed that kids under the age of 14 would take drugs. I must be naive. But today is a whole different world and my eyes are wide open.

I ask all members of this assembly to continue this debate, to support Nick's Law, and let's take this very public health crisis seriously.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak to this bill today. First, I want to thank the member for bringing it forward. Often I disagree with that member. We seem to be in opposite universes on a lot of things politically, but—this is very important to say—she has a profound sense of empathy for the people in this society, a profound sense of empathy for the people in her community, and it comes through in the bills that she brings forward. She understands human suffering. She understands the need to address that human suffering. And she won't be surprised to hear this: She's not a quiet person. She uses her voice, and I'm very pleased that she does. I'm very pleased she does.

I'm quite happy to support this bill today. But I also want to say I'm quite happy that she recognizes there's a constellation of efforts that have to be put in place to actually take this on.

I think it's a good idea to use marketing dollars to shift the opinion of those who are at risk of using very deadly drugs. I think an effective program—I don't need to talk about where it's set up, who does it, what platform. An effective program of communication that moves people

emotionally to understand the risk they are putting themselves at, and their families and their friends, could be a very powerful tool.

1600

The member talked very specifically about the individual situations of people who are dealing with this drug issue. I want to just pull back a bit and look at some of the statistics, because a few years ago, I had a constituent in my riding, a doctor, come in to talk about the opioid crisis and the need to take this on. At the time he said to me, "More people die from opioid-related causes than die from traffic accidents, from car crashes," which completely took me aback. I didn't think of it being at that scale, but I actually had an opportunity before I stood up to look at the statistics. In 2016 in Canada, there were 2,458 people who died from opioid-related causes. That doesn't include Quebec; those statistics were incomplete. That's 8.8 people per 100,000. When you look at auto-related deaths, the year before, in 2015, it was 1,858 people, a fatality rate of 5.1 persons per 100,000.

There's no question at all. If we think about the carnage we see on our roads, if we think about traffic accidents, if we think about the amount of time, effort and legislative focus that we put on dealing with car-related deaths—we've got a problem here that's bigger than car-related deaths. Maybe it's not as visible; you don't have police tape around alleyways, but you do have police tape and auto routes shut down, expressways shut down when you have a big accident. This problem, however, is having a larger impact on life and death rates in this country.

I have to say that in talking to that doctor, who talked about a variety of different paths to get at this problem, one of the paths he talked about was dealing with people who are exposed to painkillers on a regular basis because they don't get drugless therapy. I said, "What do you mean, drugless therapy?" He said, "Physiotherapy." For people who have a bad back or shoulder or neck pain, an awful lot of that can be relieved with the application of physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Yet more often than not, because coverage of that treatment is so limited, people rely on painkillers prescribed by their doctors.

I have in my riding a number of methadone clinics. Speaker, they are controversial. Neighbours don't like them, so I actually go and talk to the doctors who are running them. I remember talking to a doctor on the Danforth who went through some of the life stories of people who came to see him, people who had had severe cases of cancer, surgery, chemo, radiation, took a lot of painkillers and ultimately wound up addicted to opioids and needed to access methadone as a way of dealing with that addiction.

He talked about one person who came in to see him who said that they could never have imagined earlier in their lives that they would find themselves holding up a variety store for the cash to go out and buy drugs. So there's a question here of injuries, of fatalities, but there's also a question of disruption of society overall when people have an addiction that's so powerful, they engage

in violent, illegal behaviour to deal with their craving for opioids.

I think what the member has brought forward makes sense. I'm very glad she looked at the broader range of things that have to be done, and she spoke about them quite eloquently: an investment in detox beds; an investment in addiction treatment; an availability of naloxone so that in acute cases, people are saved, quite literally, from dying on the spot—all of those things, put together with a program of public consciousness of the scale of this public health crisis and an investment in public education through media to make sure that people aren't unknowingly, perhaps, taking a medication that will kill them on the spot.

My thanks to the member. I look forward to the rest of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm privileged to have the opportunity to join this important debate and to discuss the elements of Nick's Law. What we have in this province, as we do across Canada, is a public health emergency, a public health crisis.

We're seeing, with the current opioid epidemic, as the member herself mentioned earlier, a dramatic increase in the presence of fentanyl—and occasionally carfentanil, which is even more lethal—in illicit drugs. With these illicit drugs, regrettably, the users, whether chronic users or new users, have generally no knowledge that these drugs they may be getting access to and taking are poisoned.

We're seeing, as a result of that, a dramatic escalation in deaths, and non-fatal overdoses as well. Last year, 865 Ontarians died of opioid overdose. It's a startling number, and I fear that that number has grown even higher this year, because we're seeing it in the increase in visits to our ERs for overdoses.

The government has responded, and I can say that for nearly two years this has been top-of-mind for myself. Our actions go back that long, to the naloxone distribution that is being referred to, where roughly 7,000 naloxone kits are distributed every single month through public health units, through our agencies, through community agencies that are able to access vulnerable individuals, through 150 different communities and, I think, through 1,500 pharmacies now that provide naloxone free of charge.

We're expanding access to detox, to withdrawal management services, to day and overnight supportive care for those who seek help, to rapid-response clinics and to pain management clinics. We are literally finding every possible touchpoint to address this epidemic that we're facing.

Speaker, a couple of nights ago the Premier and I had the opportunity and the privilege to visit Moss Park at the pop-up site, the overdose prevention site located in downtown Toronto. We met many individuals—harm-reduction workers, front-line health care professionals—who were volunteering their time and literally are saving

lives every day at that location. They are courageous individuals, absolutely professional and absolutely committed to what they are trying to do. They are trying to provide that life-saving access to individuals in need.

The Premier and I also had the opportunity and the privilege to speak with five active users. Madam Speaker, it was often a difficult conversation, but I have to say that these were five remarkable individuals, and very courageous. Each of them, as well—we need to understand that those who are drug users in our society almost invariably come from a history of trauma. It may be sexual abuse as a child, it may be homelessness or it may be physical injury, but they are individuals who have faced circumstances few of us could imagine, and those circumstances catalyzed and led to where they find themselves today, as active drug users.

Madam Speaker, what's happening at Moss Park is absolutely necessary, and I defend and applaud those individuals who are providing that care. We still are not succeeding enough to ensure that we are saving every single preventable—well, every one of those lives lost is a preventable death, so there's much, much more work to be done.

Part of that work, as the member has described and as certainly is encompassed in her bill, is greater public education and awareness. That's another point through which we can prevent deaths. That includes a broad-based education and awareness campaign that aims to reach every segment of our society that can come into contact with both prescription drugs and prescription opioids, but particularly the tainted, poisoned illicit drugs which we're finding in our society and in our streets.

1610

We're working, Madam Speaker, with our public health units. We're making sure that they have the most up-to-date education and awareness materials, so they can share them with their community partners and with the front-line health care workers who can provide that support. We're working with the Ministry of Education and our education partners to ensure that we're creating appropriate, accessible, impactful education and awareness tools that can reach into our high schools, our colleges and our universities and alert individuals and their families to the dangers inherent in illicit drugs.

We're also cognizant that we need to reach into bars and nightclubs, and we're working to do just that so we can reach, touch, impact and educate individuals who may frequent those establishments. We're working and dialoguing with harm reduction workers to ensure that through them we're providing those appropriate tools and education and awareness materials so that those who are chronic users, like those the Premier and I met two days ago at Moss Park, have the information they need.

We're working with our pharmacists, as well, to ensure on the prescription side that when an individual goes to a pharmacist and obtains a new, or even a renewed prescription, with that prescription being dispensed they will get materials to alert them to the risk of opioids and the addiction potential.

There are, as you can appreciate, many touch points. I'm gratified, as well, that yesterday I announced the creation of an opioid emergency taskforce which will be comprised of a whole myriad of experts and advisers, but particularly, it will contain and benefit from the participation of and the advice from harm reduction workers, people with lived experience, clinicians and others who can truly help us take those next steps to both alleviate and reduce the impact of this scourge, this epidemic. Hopefully, Madam Speaker, it can result in the elimination of the epidemic and the public health emergency.

Madam Speaker, I am thankful that the member opposite has brought this bill forward. As I said this morning, it is brought forward with the most genuine of intent, passion and compassion for this issue. I know that both of us have had many conversations about our shared concern about the opioid crisis, and I applaud her and thank her for bringing forward a bill that speaks to that critically important—it's not the only solution, and she has mentioned that herself—aspect of awareness and education.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I, too, am pleased to rise to speak to Bill 161, Nick's Law (Opioid Abuse Awareness). This is an act to allocate 10% of the Bulk Media Buy Program toward marketing campaigns to prevent opioid and fentanyl abuse. Now, this is put forward by the very passionate member from Nepean–Carleton. I, too, want to lend my voice to say thank you for doing what you're doing, for garnering the teamwork that you've garnered on this. This is just a particularly touching topic in the middle of such a crisis.

As I stated a week or so ago in a recent debate on Bill 126, we are indeed in the midst of an opioid crisis. Between 2006 and 2015, fentanyl overdose deaths in Ontario soared by 548%. Last month, we got word that opioid-related deaths rose 19% in 2016 in Ontario. You may recall, Speaker, that after 15 fentanyl deaths in my hometown of North Bay, the leaders there came together with their drug strategy committee and developed a Patch for Patch program—you'll see why I'm talking about this in a moment. Patch for Patch is a protocol that basically states that before you can get a new fentanyl patch, for those who need it by prescription, you return the used patch undamaged. It was a very successful program, which this Legislature adopted province-wide. Since that time, in my hometown, fentanyl-related deaths—remember, we had 15—are now zero. It has just stopped in its tracks, due primarily, at the time, to the Patch for Patch program.

I relate this because it is my hope, and our hope, that this same kind of non-partisan lens is used to move this bill forward. Certainly today it sounds exactly like that is what's happening. I think we're all so grateful to see that. But we do want to see this go to a committee and come up to the committee and have hearings. We don't just want to see it fall by the wayside after one wonderful day today.

We saw Bill 126 recently—and this is from the member from Kitchener–Conestoga. This was his Illegal Pill Press Act—again, as the minister said, one more tool in the tool box to fight this scourge. That received non-partisan support, and hopefully that bill will also go to committee. But this is what we're saying; this is what we're hearing. They are all pieces that are part of this big puzzle to try to solve this, and I think that anything we can do in this Legislature to save lives, well, that ought to be something we do. I see the member from Nepean–Carleton doing that today.

The Ontario PC Caucus has also urged the government to do more in the prevention of the opioid crisis, and we're starting to hear things that I think we're all pleased to hear—the task force that the minister announced. These are all critical pieces. Not one is going to solve it all, but cumulatively, these pieces will come together.

We encourage the government, through this bill, to start advertising for public safety from public money. I think that's what the member from Nepean–Carleton is really asking for here. Opioid overdoses are preventable. With more awareness and education, youth will have a better understanding of just how very lethal these opioids like fentanyl and, as you heard from the member from Nepean–Carleton, carfentanyl—just how very deadly these are.

Nick's Law proposes allocating 10% of the government's \$57-million advertising budget to the fight against fentanyl and other dangerous opioids. It would establish campaigns to address the prevention of opioid abuse, talk about the early warning signs of addiction and the dangers associated. It would bring greater public awareness to the dangers associated with the drugs that are contaminated with fentanyl, much like the patch-for-patch return policy.

Speaker, as in the past, I want to read a letter from Sherry Albert of New Liskeard, to remind members in this House what this is really all about. Sadly, she wrote to me:

“In 2011, I lost my 19-year-old son to this tragic abuse of medication.

“He was a gentle young man with many plans, who was at the wrong place at the wrong time and, as many others, did not know the dangers of prescription medication.

“The police determined that fentanyl was sold to his friend for \$100.

“Since May, I have heard of at least four more senseless, fentanyl-related deaths in our very small community. I, too, am afraid for our youth.

“My life has been forever changed and my heart eternally broken by the loss caused by this serious problem.”

It's a reminder that there are families just like Sherry's all across the province who are hurting. Their anguish is raw, human and real.

1620

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I want to thank the member from Nepean–Carleton, my friend, for her advocacy and her compassion, and also for her discussion that this is just a step in a number of steps that need to happen, and it takes some money. I hope the government listens, and not only listens and passes this bill, but actually spends the money.

Everybody here knows that I was a street kid at one point in my life. I was homeless when I was 15. I was drug-involved, like most street kids are. I survived. I'm one of the lucky ones.

Applause.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's actually not worthy of applause for me, but for those who helped me. It's to them that I give thanks, because I was supported and helped.

The way I was supported and helped was that I had supportive doctors, I had supportive clergy in those days, and I had enough money on the social assistance programs that I could rent a basement apartment in Toronto and continue to return to school. Those are critical supports. I also had health care if I needed it. I just want to say that those are still the critical supports needed to get off the streets, to get away from drugs, to get your life back in order.

I want to thank the Minister of Health for the emergency task force. We in the New Democratic Party call for a state of emergency to be declared. This is almost as good. This is good. Thank you, because it's absolutely essential.

I want to put forward another notion—and I know it's not within the domain of this House, but it's something I think we need to advocate for with our federal cousins—and that is the decriminalization of all drugs. And I'll tell you why: Because in Portugal, where they have decriminalized everything from weed to heroin for 17 years, there is a lived experiment that shows it works. I'll tell you why decriminalization is so important: Because as long as drug use remains underground, as long as we are threatening children with prison time, they're not going to talk to us. They're not going to come out from the shadows. They're not going to seek help. That's why we need to decriminalize.

Here are the results of that Portuguese experiment. There are just under 11 million in Portugal. That's their population. They had 16 opioid deaths. Compare that to our 800-and-something. This is what happens when you allow those who are using to come out of the shadows and seek help—in fact, not only that they come out, but that you go looking for them.

Remember, this is not legalizing drugs; it's decriminalizing them. What happens is that the police interact with users and give them a citation. They go before a panel of health care workers, social workers and doctors, who are then able to help them. That's the point. You get them into help. Traffickers are still prosecuted. You can imagine that the police costs are halved from what they used to be as well. The money that the government saves goes into what? Treatment, because that's the other piece of the puzzle.

If a child has a problem—and they do, if they're using fentanyl—we need to get them help. As the member from Nepean–Carleton said, just going into detox with 50-year-old men is not going to cut it. Children—and we're talking about children—need their own help, and they need long-term rehab help. If you look to try to find it, you will find it, but it costs. The wait-list for free help is so long as to be deadly, because that's what it is: It's deadly. When a child or anyone wants help, they should be able to get it now. That's when you need it. That's the other piece of the puzzle.

Again, I cite the group of parents, Tragically NOHIP, who came here a few years back with their children and said, "Our children need help, and we've mortgaged our houses to get it for them" because they need to be in residential care for at least three months to get the help they need if they're dealing with an addiction issue. So that's another piece of it.

Finally—I just have a few minutes left—I want to give a shout-out to Mark Baratta. Mark is this incredible person in Parkdale–High Park. He's an addict himself. He walks around with a naloxone kit. He saves lives every week. There was a Star article about him, a beautiful one. We gave him an award at our volunteer banquet and, on the way to the banquet, he was late. Why? Because he saved a life. That's how endemic it is in our communities.

Please, yes, spend the money because that's what's being called for here: to do an educational program to reach kids and reach those who don't know what they're taking. And then, please, work with our federal cousins to get it out of the shadows, into the light, so that those people who don't know what they're taking can get it tested, can get some help. That's what we need.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a pleasure to join the discussion on Bill 161 put forward by the member from Nepean–Carleton. I want to thank her for bringing this bill forward. I also want to thank the member from Parkdale–High Park for her advocacy and also for sharing her own life experience with us in this House.

As we all know very well, this is an issue not only for individuals in our society, in our province of Ontario, in our country of Canada; in fact, it's an issue worldwide. It's an issue in every country around this world, opioid abuse by different ages, from young people to the elderly, men, women and children. It's a major human problem around the world, in every country, every society and, indeed, in our society as well. When this thing happens, it's not just only one individual who is affected by this very terrible issue. It affects families, friends, relatives and, of course, communities. It affects the whole population, so it's a major issue.

As the member who put this bill forward indicated, public education is very, very critical. Like any other issues we are facing in society, public education is at least one of the major key points in order to solve and tackle these kinds of issues. I'm glad this bill has been

brought forward so that we can discuss how we can educate the public in order to tackle this social issue in our society.

I'm glad that our government has come up with this opioid strategy in the province of Ontario, which our Minister of Health announced just last year. There are various elements to this strategy in terms of funding, which is the key. As the member from Parkdale–High Park indicated, it's very key that the government allocate funding to solve or partly help solve this issue in our society.

The strategy allocated \$222 million over the next three years by our government, the government of Ontario, to assist people who have these kinds of problems. Now \$9 million is going to go to add more front-line harm reduction outreach workers across the province. More than \$20 million is there to expand the supply of naloxone, including expanding supply to at-risk individuals by distributing that particular medication through emergency departments. Then, \$70 million will be invested to respond to needs at the community level for addiction treatment, including new rapid-access addiction medicine.

There are many other allocations, like \$23 million to provide additional support for existing harm reduction programs and so on.

I urge all members to support this bill. I will support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like, first and foremost, to extend my thoughts and condolences to the family of Nicholas Cody. I'd also like to commend my colleague from Nepean–Carleton. I'm pleased to rise in support of her private member's bill calling on the government to release money to fight the opioid crisis that, last year, killed 865 Ontarians.

Nick's Law proposes earmarking 10% of the government's \$57-million advertising budget into a public education campaign to raise awareness about the lethal ways of fentanyl and other lethal opioids. This is the second time our party has put forward a prevention tool and taken action to fight overdose deaths in Ontario.

1630

Just two weeks ago, my friend and Kitchener–Conestoga MPP Michael Harris debated his pill press bill to stop the production and proliferation of counterfeit opioids at the source. I was very pleased to support his efforts, and I'm pleased as well that his bill is now in committee.

I truly hope the government will keep working together to ensure the pill press ban is quickly passed into law and will give law enforcement the tools to get these horrendous opioids like fentanyl off the street. With approximately two Ontarians dying every day from opioids in 2016, no one wants more families to suffer, so we need to work quickly to prevent future tragedies.

Keeping our communities and Ontarians safe must be this government's top priority in the fight against lethal

opioids. But the fact is, this government hasn't done enough. Drug overdoses have affected far too many families, because none of us is immune. From Ottawa to Toronto, London to Kitchener and even in my backyard of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, the opioid crisis has been hitting communities across the entire province for about a year.

We believe the best approach to preventing future users is through greater awareness and better education, particularly targeting the youth in our province from taking potentially deadly drugs laced with fentanyl. This is something the government has the money to make happen. Given the government's bulk media buy, or its advertising budget, which has grown in the last year from \$25 million to \$56 million, the government has the ability to dedicate 10% of that to the public fight against opioids. I sincerely hope they will show today that they also have the will to make it happen.

Our caucus has urged the members opposite to do more in prevention of the opioid crisis. There have been about 20 questions asked in question period and two opioid-related bills put before the government.

Opioid overdoses are preventable, and with more awareness and education, our youth will have a better understanding of just how lethal opioids like fentanyl and carfentanil are. They will know that just two milligrams of fentanyl is a lethal dose. Think of that, Madam Speaker—two milligrams could take your life away.

We encourage the government to start advertising for public safety with the public purse. The government spent \$5.7 million on ORPP ads after the program was scrapped and during the program's scrapping; they're slated to spend at least \$5.5 million on their hydro scheme—all partisan vanity ads that the Auditor General has already criticized and suggested would not have been approved if she still had the authority the Liberals recently stripped from her. Surely they can find \$5.6 million to be dedicated to bringing opioid awareness into every home, school and community in Ontario. This is, after all, a public safety campaign that could save lives. This is the type of thing we want the public to be aware of. This is where we think they should be putting their money and investing. The lives of our children, our pages, our grandchildren are the ones that we're thinking of—and every life should be a priority.

I know this is too late for at least one family in my riding. Sadly, my sons lost a friend to a fentanyl overdose. Again, it's that Russian roulette, as the old saying goes. They really don't know what they're playing with. They don't know how lethal that is. Just a little smidgen can snuff out that life in a very short period. But it's not too late for the other 13 million Ontarians whose lives could be saved through this province-wide awareness campaign.

Madam Speaker, I ask the Minister of Health and all of his Liberal colleagues to do the right thing. We have to always think of what our actions are going to be. Today we have the ability, through a private member's bill, to make a difference in our community, which is why we

all, of all stripes, come here—to make a difference, to be beacons of light for the next generation, for our current generation, for our seniors. At the end of the day, this is one of those ones—we see an epidemic that continues to grow.

We know that there are needs out there—and now it's a call to action; it's an ability to truly step up. In this case, we would support fully, and hope that the government will support, my colleague's private member's bill, Nick's Law, to help us keep our kids, schools and communities safe from lethal opioids.

When Michael Harris did his bill, there was a young lady—her name escapes me.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Leila Attar.

Mr. Bill Walker: Leila Attar—thank you very much.

It sticks with me because I was at that news conference. She almost died from this. The person who gave it to her—what really struck her was, the value of her life was \$60, to that person, for a pill. I can't fathom how anybody with any conscience whatsoever could do that to a friend.

Again, I reflect on my sons and how much it impacted them to know that one of their friends died with an illegal opioid, fentanyl. They couldn't really comprehend it. It was one of the first times that they'd seen someone of their age group pass away. They are still kind of dumbfounded by this.

I truly commend my colleague. Every one of us has due diligence—we all have to take a piece of this. We all have to help. Nick's Law is going to give the public the tools to say no to lethal opioid drugs. To help at least one person, it's all worth it.

I sincerely hope all members would join in support of this legislation to address our province-wide opioid crisis and truly make the health of everyone in our province the absolute priority.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Nepean–Carleton to wrap up.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker, and thank you to all of my colleagues. I would like to thank the member from Toronto–Danforth, the Minister of Health, the member from Nipissing, the member from Parkdale–High Park, the Minister of Research and Innovation and, of course, my colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

I'd also like to say thank you to my staff, who made this bill possible. Three of them are sitting in the gallery. They are Kayla Fernet, Valerie Cickello and Rebecca Hubble; and from the leader's office, Cody Welton; and from my constituency office, Trish Sloan; who have been with me on this journey and working with the families.

To Steve and Natalie Cody: I think we're going to see this bill advance today. I know you're watching at home in Barrhaven. I know Sean O'Leary is watching at home in Kanata. The Legislature has spoken here today, and we're taking your issue seriously. We want you to know that the work you've put in in the last nine months to raise awareness and your advocacy have mattered. You

have moved the pendulum. You have had an impact in what you've done.

Speaker, almost 900 lives were lost last year in the province of Ontario due to opioid abuse. It is getting more dangerous. It really is incumbent upon all of us in this assembly to go back into our communities next week and maybe call our local newspaper, send out a tweet or put something on Facebook about this crisis. If we can save but one life, we will have done our job and our duty, and that's what is really required of all of us.

My friend and my former leader stood here a year ago, and he told us that we have a microphone, and that microphone is for us to use. We should spend \$5.6 million on this, but we also have reach in our own home communities. We could do that and use that microphone of ours today.

Speaker, thank you very much. It was really a pleasure.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

LIFE LEASES ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LES BAUX VIAGERS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will deal first with ballot item number 73, standing in the name of Ms. Hoggarth.

Ms. Hoggarth has moved second reading of Bill 155, An Act respecting life leases. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried."

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to turn to the member to identify the committee.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd request that the bill go to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Agreed? I hear "agreed." Congratulations.

HONOURING OUR VETERANS ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 RENDANT HOMMAGE À NOS ANCIENS COMBATTANTS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. MacLaren has moved second reading of Bill 100, An Act respecting identification for veterans. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried."

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to turn to the member to identify the committee it's going to.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: The Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Agreed? I hear "agreed." Congratulations.

NICK'S LAW (OPIOID ABUSE
AWARENESS), 2017
LOI NICK DE 2017
SUR LA SENSIBILISATION À L'ABUS
D'OPIOÏDES

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. MacLeod has moved second reading of Bill 161, An Act to raise awareness of opioid abuse. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried."

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Nepean–Carleton to identify the committee.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'll refer it to social policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Agreed? Agreed. Congratulations.

Orders of the day? I recognize the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Laura Albanese: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Albanese has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? I hear agreed.

This House stands adjourned until 10:30 a.m. on Monday, October 16, 2017. I want to wish everybody a happy Thanksgiving.

The House adjourned at 1639.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioic Lim, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (IND)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengary	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Hon. / L'hon. Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC) Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	York–Simcoe Halton	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint de parti reconnu
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Michael Mantha
Mike Colle, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Cheri DiNovo, Michael Harris
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Michael Mantha, Arthur Potts
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Han Dong
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Mike Colle, Han Dong
Victor Fedeli, Ann Hoggarth
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Granville Anderson
Granville Anderson, Yvan Baker
Grant Crack, John Fraser
Lisa Gretzky, Julia Munro
Lou Rinaldi, Lisa M. Thompson
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
Granville Anderson, Lorenzo Berardinetti
James J. Bradley, Wayne Gates
Cristina Martins, Sam Oosterhoff
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Amrit Mangat, Jim McDonell
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Ross Romano, Monique Taylor
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Sophie Kiwala
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Grant Crack, Jennifer K. French
Jack MacLaren, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Mario Sergio
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Lorne Coe, Bob Delaney
Vic Dhillon, Joe Dickson
Harinder Malhi, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley