

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



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of Debates  
(Hansard)**

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(Hansard)**

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Lundi  
23 mars 2026

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Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 March 2026

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 mars 2026

*The House met at 1015.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Good morning, and welcome back.

*Prayers.*

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

### RESIGNATION OF MEMBER FOR SCARBOROUGH SOUTHWEST

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I beg to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the membership of the House by reason of the resignation of Doly Begum as the member for the electoral district of Scarborough Southwest, effective February 3, 2026. Accordingly, I have issued my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for a by-election.

### TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I beg to inform the House that, during the adjournment, the following documents were tabled:

From the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario:

—the 2023-24 annual report; and

From the Office of the Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario:

—a report entitled 2025 Capital Plan: Spending Plan Review;

—a report entitled Economic and Budget Outlook, Winter 2026;

—a report entitled FAO Forecast Accuracy: 2024-25;

—a report entitled Ontario Economic Monitor: July to December 2025; and

—a report entitled An Update on Subsidized Housing Programs in Ontario.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### BRUCE WYLIE

**Hon. Steve Clark:** Good morning, everyone. I rise this morning to celebrate the legendary broadcasting career of Bruce Wylie, the voice of Brockville.

On April 7, Bruce shuts off the studio mike for the final time, after an extraordinary 55 years on the air. For generations, his morning radio show has informed, entertained and brought our community closer together.

Bruce's trusted voice helped us celebrate great times and comforted us on those difficult days.

Never was his voice more important than during the ice storm of 1998. Broadcasting from a generator-powered studio, his call-in show was a lifeline for listeners, connecting them with emergency help and supplies.

Bruce's impact went far beyond the airwaves. He helped raise millions of dollars for local causes, collected tons of food for those in need, spearheaded special events like Riverfest, and founded both our sports and our music and performing arts halls of fame.

Bruce, congratulations on an extraordinary career. You're truly one of a kind, and you can retire knowing that Brockville is a better place than when you first moved there in 1971, and we're so thankful that you did. Thank you. I wish you and Eileen all the best.

And as Premier Ford told Bruce when he personally recognized him last week at my constituency office, "Enjoy sleeping in for the first time in decades."

### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Good morning. This morning, I'm sharing lessons that I've learned from my very first year at Queen's Park.

Number one, if they can't get shovels in the ground, this government will spend \$112 million on ads suggesting that it's already built.

Number two, when Ontarians ask for safer northern highways, this Conservative government draws up plans for fantasy tunnels and luxury spas in Toronto.

Number three, when the courts say no—no to secrecy—this government rewrites the rules, turning freedom of information into none of your business, though the greenbelt will always be public business.

#### 1020

And fourth, I have learned that when hospital health care isn't improving, when children are waiting more than five years for autism supports, when child welfare data shows that on average one child is dying every three days, this government stops reporting the numbers to the public and even tracking them.

These are the lessons that I've learned in this chamber. But outside, among the families we are sworn to serve, when the data disappears, the needs don't. When the services fall short, families carry the burden that this Conservative government made with their decisions. And somewhere in Ontario tonight, there's a child who is still waiting and there is a family who is still struggling.

And I have learned this year that Ontario deserves better.

## RIDING OF SCARBOROUGH— GUILDWOOD

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** Madam Speaker, it's great to be back.

I rise today to address the reality that my constituents of Scarborough–Guildwood and communities across Ontario are facing.

I always love to take pride in sharing progress and good news from my riding, but today I can't do that. The people of Scarborough–Guildwood and Scarborough are not just under pressure; they're struggling to survive. Unemployment in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood stands at a staggering 16%, far exceeding the provincial average of 7%. Meanwhile, the cost of living continues to rise, pushing families to their breaking point.

Madam Speaker, one in five Ontarians is forced to spend over 70% of their income just to keep a roof over their heads, leaving nothing for essentials like food, savings, or a secure future.

In my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood, hundreds of renters are just one paycheque away from going homeless.

At the same time, Scarborough has the highest child poverty rate in Toronto, and my riding follows closely—listen to this number—with over 34% of children living in poverty.

I stand here today as their voice, committed to advocating for fairness and ensuring that no family or community is left behind.

It's great to be back. We cannot hide anymore.

## GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

**Mr. Steve Pinsonneault:** It is a pleasure to welcome everybody back as we begin this new session. I hope all members had an opportunity to spend meaningful time in their communities over this break.

In my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, we continue to see the impact of strong provincial investment in infrastructure that brings people together.

I am proud to share that two community arenas in my riding have each received \$1 million in support, which ensures these vital spaces remain accessible for families, youth and local organizations. Just a few weeks ago, I had the privilege of joining Minister Lumsden and community members for the grand opening of one of these upgraded facilities. It was a great reminder of how investments like these strengthen not only our infrastructure but the fabric of our communities.

I want to thank everyone involved for making these projects a success, and I look forward to continuing this important work together.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I've got to hand it to the government: They're really, really brilliant at the politics of distraction.

This morning, the Legislature is coming back after three months, and the thing that's going to be on everybody's mind is that this government is going to be gutting the freedom-of-information act because the courts have ruled that the Premier has to release his phone records that he was using to make deals. The freedom-of-information act has been used to expose the \$8.3-billion greenbelt scandal, the \$2.2-billion Ontario Place scandal, and the \$2.5-billion Skills Development Fund scandal. So this has been very, very helpful for the people to understand how many tax dollars this government is wasting.

But this morning, to try to distract everybody, the Premier went to Billy Bishop airport and announced that he's going to be invoking Bill 5 in the redevelopment of Billy Bishop airport. Bill 5 is another attack on our democratic rights, because Bill 5 allows the Premier or any minister to break any law any time, anywhere in the province of Ontario.

So the questions that I have for the Premier are what environmental, labour and safety laws are you planning to break at Billy Bishop airport, that you're invoking Bill 5—and the other one is, what is the incriminating evidence in your phone records, that you are changing the freedom-of-information record to keep your phone records hidden?

## THE CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION GALA

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Good morning, colleagues, and welcome back to the Legislature. It is a pleasure and a privilege to be here with you today.

I rise today to share a great event that took place in Belleville over the break: the Children's Foundation night-in-Ireland gala. This gala supports children's causes across the Bay of Quinte, Hastings and Northumberland counties. My wife, Jennifer, and I had a fantastic time. As busy parents of three, it's not often that we get the opportunity to get dressed up and go out together for a night of fun, food and great friends, both new and old. Despite some last-minute setbacks that required reworking the program the week of, the event was an incredible success. It was completely sold out and raised more than \$408,000 for children in our area, which is a new record. It was so inspiring to see so many members of our community come together to support young people across our region, and I want to thank the foundation, the volunteers, the donors, the sponsors and the guests for a job very well done. It was incredible to see the Belleville armouries completely transformed into a night in Ireland.

I did want to give special thanks to executive director Ingrid Moore, gala chair Cassandra Bonn, emcees Victor Cooper and Kelly McKinney, auctioneer Boyd Sullivan, and board chair Jack Miller. Thank you for all that you do for our community.

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** Youth unemployment in Windsor has reached alarming levels, leaving many young people struggling to find stable work and build a future. Known

for its strong manufacturing base, the city has faced economic shifts that disproportionately impact youth, especially those entering the workforce for the first time.

This situation will get worse due to cuts to OSAP by the Premier and his government. For many years, OSAP has been a critical support system enabling students from lower- and middle-income families to access post-secondary education. Cuts to funding grants and stricter eligibility requirements are forcing many young people to either take on unsustainable debt or abandon their education goals altogether. This creates significant barriers for many.

The combined effect of high unemployment and reduced educational support will make it even harder for youth in Windsor and across Ontario. Without access to education or meaningful employment, youth in Windsor are left with fewer pathways to success, increasing the risk of long-term financial instability and social inequality. If these challenges aren't addressed, the city risks losing an entire generation of talent and potential.

Investing in youth employment opportunities and restoring accessible education funding is essential to ensuring that young people can contribute to and benefit from a more equitable and prosperous future, which creates economic stability that we all benefit from.

I'll continue to join students in Windsor and across Ontario in the fight for better, fairer OSAP, as well as more meaningful job opportunities that set up students and recent grads for success.

## PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Since 2023, Ontario pharmacists have completed over 2.2 million assessments for common ailments and issued nearly two million prescriptions, helping people get care faster and reducing pressure on our health care system. That means, colleagues, over two million times someone walked into their local pharmacy looking for help and received the care they needed right in their community.

Whether it is recommending the right treatment or explaining how to use a prescription, pharmacists are always ready to help.

Pharmacist is one of the oldest health professions in the world, dating back thousands of years to ancient civilizations.

Across Ontario, more than 4,700 pharmacies play a vital role in our health care system, with most residents living within five kilometres of their local pharmacy.

Thank you to the Ministry of Health for expanding the role of pharmacists to provide more accessible care close to home.

I want to recognize the important work of the Ontario Pharmacists Association, OnPharm-United, and local pharmacies that I have had the opportunity to visit and connect with over the past year.

This Pharmacy Appreciation Month, I encourage all my colleagues to visit their local pharmacy and thank the

dedicated pharmacists for keeping our communities healthy and safe.

And I have Sherif Guorgui, the president of OnPharm, here supporting our province and helping to build a better, safe community.

## JAY DEARBORN

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** It's great to be back here in the House with all of our colleagues.

Today, I rise to recognize one of our own, Tamworth's own Jay Dearborn. He recently represented Canada at this year's Olympics, from my area, and has made Hastings-Lennox and Addington very, very proud.

### 1030

Before hitting the ice in the sleds, Dearborn was a standout defensive end, best known for his elite explosive speed. Playing for the Holland Hurricanes and the Carleton Ravens, he recorded 50 tackles and seven interceptions.

Following a football injury in 2019, his "rocket ship" obsession progressed into the notable sport of bobsledding.

After competing on the world stage this year, Jay kind of playfully summed it up with, "Eh, couple of losses on the road ... looking to take the next one at home ... it's a long series."

I'm still not completely sure how that applies to two-man and four-man bobsleigh teams. But I do know this: That mindset—the mindset of teamwork, resilience and playing your role—is exactly what got him to the Olympics and what gets anyone to the Olympics.

Jay represented our riding with excellence, authenticity and a sense of humour, and had people across the whole country smiling. And in Hastings-Lennox and Addington, we couldn't be more proud.

## MAX SIMAO

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Hamilton Centre.

**MPP Robin Lennox:** I seek unanimous consent of the House to have a moment of silence in honour of the life of Max Simao, who tragically died on December 11, 2025, and whose family is visiting Queen's Park today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Hamilton Centre is seeking unanimous consent of the House to have a moment of silence in honour of the life of Max Simao, who tragically died on December 11, 2025, and whose parents are visiting Queen's Park today. Agreed? Agreed.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Please be seated.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**MPP Robin Lennox:** It's my honour to recognize Chris Simao, the father of Max Simao, and Jennifer

Timmins, the educational assistant for Max Simao, who are in the gallery today.

*Applause.*

**Hon. Stan Cho:** It's great to be back in the Legislature. I'm proud to have today's page captain Chen Lin from Willowdale in the Legislature.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I'd like to welcome Professor Semra Sevi and her political science students from the University of Toronto taking course POL382 to the House. Welcome to your Legislature.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Good morning, everyone. It is so great to see your smiling faces.

I'd like to welcome the Ontario Craft Brewers, who are in the House today. They help us deal with the antics in this chamber. And especially, a shout-out to Great Lakes Brewery and Left Field Brewery—Mandie and Mark Murphy and Troy Burch. They are inviting you to a reception tonight.

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** Here with us today are youth from the Armenian community: Tro Karshafian and Joshua Lin.

It is also Joshua's birthday today. Happy birthday, Joshua.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** I'd like to introduce Donna Blackburn and Jennifer Jennekens, democratically elected trustees from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, and Cathy Abraham from the Kawartha Pine Ridge school board and former president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. Welcome.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to introduce three medical students who are here at Queen's Park today: Audrey Marquis and Isabelle Moy from the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, and Asma Bilgasem, who is from Sudbury but studies medicine in Toronto.

Welcome to your House, ladies.

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to wish a warm welcome to Dave Carnegie and Sandro Perruzza, representing the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, who are here for their lobby day. I'm looking forward to joining the reception this evening.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I'd like to welcome constituents from Toronto Centre who are here today to watch our proceedings: Anan Qiang and Shuguang Xie. Welcome.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I would like to introduce two very impressive groups of students who are with us today. The Western University Students' Council has their delegates from the Women in House program, and the Ontario Medical Students Association is here.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Steve Pinsonneault:** I'd like to welcome Annie McNaughton as page for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. She is the daughter of my predecessor, former Minister of Labour Monte McNaughton. Welcome.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** I'd like to welcome Professor Sevi's third-year political science class, as well as my intern from the last two summers, Connor MacDonald. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** I'd like to recognize Rhea Saini, Davi Sihota, Merna Mina and Harmanvir Dhaliwal as a part of 80 medical students from the Ontario Medical Students Association. Welcome to Queens Park.

**Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam:** I would like to welcome our friends from PeerWorks: executive director Allyson Theodorou and all the board members who are here today. You are an integral part of the mental health and addictions system in Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It gives me great pleasure to welcome the Ontario Medical Students Association. I had the pleasure of meeting with Rachiel Chirara, Joshua Jonathan Williams, Nellie Krougly and Virginia Guisandes Bueno.

I'd also like to welcome Western USC's Women in House.

Welcome to your House.

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** I would like to welcome the Ontario Medical Students Association, who are here today for a lobby day to share their vision of a better, stronger and healthier Ontario.

I also want to welcome the students from the Western University students' union as well.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I'm pleased to introduce Sandro Perruzza, the CEO of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. We want to welcome him. Please join the reception at 5:30 tonight.

PAUL DUBÉ

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today Ombudsman Paul Dubé. He is accompanied by Barbara Finlay, Deputy Ombudsman, and Houda Bennani, his executive assistant. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests to the Legislature.

I would also like to acknowledge that next Tuesday marks the end of Mr. Dubé's 10-year service as Ombudsman of Ontario. He served as the province's seventh Ombudsman, first appointed in 2016 and reappointed in 2021. As Ontario's Ombudsman, Mr. Dubé oversaw the office through expansion and change. He also supported several initiatives in the best interest of the public.

Mr. Dubé, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, thank you for your service and best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** This morning in the members' gallery, we are joined by Eve Rachel McLeod, a soprano and long-time member of the Canadian Opera Company Chorus from the riding of King-Vaughan, who will perform O Canada and God Save the King.

Please stand and join her in the singing of our national and royal anthems.

*Singing of the national anthem / Chant de l'hymne national.*

*Singing of the royal anthem / Chant de l'hymne royal.*

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I want to see someone top that. Where's Yak when we need him, right?

I recognize the member of His Majesty's loyal opposition.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I seek unanimous consent that the House calls on the government to reverse its proposed changes to the Ontario Student Assistance Program.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** A member of His Majesty's loyal opposition is seeking unanimous consent that the House call on the government to reverse its proposed changes to the Ontario Student Assistance Program. Agreed? No.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Welcome back, everyone.

This question is for the Premier. The Premier has announced he is dismantling Ontario's freedom-of-information laws to hide from accountability and take away the people's right to know how their hard-earned tax dollars are being spent. This is a huge violation of the public's trust. They are taking us backwards in accountability and transparency.

So I would ask the Premier to explain. Why is his government taking away the people's right to see how decisions are made, and who is benefiting?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Madam Speaker: We aren't taking anyone's rights away; 95% will be FOI-able. That's number one.

Number two: All we're doing is duplicating other provinces—no matter if it's Saskatchewan or Quebec, for example, but the rest of the provinces—and the federal government. We're duplicating what the federal government has done. The only thing we haven't done—we should have moved a lot quicker on this. But again, 95%—I'm going to emphasize that—is FOI-able.

There are two groups that are concerned about it. They're the opposition—they should talk to their federal partners—and the media. Everyone else is focused on something else. They're focused on the economy, about jobs, fighting President Trump. That is what they're focused on.

We'll let them chirp away, but we're going to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, the Premier has been pretty clear, actually, with the public already about why he's making these changes. He said himself that this is about concealing his cellphone records—the cellphone that he admitted he conducts government business on. The courts have ordered for those records to be shared, to be released. The province's own accountability watchdog has said that this is all about evading accountability.

So I would ask the Premier—protect Ontario? No. This is only about protecting himself. What is in those

cellphone records that the Premier is trying so very hard to hide?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Madam Speaker, I'll tell you what's inside these phone calls: 6,743 messages that people need help. They need help, no matter if it's health care, family issues—and do you know why they don't have to worry about it? I'm the only person in the world who gives out his cell number to help people. That's the difference.

They don't get any phone calls. They're all right to put out publicly personal information about people.

Constituents don't even call you, because they don't get a call back.

But if they were to call them and tell them personal health issues—do you think for a second anyone in this province wants to release personal information?

That's what this is all about. That is what it's all about—taking care of the people, personal issues.

You have no problem with airing people's issues around the province. I have an issue with that.

I took an oath, like each and every one of you, to protect the people who call you and their—

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Well, they've sure got issues, Premier, but those issues are with the cost of everything; they're with the hallway health care that has exploded under your watch; they are with the lack of funding for OSAP. That's what people here are worried about. But you seem to be consumed, for some reason, with hiding your cellphone records. We know it's not about hiding constituent information, because that is already covered and protected—and the Premier knows absolutely why.

The timing of these changes is very suspicious, Premier.

The RCMP are—

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** —closing in on this government. They're going to reveal each government member's involvement in the greenbelt scandal. And let me tell you, Speaker, they're not going to be coming with FOI laws; they're going to be coming with a warrant.

Multiple recipients of skills development funds closely tied to this Premier, to this labour minister—now the Premier is in court fighting to keep his cellphone records private.

Is the Premier changing the rules because he is trying to hide the truth?

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

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** Thank you to the member opposite for allowing me the opportunity to talk about what this legislation is actually doing. And I can tell you, it's long overdue.

What we are doing with this legislation is updating and strengthening cabinet confidentiality, which is certainly the bedrock of the Westminster system. If we look across Canada, to New Brunswick, Newfoundland, PEI, Quebec,

Alberta, BC, Manitoba, all these provinces and the federal government have one thing in common: They have rules around cabinet confidentiality. I think everyone here should be able to understand that most basic principle. There is still absolutely complete—and there will be—transparency over decisions that are made by this government. That is how people will judge the government. That will still be open. And as the Premier alluded to, over 95% of what is accessible today will still be accessible through the FOI process.

#### STUDENT ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, the member opposite knows perfectly well that cabinet confidentiality is already protected in existing laws. Nobody is buying that.

To the Premier—I'm going to go back to him, because I'm going to ask a question on behalf of every young person in this province. It has never been harder to be a young person in Ontario than it is today. Youth unemployment is at an all-time high. The cost of rent and groceries and gas is through the roof. Higher education already feels out of touch for almost every young person today, and their families. But this Premier decided, over his extended break, to make it even more difficult.

Why is the Premier turning his back on the next generation?

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

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** I'd like to address some of the NDP-Liberal narrative that the government is getting rid of OSAP.

The Leader of the Opposition just stated the lack of funding for OSAP—OSAP is not going away. We've made that very, very clear. The changes we're making to OSAP are to ensure it is sustainable so that this program can be around for the next generation of students behind these students. They'll continue to get the support they need when accessing higher education. If our government had not acted, like myself and the Premier have clearly articulated, we would have decimated OSAP, putting student access at risk and a massive burden on the taxpayer.

Let me remind you, Speaker, under the Liberal McGuinty-Wynne government, the grant-to-loan ratio was actually only 15% grants until 2017. That's less grants than we just currently introduced. When the grants were flipped to 85%—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Order.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** —the Auditor General made it very clear that it is unsustainable. You know the Auditor General clearly articulated your changes to OSAP—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I would ask the members in opposition and members of the third party to come to order.

1050

Back to the leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, the government has decimated OSAP—decimated it. Nobody is buying that line of argument. You are saddling Ontario's young people with a lifetime of debt.

I want to be very clear. I have met nurses over the last few months who are going to have to withdraw from their programs or face debt until they're in their forties. Students who rely on OSAP are going to have to pay \$3,500 more per year, and that is on top of what the federal government—the federal Liberals—are already adding: \$1,200 per year to student loans. Look at those numbers. Look at those numbers.

A lot of students are deciding that they're going to have to give up on university or college—and we're talking PSWs and ECEs and teachers and health care workers. They are turning down their offers because they cannot afford it. That's what we've been hearing. I know you're hearing it too.

I gave this government a chance to do the right thing this morning. But I'll ask the Premier again. Will you do the right thing and reverse your OSAP cuts?

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** I know it has been a while since the Leader of the Opposition was a member of the Rae government. Under the Rae government, tuition went up 50%, three times the rate of inflation. That was under your watch.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** That was under your watch. It was.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Order.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** And under the Liberals, it went up 83%. Tuition went up 83%—again, triple the rate of inflation.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Order.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** If you were in power right now, tuition would be over \$14,000 a year—if you were in power—because history speaks for itself.

Speaker, our new grant-to-loan ratio is right in line with other provinces, including the NDP friends in Manitoba and BC. When the Leader of the Opposition was in front of the media in February, she said, "We'd like to get to the place where other provinces are at." Great news: We did exactly that. We're in line with the rest of the other provinces.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, so there you go, right? That is this government's message to young people, to families out there. And I've got to tell you, that's devastating. The thousands and thousands of young people we have heard from over the last few months have been very clear that they cannot afford this government, and clearly, based on what that minister said, they are on their own.

People out there are working harder than they've ever worked before, just to make ends meet, and you are shutting down the future of the next generation.

Why is this Premier punishing young people instead of investing in their future? I hope he has the guts to stand up and answer the question.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Order.  
Minister of Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** I'll remind the Leader of the Opposition that it was our government that cut and froze tuition for the last eight years, when high inflation—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** We have saved the average university student \$1,800 a year on tuition and \$450 a year for the average college student. But the sector has changed significantly since the federal government has made many unilateral changes.

Speaker, we are there for the students, whether it's through the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant that has had almost 13,000 health human resource students go through our system with free tuition, free books covered by our government, as well as the First Nations mining scholarship that has the first cohort of students enrolled this January—\$10 million.

Higher education is an investment students make in themselves, in their community and in their future, and our government will always be there to support that investment in a sustainable and responsible way for hard-working taxpayers.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** Thank you very much, Speaker. It's good to see you.

It has been, I think, 102 days since we were all last here, and I know the Premier hopes that we all forgot things—things like \$10 million to a strip club owner; or \$2 million to the family dentist; or the mess that's Keel Digital Solutions. That's not going to happen. No one is going to be forgetting this Premier's or this government's record on anything. The longer rot sits, the more it stinks.

And the Premier's latest stinker is changing the FOI laws, retroactively.

There must be something really, really, really bad on that phone, Premier.

Speaker, after eight years, does the Premier think he can hide from any of his record?

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

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. It's good to see you again. It gives me an opportunity today to highlight what we are doing with this legislation, which is well overdue. The legislation that it will be replacing is almost 40 years old. To put that into perspective, that was even before the disastrous Bob Rae government. This was before cloud computing, before text, before WhatsApp, before artificial intelligence—well before that. So the legislative framework we have for FOI and cyber security in this province is well outdated. That's why we're making changes.

What are we doing? First, we're strengthening cabinet confidentiality. Number two, we're modernizing the privacy and access framework for FOI in the province of Ontario. And third, we're strengthening cyber security, enhancing protection for children.

The current cyber security network in Ontario is outdated. We will be bringing in regulations with EDSTA that we passed a year or two ago—the Enhancing Digital Security and Trust Act—to expand cyber protection through the broader public sector. That will include hospitals, school boards and children's aid societies, among other institutions.

We're excited that we will have a more strong, united, protected Ontario.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** Speaker, why is the Premier hiding? It's because after eight long years, everything is worse. Life is harder. Class sizes keep going up. Unemployment: up. Hallway health care: up. People without a family doctor: up. Electricity and heating costs: up. And crime is up too. Don't take it from me. Just ask the Premier. And after eight years, it's all on him.

So how does the Premier think he can hide from his record of making life harder and less safe for Ontario families?

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

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Madam Speaker, this is real ironic coming from the Liberal member who destroyed our province for 15 years, chased 300,000 jobs out of the province.

And every piece of legislation that we put forward—they voted against.

They voted against building infrastructure to \$223 billion and building the 413 and the Bradford Bypass to get goods to market sooner, to get people home sooner.

They voted against building 60 additions or new hospitals around the province. They voted against it.

They voted against, obviously—and you're dead against the airport, to create economic development and 23,000 jobs.

They voted against our great nuclear program that's going to create 150,000 jobs.

They voted against the Ring of Fire and the critical minerals. That's the reason they lost 300,000 jobs.

Since we've been in office, there's over a million more people working.

We're going to continue giving people opportunities to thrive and prosper and grow.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** Eight years, Premier—eight years.

Life is harder under this government and this Premier. They're tired, out of gas, and out of touch. And everything is going up.

The only thing that I can find that's going down is the Premier's popularity. That's easy to understand because when all you do is talk, at some point people finally realize

that you just can't deliver on the things that are important to them.

Speaker, I'll ask the Premier again: Does he actually think he can hide from his record of making life harder for Ontario families for eight years?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** To the member over there: He mentioned the word "gas." They voted against 10.7 cents a litre.

Imagine, if they were in power, the pro-carbon tax—another 10 or 11 cents on top of the gas.

They voted against absolutely everything that puts money into people's pockets.

We cut the cost of doing business and off the backs of people by \$12 billion a year.

They voted against the One Fare that can save riders up to \$1,700.

They voted against getting rid of the tolls because they're the ones who put the tolls in. We got rid of the tolls on the 412 and the 418, saving families \$5,000 to \$7,000 a year.

**1100**

And do you know something? I know he likes talking about polls. The only poll that counts is on election day. Just to let him know, the PCs are up 45%. The Liberals are at 28% or 29%, and the Dippers are at 21%—I've got to help the Dippers get up a little bit. But if the election was held today, we would have a larger majority today—

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

#### STUDENT ASSISTANCE

**Mr. John Fraser:** The Premier is talking so much, we need to get him a Truth Social account.

Do you want to know what else is up? The provincial debt. It's closing in on half a trillion dollars. As the Premier would say, "Hey, folks, that's historic." It is.

Do you want to know what other debt is up? The debt of young people—and their families—who are trying to get a degree, a diploma or a trade. And that's because that guy over there decided that he was going to break OSAP. He's making life harder for them. He's piling on those families. Life is already hard. Why is he piling on?

After eight long years, does the Premier really think he can hide from his record of making life harder for Ontario families?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Speaker, that's why we have elections. And we kicked their asses three times in a row, okay?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I apologize.

We kicked their butts three times in a row, and we're going to kick their butts four times—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Please withdraw.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I retract that.

Anyway, let's talk about OSAP. When we came into office, we knocked off 10% tuition—they increased tuition by 83%. We kept that tuition down for eight years. Now they're getting their tuition reduction—by 8%.

All they do is want to tax people to death, put their hands in their pockets. That's what they believe in—tax and spend.

We believe in putting money in the people's pockets until they have more money to go out there, maybe go for dinner, maybe put a little addition on, buy their kids clothes.

Not under the Liberal and NDP governments—they gouged them to death. Highest taxes ever in the history of Ontario from—

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** Speaker, they can't do that, and the Premier is making them go into debt just to give their kids opportunity.

After eight long years, what are Ontarians left with? What does the Premier say to that mom or dad in Sault Ste. Marie who just lost their job at Algoma, when their son or daughter says, "Mom, Dad, I want to go to school. I want to get a trade"? Just exactly what do they say?

The Premier is making life harder. I know he can't see it. It's harder for people in Windsor. It's harder for people in Amherstburg. It's harder for people in Brampton. It's harder for people all across Ontario—name any city.

So why is the Premier making life even harder for young families? Is the Premier actually proud of his record of making life harder for Ontario families?

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

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** In the 15 years that the member opposite was in government, do you know what they did? They taxed everything, and they built nothing. That's why they are over there now.

This government is building everything in this province. We are building hospitals. We're building schools. We're building energy and nuclear. We're building highways. We're building transit. We're building long-term care.

Do you want me to keep going?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Yes, yes, of course.

We're building houses. We're getting everything built across this province. And do you know what that does, Madam Speaker? That puts people to work. What a concept. We put the great people of Ontario to work. That's what a government does.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** There are a whole bunch of people on the front lawn today, and that's because the Premier and the minister have made their lives harder. They've made their schools not safe places to learn or to work—not just OSAP, not just post-secondary. Class sizes are too big. They went up. Right, Premier? Special education has been starved; more kids are not getting their needs met. Up—and a mental health crisis that this Premier has just skated right by in schools. They're on the front lawn today. You've made life harder for them.

Are you proud that you've made life harder for all those people and those kids on the front lawn today?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** This is a person who was in charge of long-term care—in 15 years, built 600 beds. Our great minister is up to 30,000 long-term-care homes—30,000 long-term-care homes.

This was the member who voted against closing 600 schools. We're building \$23 billion of new schools, under our great Minister of Education. That's what we're doing.

You put us in debt—a record debt that we've never seen before. You drove up the deficit.

You dismantled jobs. We're creating jobs. We're creating opportunities. Folks, there's a million more people working today than there were when you were in office. You chased 300,000 jobs out of this province.

#### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Today in the gallery is Chris Simao. He should be here with his son Max. But Max is not here, because Max died when he was excluded from school.

There are 100,000 other kids in Ontario experiencing school exclusions, and the number one reason is that there is not enough support to keep them safe in our schools. Families and experts have been sounding the alarm for eight years now, and they are out on our front lawn again today.

Can the Premier please tell Chris, his wife, Emily, and their other kids what he will do to ensure that no other family in Ontario experiences a tragedy like this?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Well, let me just say this: Obviously, our hearts go out to the parents who are in the gallery today. This is obviously something that is heartbreaking, and I think all of the Legislature has nothing but the greatest amount of sympathy for what these parents have gone through. I'm sure that they don't care to hear the money that is being spent in the system or the supports that are being spent in the system. I think all they care about, really, is the fact that they lost a loved one and that they expect better and that things change as a result of that—and we'll make sure that it does.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** Every single day, there are thousands of children like Max around the province—children who should be in school, who have every right to be in school, but aren't, because the supports are not there for them.

This government has cut more than \$6 billion from our schools—more than 5,000 educators gone since 2018. That is an utterly shameful record.

I'm going to ask the Premier one more time. Can he please tell Max's parents directly, what is he going to do now to ensure that there are no more tragedies and that every child in Ontario is able to go to school?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Madam Speaker, my answer is not going to change. The reality is that I have nothing but the greatest amount of sympathy for what these parents are going through and what they have endured.

The people of the province of Ontario expect the best from their education system. I expect the best from our education system, as do all members of the caucus on this side.

That is why we've taken aggressive actions to make sure that our education system is responsive to students, parents and teachers. We will continue on that mission because it is absolutely critically important that our school system does just that—that it meets the needs of parents, it meets the needs of students, and it meets the needs of teachers who just simply want the best for the kids they are educating.

We're going to make sure that we continue on this mission of revamping and reenergizing our school system so that it is the absolute best not only in Canada but in the world.

A \$43-billion investment should have better results—I absolutely agree with that—and we'll make sure it does.

1110

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** My question is to the Premier.

The government's proposed changes to the freedom-of-information act would give ministers and parliamentary staff a get-out-of-jail-free card. These laws exist to hold those in power accountable, not to shield them when it's inconvenient.

If the Premier is so concerned about risk, why is the solution to reduce transparency from his own office instead of strengthening accountability for Ontarians?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I have an idea. Why doesn't the member call the Prime Minister, call their federal cousins, call their local MPs and ask them why we're duplicating exactly what they have? Ask them why their staff and MPs and ministers and the Prime Minister are not handing over their records. Do you know why? Because 95% there, 95% here—we're duplicating what they have.

I find this double standard hypocrisy at its best. We're duplicating the federal government. That's what we're doing. So call your cousins up in Ottawa and ask them why they aren't doing it. But you won't. You won't call them. I'll call them for you—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Premier, I'm going to ask you to withdraw the word "hypocrisy."

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Toronto—St. Paul's.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** Well, I think we have all kinds of ideas to strengthen transparency and accountability for this government that were proposed today.

But I still have to say, the question is, "Why?" It's simple. Why is this on-the-run government moving to change the rules retroactively, conveniently right after a court ruled that the Premier must hand over his cellphone

records? Ontarians deserve transparency. The question is simple. Again, what is the Premier trying to hide?

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

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** Thank you again to the member opposite.

This legislation is long overdue. This legislation that is being replaced is almost 40 years old, as I mentioned.

What we are doing, as the Premier mentioned, is aligning with other jurisdictions in Canada—just about every province, the federal government. And not only, actually, in Canada—let’s take a global look. Let’s look at the Westminster democracies: Australia, New Zealand, Ireland—similar laws.

What’s really interesting coming from that party is talking about transparency, because I remember, in 2018, when I was first elected, the first issue we had to deal with was a hidden \$15-billion deficit, that the previous Liberal government had hid from everybody in the province of Ontario. We, as a result of that, brought in a new fiscal transparency act. I thank the Minister of Finance at the time for doing that—for bringing openness and transparency to the province of Ontario.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**MPP Billy Denault:** My question is for the Minister of Energy and Mines.

Speaker, this year’s PDAC convention was historic. The world is turning to Ontario and Canada.

Under the previous Liberal government, Ontario was paralyzed by delay and red tape. Our government is taking a different approach.

In less than one year, we reformed the permit process and introduced key initiatives, from a new critical mineral strategy and processing fund to a Critical Minerals Innovation Fund, and support for early exploration. As a result, Ontario took centre stage as a global mining powerhouse, showcasing our leadership in delivering major projects with speed.

As global demand for minerals like nickel, lithium, chromium and cobalt continue to surge, countries are looking for stable, reliable partners with the resources, workforce and supply chains to meet that demand. Ontario has what the world needs.

Can the minister outline how our government’s reforms are building momentum and gaining traction among global investors and governments?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I want to thank the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for his leadership.

And more than anything else, I want to thank members of this caucus for standing firm in defence of ethical resources.

Madam Speaker, leadership is about challenging the status quo. We inherited from the former Liberals a permitting system that was the second-slowest in the OECD. In the industrialized world, we were among the slowest on earth. Our Premier challenged the status quo and demanded better. We reduced the permit times by half with

“one project, one process,” that has resulted in Ontario, for the first time in the history of this country, emerging as Canada’s top place to invest—number two in the world, from 15. And that didn’t happen because of an accident; it was an intentional policy to streamline, to accelerate, to move with speed in this moment—the ministry of economic development working together to get a processing fund to end the ripping and shipping of our resources.

This is a whole-of-government effort to stand up for our ethical resources, productive workers and our country at a critical time.

At PDAC, the world saw first-hand that we are the world’s reliable partner.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**MPP Billy Denault:** Thank you to the minister for his response.

Speaker, early-stage exploration is high-risk, capital-intensive and increasingly competitive, with jurisdictions around the world competing for the same investment.

Unlocking Ontario’s full mineral potential will require getting major projects moving in the north—and that includes infrastructure, from roads to transmission lines.

Our government has a plan to end the delay. That means finally building roads to unleash the north’s true potential, including in mineral-rich regions like the Ring of Fire.

Speaker, can the minister explain how Ontario is supporting exploration and how our government is advancing nation-building opportunities in the Ring of Fire?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I know we want to supercharge our economy and help bolster our self-reliance. We really need a new pipeline of new mines in this province. We have 36 today—blessed with 36 mines in the province, 30 more anticipated over the coming decade. But it’s clear we need to support, incentivize prospectors to explore and identify the next big discovery in the north. That’s why in Sudbury, with the parliamentary assistant, we announced a plan to launch the Ontario Junior Exploration Program, supporting 68 early-stage projects.

It was 20-odd years ago that explorers identified vast deposits in the Ring of Fire. That too was a prospectors’ initiative, and they unearthed or unlocked the largest multi-commodity, undiscovered region on earth.

It is our government’s plan to get on with building. It was our Premier, at PDAC, who announced a globally significant plan to accelerate road construction to the Ring of Fire, five years ahead of schedule, moving from exploration to extraction, getting on with building our economy.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**MPP Robin Lennox:** Madam Speaker, while this government had an extended break, health workers have been taking to the streets, protesting cuts to hospital funding.

It’s truly stunning that more than a thousand patients are cared for in hospital hallways each day, and yet this government decided to take that problem and make it worse.

Let's talk about what this means for a community like Scarborough. A patient admitted to a Scarborough hospital already spends more than 21 hours waiting for a hospital bed. And a bed might actually be a hallway stretcher.

To the Minister of Health: Why are you wasting millions of dollars on advertisements, rather than giving our hospitals the resources for everyone to simply have a hospital bed when they need it?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I'm not sure what the member opposite has been doing in the last three months. But I can tell you, in January alone, we were able to make announcements to mark a one-year milestone in primary care attachments in the province of Ontario—a 10% increase in what we expected, which was 300,000 people attached to a primary care provider.

Also in January: 16 teaching clinics that are going to ensure that our students who are practising in medicine are actually going to get an opportunity in community to, again, connect more than 300,000 patients to primary care clinicians. HART hubs—Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment Hubs—in Sault Ste. Marie, in Sudbury, in regions across Ontario, because we know when we offer pathways and hope, then they get the opportunity to actually get better.

That's what we've been doing in the last three months; I'm not going to presume what you've been doing.

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

**MPP Robin Lennox:** I'm not sure what the Minister of Health has been doing for the last three months, but it sure as hell wasn't working in a hospital.

Madam Speaker, the minister should know that the best—

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

**MPP Robin Lennox:** Withdraw.

Madam Speaker, the minister should know that the best advertisement for health care would be an open sign on every single rural ER. Instead, this government continues to underinvest in health care and prioritize reckless spending on ads and vanity projects.

The people of Ontario are not fooled by your ridiculous ads that you're paying for with their tax dollars. They know the realities: long wait times, hallway health care, closed signs on rural ERs, and valued health workers laid off.

1120

To the Minister of Health: When will you stop throwing money at private, for-profit companies and instead ensure that our public hospitals have the resources to shorten wait times and eliminate hallway health care once and for all?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I think it's important to remind the member opposite that since our government was formed, we've actually increased health care funding to hospital partners by over 50%. We have been a partner with our hospital agencies to make sure that they have the funds necessary to ensure they can hire high-quality staff.

I am never going to talk down the health care system in the province of Ontario, because I look at SickKids

hospital, which just got acknowledged as the number one pediatric hospital in the world; I look at UHN, the number two publicly funded hospital in the world. We have world-class health care in the province of Ontario.

We're investing in our students, we're investing in our people, and we're investing in our hospitals, and I am proud to be a member of our government that is doing that work.

## SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Through the government's own actions, it has made one thing abundantly clear, and that's that supporting children with special needs and autism is clearly not its priority. Instead, this government has chosen to pursue a political agenda in schools, while tens of thousands of children with autism are waiting for core clinical services.

Through you, Speaker: Is the minister willing to be the lone voice in the Conservative benches to stand with children with autism and the protesters on the front lawn right now, or will he continue to sit quietly and do nothing?

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** I thank the honourable member for the question.

I don't know what he means by "sit quietly." There hasn't been a louder caucus in the history of this province than this Premier and this caucus, standing up for the parents and students in this province. And that's what it takes, when you listen to families, right?

When we formed government—a total of 8,000 families across the province were receiving supports and services, under the previous Liberal government. It was this Premier, it was this caucus, that said, "That's not enough." That came as a result of listening to families, of working with service providers and doubling the investment of the Ontario Autism Program, from \$300 million to \$600 million. We weren't done. We said we weren't done. There's more to do, which is why, in last year's budget, thanks to the Premier, thanks to the Minister of Finance, thanks to the President of the Treasury Board—an increase of an additional \$175 million, bringing our total to \$779 million. What has it done, as a result of 8,000 in total across the province receiving supports and services, to now nearly 45,000 families—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** Speaker, the minister mentioned listening. Well, if he listened closely to the voices outside on the front lawn of the Legislature right now, he would hear the truth.

What we're seeing now is not an accident; this is a political choice. The Conservatives made promises to families of children with autism, and they broke them. Instead of delivering services, it has left over 67,000—listen to that number: 67,000—children on a wait-list while families are forced to fend for themselves. This is a choice. They had eight years. This government is choosing not to act.

So, through you, Speaker: Will the minister admit that this crisis is the result of this government's broken promises and commit finally—yes or no—to clearing the wait-list?

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** Again, I thank the honourable colleague for the question.

When it comes to listening, he talks about 15 years they were in power—15 years. They never listened to families. That's why there were only 8,000 families. They were only receiving support through one stream—one.

Today, families, upon registering with and being on the service registry, can access programs, supports and services immediately—accessing programs like urgent response, caregiver-mediated programs, entry to school, foundational family services and an expanded core service, which now includes occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, mental health supports that never existed before and, of course, IBI. That's what it takes when you listen to the community—that's what it takes to families.

The member knows I talk to five to 10 to 15 families every single day, because that's what the Premier's standard is—it's serving the people as best as we can, and that requires us working with service providers and listening to parents, because they know what's best for their families.

We'll continue—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Essex.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

President Trump's tariffs have disrupted the supply chains that businesses in my riding of Essex and across the province have relied on.

That is why our government is stepping up and providing \$30 billion worth of tariff relief and support to protect Ontario workers and businesses.

I had the privilege of joining the minister and the member from Windsor–Tecumseh to announce companies that our government is supporting through the Ontario Together Trade Fund.

Our government is sending a clear message: We will not back down in the face of tariffs coming from south of the border.

Speaker, can the minister tell this House how the Ontario Together Trade Fund is protecting jobs and helping Ontario businesses during this time of global economic uncertainty?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** The \$150-million Ontario Together Trade Fund is helping companies on the front lines of this trade war. This program is helping businesses on-shore products and make them here in Ontario instead of the US, and find new markets all around the world.

We announced the latest projects with the members from Essex and Windsor–Tecumseh. Eight Windsor-area companies invested \$44 million, created 65 new jobs and

protected the 692 jobs they already have. From auto parts suppliers to manufacturers of critical components, those eight firms are doubling down right here in Ontario.

With President Trump continuing his threats to our industries, our support for tariff-impacted businesses is unwavering.

Speaker, we're not stopping here. We look forward to announcing more job-creating investments in the coming weeks.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer.

The Ontario Together Trade Fund is supporting businesses in my riding of Essex and also across Ontario.

For example, Reko International—an automation and machining company manufacturing large, critical automation parts—is investing \$6.4 million in the riding of Essex. Their investment is creating 41 new jobs and protecting 71 existing jobs. In nearby Windsor–Tecumseh, Kringer Industrial, who produce materials and packaging for the cargo and transport industry, is investing \$1.4 million.

Supported by the Ontario Together Trade Fund, businesses in Essex and across the province of Ontario are strengthening domestic capacity, reducing our reliance on foreign inputs, and seizing new opportunities here at home.

Can the minister explain to the members opposite why the Ontario Together Trade Fund is essential for Ontario's economy?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** The Ontario Together Trade Fund, to date, has supported 23 Ontario companies, and those 23 companies have invested \$267 million of their money. They have protected and created 2,884 jobs.

Speaker, we are working to deliver real support for those tariff-impacted workers so they can emerge from this once-in-a-generation trouble stronger than ever before. We're reducing our dependence on US goods and services. Every single day, companies are on-shoring and building products here in Ontario that we had not made. They're diversifying. They're making a resilient economy to help weather this economic uncertainty, and that means us helping them create those new customers in Europe, Asia and across Canada.

1130

#### HIGHWAY SAFETY

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** Ma question est pour le ministre des Transports. Yesterday, on my drive to catch my flight to Timmins, there were two collisions on Highway 11, which left the highway closed from Smooth Rock Falls to Kapuskasing, and also in Val Gagné. We know in 2024, Highway 11 closed 363 times. Can the minister tell us how many times Highway 11 closed in 2025?

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** We continue to make historic investments into northern highways, like the 11 and the 17 highway—which, by the way, that member has voted against every single time, including the investments

into winter clearance. Whether it's over \$100 million that we invest, with deploying over 1,400 pieces of equipment on those roads—that member has stood up and voted against every single one of those investments that we have put forward.

We continue to work with authorities there, winter maintenance cleaners there, to ensure that we have safe highways.

We'll continue to do better and ensure that we improve and invest in Highway 11 and Highway 17.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay.

**Mr. Guy Bourgoïn:** Monsieur le Ministre, my question was about how many times the highway closed in 2025, and you spoke about us not supporting your bills. We brought bill after bill that would save people, that would keep our highways open, and you all voted against them, so we have no lesson to take from you, Minister.

I'm going to give you another opportunity to respond, Minister.

Sadly, we lost a lot of people on our highways.

Can the minister tell us how many people lost their lives on Highway 11 this year?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Order.

I apologize to the minister—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Order.

I recognize the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Let's look at the record of that member on voting for northern highways. Whether it's Highway 11 or the 2+1 pilot, that member has voted against it.

Now let's talk about enforcement on those highways. We've hired 99 additional transportation enforcement officers with a focus on the north.

Guess what? When that member had an opportunity to stand up and invest in more safety and more officers in the north, more transportation scales in the north, that member voted against it every single time.

When that member had an opportunity to vote to support the increases in winter maintenance funding, that member voted against it.

When it's an opportunity to vote to support the expansion of Highway 11 and the 2+1 pilot—the studies, the reports and the investments; the shovels that are going to go into the ground—that member has voted against it every single time.

We're going to continue to ensure that we invest in the north. We're going to continue to ensure we build Highway 11, build Highway 17, and I hope that member steps—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Members, may I have your attention?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Members, it's our first day back.

I have no problem naming members, and you will be asked to leave.

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Rob Cerjanec:** My question is for the Premier.

The Premier has had eight years to protect Ontario's economy. Yet, we have the second-highest provincial unemployment rate. And in January, Ontario lost 67,000 jobs.

In Amherstburg, when the Crown Royal plant closed, the Premier made a big show out of it, pouring out Crown Royal live on TV, and talked tough. He said he was going to protect Ontario, those workers and their jobs. But he hung out those workers in Windsor-Essex and southwestern Ontario—he hung them out to dry.

There are companies that are ready to buy that Crown Royal plant, to create new jobs there. So why did the Premier not use his leverage and require the plant be sold as part of the province's deal with Diageo?

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

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** President Trump's tariffs sparked unprecedented global economic uncertainty and have disrupted all of our supply chains.

Our government stepped up with \$30 billion in supports to help businesses protect those jobs—measures that both the NDP and the Liberals voted against. We're seeing that resilience, though—59,000 new jobs were created just in the fourth quarter of 2025—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Windsor West will come to order.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, I said 59,000 jobs were created just in the last quarter of 2025.

In fact, \$44 million in investments were announced from eight manufacturing companies, as I mentioned, in the Windsor area just a couple of weeks ago. Their investments continue to reshore supply chains and create new jobs there.

We are protecting the businesses, the workers, and building a more resilient economy.

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

**Mr. Rob Cerjanec:** That's a lot of talk. The province had an opportunity to protect jobs in Windsor-Essex. The province had an opportunity to require that that plant that Diageo had be sold to either one of the interested buyers or included as part of the deal; the province chose not to. So not only does the Premier not know how to pour out a bottle of whisky; he didn't fight for those same very workers he promised to protect—but it's not just there.

In Sault Ste. Marie, layoffs at Algoma Steel are starting today. That's 1,000 families wondering what is going to be next. And while the federal government has been stepping up, Ontario once again is nowhere to be found and, frankly, riding on the coattails of the feds. This is an out-of-touch Ontario Conservative government hoping someone else will do the heavy lifting.

Speaker, is the Premier asleep at the switch, or is he going to say, “Call me on my cellphone?”

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** It is rich to hear this member stand and talk about this, considering they campaigned on not hiring 4,000 jobs in Pickering—losing those jobs, campaigning against the \$41-billion refurbishment in nuclear in Pickering. So it’s very rich to hear him suggest that.

Meanwhile, we have created one million new jobs since getting elected, and we’re doing everything to protect and build on this progress. We’re providing immediate supports to help these businesses. That’s why we’re able to land companies from around the world, like Sandvik in Sudbury, Massilly—\$85-million investment in Brantford.

Speaker, our goal has been very clear from the beginning: more investment, more jobs, more wins for Ontario workers.

### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Billy Pang:** My question is for the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

For over a year, US tariffs have disrupted key Canadian industries, including steel, automotive manufacturing and forestry. In Ontario, these pressures are affecting workers who build our roads, ships, hospitals and communities.

Unlike the Liberals and NDP, who continue to vote against measures that protect our province, our government is taking action. We are making bold, critical investments in Ontario, including a historic \$220-billion commitment to protect Ontario’s workers.

Speaker, can the minister tell the House how our government is continuing to support workers and protect critical industries impacted by the US tariffs?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** I thank the member for the question.

Earlier this month, I joined the federal Minister of Jobs and Families in Ottawa to announce an over \$228-million investment over the next three years through Skills Advance Ontario. This program will help up to 27,000 workers retrain, upgrade their skills and stay competitive in key sectors such as softwood lumber, steel and automotive manufacturing. This investment means a steelworker in Sault Ste. Marie can upgrade welding certifications to adapt to new technologies, or an auto-parts supplier in Oakville can upskill its workforce to spur innovation and to stay globally competitive.

Applications for Skills Advance Ontario are now open, and eligible workers, job-seekers and employers can learn more by contacting the ministry. We are ready to get to work and ensure Ontario remains competitive, resilient and self-reliant for years to come.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Markham—Unionville.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Thank you to the parliamentary assistant to the minister for the update.

As we continue to navigate the economic uncertainty created by ongoing tariff pressures, many workers across Ontario are understandably looking for new opportunities, new skills and new pathways to stable employment. These workers are the backbone of our communities and deserve access to high-quality training, career support and resources that will help them recover quickly and confidently.

Our government has been clear that supporting workers is central to strengthening our economy, especially during these challenging times.

Through you, Speaker: Could the parliamentary assistant to the minister share how our government is continuing to support and protect Ontario’s workers?

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** I thank the member again for that important question.

Skills Advance Ontario is just one of many tools our government is using to support and protect Ontario’s workers.

We launched major investments in POWER Centres to ensure affected workers can access help quickly and reconnect to employment faster, supporting thousands of people in communities across the province.

We strengthened Better Jobs Ontario with significant new funding to help more individuals retrain for in-demand, better-paying jobs, with substantial financial support available for eligible participants.

And through Working for Workers 7, we made history by passing into law Canada’s first job-seeking leave for employees impacted by mass layoffs, and ensuring workers are automatically referred to employment services when they need them most.

When workers need help, our government is right there beside them, making sure they receive the services, training and support required to get back on their feet and into meaningful work as quickly as possible.

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. Steve Clark:** Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice for the arrangement of proceedings for debate on concurrence in supply.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice for the arrangement of proceedings for debate on concurrence in supply. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the government House leader.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I move that, notwithstanding any standing order, the orders for concurrence in supply for the various ministries and offices, as represented by government orders 9 through 38, inclusive, shall be called concurrently; and

That when such orders are called, they shall be considered concurrently in a single debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The government House leader moves that, notwithstanding any standing order, the orders for concurrence in supply for the various

ministries and offices, as represented by government orders 9 through 38, inclusive, shall be called concurrently; and

That when such orders are called, they shall be considered concurrently in a single debate.

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

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1144 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I'm proud to welcome Zahra Erkul, who is a fantastic individual who has been doing a great job volunteering in the riding of Humber River-Black Creek.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I beg leave to present a report entitled Audit of Changes to the Greenbelt, 2023 special report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Mr. Rakocevic presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Yes, I do. As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I am pleased to table two reports today.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent membership of the committee and substitute members who participated in the public hearings and report-writing process.

The committee extends its appreciation to officials from all the ministries and agencies who participated in the respective hearings.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Office of the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee and legislative research.

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Mr. Rakocevic moves the adjournment of the debate. It is the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I beg leave to present a report entitled Value-for-Money Audit: Metropolitan Toronto

Convention Centre and Ottawa Convention Centre, 2023 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Mr. Rakocevic presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Yes. Once more I want to thank all those I've thanked before.

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Mr. Rakocevic moves the adjournment of the debate. It is the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**Hon. Ernie Hardeman:** I beg leave to present a report on the pre-budget consultations, 2026, from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Hon. Ernie Hardeman:** I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Mr. Hardeman moves the adjournment of the debate. It is the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I beg leave to present the first report on regulations, 2026, of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Mr. Hsu presents the committee's report.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement? He does not.

*Report presented.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### TRUCK DRIVER TRAINING SCHOOLS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2026

### LOI DE 2026 SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ DES ÉCOLES DE FORMATION DE CONDUCTEURS DE CAMIONS

Mr. Vanthof moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 93, An Act to amend the Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Highway Traffic Act / Projet de loi 93,

Loi modifiant la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges d'enseignement professionnel de l'Ontario et le Code de la route.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does the member wish to briefly explain the bill?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** The bill's working title is Truck Driver Training School Accountability Act. What it basically does is that all of Ontario's truck driving schools will be inspected at least once a year by inspectors from the Ministry of Transportation as well as from the ministry of colleges, training and universities, and truck-driving schools that have under five years of history or service will be inspected semi-annually.

PUTTING FANS FIRST ACT (NO TICKET  
RESALES ABOVE FACE VALUE), 2026  
LOI DE 2026 DONNANT LA PRIORITÉ  
AUX FANS (INTERDICTION  
DE REVENDRE DES BILLETS AU-DELÀ  
DE LEUR VALEUR NOMINALE)

Mr. Rakocevic moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 94, An Act to amend the Ticket Sales Act, 2017 to provide that tickets cannot be resold at an amount above face value / Projet de loi 94, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2017 sur la vente de billets pour prévoir que les billets ne peuvent être revendus pour un montant supérieur à leur valeur nominale.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Is it the pleasure of the House that motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does member wish to explain the bill?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I do. I'm proud to introduce the Putting Fans First Act with my co-sponsors, the members from Toronto Centre, Kiiwetinoong and Spadina-Fort York.

This bill will make it illegal for anyone, including websites, to resell a ticket for anything above its face value—the price originally paid in the first place. Our Putting Fans First Act is about fairness. It's about ending the unfair gouging on ticket resale sites so fans can actually watch the games and shows that they love.

338026 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2026

MPP West moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr37, An Act to revive 338026 Ontario Limited

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

PETITIONS

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I have a petition before me to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario asking that the Legislature take action to protect people in this province who are going face outrageous financial burdens because of the changes to OSAP.

The petition asks that the non-repayable grant funding for Ontario students be maintained and that future commitments to these students be made so that people have an opportunity to get the education they need for a prosperous life.

I agree with this petition. I sign it and give it to Jiyana.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario—I think I tabled it in the last session. This time it's signed by a number of people, including seven of my mayors.

It's calling on the federal government to restore full navigation to the Rideau Canal by installing a structure that will enable marine traffic to pass through the LaSalle Causeway in Kingston for the 2026 boating season.

It's actually the 200th anniversary of the start of construction of the Rideau Canal. The canal contributes about \$309 million annually to the economy of eastern Ontario. The federal government installed a temporary fixed bridge, which restricts marine traffic through the causeway. They've not responded to any of the petitions that I or my federal colleague Michael Barrett have put forward.

1310

On behalf of our riding, we feel it's very critical that Public Services and Procurement Canada establish a time frame and demonstrate the sense of urgency that the mayors and all of our constituents have in terms of this bridge. I'll affix my signature and I'll send it to the table with page Eleanor.

WATER SUPPLY

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Today, I'll be tabling for the first time a petition entitled "Invest in Ontario's Infrastructure to Ensure Economic Growth."

Waterloo region right now is in an unprecedented situation. All housing development has been paused, stalled and stopped—in a housing crisis, I might add. So this petition is calling on the provincial government to help with infrastructure, water, funding and resources to ensure that we can actually meet the housing needs of the people of Waterloo region.

It goes on to say that we need to:

“—strategically invest in water infrastructure;

“—immediately pause the relentless commercial water-taking permits.”

For those of you who don't know, Waterloo region depends 80% on aquifer water. We should not be fast-tracking and streamlining aggregate water-taking permits when we don't have enough water right now to grow. So this is a very reasonable petition, signed by the people of Waterloo region.

AMO has said there is a \$60-billion infrastructure deficit in the province of Ontario. You need to get your house in order that we can keep growing, so every community can meet their housing needs.

#### LABORATORY SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The member from Sudbury and I have collected over 10,000 signatures. It weighs a ton, so I'm going to transfer this over. I'd also like to thank Lise and Denis Tranchemontagne from Levack in my riding for these petitions. They're called "Keep Medical Lab Testing in the North."

As you know, Speaker, Ontario has privatized their community lab services. The biggest lab provider in Ontario is LifeLabs, an American company. This American company has decided that they're going to close the analysis that is done in Sudbury. The lab in Sudbury hired 40 people. All of those people are going to lose their jobs, and all of the samples collected from all over northern Ontario are going to be repackaged and shipped to Toronto.

Health care professionals, patients with vulnerable health, hospitals—everybody knows that this puts people's health at risk. This puts people's lives at risk and cannot continue to do so.

So they have signed our petition to make sure that we find solutions to keep testing in the north so that this expertise stays in the north. In a time of a pandemic or an environmental emergency, you need to have those highly trained medical lab technologists on-site to be able to help out. But all of this is at risk because the American company wants to make more money and does not care about the quality of services that they provide to northern Ontario.

The member from Sudbury and I both are trying to help. I will fully agree with the petition "to take immediate action to ensure medical laboratory testing continues to be done in Sudbury" and that the people that work at LifeLabs keep their jobs in the north.

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

#### HIGHWAY SAFETY

**Mr. John Vanthof:** As many people know, we did an extensive consultation tour in northern Ontario. Many northerners—they're still flooding in, the signatures—have signed this petition—northerners for a safer highway.

What this petition basically asks for is that the Legislature encourage the government of Ontario to protect Canada's drivers, east-west trade, national resilience, supply chain reliability and mining projects by working

with the government of Canada to declare the expansion and modernization of Highways 11 and 17 a project of national significance.

#### CANCER SCREENING

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I have a petition today from constituents in Kingston and the Islands as well as residents of Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston and Hastings–Lennox and Addington. They're petitioning the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ontario Breast Screening Program to allow women over the age of 74 to self-refer for mammogram screening, thereby improving early detection and health outcomes and reducing long-term health care costs.

#### STUDENT ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It's my honour to present the following petition on behalf of Jerry Peng, Amrithaa Logeswaran, Rachel Seaby, Zayah Samad and Sally Al-Dulaimi, part of London's Save OSAP London group. It's a powerful group, Speaker, and they're incredibly angry. They're angry because of Conservative attacks on the education system, which have led to larger class sizes, growing school violence, teacher shortages and a lack of student mental health.

This petition mentions that Ontario has the highest student tuition rates, the lowest post-secondary per-student funding in Canada, the highest debt load and also how these ongoing cuts have led to an overreliance on part-time contract faculty and an overreliance on international students. This petition calls upon the government to direct the Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security to reverse this wrong-headed decision to cut OSAP, to stop blocking students from succeeding and restore the grants portion of OSAP. Let's get this done, Speaker.

#### STUDENT ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm pleased to be able to stand in my place on behalf of many young people in Oshawa, and not so young, but those who are pursuing their education in post-secondary pathways who are very concerned about the need to fund education, the need to save OSAP. The changes to OSAP that this government is bringing forward have really upset people's paths to a bright future.

We're in a position, because of the chronic underfunding by successive Conservative and Liberal governments—youth are experiencing the highest unemployment level in Canada. And you add to that sky-high rent, fewer opportunities, higher costs at every turn—these are insurmountable challenges. Cutting OSAP grants and increasing tuition fees is going to exacerbate the economic situation of young people and students.

Speaker, I attended the high school walkouts when they invited me. I met with elected student leaders at two of our local post-secondary institutions, hosted a town hall with

concerned parents and students and have heard from hundreds of survey respondents. And so many petitions are coming in. I hope the government is listening.

Of course, I support this petition calling for the government to direct this minister to immediately reverse the cuts to OSAP grants, stop the tuition fee hikes and appropriately fund colleges and universities so that young people can get that quality education and plan for a bright future.

#### STUDENT ASSISTANCE

**MPP Alexa Gilmour:** Speaker, I have before me a petition called “Save OSAP—Fund Education Now,” and one of the signatures on this petition is from a young woman who is in her final year of undergrad. She planned to become a scientist but is now grieving her dream because the cost of a master’s and a PhD will be out of her reach. She is just one of the stories I heard when we were out on the streets. I want to thank Nils and Cynthia for gathering petitions when we were at our town hall in my riding, where hundreds of people came. She is one of the thousands of voices of young people who are speaking about the injustice of how only the rich will be able to afford education now that we have cut these OSAP grants.

I am in agreement with these individuals, and it is my great honour to stand with them and sign this petition.

#### STUDENT ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Again, we are fighting hard to stop the cuts to OSAP, which is the title of this petition. I was at a rally at the University of Waterloo campus. Over 2,000 students showed up to protest the reduction in grants, which will create barriers for students to access post-secondary education.

We’re in an uncharted, unprecedented place in the province of Ontario. Youth unemployment is at an all-time high. Congratulations, you have the best record for youth unemployment across the country. Putting up further barriers for students to reach their potential will only compromise the potential of this province. I don’t know how to get this message across to this government, Madam Speaker, but students are coming out in force. In fact, they will be here tomorrow on the front lawn of Queen’s Park.

1320

It is my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition. Stop the cuts to OSAP. Let people reach their potential in the province of Ontario.

#### HIGHWAY SAFETY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Diane and Luc Gervais from Westree in my riding for this petition. The Gervais family live in Westree. They need to use Highway 144 to go anywhere. They were hit by a transport truck on January 26. Their truck is completely destroyed, and they are having a tough time. They are but one of many, many families in my riding that have had accidents because of the roads in the north.

My colleagues Sol Mamakwa, John Vanthof and Guy Bourgouin did a northern tour to let people know how

dangerous the roads are in northern Ontario. Those people are signing the petitions because they want to be able to travel and feel safe on our highways. They want to prevent further accidents and fatalities.

These are many, many collisions on northern roads, including Highway 144, which is a highway that goes from Sudbury to Timmins. The whole 300-and-some kilometres is all in my riding. There is no bypass. There is no detour. Every time there’s an accident, all of the—there are at least nine mines that use this highway every single day. Every time it is shut down, it is lineup and lineup of trucks before it reopens.

They ask the government to listen to the people of the north. Organize a round table of representatives from the Ministry of Transportation, the police, the ambulances, the tow truck operators, the shipping companies, the mining companies, the school bus drivers, the road users. Listen to the work that the NDP has been doing. There are solutions that could be put into place right here, right now, that would make our roads safer.

What happened to Lise, Diane and Luc should not happen to anybody else. I fully support this petition and will affix my name to it and ask page Chen to bring it to the Clerk.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I’m very proud to rise in this House to present this petition. It’s entitled “Affordable Housing now.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas for families throughout much of Ontario, owning a home” has now become a dream that slipped away, while renting has become “painfully expensive;

“Whereas consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments have sat idle,” letting the housing crisis deepen, the costs have now spiralled out of control, and speculators are making fortunes while families are left behind;

“Whereas” Ontarians “should have access to safe, affordable housing”—a family who wants to rent or own should be able to do that, and they should have the options available to them.

Therefore, the undersigned “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“—immediately prioritize the repair of Ontario’s social housing stock;

“—commit to building new affordable homes;

“—crack down on housing speculators;

“—make rentals more affordable through rent controls and” legislation updates.

I’m proud to sign this petition and send this back to the centre table with page Else.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

##### ADOPTION DES CRÉDITS

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** I move concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services; the Ministry of Colleges, Universities,

Research Excellence and Security, including supplementaries; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Long-Term Care; the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility; the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism; the Ministry of Infrastructure; the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Ministry of Sport; the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming; the Ministry of Transportation, including supplementaries; the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness; the Ministry of Energy and Mines, including supplementaries; the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; the Ministry of Natural Resources; the Ministry of Northern Economic Development and Growth; the Ministry of Rural Affairs; the Ministry of the Attorney General; the Ministry of Emergency Preparedness and Response; the Minister of Francophone Affairs; the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation; the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement; the Ministry of the Solicitor General; the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development; the Cabinet Office; the Office of the Premier; and the Treasury Board Secretariat, including supplementaries.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Debate?

**MPP Bill Rosenberg:** It is my pleasure to rise today to introduce concurrence in supply. I should note, off the top, that I will be splitting the government's allotted time today with parliamentary assistant George Darouze.

Madam Speaker, I consider it an honour give the House a brief refresher on the procedural process as it relates to the government's expenditures and estimates for the 2025-26 fiscal year. While I trust this procedure is well-known to some members of the House, I believe it is always valuable to make sure that each and every member understands concurrence in supply and, further, to know how the entire estimate process works because I believe the public puts its trust in its elected members of this House to fully comprehend legislative processes. My fellow members, it is our duty to understand the mechanisms of the province's finances. The details of the process by which the government handles the public purse are important.

Madam Speaker, concurrence in supply will not likely top everyone's newsfeed tomorrow, nor will it be the talk around the water cooler or burn up social media. However, that shouldn't diminish its impact. The simple fact is that every member has a duty to fully comprehend the essential legislative process. This government has a firm belief that guides all its actions, including expenditures. It's a very simple concept: Every single dollar that the government spends throughout the fiscal year comes from Ontario taxpayers.

Madam Speaker, as you know, Ontario continues to navigate the impact of US tariffs and global economic uncertainty. It is even more important in times like these that the government fully commit to the concepts of fiscal transparency and responsibility. That is what concurrence

in supply is all about. It is a key cog in the fiscal machinery of the province. As such, I am happy that I was given the opportunity to detail the process today for the record.

It will also be my pleasure, after detailing this process, to discuss the province's current fiscal position. I believe it is important that at the beginning of this current legislative session, the House is refreshed on exactly where the province stands economically. Madam Speaker, volume 1 of the 2025-26 expenditure estimates was tabled on June 4, 2025. This portion of the expenditure estimates provides a complete public record of government offices' and ministries' budgets, in alignment with the spending plans outlined in the 2025 Ontario budget.

**1330**

Madam Speaker, the government may also table supplementary estimates to ensure the government has sufficient resources. Supplementary estimates were tabled on December 9, 2025. They provided additional resources for the contingency fund and other required funding.

Volume 2 of the 2025-26 expenditure estimates was tabled also on December 9, 2025. The second set detailed the spending plan for the legislative offices. These legislative offices include the offices of the Assembly, the Auditor General, the Chief Electoral Officer and Ombudsman Ontario. Altogether, the expenditure estimates detail the operating and capital spending needs of the legislative offices and ministries for the fiscal year.

Once expenditure estimates are tabled, they are referred to the relevant standing committees for review. The standing committees then select ministries to appear and answer questions specific to the respective expenditure estimates.

Taken together, this constitutes the government's formal request to the Legislature to approve spending requirement. This process is undertaken every year, and every Ontario government must complete it. The 2025-26 estimates support the initiatives and the investments outlined in Ontario's 2025 budget.

Madam Speaker, as I have concluded the explanation of the legislative procedure related to concurrence in supply, I would like now to discuss the province's current financial situation. We owe it to the people of this province to be fully transparent about the economic challenges facing this province. The shifting of the relationship between Ontario and the US is an inescapable fact, and it has led to trade tensions and tariffs that have adversely affected so many industries. Frankly, they have greatly contributed to economic uncertainty and a weaker global economic outlook.

However, in this new context, it can be correctly asserted that Ontario's economy has been resilient. According to the third-quarter finances released by the province last month, Ontario's real gross domestic product—GDP—increased 0.5% in the third quarter of 2025, following a 0.7% decline in the second quarter. The previous decline was a direct reaction to the implementation of US tariffs. However, despite these aggressive and harmful tactics, Ontario's real GDP rose by an estimated 1.2% in 2025. That number is higher than projected at the

time of the 2025 budget. It should also be noted that the private sector average projection for real GDP growth in 2026 has increased slightly to 1.1%.

There is always the possibility that a positive new trade deal between Canada and the US could greatly alter this projection. The government continues to support efforts to arrive at a mutually beneficial deal that will further boost Ontario's outlook.

In the longer term, investments in new technology such as artificial intelligence could create opportunities for improved productivity and economic growth. We have already seen great growth in that sector in the province, and the government is doing what it can to attract further investment.

Madam Speaker, it bears repeating that our government continues to take a fiscally responsible and balanced approach to the province's finances. This has been achieved through sustained investments in key public services. However, anyone who has crafted a budget knows balance is the key.

The government has made sure to maintain fiscal flexibility. It is this careful approach that has enabled the government to do what many have thought impossible: that is, to maintain a clear path to a balanced budget.

Madam Speaker, I would like members to consider the government's most recent deficit projections. The province's 2025-26 deficit is projected to be \$13.4 billion. This represents an improvement of \$0.81 billion compared to projections in the 2025 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review. The 2025 budget projected a deficit of \$14.6 billion for 2025-26. This is good news. We are trending towards a sizable reduction in debt over the next few years, and that means that future generations of Ontarians won't be saddled with ballooning interest rate payments owing to the borrowing of those who came before them.

Madam Speaker, it has always been the government's aim to responsibly manage debt load. I believe the projections for the next couple of years illustrate that the government is doing just that; however, I don't want to bury the lede, and that is that the government's latest projections indicate a surplus of \$0.2 billion in 2027-28. It is certainly noteworthy that the word "surplus" is being entered into the record at this point, Madam Speaker.

Of course, these are projections, and the usual caveats do apply. However, it is certainly a credit to the government's fiscal expertise and careful management that such an extraordinary debt management could be projected. It is now possible to imagine a future for this province that is deficit-free, a future where the previous generation's debt doesn't weigh down future Ontarians.

There are other numbers that clearly illustrate the success that the government is having in managing the province's finances. According to the third quarter finances released, the net debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to be 36.9% in 2025-26, 0.8 percentage points lower than the 37.7% forecast in the fall economic statement. And Madam Speaker, the government plans to keep it below target levels over the medium-term outlook. This com-

mitment is a clear indication of the government's responsible stewardship and fiscal management.

Furthermore, another positive number for members to consider is the interest as a per cent of revenue ratio. For 2025-26, the government's forecast for that indicator is 6.4%. That number is almost at the lowest level it has been since the 1980s.

Madam Speaker, these numbers speak for themselves; however, there is much more information about the province's current financial picture that I would be happy to illustrate today. Firstly, it is important to remember that the government's fiscal plan strictly adheres to the Fiscal Sustainability, Transparency and Accountability Act and its governing principles that guide Ontario's fiscal policy.

The first pillar of this act is transparency. As I stated before, in a difficult economic context transparency becomes paramount. The government demonstrates its transparency through the regular release of fiscal updates such as the third quarter release I have already referenced.

This commitment to transparency is also bolstered by the fact that for the eighth year in a row, this government has received a clean audit opinion from Ontario's Auditor General. This is far from a rubber stamp, Madam Speaker. The independent Auditor General has carefully reviewed the government's financial statements and approved them with a clean audit opinion. The fact that this government has received this clean opinion for eight straight years truly speaks to its commitment to openness and transparency.

Another pillar of the government's approach to the province's purse strings is responsibility. The government is proud of the processes it has developed to create a measured and accountable approach to managing Ontario's finances, a measured approach that also considers necessary investments in critical programs, services and capital projects.

#### 1340

And finally, the government has built-in flexibility to its fiscal plan. We all know that circumstances can turn on a dime. Any responsible financial plan will have contingencies for those things that simply cannot be predicted. That's exactly why the government's plan is imbued with practicality in the form of contingency funds. The contingency fund ensures the proper level of fiscal flexibility so that the government can respond to circumstances as they change, and change they do.

Equity is another foundational concept that is baked into the government's fiscal approach. The government has shown that it will not overlook key public services such as health care, social services and education, no matter the economic context. Proper fiscal planning will ensure that these foundational services are not only readily available for the people of today, but they will also benefit future generations.

That brings me to the final pillar of the government's fiscal management: sustainability. Madam Speaker, to manage the province's finances with only this year in mind is nothing short of myopic. Any responsible government considers future generations, and that is exactly what the

government has done. And it is why there has been an emphasis on reducing the deficit for future generations. The government believes that the next generation should not be burdened by the reckless spending of the previous generation. That is not the Ontario we want to leave to our children and their children after them. And that is why we are here; we have taken the steps to achieve a balanced budget and reduce the province's debt burden. The government has taken the long view, and we believe that the next generation will be the beneficiary of that vision.

I know I previously mentioned our efforts at reducing the deficit. Madam Speaker, it is clear to anyone who has looked at the many financial disclosures from the government over the last fiscal year that Ontario's finances are in the strongest position they have been in for more than a decade. The numbers that I have presented here today are all publicly available and verifiable. And I would be remiss if I didn't add that independent agencies have also reviewed these numbers and have given the government's fiscal plan positive assessments. In 2025, the four major credit agencies—Moody's, Fitch, Morningstar DBRS and S&P Global—all affirmed Ontario's credit rating, and the outlook is stable. This vote of confidence reflects Ontario's commitment to maintaining its targets for debt sustainability measures despite the economic and geopolitical context. These are significant improvements that reversed the Liberals's trend of credit downgrades.

I believe this clearly illustrates that Ontario's transparent, responsible and prudent fiscal plan is working. And these ratings have real-world benefits. A higher credit rating means Ontario is seen as a lower-risk borrower. This will further reduce Ontario's borrowing cost, and, perhaps most importantly, it sends a message to the global investment community that Ontario is a great place to do business. With further investments comes the job creation that will spur further financial success. Madam Speaker, the immediate upshot of these good credit ratings is that the province has seen new international buyers of its bonds and continues to have the lowest interest rate of all provinces in the 30-year term.

To conclude, I will give a quick overview of some top-line numbers from the third-quarter release. Revenues in 2025-26 are projected to be \$223.7 billion. That is \$0.6 billion higher than the forecast in the fall economic statement. Madam Speaker, in 2025-26, program expense is projected to be \$219.9 billion. That is \$1.5 billion higher than the forecast in the fall economic statement. Importantly, Ontario's cost of borrowing for 2025-26 remains unchanged at 4%.

Finally, Ontario's real GDP rose by an estimated 1.2% in 2025, which is also higher than previously projected.

Madam Speaker, today's discussion and subsequent vote are both important steps in approving the government's spending for the current fiscal year, which ends on March 31, 2026. I would like to thank you and all the members for taking time today to discuss the concurrence process. It has also been my pleasure to provide some perspective on the province's current financial situation and to look at some of the financial indicators that are part of the recent third-quarter release.

I would now like to turn the floor over to my colleague parliamentary assistant George Darouze.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I recognize the member from London West.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'm very pleased to rise today in this chamber after a long break that this government forced on MPPs because of their desire to stay away from accountability to answer the questions that Ontarians are asking about this government's decision-making.

Before I get into my remarks, I did want to recognize two powerful women advocates who have joined us today from the Western University student council for the Women in House program. They are participating in the program, shadowing me at Queen's Park. I'd like to welcome Mina and Sadi to this Legislature today.

The member gave the overview of this concurrence in supply debate, and, of course, we heard from the government side that there are multiple estimates from many different ministries that are being considered today in this debate. I would like to focus specifically on the estimates debate that occurred with the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security because it was an interesting conversation that took place at the committee when the estimates from that ministry were considered.

One of the questions that I asked the minister back in November about the ministry's estimates was with regard to OSAP funding, and I think the minister's comments should be put on the record once again. They were on the record at the committee meeting, but I think that everyone should hear what the minister had to say in November. He said, "here is what makes OSAP truly impactful: 85% of Ontario's financial aid for full-time students in 2024-25 came in the form of grants—money that students do not have to repay. Let me repeat that: Students do not have to repay these grants. By reducing the amount of student loans needed to take on—we're supporting graduates to start their careers with less debt and more freedom to pursue their careers and their future lives. That means more young people can afford to buy homes, start their families and contribute to Ontario's economy sooner." He concluded, "This is how we're protecting Ontario's future by empowering the next generation to thrive."

There are a lot of times that I don't agree with what I hear from the other side, but when the minister made those comments at the estimates committee meeting about the importance of OSAP grants rather than loans and enabling young people to get a start in life and build the future that we all hope for in this province, it made me feel good, because I recognized—as the minister recognized just a few short months ago—that saddling young people with a massive debt burden is not the way that we are going to advance this province's future.

**1350**

I want to quote some more from the minister because he made some other comments that I think everybody should be aware of. He said, "Financial challenges should not keep the next great surgeon or teacher or welder from pursuing their dream career. Our government is proud to

support our students with funding to cover their tuition, books and other educational costs every year, to set them on the path for success.”

Now, Speaker, this is not just something that that minister was proud of as early as November 2025. Even in the prior year’s estimates, in October 2024, the minister responded in a similar fashion to questions that I had asked about OSAP. Back then he said, “Something I am very proud of is the 400,000 students who are being helped with OSAP this year alone—82% of that is to full-time students in the form of grants, compared to 54% on the federal assistance. So we have a larger amount of grants than loans coming through OSAP.”

This is something that the government and the minister have touted for several years, because they said that this was important—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** They were bragging about this.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Yes—not to force students to have to carry this big burden of debt when they are contributing to our collective well-being by pursuing post-secondary education.

It really makes you wonder, Speaker: What changed? What changed between November 2025 and February 2026 when, all of a sudden, this minister and this Premier are saying that students who want to go into post-secondary education don’t need grants; we will just force them to borrow from the government, with interest, and potentially graduate with a significant debt burden?

We now have this announcement that where previously students could get a maximum of 85% of their student financial assistance in the form of grants, that is now going to be slashed to a maximum of just 15% in OSAP grants. Experts in the post-secondary sector have tried to quantify what this is going to mean for post-secondary students in Ontario. It is estimated that this government’s decisions to shift from OSAP grants to loans could add \$3,500 in debt for students who are getting the maximum amount of aid.

This government’s decision to completely reverse the proportion of loans to grants is coming at a time when we know that the federal Liberal government is also making changes to rely even more on loans through the Canada student loan program. So students who rely on OSAP could see an additional \$3,500 dollars in debt and then, added to that, their federal student loan will add \$1,200 in additional borrowing to the cost of their post-secondary education.

This means that students who need financial assistance in order to attend post-secondary education, Speaker—that’s why they are applying to OSAP; that’s why they are applying to Canada’s student loans. They don’t have families who can just pay the full cost of tuition and residence and books and food and transportation and utilities and all of that. They need financial support in order to be able to pursue a post-secondary education. These are students from moderate and low-income families, and many of them may be independent students. They may have either become estranged from their parents or their parents have simply said, “You know, now that you’ve turned 18, it’s up to you to fund your own pathway into the future.”

What we are looking at with the \$3,500 extra from OSAP, with the \$1,200 extra from Canada student loans, is that those moderate and low-income students will now be looking at a cost of \$4,700 more per year in the coming academic session.

Of course, we all hear from post-secondary students. We’ve seen the data. Post-secondary students are among the fastest-growing group of food bank users. We are in the middle of an affordability crisis, and the affordability pressures are felt particularly keenly by young people right now.

This OSAP debt and the Canada student loan debt is not the only debt that many of these young people are carrying. They’re also having to rely on private borrowing. They’re accessing bank loans, getting family members to provide a loan or getting a student line of credit.

We are hearing about students who are graduating, tens of thousands of dollars owing the very day that they complete their education. And not only is that debt owing, but the Ontario government charges interest on that debt. That interest starts accumulating the minute that that student completes their program and graduates from their institution.

This government’s decision on the change, the cuts that they’re making to OSAP grants—because the burden is going to be carried by those moderate and low-income students, it effectively means a jump in net tuition. Alex Usher, who is a very well-known post-secondary education analyst, says that this is the largest single jump in net tuition ever seen in Canada. His comments are quite instructive, I think.

Richer students, those who don’t need student aid, are looking at tuition increases on the order of \$160 next year because the government allowed a 2% tuition increase. However, poorer students, the ones who receive grants, are going to see an increase in their net tuition about 30 times larger.

What the government has done, effectively, is announce some operating funding increases for colleges and universities, but they are funding it almost entirely on the backs of low-income students. So they are forcing students to choose whether they want to take that risk of taking on this huge loan or give up their dreams of post-secondary education altogether.

I’ve talked to many high school students in London who have told me that they worry about whether they are going to be able to afford to go to college or university. I’ve talked to people mid-career who were looking at possibly upgrading their skills, maybe doing a career change to get into one of those in-demand jobs that employers are really crying for. But these are people who have mortgages. They have car payments. They have child care costs. They’re in no position to take on a huge loan in order to pursue this additional post-secondary education.

Speaker, we have to keep in mind that when individuals do this, when they upgrade their skills, when they look to go into careers that we know are needed in our labour market—when students do that, they are contributing to

our collective well-being. They are contributing to the prosperity of our province and the health of our economy.

**1400**

What this government is doing is discouraging. As I said, high school students are thinking, “Whoa, I’m not sure if I can go after all.” Mid-career people who are looking at a career change are saying, “Whoa, I can’t take on that kind of debt.” So they are disrupting a whole generation of Ontarians whose dreams will now be lost.

For young people, I’ve heard it described as “delayed adulthood,” because young people with this huge debt burden can’t even think about moving through those normal kinds of milestones of adult life, like moving out from their parents’ house, buying a car, maybe saving for their own home, starting a family. Instead, they are stuck trying to pay off their student loans, which can be tens of thousands of dollars. The debt burden is very, very high for students who are coming out of undergraduate degree programs and thinking about pursuing masters’ or professional degrees.

Law school tuition is in the neighbourhood of \$22,000; medical school tuition, \$25,000. When you already have a debt from your undergraduate degree, to take on that kind of borrowing to go to med school or to masters’ programs—it can be a huge deterrent. And so people are choosing not to go into those career pathways.

When we think about medical students, Speaker, we know that Ontario needs doctors desperately. ERs are closed, or they’re completely overwhelmed with patients. We have people being forced to wait months, if not over a year, to get a specialist appointment. We still have far too many Ontarians without access to a family doctor. We need young people to go to medical school, to get medical training, to become the primary care providers, the physicians, that Ontario patients rely on.

I have heard directly from medical students who say that these changes to OSAP are definitely going to cause many prospective medical students to reconsider whether they can take on that loan. And it’s especially the case for students who come from first-generation families, who don’t have other family members who accessed post-secondary education, or students who are racialized or Indigenous or come from low-income backgrounds, who have disabilities. Disadvantaged students, students who are already marginalized, are going to be particularly hard hit by these OSAP changes.

As I mentioned, Speaker, the government chose to make this change as we see some of the highest rates of youth unemployment that we have ever seen in Ontario. Young people can’t find part-time jobs. High school students are struggling to find part-time jobs so that they can try to earn some money to pay for their post-secondary education. Current post-secondary students are struggling to find summer employment so they can pay to go back to school. And even when they do, Speaker, at minimum-wage rates, the money that young people are able to earn to contribute to their post-secondary education is a fraction—a tiny fraction—of what is actually needed to

pay for the tuition, books, residence, groceries and everything else.

We on this side of the House are going to continue to do everything we can to push this government to reverse these harmful changes to OSAP because it is not only hurting individual students who are forced to make this tough choice between taking on more debt, graduating with a big loan or not going to school at all, but it is also going to stifle economic growth in the province. It’s going to hurt employers who are crying for graduates of some of the programs that we have significant shortages of in our economy.

Before I wrap up, I did want to take a couple of minutes to comment on another ministry that went through the estimates process. During that process, there were questions asked of the Ministry of Health related to its plans for addiction treatment. We know that the government has had this focus on HART hubs, the Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment Hubs, which is certainly a need in that continuum of addiction supports—we need to have access to addiction recovery treatment services. But what this government did not mention in the estimates process—and just as with the OSAP cuts, it came out of the blue. The government announced that they were going to be closing supervised consumption sites. Although they replaced a number of supervised consumption sites with HART hubs, there are a number of communities in Ontario that still have supervised consumption sites. London is one of those communities.

And I can tell you, Speaker, the reason why those supervised consumption sites were established in London and across the province is because they work. There’s 30 years of evidence showing the importance of having a continuum of addiction treatment services, starting from harm reduction, like supervised consumption, and moving through to addiction recovery treatment services. So there are lots of concerns from people in my community about this sudden, out-of-the-blue decision from the government to close the supervised consumption site, Carepoint, in London. I hear from the London Public Library. They’ve had to spend significant resources on security. They’ve had to provide trauma training for library staff who are seeing people overdose in library washrooms.

If we no longer provide those services, those supervised consumption services, not only are people going to die because there’s no one there to reverse an overdose, but there’s going to be more public drug use because we’re closing down the one place where people were able to go to safely inject drugs.

We all hear in our communities about the pressures on our health care system, in particular paramedics who are called regularly to deal with overdoses. Those pressures are just going to increase when we have people who are overdosing in unsafe places. And Carepoint’s results show clearly that Carepoint was working to reverse overdoses and also to connect people to other critical community services to help them on their recovery journey.

Speaker, I am going to end my remarks there. There is so much you could say about all of the ministries of this

government, all of the multiple ways that this government is mismanaging public dollars. But today, I really wanted to focus on two of this government's recent decisions that are going to cause real harm to people. They're going to cause harm to students through the cuts to OSAP, and they're going to cause harm to communities through the decision to close the supervised consumption sites.

1410

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I'll start by saying that I really appreciate the remarks from the member for London West, which I wholeheartedly agree with. I see the same situation in my riding, actually, about the OSAP, but also about the safe injection sites.

I do welcome the opportunity to speak to concurrence in supply and to remind this House of a simple but very essential truth: that budgets are about choices. They are not just numbers on the page; they are a reflection of priorities, they are a statement of values and, ultimately, they are a test of whether a government understands the real lived experiences of the people it serves. Because when we talk about supply, when we talk about where public money goes, we are looking at whether the priorities of Ontarians and the values we hold dear are being reflected in these numbers.

Concretely, for the people of Ottawa–Vanier, we need to consider whether families can access health care, whether students can succeed in safe classrooms, whether young people can afford an education and whether communities feel supported rather than ignored. And on all those fronts, this government is making the wrong choices.

What makes this even more troubling is that the government rushed an early election to get a strong mandate. And it did: The government was given a strong majority, political capital and stability—the kind of mandate that should allow for long-term planning, meaningful reform and real results. Yet, instead of using that mandate to build, we see a pattern of short-term thinking, reactive decision-making and headline-driven policy—announcements instead of outcomes, optics instead of delivery. That is the missed opportunity before us today.

I'll begin with health care because it's a very important topic. At a time when Ontarians are struggling to access basic care, when emergency rooms are closing, when people cannot find a family doctor, when wait times are growing longer, this out-of-touch government has governed for eight long years without making life better for Ontarians, choosing not to fully invest in our health care system. In fact, a resident in my riding recently told me that she has been on a wait-list for over two years just to find a family doctor. In the meantime, what she does is she has to manage a chronic condition by going from one walk-in clinic to another, repeating her story over and over again without continuity of care. That's not a system that works.

This is a system that is failing people in real, everyday ways, yet we've seen over \$1 billion underspent in

hospitals. That's not efficiency; that's a failure of priorities, because every dollar that is left unspent is a missed surgery, an unfilled nursing position, a patient waiting in pain, a family left in uncertainty.

Ontarians are not asking for miracles; they're asking for a health care system that works. They're asking for a government that follows through, and that's precisely what's missing: the follow-through. We see announcements, we see commitments, but too often, we do not see sustained implementation or measurable results.

Nowhere is the gap more evident than in mental health and addictions. This is one of the defining challenges of our time. We see it in our communities, in our hospitals and on our streets. In Ottawa–Vanier, we see it every day in Lower Town, in the ByWard Market and around organizations dedicated to help even without appropriate support from the province, like the Shepherds of Good Hope that help so many people.

I speak regularly to front-line workers, and what I hear is that individuals are cycling repeatedly through emergency rooms, shelters and short-term programs, never getting the long-term support they need. And that captures the gap we are seeing across the system. Front-line organizations are doing extraordinary work, but they are stretched thin. We see people in crisis without access to timely care. We see emergency rooms acting as default mental health providers. We see communities struggling to respond without the coordinated support that they need. Instead of a coordinated long-term strategy—one grounded in treatment, prevention, housing and support—we see fragmented measures and political talking points. Safe consumption sites become headlines, programs are announced, but the system as a whole remains under strain.

This is what happens when policy is driven by reaction instead of strategy. Madam Speaker, this crisis cannot be addressed with short-term measures. It requires sustained leadership and a government willing to invest in people and solutions that last.

I'll turn now to education, because this is another very important topic. A budget should create learning environments where students and educators can thrive, but instead, we see \$6.3 billion underspent in classrooms. We see growing class sizes and we see exhausted educators. And again, I hear this directly from schools in Ottawa–Vanier: Parents talk about their children who are learning in portables year after year. A parent in my riding shared with me that her child has spent almost her entire elementary school experience in a portable classroom. What kind of province allows this to happen? We have to be better than that, but year after year, we see no change.

And for students with additional needs, the lack of stability and support can have lasting consequences, and we know that. Educators speak about increasing needs in the classroom without the support required to meet them. In French-language schools in particular, they face added pressure as they work to protect both quality education and linguistic vitality.

Again, rather than working collaboratively, this government turns to blame. Blaming school boards may

be politically convenient, but it does not reduce class sizes, it does not support students with special needs and it does not retain the professionals our systems depend on. This is a pattern, Madam Speaker: When results fall short, responsibility is deflected.

We see the same pattern in post-secondary education. In Ottawa–Vanier, institutions like La Cité and the University of Ottawa are essential to our local economy and the future of our province, but they are under pressure. Students are worried about affordability. Institutions are forced to make difficult decisions. Programs and supports are at risk. For years, warning signs were clear: Institutions were becoming increasingly reliant on international student tuition just to remain viable. That was not sustainable.

But instead of acting early, investing strategically and planning for the long term, this government waited until the situation became a crisis. And when it finally acted, it did not build stability; it shifted the burden. Students are asked to pay more. I hear from students who are working part-time, sometimes multiple jobs, just to stay enrolled, while worrying about rising costs and reduced support. They're doing everything right, Madam Speaker, but they're still struggling to get ahead. And institutions? Well, they're asked to do more with less. This is not a plan; it's a patchwork response to a problem that required foresight.

Madam Speaker, what we are seeing across sectors is not simply underinvestment; it's a broader approach to governance: a preference for big announcements over practical solutions, for centralized decisions over collaborative ones and for speed over sound process. We've seen decisions made without proper consultation. We've seen processes bypassed right here in this House, and we've seen the consequences: controversy, reversals and a loss of public trust. Because when decisions are rushed, when transparency is lacking and when long-term planning is absent, the result is not efficiency; it is instability.

And that brings us to the question of efficiency. Yes, responsible use of public funds matters, but there is a difference between efficiency and erosion. What we are seeing now is a mindset that risks confusing control with effectiveness. Centralizing power may appear efficient, bypassing local input may appear efficient, but it comes at a cost: a cost to local knowledge, a cost to accountability and, ultimately, a cost to better outcomes.

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Protecting Ontario should not mean concentrating power; it should mean getting the fundamentals right: a strong health care system; healthy, well-supported classrooms; accessible, high-quality post-secondary education; and communities where people feel seen, heard and supported, because a strong economy is built on a healthy and educated population, a workforce that can access care, a workforce whose children are safe in school, a workforce that can pursue education without being overwhelmed by debt. That is how you build long-term prosperity: not through announcements, but through sustained investments and sound policy.

Madam Speaker, I would also underscore that these challenges are often even more acute in francophone communities.

Et chacun de ces problèmes se trouve amplifié du côté francophone. L'accès aux services de santé en français demeure insuffisant. Les ressources en santé mentale sont encore plus limitées. Et dans le domaine de l'éducation, les institutions francophones doivent composer avec des contraintes supplémentaires, une pénurie d'enseignants, tout en jouant un rôle essentiel dans la vitalité de leurs communautés.

Protéger l'Ontario, c'est aussi protéger ses communautés francophones, en reconnaissant leurs réalités et en y répondant concrètement.

Finally, Madam Speaker, we must speak about the broader fiscal picture. This government continues to accumulate debt, while failing to deliver meaningful investments in the core services Ontarians rely on. This is not a question of spending more or less; it's a question of spending wisely and aligning resources with priorities, because after eight years, the pattern is clear: spending where it generates headlines; underspending where it delivers results. That's what we've been seeing.

Madam Speaker, budgets are about choices and the choices we are seeing are clear:

- underspending in hospitals, while people wait for care;

- underspending in classrooms, while students fall behind;

- failing to address a mental health and addictions crisis with the urgency it requires;

- shifting burdens on to students instead of supporting institutions; and

- centralizing power instead of empowering our communities.

In Ottawa–Vanier, like across this province, people feel those choices every single day—all of this despite having a strong mandate, a mandate to do better. Ontarians deserve more than announcements; they deserve results. They deserve a government that uses its mandate not to manage the moment, but to build for the future. They deserve a government that understands that investing in people is not a cost; it's the foundation of a strong province. They deserve a budget that reflects those values.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I recognize the member for Carleton.

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** I rise today—

*Interjections.*

**MPP George Darouze:** Carleton—unless you want to take my riding.

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today and join my colleague parliamentary assistant Bill Rosenberg in the introduction of the concurrence and supply. I would like to thank PA Rosenberg for giving me such a detailed explanation of the procedural process that is central to the fiscal management of Ontario. It was also quite valuable to get a clear picture of the province's current financial situation.

It has always been the government's aim to be as transparent with the province's finances as possible. I believe that PA Rosenberg's remarks bear this out, and I will continue in that vein. Madam Speaker, every member knows that there is nothing to be gained from obfuscation and confusion, so it will be my pleasure to discuss head-on and as clearly as possible the real challenges facing Ontario right now.

While unique in so many ways, Ontario is not alone in facing global economic uncertainty driven by evolving US trade policy. The province is not immune from the macroeconomic factors that have put pressure on many different sectors of our economy. And, of course, that pressure has filtered down to the families and businesses that are the lifeblood of this province.

Madam Speaker, I would like to discuss with members today how the government is facing these challenges, doing so, I might add, without disregarding the bedrock fundamentals of fiscal responsibility and transparency. These concepts have guided the government's management of the province's expenditures since day one.

As you know, Treasury Board leads the government's efforts on accountability, openness and modernization. As well, Treasury Board is the employer for the Ontario public service's nearly 70,000 workers. Our ministry's mandate is to help deliver good government and excellent public services in the most effective and efficient way possible.

That brings me to the first area I would like to discuss. As the employer of the OPS, it is our job to make sure that we deliver the public services that Ontarians deserve in the most cost-effective and efficient manner. This means making sure that our workforce is using the latest tools to do so.

In the current economic climate, it is all the more important to make sure that the Ontario public service is as fiscally responsible as it can be. It is for this reason that the government has endeavoured to employ lean techniques across the entire OPS. Since it was established in 2019, the Lean and Continuous Improvement Office has partnered with OPS ministries and broader public sector partners to deliver significant time and cost savings. In that time, the savings have been extraordinary, including more than \$67.5 million in savings and cost avoidance through Lean-led improvements.

Additionally, a staggering 45 years of cumulative wasted time has been avoided, enabling staff to redirect their efforts to higher-value work.

Throughout the public service, more than 28,000 people have been trained in lean principles and practices where staff are coached to lead end-to-end process improvements in their ministries. Madam Speaker, more than 700 business processes have been improved through the OPS Lean Yellow Belt and Green Belt learning programs. In 2025, \$5.6 million in costs were avoided for the OPS through the use of in-house lean training, consulting and coaching.

Along with lean applications, the OPS is also using artificial intelligence—AI—to increase efficiency. In

alignment with our OPS commitment to modernizing public service, AI technology provides the OPS with tools to improve how we work and provide services. There are many examples of how AI is already reshaping the public service, and it is my pleasure to detail a couple of those examples today.

One of the government's first uses of AI was in the development and deployment of chatbots and virtual assistants. These have been safely used by our colleagues at the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement since 2018. These chatbots and virtual assistants free up resources to tackle more complex issues. The latest data we have indicates that the OPS Enterprise Virtual Assistant, known as EVA, can answer more than 3,000 questions on information technology, human resources and pay and benefits.

Public-facing service applications are not the only way that the OPS leverages AI. Since 2021, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development has leveraged AI clause and table extraction. This tool enables the ministry to extract relevant data from labour agreements to determine trends and developments over time. The potential for AI to enhance the work of the OPS is exciting.

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I would like to emphasize that it has always been the government's commitment to proceed in this area with strong safeguards and risk-based rules for the transparent, responsible and accountable use of the technology. We do this in partnership with the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement.

Madam Speaker, the US trade actions since late 2024 have shown that Ontario can no longer count on the benefits of its long-standing economic partnership with the United States. It is not an ideal situation by any stretch; however, I'm happy to tell members today that the government is meeting this challenge. Since the 2025 budget, the government has explicitly outlined its plans to protect Ontario's economy. It starts with an ambitious plan to unleash the province's enormous economic potential. In doing so, we will transform the economy to help make Ontario the most competitive place to invest and to do business in the G7.

Since 2018, Ontario has attracted tens of billions in new investments across the manufacturing, life sciences and technology sectors. It is unfortunate that hastily applied US tariffs and short-sighted protectionism have disrupted this progress, but the current situation has afforded the government an opportunity to examine the province's other trade relationships.

That's why last April the government introduced and passed the Protect Ontario Through Free Trade Within Canada Act. The purpose of this legislation was to unlock free trade and labour mobility within Canada. The act creates new opportunities for attracting investments that create jobs and grow our economy. Owing to the government initiative in this area, Ontario is now recognized as a national leader when it comes to trade between provinces and territories.

Madam Speaker, it is estimated that trade barriers within Canada cost the economy up to \$200 billion each year and lower gross domestic product by nearly 8%. This cost hits taxpayers directly in their wallets by increasing the cost of goods and services that Ontario families rely on by nearly 15%. That's a significant number during a time when families are already struggling from increased costs due to tariffs.

All members of this House should be proud that Ontario is leading the charge to tear down these barriers to unlock Canada's full economic potential. The act makes Ontario the first province in Canada to remove all its party-specific exceptions under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, without exception. It also removes labour mobility barriers and reduces administrative barriers to make it easier for workers from other parts of the country to come and work in Ontario. It is important to remember that Ontario is Canada's largest interprovincial trader. Tearing down internal trade barriers is a crucial part of protecting Ontario's economy.

Along with tearing down internal trade barriers, the government has outlined several other initiatives that were designed to directly assist Ontario workers and communities who are feeling the impact of tariffs that have undermined key industries, slowed growth and shaken business confidence.

Madam Speaker, changes in US trade policy threaten the livelihoods of workers who depend upon stable cross-border trade with our most important trading partner. The government took the opportunity of the fall economic statement to outline the urgent actions that have been taken to mitigate this threat and to ease the increasing pressure on our families and businesses. Our government responded immediately and with commitment. In fact, our government has announced nearly \$30 billion for workers and businesses since April of last year. Madam Speaker, those funds were announced to provide both immediate relief and support to help businesses and workers, as well as measures to build Ontario's long-term resiliency and prosperity.

The government immediately deferred select provincial taxes for about 80,000 provincial businesses for six months. This reprieve gave these businesses up to \$9 billion in liquidity relief. Madam Speaker, that is money that is going towards keeping workers on the payroll.

Of course, our efforts did not stop there. The government launched the \$1-billion Protect Ontario Financing Program, the first phase of the \$5-billion Protecting Ontario Account. This fund provides support to Ontario-based businesses that have been affected by higher tariff rates in the steel, aluminum, copper and auto sectors. I'm happy to share with the House that funding through the Protect Ontario Financing Program is currently flowing to tariff-impacted businesses.

De plus, notre gouvernement maintient une collaboration solide avec le gouvernement fédéral afin de travailler à nos objectifs communs visant à protéger les Ontariennes et les Ontariens. Le partenariat de notre gouvernement avec le gouvernement fédéral pour annoncer un investissement de

500 millions de dollars afin d'aider Algoma Steel est l'un des nombreux résultats de cette collaboration.

Dans le cadre du Programme de financement pour protéger l'Ontario, la province accorde un prêt de 100 millions de dollars pour ce projet. Ce ne sont que quelques exemples des mesures par lesquelles le gouvernement soutient les travailleurs et les entreprises face à la situation économique actuelle.

Bien entendu, ce gouvernement tient systématiquement compte des familles ontariennes dans l'élaboration de ces politiques économiques. Et ce sont précisément les familles qui ont besoin de recevoir davantage d'argent dans leurs poches afin d'atténuer les répercussions de la situation économique actuelle.

À cette fin, nous continuons de consolider notre bilan en matière de soutien financier direct offert aux familles et aux particuliers. Le gouvernement y parvient notamment en faisant économiser de l'argent aux navetteurs et navetteuses grâce à l'élimination des péages, en rendant le transport en commun plus abordable grâce au programme de tarif unique, et en réduisant de façon permanente les taxes sur l'essence et le carburant.

Ces mesures ont été conçues et mises en oeuvre dans le but de réduire les coûts et de rendre la vie plus abordable pour les Ontariennes et les Ontariens. Dans cet esprit, le gouvernement a également versé des chèques de remboursement aux contribuables, offrant environ 3 milliards de dollars en soutien à près de 15 millions de personnes admissibles en Ontario. Madame la Présidente, cet argent fait une réelle différence.

Pour stimuler les économies, le gouvernement investit également près de 11 milliards de dollars dans les programmes d'efficacité énergétique. Il s'agit du plus important investissement en efficacité énergétique de l'histoire du Canada. Il n'y a jamais eu de meilleur moment pour aider les familles et les entreprises de l'Ontario à économiser de l'argent et à réduire la demande énergétique.

Bien d'autres initiatives mériteraient également d'être mentionnées sur ce sujet. Cependant, nous n'avons le temps que pour quelques exemples supplémentaires. Je souhaite rappeler à la Chambre que le gouvernement a également gelé les frais des permis de conduire et des cartes-photo de l'Ontario. De plus, le programme de tarif unique de l'Ontario permet aux usagers quotidiens du transport en commun sur les réseaux participants d'économiser en moyenne 1 600 \$ par année.

#### 1440

Une fois de plus, il s'agit d'argent qui reste dans les poches des Ontariens et Ontariennes qui travaillent dur. Mais il reste encore du travail à faire. Le gouvernement demeure résolu à mettre en oeuvre son plan visant à protéger les travailleurs, les entreprises et les collectivités de l'Ontario, et à maintenir les coûts à un niveau abordable.

Permettez-moi maintenant d'aborder une autre stratégie que le gouvernement déploie pour renforcer et libérer le potentiel économique de la province. Je parle ici de construction. Notre gouvernement réalise un plan ambitieux

d'immobilisations de plus de 201 milliards de dollars sur 10 ans. Il ne s'agit pas d'une exagération. C'est le plan le plus vaste et le plus ambitieux de l'histoire de la province.

Le plan prévoit des investissements historiques pour construire des infrastructures qui répondront enfin aux besoins urgents de l'Ontario. Ces projets d'infrastructure à long terme jetteront les bases de la prospérité et de la croissance futures pour de nombreuses communautés partout dans la province. Bien sûr, ces projets créeront également des emplois bien rémunérés dans un secteur actuellement sous pression.

Les membres se souviendront peut-être qu'un financement supplémentaire de 5 milliards de dollars pour le Fonds ontarien pour la construction a été annoncé dans le budget de l'Ontario de 2025. Je suis heureux d'annoncer que ce fonds a déjà commencé à appuyer des investissements prioritaires. Il a mobilisé des solutions novatrices pour construire davantage d'infrastructures essentielles qui, autrement, ne seraient jamais réalisées.

Madame la Présidente, le Fonds ontarien pour la construction a été créé pour cibler des projets qui auront un impact positif dans des domaines clés tels que les soins de longue durée, l'infrastructure énergétique, le logement, l'infrastructure municipale et des communautés autochtones, les transports et les minéraux critiques.

Mon dernier exemple de l'engagement du gouvernement envers la construction de la province concerne un enjeu qui affecte tant de gens dans notre province. Cet enjeu a peut-être ralenti certains membres en se rendant à la Chambre aujourd'hui. Je parle bien sûr de la congestion routière. La congestion coûte 56 milliards de dollars à l'Ontario chaque année. Ce chiffre semble presque inimaginable. Il est pourtant bien réel. Pour répondre à ce problème, notre gouvernement a élaboré un plan complet visant à remettre enfin en mouvement les automobiles et les marchandises.

Ce plan comprend la poursuite des travaux pour la construction de la route 413, du « Bradford Bypass » ainsi que l'élargissement d'autoroutes existantes. Notre gouvernement est également fier de superviser la plus grande expansion de notre transport en commun en Amérique du Nord. Cette expansion—

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

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** Good afternoon to all. It's always an absolute privilege to be able to rise in the House after a long lengthy winter break—we've seen Santa Claus come, now the Easter Bunny is around the corner—and I'm ready to bring back what the voices of St. Catharines have told me after this long winter break.

Speaker, today I want to contribute to the debate and speak to this government's spending at a critical moment for this province. As we approach budget day, the official opposition has taken a clear and transparent approach to evaluating this government's record after hearing what matters most to Ontarians. It is time that we take a look at whether or not the decisions this government makes actually promote an environment of affordability for the average family, the average senior on a pension or the average student trying to obtain a university education.

I want to ask the question: Is life getting better for residents in Ontario? No. How does policy lower the cost of rent, and is this government spending our money with responsibility? I don't think so. Across key areas that matter most, like health care, like housing, affordability, education and public services, this government constantly falls short, not by a small margin but in ways that are being felt every single day in communities like mine in St. Catharines.

Today I want to speak not just about spending, but about priorities. Budgets are not just obscure numbers on a page; they are a reflection of what this government values. Right now, the values being reflected are not aligned with the needs of the average person who elected all of us to this House.

Ontario has heard a lot from this government about investments, but the reality on the ground tells a whole different other story. When families are placed on lengthy wait-lists for mental health services, this is a problem. When families are struggling to access timely care in hospitals or clinics, this is a real, huge problem.

Our young people in particular are facing unprecedented mental health challenges, and yet the supports available to them are fragmented and underfunded. We continue to see it treated as an afterthought. If this government is serious about building a healthier Ontario, then meaningful sustained investments in community-based mental health services must be a core part of the upcoming budget.

Talking about the broader health care system, it is impossible to ignore the dire crisis unfolding in our hospitals and the deeply concerning decisions being made against auxiliary services in our communities, decisions that will only deepen the hole this government has put all of us in.

Just two weeks ago, the rug was pulled out from underneath us when this government told the remaining consumption site operators that provincial funding will be pulled. This is not an abstract policy decision. This is a decision that will have real and very immediate consequences in communities like St. Catharines.

Another critical issue tied to our health care system is the growing shortage of physicians. In communities like mine, residents are struggling to find family doctors. Thousands of people are unattached, relying on walk-in clinics or emergency rooms for care that should be provided in primary care settings. Not only is this inefficient, it's costly and harmful to patient outcomes.

At the same time, we are seeing changes to OHIP that are quietly shifting costs on to patients. Senior constituents of mine are contacting me daily, saying that at their last doctor's appointment, the brand name medication they are normally prescribed is no longer covered under OHIP. Shame on this government. Doctors are informing them that only generic and sometimes less-effective options are being offered to them, or that certain blood tests that used to be covered are now out-of-pocket expenses for seniors.

It's the quiet, under-the-radar shifts that are costing residents more than they bargained for. Services that were

once covered are no longer fully accessible to seniors or to anyone in our communities.

Let's turn to housing now. This is an area where the gap between need and action is especially stark. Every session this government stands here and makes claims about what they are doing to support housing builds, except we are in the midst of a housing crisis. Rents are skyrocketing, home ownership is increasingly out of reach for our young people and families wanting to live in the same areas they work and they grew up in are no longer seeing those dreams, Speaker. And yet, the types of housing we need most are not being built to the scale we require.

1450

We need more co-operative housing—

*Interjections.*

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** Are you guys listening over there?

We need more co-operative housing. We need more supportive housing. These models provide stability; they supply affordability and dignity for people who might otherwise fall through the cracks, Speaker. Instead, we continue to see a reliance on market-driven solutions that are not delivering for those most in need. The upcoming budget must include targeted investments in not-for-profit and co-operative housing, as well as support for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

In my community of St. Catharines, the rise of homelessness is 55-plus. Think about that: 55-plus—seniors—are being pushed out onto the street. This government needs to stop the problem before it happens. You don't wait until homelessness is visibly increasing on our streets and then try to fix it. That's working backwards.

Affordability is another area where Ontarians are feeling immense pressure. The cost of living continues to rise. Grocery bills are higher than ever. Gas prices have been climbing again and again. Families are making difficult choices about what they can afford, what they're cutting back on—they're cutting back on essentials and, in some cases, going into debt just to get by day by day.

This is not sustainable, Speaker. And it's not because families are going out to eat too often—can you believe that was even said?—or going on luxury vacations; it's from basic necessities like sky-high car insurance premiums, hydro bills continuing to increase, our monopolized telecom companies gouging people on their phone plans—the cost of Internet has tripled. The list goes on and on and on. This government has a role to play in easing the burden, whether through targeted support or legislation that does not secretly work against Ontarians.

Another area of concern is the creeping privatization of public services, particularly when it comes to water. Through Bill 60 and related measures, we are seeing increased opportunities for private involvement in services that have traditionally been publicly delivered. Water is one of them. Water is one of the last truly public utilities we have in Ontario. It should never be treated as a commodity to generate profits. Residents should never have to worry about price hikes on their water bills or

reduced access because private interests are being prioritized. We must protect our public infrastructure and ensure that it remains accountable to people, not to shareholders and not to a board appointed by a minister.

Speaker, this government either cuts funds or increases costs that fall on the backs of taxpayers. This is what they are very, very good at. I want to speak about education, especially and specifically the cuts to OSAP grants.

Post-secondary education should be accessible to all who want or wish to pursue it. But with the reduction in grants and the increased reliance on loans, students are and will be graduating with higher levels of debt or, in some cases, choosing not to pursue education in Ontario—shame on this government.

A few weeks back, a few hundred students from local high schools organized a walkout in the middle of the afternoon in protest of recent cuts to OSAP. They rallied right out in front of my office, so I had a really good chance to get out there and talk to the younger generation and the upcoming, maybe possibly legislators in this House one day—if they can get through their education. But they're out in front of my office, and I'm genuinely worried about the future of these students. They talked to me and they said, "My dad passed away. I'm 16 years old and I live with my mother. She has a disability and I am really, really scared that I won't be able to go to school and support my mom who has supported me all my life." This is what we're listening to. I don't know what you guys are listening to, but I know what we're listening to: Students who are trying to pay their own way through school, right now in high school, and then looking at even more debt—this is really, really not the way we're going to find steady employment, thank you very much.

Speaker, when we look at all of these issues together—mental health, health care, housing, affordability, education and public services, just to name a few—a clear picture emerges; we can put Jen's frame around it. This is a government that is not meeting the moment. Ontarians are asking for a government that invests in people, that strengthens public services and ensures no one is left behind. They are asking for a government that understands the realities they are facing and responds with urgency and compassion. As we head into budget day, the question is simple: Will this government continue down its current path, or will it listen to the people of Ontario and make the investments that are so clearly needed?

Instead of trying to distract Ontarians with shady changes to the FOI regulation, work for the public good, for more affordability in Ontario, so people can afford to go to school, so people can afford to stay in their homes, so seniors aren't being bumped out onto our streets. Speaker, 55-plus is rising in Niagara. That is so shameful. Our seniors are being pushed out. They are choosing, "Should I pay for my hydro or should I pay for my pills, my medication?" I said that OHIP is quietly pushing their medication out.

We have a report card on the official opposition side. We have a report card, and it is showing where the gaps are—

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** In the budget.

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** In the budget, yes—showing where the gaps are. Now it's time to address them. Speaker, it's this government's time to address them, so that people aren't languishing in hallways at their local hospitals; so that children with autism who were here this morning, the parents that were here this morning, have the educational assistance they need in schools. We're just starting to kind of peel back all these terrible things that—this government has made the picture very, very clear.

And what this Ford government has done to OSAP is not reform, Speaker; it's a rollback, as I said. This government's cuts to grants and replacing them with loans—it's forcing students deeper and deeper into debt, just to get education.

You know, this is terrible. This hits low-income families. Mature students—we haven't even touched on mature students who want to feed their families and go to school and be able to come out with a really good education and a skilled-trade job from our community colleges. We haven't even touched that.

I've only got two more minutes here, Speaker, and how fast the time is going by, but you know we can go on. I know the member from London West was very clear on what happened with the OSAP and what it has done to people, and what it means to really do truly deep, deep, deep cuts. It means it's going to be delays in careers. It means younger generations won't be going to school because that door will never open. That door will never open.

One thing my mother always said to me: "Use that door. Go through it and see what a beautiful world it is at an educational level." I did three years of nursing, Speaker, and I'll tell you, when that door opened for me, that was the best thing that I ever did, because I went into a skilled trade—Mac School of Nursing—and I got my nursing degree. But it opened a door of opportunity, a wealth that a lot of people will not be able to do now, because it's going to cost them and puts them into a true deep, deep, deep debt.

And just to wrap up, I want to say, by shutting this door, this government shutting this door on our younger generation, it's not making a brighter future. It's creating a problem that we're going to see not only on our streets, not only in our neighbourhoods—it's creating a problem that they've created.

**1500**

The official opposition is giving them the chance to reverse, to do their Michael Jackson walk that they've done for the past eight years. You guys backtracked on more things in eight years than Michael Jackson did in his Thriller movie. Like, can we backtrack now on the OSAP? Come on. Give these people an opportunity. You're better than the rollbacks at Walmart. Oh yeah, that's right. You guys like the United States of America and the way they act.

Anyway, I do want to end it with please roll back your decision like you did every other decision in the past eight years. Really be a government for a change. I really want

to also say that the younger people are watching you. They're watching you. You're going to drop in the polls. Don't worry.

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

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** Speaker, I rise today to address the concurrence in supply as it pertains to the 2025 budget, a budget the government claims is "A Plan to Protect Ontario." But when I look at the fine print—and I did look at the fine print—I see a plan that fails to protect the very Ontarians who count on us the most: our patients, our students, our workers, our families—those who wake up every morning hoping the government hasn't made their lives harder. We know it has become a disaster to live in Ontario right now.

Speaker, let's start with health care, which is still underfunded and facing a \$1-billion deficit. This government boasts about its investments, but when we pull back the curtains, the reality is staggering. Hospitals across Ontario are closing emergency rooms. Wait times for surgeries, diagnostics and mental health services are at record highs. Nurses are burning out; they're still burning out and leaving the profession.

This budget mentions a \$1.8-billion primary care action plan. Yet today—today, Speaker—over 2.5 million Ontarians and counting are still without a family doctor. What about the exhausted health workers still working double shifts, picking up the slack for a system that's been stretched to the breaking point?

We hear about \$56 billion for health infrastructure, so while we welcome that over 10 years, bricks and mortar don't treat patients. Where is the real investment in the people, in nurses, in personal support workers, in doctors for the north, for rural Ontario and for the communities that have been ignored year after year? While \$280 million is being poured into private for-profit clinics, public hospitals are left to crumble, ERs are still shuttering and patients are being sent hours away for basic care. Treating patients in hallways and staircases is the new normal for this government.

A couple of months ago, I had to follow up with one of my staff because she fell ill and we had to wait for the ambulance to come. The ambulance took 15 minutes. Let me tell you: If she was having a heart attack, she would have not been with us today. I followed my staff to the hospital in the ambulance, and guess where she was treated once she became conscious? In the hallway.

I'm not understanding why this government is not facing the reality of knowing that patients are being treated in hallways, and in some hospitals, in staircases. What about mental health? What about addiction? What about the opioid crisis? Not one word in this budget. The government has mentioned alcohol 132 times, but I'm not surprised at all. There was no mention of poverty, autism, mental health and ODSP.

Let's move on to the economy, an amazing hot topic right now. Speaker, our economy is crumbling, and there is still no support from this government. Let's look at small businesses that this government doesn't talk about.

They employ two-thirds of Ontario's private sector workforce. They're still part of this economy. They sustain families, enable students to afford college and universities, and form the backbone of our economy.

Listen to the CFIB's most recent survey, which showed Ontario with the third-lowest small business confidence rate in Canada. That is shameful. In the coming months, twice the number of Ontario small businesses are planning to reduce staff rather than hire new ones, and most will face the dire decision to close their businesses—their heart, their dreams.

Ontario is tied for the highest provincial small business tax rate in Canada. In Ontario, over seven in 10 small businesses say taxes are a major input cost constraint. The Ontario Liberals will continue to call on this government to implement the small business tax cut we have been tabling for over a year, which would reduce taxes on small businesses by up to \$17,800 every year. Small business would love to get that money back in their pocket so they can pay for overhead and help hire more employees.

Small business bankruptcies are up in Ontario—a very sad story, just like every other thing that we have to survive on for a quality of life is up in Ontario.

I love to support workers. I love to support skills training and job creation. The \$5-billion Protecting Ontario Account is designed to protect jobs, but there is no guarantee that a single dollar will go to workers' wages or job security—just like the Skills Development Fund. The government boasts of \$2.5 billion for skills development, but where are the protections for workers' rights? Where are the supports for women entering trades and for equity-seeking groups still too often left behind?

Horrible stats under this government: Unemployment is now at 7.9%, the highest rate in a decade and up since this government took office, when it was 5.9%. This government continues to let down the workers of Ontario.

Let's take a look at transportation, my favourite topic, my favourite file that promises Ontario big promises but lots of pitfalls. This government loves to talk about big numbers, but too often these announcements come with delays, cost overruns and broken promises. A \$1.2-billion green bond announced January 2025 was allocated for five projects:

—GO Transit expansion, which is a total mess;

—Hazel McCallion LRT started at \$1.4 billion, now at \$6 billion;

—Ontario Line subway started at \$10 billion, now at \$27 billion;

—Scarborough subway extension, which started at \$5 billion, now over \$10 billion.

So what I could say to this government—he said to the students, “Money doesn't grow on trees,” but for him and his insiders and his donors, money does grow on trees.

Ontarians deserve to know whether these massive public expenditures are being managed in their best interest or whether systemic inefficiency and mismanagement have eroded the value of dollars spent. This is why I did call for a province-wide value-for-money audit. This would have helped restore public confidence, provide

clear accountability and ensure that future transit investments are procured and managed according to best practices. There is no shame in that. There is no shame in correcting the government deficiencies and errors.

Here's my trick question for this government: Who is benefiting from all these massive overruns? This government cancelled a \$1.6-billion, 25-year operations-and-maintenance agreement between Metrolinx and ONxpress just months before it was set to begin. We're asking how many dollars for our taxpayers were wasted, and it's all secrecy. It's all secrecy—no accountability. Once again, I'm going to stress on this: The government has given us no transparency and no accountability for the millions of people impacted by this delay.

Speaker, this contract was a cornerstone of Ontario's GO rail electrification project. But in the coming months, we shall all see the results of this government's reckless decision regarding this cancellation. Fast forward, and we are experiencing the devastation.

In my riding of Scarborough—Guildwood, we tabled a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to “initiate a full public inquiry into increasing costs, delays, and governance failures of Scarborough transit projects, including a public report detailing financial accountability and oversight.” After all, these are taxpayers' dollars. They're not the government's personal piggy bank.

**1510**

Madam Speaker, these projects represent tens of billions of dollars. This is why I call for a value-for-money audit into the ongoing delays, cost escalations and transparency issues affecting multiple major transit projects across Ontario. This government doesn't have a clear plan to protect Ontario. It's a plan to protect profits, to protect insiders and to protect the status quo while leaving everyday Ontarians to weather the storm alone.

We have nothing to show for the 2025 budget that really impacted the lives of Ontarians. The people of Ontario are going through a life that has been more difficult for them than when this government took over. Are classrooms safe? Are families able to afford groceries, rent and just the basics to get by? Or is it the Premier's friends and insiders who have his ear? We're still trying to find out because we are hearing from so many people in our riding that they're one paycheck away from going homeless.

Speaker, I stand here not just to criticize but to call for something better. I'm wrapping up right now. Ontario deserves a government that invests in people, not just press releases; a government that listens to workers, parents, students and seniors, not just his friends, donors and insiders; a government that builds, protects and uplifts all Ontarians, not just those with friends in high places, because when Ontario is at its best, it doesn't leave anyone behind. This should be a land of opportunity. Thank you.

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

**MPP Tyler Watt:** It's been over 100 days since I last stood here and spoke. I had over 100 days to connect with people in my riding of Nepean, to talk to them about how they feel the last year went. How did they feel about the

direction that this government is going in? When I talked to them, we talked about the spending and especially the “fiscally responsible” spending that this government claims that they’re doing.

I keep coming back to a simple question: If they’re spending billions and billions of dollars—in fact, the most amount of money in the history of Ontario—year after year, why does life feel harder for the people in Nepean and Ontario after eight years of this government? Because that’s what I’m hearing every single day in Nepean. People aren’t feeling relief. They’re feeling stressed and worried about putting food on the table for their kids, paying their mortgage or rent or paying for their medical bills. They’re feeling like they’re doing everything right and still falling behind.

They’re wondering how it’s possible that with all this government spending, the basics still aren’t being met. That’s when it becomes clear: This isn’t about how much this government is spending; it’s about what they’re choosing to spend it on, and, more importantly, who they’re choosing to spend it for.

Let me start with health care. This is my background, my bread and butter. I have lots to say about this because health care is where the consequences are most immediate.

In Nepean, about 30% of residents don’t have a nurse practitioner or family doctor. That’s thousands of people without access to primary care. So what happens when they get sick? The urgent care clinics are usually shut down by 10 a.m., so they end up in the emergency hospital, the Queensway Carleton ER.

The people working there are doing everything that they can, but they’re overwhelmed. Wait times at the QCH are among the longest in the province. Hallways are full; patients are waiting hours just to be seen. It’s now the norm to have patients laying in stretchers in hallways or in a stretcher in a storage closet. That’s not dignity; that is a system that is collapsing because of this government’s refusal to fund hospitals properly.

What’s most frustrating is that the hospital has a plan. It has a plan to expand its emergency department to meet the growing needs of our community. But instead of urgency, instead of collaboration, what we hear from this government is nothing but empty words: that it’s under review—under review, still, two years later.

I asked the health minister a simple question on an update, and here was her response:

“The proposal put forth by the Queensway Carleton Hospital is currently being reviewed by the Ministry of Health. Should we have any news to share, we will be sure to make an announcement.

“In the meantime, although you in the past voted against our investments in the hospital sector, I hope we can count on your support in the future as we continue to invest nearly \$60 billion in over 50 major hospital projects across Ontario.”

I was a bit shocked when I received that question, considering it wasn’t question period. This was a real, serious question that I put forward to the minister, and that was the response that I got.

At the same time, we are losing the very people who are holding our system together. Forty per cent of new grad nurses are leaving the profession within two years, not because they don’t care, but because they’re burnt out, overworked and unsupported in Ontario.

And while that’s happening, hundreds of health care jobs have been cut across Ontario since just January—in the middle of a nursing shortage. Think about how backwards that is. Patients are waiting longer, nurses are facing burnout and violence, and instead of fixing it, this government is cutting the very people we rely on.

We also know that if we want to fix this system, we need to invest in our community, in primary care and prevention. We have to invest in the things that stop people from getting to the point of crisis in the emergency room. We need more access to nurse practitioners, but this government just recently missed a critical federal deadline to publicly fund nurse practitioners, while millions of Ontarians are still searching for a provider or have given up entirely. This isn’t complicated. Nurse practitioners are part of the solution. But instead of acting, this government is dragging its feet, and people are paying the price.

When people can’t access care early, they end up in hospitals, and when hospitals are underfunded, they start borrowing from banks just to stay open. That’s where we are right now: Hospitals are borrowing money from banks to stay open and survive. That is not sustainable, and that is not what patients or health care workers deserve.

We’re seeing it across the province. In northern Ontario, the Sault Area Hospital is being forced to cut beds and front-line staff. Those cuts don’t save money; they cost patients time, care and dignity.

And yet, instead of addressing the crisis, this government is now trying to hide it. They promised to end hallway health care. Instead, they are now blocking access to the very information that would show how badly they’ve failed. They are changing the law to prevent freedom of information requests from accessing records from the Premier’s office and ministers’ offices.

Let’s be clear about what that means. Without FOIs, we would not know the truth about scandals like the greenbelt. We would not know about decisions being made behind closed doors. Transparency is not optional in a democracy. Ontarians deserve a government that answers to them, not one that hides from them.

And while all of this is happening, people are also dealing with an affordability crisis that is touching every part of their lives. Grocery prices keep going up. Wages are not keeping up; they’re stagnant. The job market isn’t exactly inspiring, especially for young people, and housing is completely out of reach for so many. Rent is out of control, and people are being priced out of their communities.

And we can’t ignore the fact that this government made a decision in 2019 to remove rent control on all new builds. That decision made housing less stable and less affordable for renters across this province.

Let’s talk about home ownership, something that many young people have completely given up on. As a renter

myself, when I see these pitiful numbers coming out of this government, I get it. Ontario is falling badly behind on housing, and it's putting affordability further out of reach.

New data shows housing starts dropped 25% in the first half of 2025 compared to the year before and are far below what's needed to hit the government's 1.5-million homes target. In fact, Ontario has been averaging about 86,000 homes per year when it needs to be over 150,000.

While some places like Ottawa are seeing growth, markets like Toronto are collapsing—down 44%—dragging the whole province and country down. The rest of Canada is actually building more, but Ontario's slowdown is cancelling out all of that progress.

Despite billions in spending, the results just aren't there. Barriers like slow approvals, high fees and limits on density are still holding back construction. The bottom line is Ontario's housing failure isn't just a provincial issue; it's driving up costs across the country and making affordability worse for everyone.

But affordability doesn't stop there. It extends into education and into the lives of students who are trying to build a future. Right now, this government is forcing more debt onto students through the changes to the OSAP grants. These grants have been significantly reduced, all the way down to 25%, and OSAP barely covers the basics as is. Students are working multiple jobs just to afford rent, groceries, tuition and just surviving being a student at college, university or in a trades program.

1520

Then, instead of supporting them, we hear dismissive comments suggesting that students are misusing that support. Let's be honest: None of these students are buying luxury items. Students are trying to survive. They're trying to build a future and this government is making it harder, while telling them that the programs they rely on are "unsustainable."

We're seeing the consequences in our post-secondary system. Colleges are cutting programs. Staff are being laid off. Supports are being reduced. This government created this crisis, and now they want credit for stepping in last-minute and giving them a lifeline of cash after being backed into a corner.

But colleges, universities and the trades are how we build Ontario's future workforce. They're how we train health care workers, build homes and drive innovation. Undermining them is undermining our future. You cannot claim to be building a strong economy while actively weakening the same systems that produce and support your workforce.

Then there's our education system more broadly. Schools are facing a repair backlog in the billions. Class sizes are growing. Teachers and education workers are being laid off by the hundreds, and those who do remain are being asked to do more with less. And what did this government offer? A one-time \$750 gift card. I have to wonder if the one that the Premier signed was worth any more. But seriously, what a slap in the face to teachers. They have to use this card so they can order more toilet paper and pencils for their classes. Is this the world-class

education system that Ontario is supposed to be known for?

It really goes to show that this government is not listening to the people on the ground. Why don't you go and talk to a teacher or a support worker at a local public school and ask them what their needs are? Why don't you go and talk to a nurse or a PSW at a bedside in a hospital and ask, "How can we as a government improve your lives?" Why don't you go and talk to those community workers who are providing home care and ask, "How can we better support you?" Because with this government, there's a lot of focus on recruitment, but very little on retention. That is why we are seeing professionals—whether it's in health care, education, you name it—flee this province.

I had a wonderful time visiting the University of Waterloo. I got to see their incredible program where they are building things like robots. They're just letting these brilliant minds create whatever they want. The innovation that we could possibly get from that would be amazing for this province. But do you know where they all want to go? To California, so they can go work for Apple or Tesla. They straight-up said to me, "There is nothing here for me. There is no competition here in Ontario."

Meanwhile, I got to visit McMaster and go visit their awesome nuclear reactor, where they have discovered a type of isotope that is going to revolutionize the way that we treat cancer in this world, frankly. Instead of chemotherapy and radiation, it can target a tumour and kill that target right then and there, with no damage to the rest of the body. That is innovation that is happening here in Ontario, in our universities, and this government likes to muse about basket-weaving courses, really doing a disservice to the importance of our post-secondary system.

With that, I will wrap up and say we have to do a better job. I think we have to do a much better job at actually listening—listening to members of the opposition, and not just to your own folks, because we actually hear what's going on in our individual ridings and we want to work together. When you don't listen to suggestions that we have or to the people on the ground, those grassroots advocates, that's when you become out of touch.

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

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, including supplementaries. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Education. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Long-Term Care. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Infrastructure. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Sport. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Transportation, including supplementaries. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Energy and Mines, including supplementaries. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Natural Resources. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Northern Economic Development and Growth. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Rural Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Attorney General. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Emergency Preparedness and Response. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

1530

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Francophone Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Solicitor General. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for Cabinet Office. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Office of the Premier. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I declare the motion carried on division.

Minister Mulroney has moved concurrence in supply for the Treasury Board Secretariat, including supplementaries. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I declare the motion carried on division.

*Motions agreed to.*

KEEPING CRIMINALS BEHIND BARS  
ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 VISANT À MAINTENIR  
LES CRIMINELS DERRIÈRE  
LES BARREAUX

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 11, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act to enact the Constable Joe MacDonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund Act, 2026 and to amend various other Acts / Projet de loi 75, Loi édictant la Loi de 2026 sur le Fonds Joe MacDonald de bourses d'études à l'intention des survivants d'agents de sécurité publique et modifiant diverses autres lois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I recognize the member from Kanata–Carleton.

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** I'll be sharing my time today with the member from Ottawa–Vanier.

Speaker, it's great to be back on day 1 of the 32 days that we are scheduled to have in the next nine months of this year to actually do what the people of Ontario elected us to do, and that is govern.

We reassemble at a time when many Ontarians are asking serious, necessary questions about the direction of our province—about our economy, about job security, about safety in our communities, about trust in our institutions and about whether our democracy is as strong and as fair as it should be. Part of this conversation is about Ontario's Bill 75, but let me be clear from the outset that this is not just about one bill. It's about what kind of province we want to live in. It's about whether we're strengthening the foundations of our society or quietly eroding them. Because laws like Bill 75 do not exist in isolation. They reflect priorities, they signal values and they shape the relationship between the government and the people it serves.

So when we talk and debate about Bill 75, I want to address, well, three main aspects:

- (1) what it truly means to keep Ontario safe;
- (2) why our democracy must also be protected, and not gradually weakened—because it's democracy that actually helps us safeguard our safety; and
- (3) the urgent need to properly resource and support our police and courts.

“Safety” is a powerful word. It resonates with everyone—families, workers, seniors, young people—but too often I've seen it be used as a slogan instead of a serious commitment. Keeping Ontario safe is not just about passing stricter laws or expanding enforcement powers, it's about building a system that actually works.

A safe Ontario is one where people can walk home at night without fear, where victims of crime receive timely justice, when communities trust law enforcement, where prevention is valued at least as much as punishment. But

here's the reality: Safety doesn't come from shortcuts. It doesn't come from rushed legislation, it doesn't come from concentrating power without accountability and it certainly does not come from ignoring the root causes of crime—poverty, mental health challenges, addictions and a lack of opportunity.

If Bill 75 or any law claims to make Ontario safer, we must ask, does it strengthen institutions or does it strain them? Does it improve trust or does it undermine it? Does it solve problems or simply create the appearance of action?

Ontarians deserve more than appearances; they deserve results.

And how is this related to our democracy? Democracy isn't just about elections every three or four years and it's not just about majority rule; it's about accountability, transparency and respect for institutions. And here is an uncomfortable truth: Democracy is rarely destroyed overnight. It is chipped away piece by piece, decision by decision. That destruction happens when oversight is weakened, when debate is rushed or silenced, when decisions are made behind closed doors and when power becomes concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. It happens when governments bypass scrutiny in the name of urgency; when they avoid transparency in the name of efficiency, hiding from their citizens who they should be serving; or when they dismiss criticism instead of engaging with criticism. If they are not strengthening democracy, they are weakening it. And once that erosion begins, it becomes very difficult to reverse.

Bill 75 raises concerns, not just because of what it does but how it fits into a broader pattern—a pattern where decisions are made quickly, consultation is limited and accountability is treated as an inconvenience. We should all be asking, are we making decisions in the open or behind closed doors? Are we empowering institutions or sidelining them? Are we strengthening public trust or eroding it?

Because a healthy democracy depends on trust. Trust is not just given; it is earned through transparency, honesty and respect for the people.

So if we are truly serious about safety, then we must confront another critical issue: the capacity of our justice system. You cannot have public safety without a functioning justice system.

**1540**

Right now, too many parts of that system are strained, overburdened and under-resourced. Police services are being asked to do more with limited resources. They are responding not only to crime but to mental health crises, homelessness and social challenges that require specialized support. At the same time, our courts are facing delays that are unacceptable. Cases take too long, victims wait too long and sometimes cases are dismissed entirely because the system itself simply cannot keep up with the demands. This is not justice, and it doesn't make anyone safer.

Let's be honest: Passing new laws is relatively easy, but making them work for the people of Ontario is hard. If the

government wants to strengthen public safety, then it must:

- invest in police training, staffing and support;
- expand access to mental health crisis response teams;
- ensure courts have enough judges, prosecutors, defenders and support staff;
- modernize systems to reduce delays and inefficiencies; and
- address the root causes of crime.

Because without these investments, even the strongest, best laws will fail. When the system fails, public confidence collapses. People lose faith not in just the courts but in the entire idea of justice.

Now, let's talk about something that should not be controversial: transparency. A government that serves the people must be open with the people. It should explain its decisions, it should justify its actions and it must be willing to answer tough questions.

But too often, we see the opposite. We see decisions made without clear explanations. We see limited consultation. We see information being withheld or delayed. When people ask questions, they are met with deflection or distraction instead of answers.

That's not how a democracy or a justice system should function. Transparency is not a burden; it's a responsibility. Honesty is not just a strategy, it's a duty. Because when governments are not transparent, people start to wonder, "Who is this really for? Who benefits? And who is being left out?"

Which brings me to one more critical point: A government exists to serve all its people—not just insiders, not just wealthy donors, not just those with influence or connections—everyone; working families, small business owners, seniors, students, people in rural communities, urban centres, people who agree with the government and those who don't. Because democracy is not about rewarding supporters, it's about representing the entire population, even those who are struggling.

When decisions appear to favour a small group and when policies seem designed to benefit those with access and influence, it damages public trust in a profound way. People begin to feel excluded, to feel unheard and eventually they begin to disengage, and that's always dangerous, because a disengaged public is a vulnerable public—a public vulnerable to manipulation and misinformation. And a democracy without participation is a democracy at risk.

So, Speaker, when we talk about Bill 75, we must look beyond merely the text of the legislation. We must ask: Will it strengthen our institutions? Will it respect democratic principles? Will it actually improve safety or just claim to?

And we must place it within a broader context. Are we investing in the systems that make laws and the justice system more effective? Are we protecting the checks and balances that keep power accountable? Are we governing in a way that includes everyone, and not just a select few? Because the strength of a province is not measured by how quickly it can pass laws; it's measured by the fairness of

its institutions, the trust of its people and the integrity of its democracy.

Speaker, this is not about partisanship. This isn't about scoring political points. This is about responsibility: the responsibility of government to govern well; the responsibility of institutions to function effectively; and the responsibility of all of us to pay attention, to stay engaged, to ask questions. Because democracy isn't self-sustaining; it requires all of our participation, all of our vigilance, and it requires a willingness to speak up when something isn't right. Speaker, without a functioning democracy, there is no hope for a fair and trustworthy justice system.

Ontario can be both safe and free. It can be both strong and fair. It can be both efficient and accountable, but only if we all insist upon it, only if we refuse to accept shortcuts that weaken our institutions, only if we demand transparency and honesty from those in power, only if we ensure the government serves everyone and not just the privileged few and only if we remember that the rule of law and democracy is not something we inherit and forget. It's something we must protect. It's something we must stand up for every single day.

So when we talk about leadership—the leadership that this province needs, and what we need to do in order to build a stronger future in this province, and how we need to address those challenges that come our way—the key, over and over again, is working together. It's transparency. It's honesty. It's wanting to be of service to others. It's about standing up for what is right, even when it might be difficult to do so.

I believe that the safety of Ontarians and the public's safety in this province is absolutely key to our future well-being, to our economic well-being, to our emotional well-being, to having the strength and courage to actually take the risks that are going to be required to adjust to the current situation we find ourselves in. We have to find that courage to do the right thing. That's what's going to lead us to the kind of prosperity and the kind of future that we can be proud of that we have left for our children. So we have to find a way to work together. We have to find a way to make all of these intricate systems in this province of Ontario work together in such a way that it creates a province that we can all be proud of, and that we can be proud of leaving to our children.

**1550**

I think at the very basis of it, it's about feeling safe and secure—physically, mentally, emotionally. Right now, there are a lot of challenges that this world is facing. There are a lot of challenges that Canada is facing, that Ontario is facing, and the best way that we can face those challenges would be together, knowing that we're all in this for the same reason: to build a better province, one that we would be proud of to leave the generations that follow.

I ask you, when we think about bills like Bill 75, let's not rush it. Let's take the time to do it absolutely correctly. Let's make sure that we learn from those who have experience, who faced these kinds of challenges in the past. Let's make the effort to actually come up with the

very best bill we could possibly come up with, that will achieve what we want it to achieve while respecting all the people of Ontario, even those who may be struggling within it.

Madam Speaker, I just wanted to say thank you for the time, and I hope that we can find a way forward to build a stronger Ontario by building a justice system that works for all.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I thank my colleague from Kanata–Carleton for her remarks. As we're sharing time to speak to this Bill 75, the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act, it's my pleasure to now rise to speak to it.

I want to begin by acknowledging something that all members of this House agree on, and that's Ontarians are concerned about public safety. We've heard that. We see it in the news. In fact, there have been troubling stories in the news: cases involving repeat offenders, cases where individuals released on bail have gone on to commit serious crime. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, those stories are real, the concerns are valid and they deserve a serious response.

But, Speaker, public policy cannot be built on headlines alone. It must be built on evidence, effectiveness and fairness, and that is where Bill 75 raises important concerns. Because when we look beyond the title of this bill, when we move past the “keeping criminals behind bars” framing, we begin to see a pattern—a pattern where the government responds to very real public concerns with measures that are highly for show and responsive to public pressure, but not always evidence-based or effective.

We are hearing that not just from one perspective, but from across the spectrum. I'm talking about legal organizations, civil liberties advocates, researchers and front-line practitioners. What they're telling us is this: This bill risks being more about appearing tough than actually improving outcomes.

Madame la Présidente, les Ontariens sont préoccupés par la sécurité publique, et ces préoccupations sont légitimes, malheureusement. Toutefois, les politiques publiques ne doivent pas être dictées par l'actualité ou les manchettes, mais par des données probantes.

Le projet de loi 75 donne l'impression d'agir fermement, mais plusieurs intervenants, que ce soit les juristes, les chercheurs et des organismes, soulèvent qu'il privilégie des mesures symboliques ou punitives plutôt que des solutions efficaces.

Comme libéraux, nous croyons que la sécurité publique doit être efficace, équitable, mais aussi fondée sur des preuves. Et je pense que le gouvernement, trop souvent dans ses politiques, ne fait pas assez de consultation pour pouvoir apporter ces preuves-là à l'appui.

What we would like to see is an approach to public safety that is effective, that is fair, that is constitutional and grounded in evidence. And so, today I want to walk through several key schedules in this bill and examine whether they meet that standard.

I'm going to start with schedule 1, Speaker, which addresses animal research practices. I'll start by saying

that it's a bit peculiar that a bill framed as a criminal justice and public safety package includes provisions on animal research. I don't know why that schedule is in there, but I guess they didn't have anywhere else to put it, and there must have been some pressure coming from some people. That alone raises a legitimate question about the structure of this legislation.

But let us examine the substance. Let's be fair and let's look at what that does. The government has presented this schedule as a response to public concern about animal experimentation, particularly involving dogs—not killing dogs. And there has indeed been strong public reactions to reports of such practices. Again, we see the government reacting to something that's been made public.

The schedule proposes to restrict the breeding of cats and dogs for research in Ontario, prohibit certain invasive practices and allow exemptions through animal-care committees. Now, those three points are important because they're not perfectly structured or justified in the balance. The government does describe this as a balanced compromise, but when we listen to stakeholders, we see a different picture emerge.

Animal welfare organizations, including groups like Animal Justice Canada, have raised a key concern: The measure may not reduce animal testing; it may simply relocate it. Because while the bill bans breeding in Ontario, it does not prohibit the use of animals that are bred elsewhere. So, what happens? Institutions may simply source animals from outside the province.

Speaker, that's not reform; this is policy displacement. It allows the government to say it acted without actually addressing the underlying issue.

We are also hearing concerns about oversight. Animal research in Canada is largely governed by institutional animal-care committees. These are committees that operate within the same institutions conducting the research and that review research conducted by their own colleagues. I don't know if you see the problem here, but there is some kind of undue influence or some conflict here that may happen.

Legal scholars and organizations like the Canadian animal law association have pointed out that this particular model, if you're not changing it, actually raises legitimate concerns about independence and transparency. Yet schedule 1 leaves that structure untouched.

Perhaps more importantly, Speaker, there is an evidence gap here. The global scientific community is moving forward. Jurisdictions in Europe and beyond are investing in human cell-based research, organ-on-chip technologies and AI-driven models. These approaches are increasingly seen as more predictive and even more ethical.

But this bill does not support that transition. There's no funding. There's no strategy. And there's no road map. So once again we see a pattern: a restriction that is for show, but no systemic modernization.

**1600**

L'annexe 1 vise à encadrer la recherche sur les animaux, mais elle risque d'être surtout symbolique. C'est

ce qu'on reproche au gouvernement comme procédure. On interdit l'élevage en Ontario sans interdire l'utilisation d'animaux qui proviennent d'ailleurs. Donc, on déplace le problème plutôt que de le régler. De plus, la surveillance repose toujours sur des comités internes, ce qui soulève des questions d'indépendance et de transparence.

Enfin, le projet de loi ne prévoit aucune stratégie pour encourager les méthodes scientifiques modernes, comme les modèles cellulaires ou technologiques que j'ai mentionnés plus tôt.

Speaker, let us now turn to schedule 2, which is actually at the heart of this bill. This is where the government's tough-on-crime narrative is most clearly expressed. The proposal includes mandatory cash bail deposits, property liens on sureties and the potential sale of property to recover bail debt. The government says it will improve compliance and protect public safety.

But this is where the gap between headline policy and evidence-based policy becomes most apparent, because across Ontario we are hearing a consistent message from stakeholders—stakeholders like the Ontario Bar Association, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and from defence lawyers and legal experts. That message is this: This approach risks creating a two-tier justice system, a system where those with financial means can secure release and those without means remain detained.

Speaker, we do not need to speculate about how that plays out. We've seen it in other jurisdictions. In fact, many US states are now actively moving away from cash bail systems because they have been shown to increase pretrial detention, disproportionately impact marginalized communities and fail to improve public safety outcomes. And yet, we are moving towards that model. This is a grave concern, that we are trying to actually do what the US has acknowledged is not working.

At the same time, the bill shifts significant risk onto families—because, who are the sureties? They are parents. They are grandparents, spouses or community members that are trying to help. Under this bill, those individuals could face liens on their homes, forced sale of property or serious financial consequences. We are already hearing concerns raised publicly that this will discourage people from acting as sureties. If that happens, the result is clear: more people detained, more pressure on the system.

But perhaps the most important point is this: Stakeholders across the justice system are telling us that the core problem is not a lack of penalty. Now, we're getting into the crux of the problem here. The problem is delay. Bail hearings that should happen within 24 hours are taking days. Court backlogs are growing. Cases are at risk of being thrown out under constitutional timelines. So, organizations like Legal Aid Ontario and the John Howard Society have emphasized that what we really need is more resources, more capacity, more support for community supervision, but this bill does not address those issues. Instead, it focuses on financial penalties. Speaker, we have to ask, are we fixing this system or are we simply making it look tougher?

L'annexe 2 introduit des dépôts en espèces obligatoires et des sanctions financières importantes, notamment des

hypothèques sur les biens des cautions. Cela risque de créer un système de mise en liberté basé sur la capacité financière plutôt que sur le risque réel. Les experts juridiques avertissent que cela pourrait accroître la détention préventive et pénaliser les personnes à faible revenu.

Surtout, le projet de loi ne s'attaque pas aux véritables problèmes du système, comme les délais judiciaires et le manque de ressources.

I think we need to be concerned about that. Because if the result of this policy is to have more people behind bars waiting for trial when there's already a backlog, there's no wonder that the government thinks that we need more jails. We need to have a system that is more efficient so that people who don't belong in jails are let out and that the room can be made for the people who do belong there. And if we don't fix that, we'll never catch up with building enough jails to put all those people behind bars. To me, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

Speaker, now we're going to talk to schedule 5. This schedule deals with road safety. It introduces stronger penalties, higher fines and immediate licence suspension based on police belief.

Now, road safety is an issue where public concern is very real. Families across Ontario have experienced tragic losses, and I really feel for them because there's nothing worse than losing somebody through an accident that was no fault of their own. Organizations like MADD Canada have rightly called for strong action, but once again, when we listen carefully, the message is more nuanced.

First, there is the issue of implementation. We have heard concerns that similar measures introduced previously have not yet been fully brought into force, and that raises a credibility question. If existing tools are not being used, why are we introducing new ones?

Speaker, these provisions target serious offences: impaired driving, refusal to comply with roadside testing, stunt driving and other dangerous behaviours that put lives at risk. And let me be clear, we all agree that strong action is needed. We can't allow that kind of behaviour to continue to kill people, but there is an important question of implementation. Ontario already has significant tools at its disposal, like administrative licence suspension, ignition interlock programs, mandatory alcohol screening and strong penalties for stunt driving. We have those measures; they do exist.

Yet we continue to hear concerns that some of these measures are not being applied consistently or are limited by gaps in resources, training and enforcement capacity. So why don't we fix that before we add on without being able to implement them? Before introducing new powers, especially those based on police belief alone, we must ask, are we fully using the tools we already have? And I would claim that that's not the case.

Second, there's a question of due process. There are concerns around that. Immediate suspensions based on a police officer's belief introduce administrative penalties before a finding of guilt. There will be people that will have a problem with that, and legal experts, including

voices within the Canadian Bar Association, have cautioned that such powers require clear safeguards, consistent application and meaningful review mechanisms. Unfortunately, this is not in the legislation, and I'm hoping that we will see, in the development of the regulations, appropriate consultations and those safeguard measures to ensure that those measures are not applied without the consistency that it needs to see.

Third, and importantly, road safety experts tell us that enforcement alone is not enough. Research from organizations like the Traffic Injury Research Foundation shows that effective road safety strategies require infrastructure design, traffic calming, education and prevention. This is what you should be doing before you come and propose punitive measures, but this bill focuses almost exclusively on penalties.

Speaker, if we are serious about saving lives, we must focus on what works, not just what sounds tough. And I know this is a rhetoric of this government: being tough on crime. I get it. But we need to be careful about what we say and what we really do.

#### 1610

Donc l'annexe 5 renforce les sanctions en matière de sécurité routière, notamment avec des suspensions immédiates de permis. Cependant, elle soulève des préoccupations quant au respect des droits, puisqu'elle permet des sanctions avant qu'une faute soit établie par un tribunal. De plus, les experts en sécurité routière rappellent que les sanctions seules ne suffisent pas : il faut aussi investir dans la prévention, l'aménagement routier et l'éducation.

Speaker, finally, schedule 6: This schedule may not attract headlines, but it has real consequences for people across this province. We are told that there will be service standards—timelines for processing police report checks. On its face, it sounds like a needed improvement, but let's consider what this means in practice.

For a student waiting to begin a placement, for a worker trying to start a job in a long-term-care home, for example, or for a volunteer supporting their community, delays in obtaining a record check can have real consequences. It may mean loss of opportunities, delayed income and unnecessary stress.

At the same time, this schedule also clarifies what information can be disclosed, sometimes including interactions that did not result in a conviction. That raises questions about fairness, privacy and long-term consequences for individuals.

Here is the main concern: While the government is creating service standards, it is also removing meaningful remedies if those standards are not met. So we're creating service standards, we're putting timelines in place, but what happens if the timeline is missed? Actually, nothing. What happens when someone loses a job opportunity because of a delay? This is not enforceable.

Without accountability, standards risk becoming little more than guidelines. The government calls this modernization, but stakeholders are raising concerns in organizations like Volunteer Canada. That sounds very much like

they were not consulted during the elaboration of these changes, because they're raising the concerns. If they would have been raised at the forefront, we may have been able to address this in the legislation.

Second, the details are not in the legislation. Again, hopefully it will be addressed in the regulations, but that limits transparency and that also limits oversight.

L'annexe 6 crée des normes de service pour les vérifications d'antécédents judiciaires, tout en retirant les recours si ces normes ne sont pas respectées. Cela crée un problème d'imputabilité : des normes qu'on établit, mais sans conséquences réelles.

De plus, les détails sont laissés à des règlements qui vont être développés dans le futur, ce qui limite évidemment la transparence et le contrôle parlementaire, parce qu'ici en Chambre, on ne se prononce pas sur les règlements.

Ces vérifications étant essentielles pour l'emploi et le bénévolat, les impacts sur les citoyens peuvent être importants—donc ici l'importance de faire ses devoirs.

Speaker, across this bill, we see a consistent pattern. The government is responding to real concerns, but too often the response is for show rather than being effective, punitive rather than systemic and politically compelling rather than evidence-based. Ontarians deserve better than that. They deserve policies that actually reduce reoffending, actually improve road safety and actually strengthen trust in our institutions.

As Liberals, we do believe in public safety—don't get me wrong, we're all on board with that—but we also believe that public safety must be effective. Public safety must be fair and transparent and grounded in evidence. Again, this is lacking from this bill because we haven't seen consultations. I certainly do hope, having said all of this, that we're going to see the process follow through here, that this bill will get to committee, that we will get to hear from experts and maybe improve the bill where it lacks. Because the real question at the end of the day, Madam Speaker, is whether it actually makes people safer.

Madame la Présidente, ce projet de loi vise des objectifs importants, mais il mise trop souvent sur des mesures d'apparence plutôt que sur des solutions efficaces. La sécurité publique est importante, et elle doit reposer sur des politiques fondées sur des preuves, équitables et transparentes. La véritable question n'est pas de savoir si une loi semble sévère, mais si elle rend réellement nos communautés plus sécuritaires.

Madam Speaker, I see my colleague left me a lot more time than I had prepared for, but I will still conclude my remarks at this point, and I thank you for your attention.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Questions?

**Mr. Brian Saunderson:** I want to thank the members opposite for their comments. My question is for the member from Ottawa–Vanier. We served together on the justice policy committee in the last session of this Parliament, and I know she's very familiar with the bail reform that has gone on in this province. That has actually stimulated the federal government to make significant

changes. In fact, Bill C-14, the Bail and Sentencing Reform Act, adopted many of the recommendations from the province of Ontario and, in fact, all the provinces of Canada, led by Premier Ford when he was chair of the federation.

My question to the member opposite is, under the proposed legislation that we're debating today, the estreatment proceedings—and she will remember from the bail reform hearings that we heard from police, law enforcement and many sectors, including lawyers, about the lack of follow-up for breach of bail conditions and the lack of estreatment proceedings. As you know, in this legislation we're proposing to enforce that, to take stronger steps to track and enforce it. I'd like her to comment on why she feels—or does she see the value in making sure that we follow up on those accused who breach their bail conditions pending trial?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I thank the member for the question.

Yes, in fact, I think we all agree that the bail reform was something that was coming up that needed to be addressed. But what I'm concerned with here is the impact that it might have on more vulnerable people.

I know all the bail reform—the bail system works in theory. The person will only be faced with paying the amount if they don't follow the conditions. But the problem for vulnerable people is that they may have a problem with the other conditions of the bail, which is having a stable address, if you're thinking about homeless people; or having a surety, not being able to find somebody who will back them up for the money that they have to promise they will pay if they don't follow the condition.

Really, the concern here is about getting more of those people behind bars just because they cannot meet the conditions, and I don't think this is framed appropriately here in this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**MPP Jamie West:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you as well to my colleagues from the Liberal Party.

The member from Kanata–Carleton started off the debate, and we all know her long history of military service.

One of the things I was reading about this is that the majority of cases brought to court end up being stayed or dismissed because they don't have the funding to get through the court system ahead of time. The latest stat we have is 2022-23, where 56% of our cases had the charges withdrawn, stayed, dismissed or discharged.

I'm wondering, in terms of a battle plan, from your military experience, if you don't have the funding and the resources, how effective can your battle plan be?

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** I would thank the honourable member for his question.

You need to think the process all the way through. We only have to look south of the border, where he does something and hasn't thought it all the way through. When you come to a strategy, a plan, you have to look at every

single aspect of that plan and make sure that it's going to function. I think that's the piece that has been missing. They haven't followed the plan right from start to finish with all of the requisite pieces, like legal aid, funding the courts and support in the courts. Both kind of pieces are missing, and that's one of the reasons why I find this particular bill worrisome. Thank you for the question.

1620

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Madam Speaker, we often forget that dangerous driving does not only affect the victims and the drivers, but also impacts people who are not directly involved in the accidents, such as family members, loved ones, dependants.

Those who have suffered as a result of reckless driving—our government wants to make sure that these individuals are protected as well. This is why, Madam Speaker, through this bill, the government is exploring an option to require impaired drivers who kill a parent or a guardian to pay ongoing child support to the victim's children. This is about accountability and supporting the families devastated by crime as well as reminding everyone that such incidents cause far greater loss than may be apparent at first glance.

So my question is very simple to the member opposite: Do you support this change, and would you vote in favour of this bill?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Yes, thank you. I think if you listened to my remarks, I did mention how terrible those accidents were, that we do have something to prevent that kind of behaviour that has dramatic impact on families' lives and people's lives. The only caution that I raised was making sure that it's framed in a way that it doesn't give unlimited power to the police; that there is some kind of protection of people's rights, like you can't be found guilty unless you've gone through some kind of process to determine whether you're guilty.

So the ability for police to be able to stop a person and take away their licence right away without any kind of due process is concerning. It's a constitutional right, I think, that we're talking about here. Again, it's just about putting in some safeguards to make sure that there is no abuse. Everything is in the implementation and they way it's going to be framed, I guess, in the regulations.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**MPP Wayne Gates:** I just want to—the first time I've been able to stand up this year, actually. So I want to welcome everybody back from Christmas break, Family Day, March break, first day of spring—and the Jays' home opener is on Friday, and we're back to work already. I know you're really surprised by that, Speaker; I hope you're not tired from your full day today, but that's where we're at.

Obviously, on Bill 75, I get an opportunity to ask the Liberals a question. Ontario bail courts are understaffed, overburdened and often unable to properly assess the risk.

What can we do to address the crisis in our bail courts to help keep all our communities safe?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Very excellent question—in fact, maybe it went under the radar for everybody, but I did table Bill 53, which is the Dignity and Mental Health in Jails Act.

There are a lot of people that find themselves in jails that don't belong there: A lot of people are just awaiting trial; a lot of people that have mental health issues or addictions. I actually went on a tour and visited some of the jails we have in our province, and the conditions are certainly not something that anybody would want to have to endure.

So apart from bringing more resources in our court system so people can get justice in a timely manner and not find themselves behind bars for times that they don't need to be, I think alternatively we need to bring support within the jail system. What my bill is proposing is to bring mental health services within the jails, because even when they're let free, very often they have nowhere to go, and I know that the condition in jail does nothing to convince people to behave better once they're out. So I think that that kind of support needs to happen in the jail at the same time that we need to ramp up our resources for the court system.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** I wanted to ask our member from Ottawa–Vanier about, I believe, schedule 1 in Bill 75. We all remember last August, when we heard about the animal testing that was going on with the dogs, the cruel cardiac experiments at the London research institute, which somehow enabled this section in Bill 75, which is a bit curious in and of itself. But again, I want to ask the member how this actually helps the situation with the animals. Does it stop the cruel animal testing?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Thank you to the member for your question. If we have good regulations—because again, invasive research is not defined in the act, so we don't know what that means.

But the main thing is, though, we're not resolving the problem, because even if the bill says that we cannot breed animals for research, it doesn't prevent a research institute to get their animals from elsewhere and continue to do what they're doing. And moreover, the committees that are supposed to oversee those procedures are within the same organization, so there's a kind of conflict of interest here.

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

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** Good afternoon, Madam Speaker. I'll be speaking on Bill 75, and sharing my time with the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville.

I'm very proud to be here alongside my colleagues to speak about Bill 75, the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act, which represents the latest bold step our government is taking to hold offenders accountable, support victims of crime, and strengthen public safety.

I'd be remiss not to recognize here in the House the excellent work and tireless dedication that so many have put into crafting this meaningful piece of legislation, namely the Solicitor General, the Associate Solicitor General, the Attorney General and all their staff, my team at the Associate Attorney General's office and our civil service. The level of work here is a true testament to the notion that through collaboration, government can create a real positive change.

Speaker, under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, our government has been consistent in advocating for meaningful changes to a broken bail system that all too often will allow repeat violent offenders to take advantage of a revolving door on crime, enabled by lacklustre consequences that inevitably hurt our communities. We know that existing holes in the federal bail system do not serve the best interests of our courts, our law enforcement, our families and our province. That's why we will continue to ask Ottawa to implement serious bail reform.

But we will not stand by idly and wait for others to work. We will step up to protect the people of Ontario. Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we are vigorously meeting the challenge by taking bold action to protect communities and restore confidence in our justice system. Our government has already made substantial progress on this front through the passage of the Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act in 2023, the Enhancing Access to Justice Act in 2024, and the Protect Ontario Through Safer Streets and Stronger Communities Act in 2025.

It's an honour to share more with the House this afternoon about the next step we are taking to enhance Ontario's public safety and justice systems. I'll remind the House that in the last election, voters overwhelmingly placed trust in our government and not the opposition to protect Ontario. We take that trust very seriously and will not apologize for our calls and actions to keep our streets safe.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear: Through Bill 75, our government is acting and delivering on our promise to fix the broken bail system by making bail meaningful, more real, and consequential for people accused of serious crimes.

In the year that I've spent as the Associate Attorney General of Ontario, I've heard from prosecutors, members of law enforcement, municipalities and citizens. Families and communities are frustrated by the risks that repeat violent offenders pose by walking free without accountability. Our government cannot stand by and watch that happen, and we're using every tool in our tool box to fight back.

The province of Ontario has a responsibility to ensure that bail, and therefore the public's confidence in the administration of justice, is upheld.

**1630**

Our hands are tied because criminal law is within the federal jurisdiction. However, within the administration of justice, cash bail is where we can make an impact. Pledges and promises have been used to reduce the effectiveness

of bail. This has created threats to public safety and allowed repeat violent offenders back onto the street.

We're working to restore the public's confidence in the system by making bail meaningful. If passed, Bill 75 will require an accused person and their surety to provide a cash security deposit in the full amount ordered by the court. By introducing mandatory full-cash security deposits, we're working to ensure that bail conditions imposed on offenders are real, not empty promises. By doing so, this government is restoring a long-standing expectation of bail proceedings, in turn making communities safer and working to protect the people of Ontario.

This is a significant change from the current system, which simply relies on a promise to pay, no cash deposit required. It's a system that leads to challenges in collecting forfeited bail payments, and it also means that resources that are used for bail collection can be freed up to protect the people of Ontario. Mandatory cash deposits will strengthen bail compliance, making bail meaningful, more real and consequential for the accused and their surety, aiming to prevent crime and promote public safety.

But that's not all we're doing, Madam Speaker. Our government is also working to ensure that bail becomes meaningful by expanding on existing collection tools for bail debts, like garnishing wages.

These changes will dramatically improve the processes we already have in place, make our bail system more efficient, and ensure real consequences for these offenders. This change to bail represents another positive step that this government is taking to protect communities and restore confidence in our justice system. Bill 75 sends a clear message to repeat offenders: If you break the law, there will be real consequences.

Madam Speaker, I'm sure the House will agree with me when I say that families deserve to know if dangerous individuals are living amongst them in their communities. If passed, Bill 75 will explore options to make certain pieces of information contained in the Ontario sex offender and trafficking registry publicly available, giving families the information they need to protect themselves.

Quite frankly, it's something that's long overdue, and we've been hearing it from all fronts, from law enforcement, from advocates, from municipalities and, most importantly, from the parents who are concerned for their children's safety walking home from school or playing in the park with their friends. Additional transparency and access to critical information is critical in ensuring that the people of Ontario are safe from dangerous individuals that hide in the shadows.

Madam Speaker, far too often, innocent families are being threatened by reckless drivers—another piece within Bill 75, and it's a piece that's another very important piece. I've heard from too many families whose lives have been turned upside down in an instant because of the dangerous decisions of someone else. While these drivers too often get another chance, the families they harm do not.

For law-abiding drivers who do everything in their power to be safe on our roads and for families to feel safe in our communities, our government has the responsibility to take bold action to cover what they cannot.

As my colleagues have mentioned, Andrew Cristillo was killed earlier this year in a collision involving a driver who was already facing charges for dangerous driving and stunt driving. His family has since called for change through Andrew's Law, and our government is listening.

That's why we're introducing a suite of measures aimed at cracking down on dangerous driving and making sure these drivers are not free to drive recklessly on our roads and get by with nothing more than a slap on the wrist. These measures include allowing police to issue an immediate roadside driver suspension for 90 days and to impound a vehicle for seven days if they have reason to believe a person was driving dangerously. We're also increasing penalties for careless driving, for driving with a suspended licence and for commercial drivers convicted of distracted driving.

Madam Speaker, our government believes that real accountability means facing the full consequences of your actions, especially when those actions could take a life and devastate a family. That's why we're also exploring a measure that would require impaired drivers to pay ongoing child support if they kill a child's parent or guardian. Because when someone chooses to get behind the wheel impaired and takes a life, the consequences of that action and that decision resonate far beyond that moment in time. Those consequences will carry on for the children's entire lives. These kids will grow up without a parent, without that support, without the stability, without that guidance, without their love.

That burden should never fall on grieving families or anyone else. We cannot bring back that family member. We cannot repair that broken family. But we will work hard to hold that person responsible for what they've done. This is about real accountability—not just lip service, but consequences that reflect the impact of these actions. Because if someone's actions take a parent away from a child, they should also take responsibility for what that child has lost.

Madam Speaker, dangerous driving is not a victimless crime. It has devastating consequences for families and communities throughout the province. And that's why our government is saying enough is enough. We will continue to take action to ensure our communities are safer, and that includes the roads that Ontario families drive on day and night. We have a duty to make sure Ontario remains the best place to live, work and raise a family. I believe these measures will help us get there.

I'd also like to echo the comments made by my colleagues on the value of this bill. It displays our government's clear intention and provides tangible action to keep criminals behind bars, strengthen the penalties for dangerous driving and reinforce the tools at our disposal to keep predators away from our children. Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we will never stop in our efforts to protect the people of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):**

I recognize the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville.

**MPP Silvia Gualtieri:** Thank you to the member from Vaughan–Woodbridge for his profound words. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in this House in support of Bill 75, the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act.

Before I speak on the contents of this bill, I want to acknowledge the incredible leadership of our Solicitor General and the collaboration across multiple ministries that made this package possible.

What we have before us today is a comprehensive response to the concerns raised by Ontarians, by law enforcement and by families who have lived through tragedy. Our government has been clear from the beginning: Our commitment to public safety is non-wavering. Bill 75 builds that commitment with meaningful measures that better protect the people of this province.

That commitment to families is exactly where I want to begin, Speaker, because no family should ever have to endure the heartbreak of losing a loved one because another person chose to drive dangerously.

Tragically, on August 3, 2025, Andrew Cristillo, a 35-year-old husband and father from Stouffville, was killed in a collision involving a driver who was already facing charges for dangerous driving and stunt driving. He left behind his wife, Christina, and his three daughters, Leah, Chloe and Ella.

His family launched a petition calling on this government to act, and we listened. This is why Bill 75 proposes Andrew's Law. If passed, police would be able to immediately suspend a driver's licence for 90 days and impound a vehicle for seven days when they have reason to believe a person was driving dangerously. It would also provide for an indefinite driver's licence suspension upon conviction for dangerous driving causing death and will also increase penalties for driving while suspended.

**1640**

Additionally, our government is developing new measures that would require impaired drivers to pay ongoing child support when their actions cause the death of a child's parent or guardian. Though nothing can ever compensate for the loss of a loved one, this measure is intended to help ease the burden during an unimaginably difficult time and provide greater stability to the children who are left behind.

This bill also recognizes that road safety is also about prevention. In addition to stronger penalties, our government is also reviewing novice driver education and working with school boards and police partners to strengthen road safety awareness for young drivers.

These are not small changes, Speaker. They are the kinds of measure that had they been in place on August 3, 2025, may have kept Andrew Cristillo alive. No family should endure what the Cristillo family has endured, and through this legislation, our government is doing everything we can to ensure fewer families ever will.

Bill 75 recognizes that protecting public safety also requires action beyond our roads. It means ensuring that

the justice system has the tools it needs to respond appropriately to repeat offenders and to enforce conditions that are imposed by the courts. Bill 75 takes the important steps that are needed in order to strengthen Ontario's bail system.

In 2024, Peel Regional Police reported that one in three individuals arrested for auto theft were already on bail at the time of their arrest for the same type of offence. Organized crime is responsible for roughly 75% of auto thefts in this province, generating over \$1 billion in insurance claims.

Bill 75 responds to these concerns in a practical and targeted way. If passed, it would make cash security deposits mandatory, requiring accused persons or their sureties to provide the full amount awarded by the court in cash and up front. This is important, Speaker, because the system today relies too heavily on promises to pay. When bail conditions are violated and forfeiture is ordered, collecting on those promises can take significant time and resources, and it ultimately has a strain on the entire system. These mandatory cash deposits will act as a key deterrence factor in the future.

Bail must mean something, Speaker. Under this legislation, it will.

But strengthening the bail system only works if we have the capacity to back it up, and that is why our government has committed to adding nearly 1,000 new correctional beds across the province by 2032. We are reopening, retrofitting and repairing former correctional facilities to make sure that no offender walks free simply because there's no room.

This legislation introduces new measures that improve safety in adult correctional facilities—and I've been there several times with the ministry. These protections include protective hatch barriers to help guard against projectiles and thrown fluids over the fences—and an expanded canine detection program to keep contraband and dangerous substances out of correctional facilities.

I can say with confidence that Bill 75 stands in strong support of our public safety personnel and their families. These are the people who show up for Ontarians every single day. They do the difficult work, often in dangerous conditions, and they deserve to know that their government is standing with them. And for families of those who did not come home, this bill puts forward the Constable Joe MacDonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund, providing scholarships to the surviving spouses and children of public safety officers killed in the line of duty. Moving this fund from an order in council into legislation gives it the permanence it deserves.

We are also expanding access to the Ontario Immediate Family Wellness Program so that more families of fallen public safety personnel can receive the mental health and crisis support they need, because supporting our officers means supporting the people who love them too.

And Speaker, public safety also means giving families confidence that the systems designed to protect our children—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Questions? I recognize the member for Mushkegowuk—James Bay.

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** I listened intently to all the presenters today, and what we see very often when government brings a bill is they expedite the process past committee. When we're talking about a bill like this one where we realize there's stuff in there that is good, but there's a lot of it that can be improved—and we heard that this afternoon.

My question to the government: Will you bring this to committee or fast-track it like you did with the rest of the bills that you introduced before we came back?

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** Thank you for the question. It's clear that this is a very important piece of legislation. It's speaking to issues that are near and dear to our hearts on both sides, between all the various parties. I think one of the things that our government has put forward is a comprehensive piece of legislation that seeks to address those issues. We all know that the bail system is broken; we all have been speaking about this for I don't know how long now. Our government is coming forward with what we believe to be a solution to, at least, move us in the direction that we need to go and hopefully encourage the federal government to do more.

I think the process that we will follow is the process that we have followed. We will ensure that we bring forward the legislation in a way that answers the needs of the people in the province of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**MPP Paul Vickers:** For years, Ontario's bail system has allowed violent and repeat offenders to walk free on empty promises, putting families and communities at risk. When bail is forfeited, collecting payment is costly and often ineffective, leaving victims frustrated and law enforcement powerless. This revolving door undermines the confidence of our justice system and jeopardizes public safety. Our government promises to fix this system and restore accountability.

Can the member from Mississauga East—Cooksville explain how this measure will strengthen compliance and protect Ontario families from dangerous offenders?

**MPP Silvia Gualtieri:** Thank you for that question.

Bill 75 delivers on our promise to fix a broken bail system that has failed Ontario families for too long. Violent, repeat offenders have been cycling through the system with little accountability. By introducing mandatory full-cash security deposits, we ensure bail conditions are real, not empty promises.

This reform sends a clear message: If you break the law, there will be consequences. Combined with modernized debt collection and enhanced tracking tools, we are closing loopholes and putting public safety first. Under Premier Ford's leadership, we're taking bold action to protect communities and restore confidence in justice.

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**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**MPP Catherine McKenney:** We already know that Ontario's courts are already failing to meet their constitutionally required bail hearing timeline, and we've heard from the Ontario Bar Association that a cash bail requirement will actually increase the number of people sitting in remand today.

My question is, what specific provisions are put in place here to ensure that people who simply cannot afford cash bail will not be in prison indefinitely in an already overcrowded system, and to ensure that people who are just simply poor are not disadvantaged here and remain in custody for an extra length of time simply because they are poor and don't have the money to pay cash bail?

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** Thank you to the member opposite for that question. It is obviously an important question to be asking, but if you've been in the House and you've been listening to the investments that the Attorney General has been making and this government has been making with respect to increasing the number of judges that are being incorporated into the system, the amount of administrative supports for those judges that are being appointed, what in effect is happening is we're recognizing that the system needs to be built, and our government is the first government that has made the significant investments that have been made to ensure that that system is there.

Now, we cannot forget that the system we're building is a system that has to address the issues relating to public safety and ensure that people who are offending are dealt with appropriately, but at the same time are not given a free pass out as a result of a bail system that's not working. There is a balance there, and our government is working to build the system to ensure that we in effect will have what we need to do with bail and ensure the bail system is actually doing what it's supposed to be—restoring confidence in the people that are abiding by the law, the 99.9% that actually abide the law.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** I heard the member opposite speak earlier about if you break the law, there's going to be real consequences. And I remember what the member from Ottawa-Vanier spoke about just a few minutes ago, about real consequences for everybody else as well in terms of the surety, in terms of who really is paying the price.

We agree: People who offend need to pay the price. There needs to be strict bail conditions. But when you look at the amounts, who's going suffer more here as well beyond the victims? What about the families of the accused, the alleged offenders, with new surety provisions—spouses, children, parents, grandparents—to find that money?

So my question is, how do you prevent the new bail provisions from victimizing the families of the alleged offenders?

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** Thank you to the member opposite for that question. We have to balance the rights of all individuals, but I can tell you from personal

experience that my greatest concern is to see a child, for instance, who has lost both parents as a result of a drunken driver, losing both parents at the same time and having to be raised as an orphan and having to learn his culture from someone like me who is teaching him French at the time. Those are the people that I have the most concern about, because at the end of the day, what caused the chain of events that brought us to the point where an individual has lost his parents—that person should be responsible.

If someone is going to take the risk of allowing that individual to come out and put up the bail, then there should be real consequences for that individual as well, because we've seen repeat offenders—not the first time, not the second time, sometimes three and four times—come out and breach those very conditions. Maybe if the consequences were a little bit more dire to the individual, to the person who caused the incident—if those conditions were a little bit tougher, and maybe a little bit tougher on the family as well, there would be less violence and less crimes. I think that's what we have to take into account: the individuals that suffered, the victims and the victims' families that are left having to deal with the problem, that have to actually deal with those issues.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** This bill that I introduced in December is a reaffirmation by our government, led by the Premier, to protect Ontario. I want to ask my friend, the member from Mississauga East-Cooksville who, by the way, was with me when we badged the largest class ever at Peel Regional Police service—86 strong. Does she agree that the strengthening—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Thank you—of the laws will encourage more people to seek a profession as a police officer and, in that way, further strengthen our public safety?

**MPP Silvia Gualtieri:** Thank you for the question, Minister. I would like to say that that evening was the highlight of all the tours that we have taken for the police services, and I'll tell you why. We had 88 police officers—brand new, spanking new police officers—and they were so starry-eyed, and we want to keep them starry-eyed. That's why we want—

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

**MPP Jamie West:** Today we're debating Bill 75, Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act. Just as a refresher for everybody watching at home, this was tabled in December, and then the House rose for three and almost-a-half months, 14 weeks. My colleague from Niagara Falls, he had mentioned merry Christmas, happy new year, happy Family Day, happy first day of spring, happy March break. Am I missing anything else?

**MPP Wayne Gates:** New year's.

**MPP Jamie West:** New Year's Eve.

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Flag Day.

**MPP Jamie West:** Flag Day.

It's tongue-in-cheek, but the reality is that the rest of Ontario has been hard at work every day. I know there's work in the riding to be done, but we have to stop this ideology of pretending that the legislation isn't important, and so the Conservative government decides not to call back the Legislature and then rushes everything and cancels committee and cancels consultation because there's no time. We only have this much time to sit. I just want to have that on the record because it is frustrating on our side of the House. We believe that there's an equal importance to us being here in the Legislature and also the importance of the opposition, of any party, to hold the government to account, which is important.

Today we're talking about Bill 75. Before I go off too far into it, just because there are a bunch of different schedules, I do want to talk about the Joe Mac schedule, schedule 3: Constable Joe MacDonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund Act, 2025. The reason I want to talk about this—one, it's a great idea. Joe MacDonald—I keep saying "Joe Mac" because in Sudbury, for a whole generation of young people, they know Joe MacDonald not as the officer; they know him for the Joe Mac football league, and I'm going to talk about that for a minute.

What this does, it creates a new act that legislates a fund already created by an order in council. It's the Joe MacDonald survivor scholarship fund, which provides scholarships to survivors of line-of-duty deaths. This is incredibly important to celebrate and to champion, but I want to talk about what happened to Joe MacDonald.

In 1993, there was a traffic stop, almost 40 years ago. Joe MacDonald was assaulted, shot and killed. You know, Sudbury is a decent-sized city, but we don't have acts of violence like that very often. It resonated and sent a chill across our entire city. As a community, we know Joe MacDonald's name. We unfortunately know he had a brother who was also shot. We know it very well.

I want to talk about the legacy, the Joe Mac football program, because we didn't really have a football program. You could play football with your friends in high school; you could join a football program if you were interested. But there was no development or Little League football program in Sudbury. The Joe MacDonald football league, what it does is it teaches the fundamentals of football. You can start as a Mini Mac, just as a little tiny kid, and then there's a junior and seniors' league. My son was part of this program. Literally, my son, the day before—it starts on Labour Day. The training day is Labour Day. The day before, we were riding bikes—he was just a little kid—and he said, "I'm a little nervous about tomorrow." And I said, "Well, what are you nervous about?" He said, "I don't know much about football." I said, "What do you know?" and he said, "I know the ball looks like an egg."

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So he went through this program. He did the juniors and the seniors. His team won the championships for the seniors. But the following year, he played for the Sudbury Gladiators, and then afterwards, he went back to coach for

the Joe Mac football league. And this is the fundamentals—if you're in a hockey city, the fundamentals of teaching kids to play hockey so they can play hockey more professionally, or AA or AAA, or just to enjoy it.

This is the legacy of Joe MacDonald and our city, is that there are thousands of young people who have access to learning how to play football—that's young men, young women, playing football, learning to love football and understand the rules; opportunities for people to coach. So I just want to acknowledge the government for recognizing Joe MacDonald and having his name repeated here in the bill, because the more you say someone's name, the more they stay alive. I know it's very meaningful to our community and to their families. So I just really wanted to say that for Joe's family.

I believe that there is a sincere want to keep criminals behind bars, no matter what party. I know sometimes in debate and stuff, things get thrown around, but there is. We want people to be held accountable. We want to ensure that people who do stuff that is against the law or things that are unspeakable, that they're held accountable for what they do. But the Premier has been the Premier—the Conservatives have been in government for eight years, and this is an ongoing issue that we're seeing.

One of the stats I mentioned earlier today was that 56% of cases—because there isn't the funding and the system in place—in 2022-23, they were withdrawn, stayed, plea bargained or just tossed. So that means, in some cases, you could have somebody who is innocent and has been charged with something, and their case disappears. But you could have, like we saw in the gallery once with victims of intimate partner violence, where the abuser and the attacker—that lady who came to speak to us, she didn't get her day in court. Her family didn't get to see what had happened.

So you can't talk about being tough on crime if you're not funding the system to hold people accountable. Earlier, there was a question—the Conservatives were debating this—about the amount of police officers who were graduating, and a system like this, how it will make their work meaningful. I agree with that, but you have to put the dollars behind it. The budget will be released on Thursday, so maybe the budget will show how the court system is going to be properly funded so that we aren't tossing these cases out, we aren't plea bargaining out.

But if not, Speaker, the Conservative government will be frustrating police officers, because it takes a lot of work to build the case and the evidence, to capture somebody, to bring them in so that lawyers can do their work, to hold them accountable. And if you do all of that work and that person who you know has broken the law and should be held accountable is tossed out on a technicality—because the courts don't have the system behind them, the funding behind them, to hold that person accountable—that is a slap in the face to police officers who work tirelessly to keep us safe. That's my concern in this. We have to make sure that people who are breaking the law are held accountable.

There's a section of this act in schedule 5—it has to do with suspending a driver's licence if you've killed

someone while dangerous driving. So their licence will be suspended indefinitely when this happens. It's 2026—just if someone's looking back at Hansard and looking at this. But Bill 197 is a very similar bill. Schedule 5 of this bill is about dangerous driving causing death, but Bill 197, from 2024, two years ago, is very similar, but it's about impaired driving—similar circumstances. I agree with this. I don't think there's anyone in this room who would disagree with this. But that bill from two years ago is not enforced yet.

This is why I think a lot of people become skeptical of politicians, because they see the press conference with this announced and they see the vote where everyone stands up and claps and your colleagues shake your hands, but then something happens to someone in your family and you find out that law is not enforced. There was the photo op and the press conference, but it wasn't enforced and you're not able to take advantage of it. If we're going to table bills that are, at the end of the day, paper tigers, we should not be wasting the time of the people of Ontario.

I've seen this. I've seen this as shadow minister for labour. There has been bill after bill after bill that are considered labour bills, and about 40% of the bills are rehashes of legislation that already exists. Everyone in the room already knows, because I've said it many times during the debate, but there was already a law to clean bathrooms.

But there will be bills about how we're going to double the maximum fine. Every single time, I'll say, "How many times did you apply the maximum fine last time," and the answer is zero. The maximum fine was never applied under the Conservative government, never applied under the Liberal government. So when you say we're going to double it, I want to actually put an amendment and say we're going to make it 100 times, because if you're not going to—I'm trying to think of how to say this well. There are certain words I cannot say during debate. If you're not going to do it, then don't do it huge. That's my concern with this.

There are always things where you can work around the edges and adjust, but I think the goal of this, keeping criminals behind bars—for sure. We're all aligned on that, but it can't just be something that is used as a stump speech. It can't just be something where politicians stand in front of some cameras for the media and say, "Look what we're doing" and "We're tough on crime," and then people who are affected by crime find out that they're not really. It would be tough on crime if only there were proper funding, then those charges wouldn't be dropped or stayed or dismissed or plea bargained. If only Bill 197 had been proclaimed into force, then it would be useful to them. We can't have legislation that, like I said earlier, is a paper tiger; it won't work.

I'll move on to other parts of the bill. A lot of schedule 2 has to do with the Bail Act. We've heard many times about the federal bail program, and honestly, there are some questions around the federal bail program—if it's actually going to be constitutional, what's happening here. We're probably going to be spending more time in court,

ironically, to talk about a bill about keeping criminals in jail. The CCLA's director of criminal justice says, "The Ontario government's proposal to require cash bail creates two tiers of justice: one for the rich, and the other for the rest of us."

I know that there are some people who hear that and say, "Who cares? It's a criminal. If it's harder for them, who cares?" But the reality of our justice system is based on the ideology that you are innocent until proven guilty. Sometimes people are charged who are innocent. We all know this. So if you don't have the funding to pay for bail and you can't get released because you just don't have enough money in your wallet, you're creating an unfair system. You can't bias that on, "Yes, but we think he's guilty, so he deserves it." That isn't how the justice system works.

So we end up with a slippery slope where justice is a little more accessible if you have some money in your pocket and less accessible if you don't, and life is already hard enough if you don't have money in your pocket. A lot of the resources that would actually help deter crime have to do with having money in your pocket.

My colleague talked about Jean Valjean from *Les Mis*. If you don't have any food, you may want to steal food. Jean Valjean stole a little stick of bread and went to jail for it in the story.

In Sudbury, for example, I grew up in a very—I call it working class. I grew up in a poor neighbourhood in the Donovan, and there's a program that's been around for 30 years, I guess, called Better Beginnings Better Futures. There's an area where there isn't a lot of resources for kids to do stuff. A lot of kids are unsupervised, and you get into trouble. So they started this grassroots program, Better Beginnings Better Futures, and they help kids with homework; they help with meals; they help teach co-operative games. Basically, they give kids something to do, because when you don't have something to do, you'll find something to do and it's not always something that you'd be proud to brag about afterwards. And because of this, because of the resources that they get and the money they get to be able to do this, you prevent a lot of people from getting into petty theft and shoplifting and maybe breaking and entering—the kind of stuff that can escalate to larger crimes later on. It's a wise investment at the beginning. But like most not-for-profits, their funding has been flatlined forever and they're constantly trying to get more funding.

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This is a program that actually would prevent anyone from getting into crime in the first place. We can invest downstream. It's pay now or pay later, but you'd actually pay a lot less ahead of time if you were to fund these sorts of things. That has to be part of the situation.

It is glamorous to lock people up. It's exciting in the news when you see somebody with all the trappings that they catch: the drug paraphernalia and the money wrapped in saran wrap and all that stuff. But imagine how safe the world would be if people had the options and they weren't

getting into crime in the first place—if that wasn't a career for them, if that wasn't the only opportunity they had.

I have a friend of the family, actually, who went to jail. She speaks at high schools. She went to jail for drug smuggling. Basically, what happened to her is that she and her boyfriend got pregnant and then somewhere around the sixth or seventh month, her boyfriend decided he wasn't interested in helping to support the child anymore. And somebody said, "They're not going to check you. You're obviously pregnant. Pregnant people don't smuggle drugs. All you need to do is go to Jamaica, stay there for the week, have a vacation, and come back and bring one package with you." And then she ended up in jail. That's a life circumstance sort of thing, right? She's very transparent. She broke the law; she's not trying to shy away from that. But she's trying to share that experience so that other people don't get in that situation.

But when you have limited means and you don't have many options—right now, the Premier has talked about, for example, reducing the amount of grants for OSAP, so your bills would be a lot higher if you go for any kind of training and post-secondary education. Well, if you're limited to go to post-secondary education, the reality for a lot of people—if you're not going to the skilled trades and if you can't inherit your dad's sticker factory, your options are limited if you don't get to go to post-secondary education. If you want to get better paycheques and make more money, it limits you. But if that cost of entry is a barrier, it's going to be tough for you to get into place, right? As your options become limited because there's fewer grants and you'll never pay off your loans, you end up trapped. And you end up trapped, ironically, by the government that says they want to be tough on crime.

We need to invest all along. I want to—there's a couple—God, time is flying.

I want to talk about the Coroners Act. There are some changes to the Coroners Act, but mainly I want to talk about the Coroners Act because I want to recognize the important work that the steelworkers did in Sudbury. Local 6500, because of the amount of people who died due to occupational health and safety, worked really well with the local undertaker, where they would exhume bodies and examine them in order to change the health and safety act and Mining Act and WSIB act about what's going on there. It's not completely related to this bill, but I want to acknowledge that hard work because these are working-class people who are protecting other working-class people and making a difference in miners' lives. And as we talk about critical minerals and the importance of mining, it's hard to attract people into mining if you can't keep them safe. And so, I just want to acknowledge 6500 for all the work that they have done on that.

Schedule 5 is about the Highway Traffic Act. This is the one I talked about before, with the indefinite suspension of someone's driver's licence if they were convicted of dangerous driving that would cause death. Ironically, when I read this, I thought about the news article around the time they were removing speed cameras. I can't remember if it was like 12 or 13—it was either a

cabinet minister or his aide had multiple speeding tickets. And it just seemed odd that the Conservative government would have a thing about dangerous driving and speeding, knowing that somebody who was driving a member of their cabinet around had multiple speeding tickets. Because, you know, you can't inhale and exhale at the same time. That kind of safety would start at home.

I think that I've got about two minutes. In the last two minutes, really, if we're going to talk about being tough on crime, we need to start at home. We need to be frank and honest about the realities. I mentioned a friend of the family who had broken the law and had been honest about it and forthcoming and working with the police and prosecution about what happened. And we know there's a criminal investigation that's happening around the greenbelt scandal.

If you want to talk about the reality of criminal cases and working with the courts, then instead of fighting the courts about cellphone records, just release them. You can't announce all the time, "I do business all the time on my personal phone," and pretend it's not a business phone. That's the reality. And when you lose in court, you shouldn't be changing the laws around FOI. Sometimes people have to tell you the truth because they care about you. That's the reality.

If you're going to talk about keeping criminals behind bars, if you want to talk about being tough on crime, then it has to apply to every single one of us. There cannot be exceptions. There can't be rules for some people and other rules for other people. If there is anybody else in Ontario who had lost a court case and tried to change the laws so you couldn't subpoena their cellphone, we would be up in arms, every single one of us in this room. And that's how the people of Ontario feel. They're feeling failed and let down by the Premier. The Premier promised to be there for the little guy. I was here when he was elected as a Premier, and more and more he's forgotten about the little guy.

The greenbelt scandal is a tragedy, and whoever is involved—and honestly, perhaps the Premier is innocent, because people are innocent until proven guilty. But as honourable members, we should be honourable to the courts and what they've ordered and we shouldn't be trying to change the laws to protect people who have undue influence on the courts like we do as MPPs, ministers, cabinet and the Premier.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Questions?

**Mr. Brian Saunderson:** I want to thank the member opposite for his comments and particularly his history lesson on Constable Mac. That was important to hear.

When he talked about paper tigers—I think that's an important topic. As I've said earlier in the House today, the previous package we had on bail reform that came out of the justice policy standing committee hearings has actually led the federal government, under Bill C-14, to make many changes to the Criminal Code that will create reverse onus offences. That will change much of the bail stuff we're discussing in this House today, and I think that

should be welcomed by all, given your sentiment that we all believe that those that should be behind bars, be behind bars.

My particular question is, when you start talking about court capacity—we heard, many times at the committee, and also we heard today from one of the speakers, that many of the alleged offenders who are arrested are out on bail for second or third times. We know that Constable Pierzchala was shot by an individual for violent offences—out on third-time bail and killed a constable, and that's not a unique story, unfortunately.

Would the member opposite agree with me that, had the bail system worked and those offenders been behind bars, we wouldn't be clogging the courts with subsequent offences involving innocent Ontarians who are losing life and property?

**MPP Jamie West:** I think the question about if the system works kind of reinforces what I talked about in the bill. I think we're all aligned that people who are criminals, people who are guilty, should have to pay their debt to society. That's why I'm saying that if you don't have the funding—the same thing with the bail system being broken. If the funding to keep people and to hold them accountable in the court system means that people are being ejected or plea bargaining or anything else, you could have a similar situation where someone has harmed an officer, a member of the public, whoever else. That's the argument that I'm making as well.

If, for example, the budget coming on Thursday doesn't say that we're going to provide the funding so that more than 50% of the cases are plea bargained or dismissed—well, that's not a good system either, right? So in the same way that the government is trying to adjust and fix the bail system, we need to ensure that we're fixing the court systems as well so that they're properly funded so they can function the way that we all expect them to be.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I listened very intently to my colleague. I'm going to bring up an issue that he didn't get a chance to bring up, and that's that this is the bill where the Premier announced there was going to end all testing on animals. We all agree with that, but we're not there yet. And quite frankly, the rest of the world isn't there yet either. If we go ahead with this the way it is, without refining it, can you imagine a world where you take your dog or your rabbit in to get treated and you ask the vet if there are any side effects, and the answer is, "Well, we don't know because we haven't done any testing, because we're not allowed to"? So we all want to go there. But is this an example of what's really important—that this bill goes to committee to make sure that we actually get the results that we need. Because right now, that isn't really clear in the bill.

1720

**MPP Jamie West:** Thank you to my colleague. I think it's a good point. One of the first questions this afternoon during debate was from the member from Mushkegukuk—

James Bay, where he talked about the importance of this going to committee.

Earlier in debate, I talked about how long it has been—three and a half months or so—since we've sat together to propose legislation. This has been a trend with the Conservative government, where we sit a really short amount of time. Last year, for the entire year, we sat 51 days, and the Premier came for question period for 21 days. So that isn't enough time to hold people to account, but it's also not enough time for us to do our jobs effectively—not our jobs in our constituency, not other things like that, but the important part of legislation that we have here.

At Queen's Park, people are very nice to us and very polite to us, but we can forget sometimes that we're not experts in everything. If we're not at committee hearing from experts about what it means if we change, say, animal testing—because I may have a certain opinion, but when you talk to some experts and you find out more details, it helps you better understand and make better laws.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** To the member opposite: Bill 75 also has a narrative about combatting people who feel it's okay to block our places of key infrastructure, block our roadways, block our bridges, block our houses of worship, block our hospitals, block our schools. Is this something that the member from Sudbury feels he's prepared to support—and therefore vote for Bill 75?

**MPP Jamie West:** It's an interesting argument because, say, during question period, there will be a question and one of the members from the government side will get up and say we voted against whatever bill or budget or whatever else. What they like to do is cherry-pick parts of the bill.

The Joe MacDonald part of the bill, absolutely, is solid, and hats off to you. And there are many bills like this. But often, in bills, there's also a poison pill in it—I don't see one outstanding in this one. I'm just saying that sometimes it's like, "Hey, do you support this one section of the act?" I'm giving context for people watching this. It's more complicated than that. I think that, on face value, lots of things do make sense, but sometimes, if it comes to committee, for example—at committee, you learn something and you believe, all of a sudden, the bill won't do what's intended, or there's a point of view that's different.

There are forms of peaceful protest that are parts of blockades, short-term blockades—that you have to balance someone's right to have a protest against access. The convoy challenge in Ottawa was a huge example of this. People had very strong opinions one way or another on it.

Where do you decide where the line is? I think that's where we need to come together and actually work in a partisan way to figure out how we balance difficult decisions like that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** I appreciate the comments from my colleague from Sudbury.

You mentioned how we had hundreds of people in this place—actually, survivors of intimate partner and gender-based violence and sexual violence—and how they shared their stories about how the justice system has failed them, and by extension, this government and governments before them, for not making proper investments into the infrastructure within the court system and making sure that we have enough staff and enough trained individuals in the courtrooms. And it's not just about having them there—it's actually having them trained in how to properly support survivors of intimate partner, gender-based or sexual violence.

I've heard the Premier stand and say publicly that he thinks that people should just carry pepper spray.

I don't think there is a woman in this place—whether you are an MPP or you work in this place—and I don't think there is a woman outside of this place who has not experienced harassment or assault at some point in their life.

So can you tell me what is in this Bill 75 that actually creates a justice system where survivors or victims are either not revictimized by the justice system, or they actually get a fair day in court where the offenders are held accountable for their actions?

**MPP Jamie West:** It's a really important question, Speaker. When you think of gender violence and intimate partner violence, sexual assault, anything like that, it's a horrific situation that nobody wants to relive. Building up to the court case, it becomes very tense and difficult for the victim because they're thinking about what happened and they have to reprocess that sort of trauma.

The slap in the face to it is that we all know that the majority of gender violence doesn't get reported. It doesn't get prosecuted. It doesn't get moved forward. It's a tough thing to move forward. So if people have the courage and strength to be able to do that, the least we can do as government—and I mean all of us—is to ensure the system is properly funded and supported so that the perpetrators, the accused, don't rob that person of their day in court, rob that person of the strength that they had to talk about what happened to them, to try to hold that person accountable, to build on the strength they had to stand and face their assaulter.

I can only imagine, after the indignity of being assaulted and forced to do something you'd rather not do—I'm saying that as polite as I can—the indignity of having that stolen from you and finding out it's because the Conservative government is refusing to fund the court properly so that you could have your day in court, is you being robbed of that dignity twice by a group that is supposed to have your back in the most vulnerable, angry time of your life. I cannot imagine how terrible and terrifying and frustrating and just left behind you'd feel by that.

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

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** It's a pleasure to rise in this House to discuss Bill 75, the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act. I will be sharing my time with the fabulous member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

Together, we're incredibly excited to be back in the House after a record-breaking 102-day adjournment, an adjournment during which we've seen crime continue to go out of control, during which this government could have been sitting in order for us to deal with the issues that matter most to our constituents. Nonetheless, we're here, and I welcome the opportunity to share my perspective on Bill 75.

Bill 75 has been branded the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act, and no one can deny that we need to do that. I would start out by putting forward that the best thing the Premier could do to keep criminals behind bars is to fully co-operate with the RCMP criminal investigation into his conduct with the greenbelt.

Failing that, I'm going to argue that he should be addressing the root causes of the challenges that we are facing in our criminal justice system and the underlying factors which have caused so many of my constituents in Don Valley East to feel as though Ontario under this Premier's watch is more unsafe than ever before.

That's really a remarkably disappointing statement that I have to make, especially because this is the Premier who, in the last election, promised that he was the man to protect Ontario. Yet how does someone protect Ontario when, under their watch for the last eight years, we are finding people lining up at food banks to record levels; we're finding record levels of homelessness; record lack of accessibility to health care; a record number of people receiving care, when they can get it, in unconventional spaces like hallways, bathrooms, closets in hospitals—if their hospitals are even open anymore, because those are closing under this government's watch.

This is a government that professes to want to keep criminals behind bars, even as they do things like get rid of speed cameras, which only place an increased burden on our already overburdened police officers to engage in more traffic enforcement. This is a Premier who claims that he is going to protect Ontario, but the only thing he has to show for it is the largest debt in our province's history, projected to be over half a trillion dollars by 2029 and a \$15-billion deficit by the end of this year.

**1730**

What more would you expect from this Premier than largely performative legislation that makes it look like he's doing a song and dance that will accomplish something, even as he fails to ignore the root causes of why we're in this situation in the first place?

Now, I will say, as with so much of what this government does, this legislation has some serious problems with it and a few things that are actually quite nice to have, that of course are supportable and which this government will dangle in front of the public as the supposedly great work that they're doing.

For example, the Constable Joe MacDonald scholarship fund—a good thing. I'm happy to see a proposal, to see

that expanded and more accessible if this legislation is passed. Sure, I can get behind that. Certainly, no one can deny that if you are engaged in dangerous driving that takes the life of another individual—who could possibly not agree to getting behind a lifetime immediate driver's licence suspension? Sure. But then there are a whole bunch of other things that are entirely perplexing.

I want to start by touching on something that maybe a lot of people aren't talking about, which is the changes to invasive research on animals. To do that, I want to start by telling a story. The story is of a four-legged friend by the name of Marjorie. Marjorie lived out her life in 1921 across the street from this building at the medical sciences building here at the University of Toronto. She was a subject of invasive animal research. She had her pancreas surgically removed, inducing a state of diabetes. That pancreas was processed, and an extract was removed which was subsequently injected right back into her, and her blood sugars returned to normal.

Marjorie was this beautiful dog for whom we can thank for having discovered insulin. And one year after that happened in 1921, the first young boy, 14 years old, down the street from here at University Health Network, received the first injections of what we now call insulin and lived another 13 years after that. That was a product of invasive animal research.

Now, I will tell you, I don't think there is anyone who is a bigger fan of animals than I am. Anyone that knows me will have heard ad nauseam about Petunia Wigglebottom. Sometimes, you may even see her wandering the halls here at Queen's Park. She's a beautiful dog. I love her immensely.

But the reality is that our health care, our research, our innovation to some degree does depend on animal research. That doesn't mean we can't treat animals with dignity. They must be held to the highest standards of research ethics. But our love for those animals can't also mean that we abolish animal research altogether. They are excellent research models for certain things like heart and stroke, and, of course, we wouldn't have insulin without that. And that is a proud Toronto story, in particular.

No one can deny, of course, that if you harm an animal intentionally, if you are immoral or unethical; if you attack a service animal or a police animal, you should be held to the highest standards of the law. Certainly, I support those provisions here in this legislation as well.

I want to turn next to schedule 2 of this legislation, which concerns itself with the Bail Act. I will say that we are seeing more car thefts than ever before. We're seeing carjackings. We're seeing more violent and aggressive crime. In fact, for a Premier who says that he wants to protect Ontario, it actually feels most of the time as though he's thrown up his hands.

When he announces in the last week that he wants people to be able to carry pepper spray in order to defend themselves, what that communicates to me is the Premier saying he is not able to protect them anymore and that everyone should just fend for themselves. Certainly, if all he does is try to force through this legislation, he is going to ask everyone to fend for themselves.

I've always suspected that this Premier seeks to Americanize our government. For example, he wants to build a massive concrete structure underneath our 401—that tunnel that he promises will clear congestion. Donald Trump also wants to build a massive concrete structure that separates the United States and Mexico, a big concrete wall. Donald Trump wants to eliminate the Department of Education; this Premier wants to eliminate school trustees, centralize school boards and essentially do the same thing. And now, as we face a situation of bounty hunters in the United States, we find a Premier who's keen to create the exact same scenario right here in Ontario.

Now, look, there is a need for bail reform. There is an issue with too many people who are getting arrested and then immediately getting turned back onto the streets, and that does need to be addressed. But one of the fundamental reasons so many people are being put back onto the streets is there isn't enough capacity in our jails. This government has done nothing to address that. Eight years into their mandate, Brockville is still looking for a jail. Ottawa is still looking for a jail. The best that we have to show for it is—I understand there's an RFP, a request to see if there's anyone qualified to possibly, maybe, put a jail in Brockville, eight years after their mandate. Similarly, there are already far too many delays in people who are able to access the justice system. It takes far too long to get a bail hearing in the first place.

And making a single-minded focus only on the financial component that could possibly keep criminals behind bars—without addressing the root causes, the fundamental social determinants of health that impact that; without addressing underlying mental health and addictions; without addressing the despair that people face across this province as they're not able to make financial ends meet, as they are confronted with homelessness, with addiction—without addressing any of these other things, and just saying the only thing to do is do a little bit to reform bail and, for the rest of you, grab some pepper spray, it shows the folly, the lack of ambition and audacity of this Premier. And it underscores the fact that this man who has promised he will protect Ontario has thrown up his hands and given in.

With that, I'd like to turn it over to my fantastic colleague to address some of the provisions around the Highway Traffic Act.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I recognize the member for Scarborough–Guildwood.

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** Thank you to my colleague for that wonderful presentation.

Madam Speaker, I rise to speak about Bill 75, schedule 5. Road safety is not an abstract concept. It is about people. It is about families who expect their loved ones to come home at the end of the day and the devastating reality when they do not.

In the most recent provincial data, at least 617 people were killed on Ontario's roads in 2024. This alarming figure highlights how deadly our highways and streets remain. Every one of those deaths represents a parent, partner, child or friend whose life was cut short and a circle

of people forever changed by that loss. These are not just numbers, Madam Speaker; they're lives lost because of speed, distraction, impaired driving or other preventable behaviours behind the wheel.

Everyone in this House should agree on one fundamental point: Dangerous driving must be taken seriously. There must be serious penalties when someone drives recklessly, especially when that recklessness results in someone losing their lives.

The responsibility of this Legislature is not simply to pass laws that sound tough. Our responsibility is to pass laws that are effective, fair and grounded in evidence—evidence-based, we're asking for. After closely examining schedule 5 of the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act, significant issues arise on each of those fronts.

Although this Legislature has already introduced similar measures, this government is presenting Bill 75 as a major step forward in road safety. However, just recently, it passed Bill 197, the Safer Roads and Communities Act, in 2024, which already made significant changes such as indefinitely suspending the licences of drivers convicted of impaired driving causing death. Yet here we are again, Madam Speaker, two years later, being asked to pass another round of penalties before we have even seen clear evidence that the previous measures have been fully implemented or evaluated.

**1740**

The data we do have raises important questions. In 2023, more than 11,000 impaired driving charges were laid across Ontario, which is a number that has been rising year over year. At the same time, 67 people still died in alcohol- or drug-related collisions in that year alone. Looking more broadly, over 340 fatal collisions occurred on OPP-patrolled roads in 2024, with 53 deaths linked directly to alcohol or drugs.

Evidently, impaired driving remains a serious issue, and I am not disputing that. That's not what I am saying. But here is the key point: It is not the only issue, and in many cases, it is not even the leading cause of death on roads. In that same data, speeding-related incidents resulted in nearly twice as many deaths as alcohol- or drug-impaired driving. And distracted driving continues to account for a significant share of fatalities as well. In fact, Ontario's own road safety reports show that distracted driving alone accounts for about 15% of all road fatalities.

Therefore, we must ask, is this about making our roads safer or is it just about looking tough? How could this government introduce legislation that concentrates mainly on increasing penalties in one area without providing evidence of effectiveness and without addressing the full scope of what is actually happening on our roads? If the previous measures were working as intended, we should be seeing clear declining trends.

Madam Speaker, another concerning aspect of schedule 5 is that it expands serious penalties before anyone has actually been found guilty. Under Bill 75, a police officer could suspend someone's driver's licence for 90 days simply based on a single roadside assessment. We do not punish first and ask questions later. We do not do that. We

investigate, we test evidence, we allow for a defence, and only then do we impose serious penalties. That sequence is not a technicality. It is a safeguard against error, against overreach and against injustice.

The schedule also significantly increases fines across multiple offences. Careless driving fines, for example, jump from \$2,000 to \$5,000. Penalties for driving while suspended rise dramatically, from \$5,000 to \$20,000. But we know from the evidence that penalties alone do not prevent collisions. A 2024 CAA survey found 55% of motorists and 61% of young drivers, 18 to 34, admit to speeding, distracted driving or unsafe lane changes despite awareness of fines.

Behaviour change is much more influenced by awareness of enforcement: 73% of drivers slow down in speed camera zones and 52% maintain lower speeds after passing them. But this government just woke up one morning and decided to rip them out and replace them with signs bigger than the moon. If our goal is truly to reduce collisions and save lives, then we must look into proven strategies. Safer roads are built not just through punitive measures, but through thoughtful infrastructure design, such as proper lighting; clearer signage and better intersection layouts; traffic-calming measures that slow vehicles in high-risk areas; strong public education campaigns; and prevention-focused enforcement guided by data on where and why collisions happen.

The question before us is this: Do we want legislation that truly keeps people safe or do we want legislation that looks tough in headlines but fails to address the root causes of unsafe driving? Increasing fines may make for a dramatic press release, but without a broader, evidence-based approach, these measures risk being punitive rather than preventative and unfair rather than effective.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Questions?

**MPP Paul Vickers:** At its core, Bill 75 is about accountability. It ensures that violent repeat offenders face real consequences, and that victims receive the support and resources that they deserve. That is why our government is focused on strengthening commercial vehicle safety, reforming the bail system, supporting victims of crime and assisting the families of public safety personnel. These combined measures ensure that Ontarians remain safe, that offenders are held fully responsible for their actions and that law-abiding Ontarians are protected.

Do the members from either Don Valley East or Scarborough–Guildwood oppose a justice system that prioritizes public safety and victim protection over leniency for those who commit the crimes?

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** I recognize the member from Don Valley East.

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** We're both so eager to answer the question. Look, of course we want to put criminals behind bars. We want to make sure that our constituents are protected and feel safe in their communities. I'll highlight the fact that while this government talks the talk, they

certainly don't walk the walk. Over the last eight years, we've seen crime run out of control.

We're not saying that we want to see leniency for criminals. No, not at all. What we're saying is that we want the fundamental reasons for why, for example, people are being let out on bail all the time to be addressed. There are far too many delays in getting access to bail hearings in the first place. There is not enough capacity in our jails currently. This legislation doesn't address those fundamental issues. It's lipstick on a pig.

This government has failed time after time after time to actually address the fundamental causes. So we will stand here—we'll stand up for constituents, stand up for safety, and also stand up for you to make the actual changes that are necessary to protect Ontarians.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**MPP Wayne Gates:** It's not necessarily the question I was going to do to the Liberal Party, but you brought up something that touches my heart with impaired driving and trying to correct it through fines.

I think I've told this story before. My wife was hit by a drunk driver. It didn't kill her, but it certainly altered her life for a long, long time, including my daughter's life. If you say you're going to just fine people, fine people, fine people, it doesn't work. But I'll tell you what else doesn't work: Bringing your own booze to the park doesn't work, in my opinion. Being able to pick it up at the corner store, being able to pick it up at ball games—all that stuff ends up getting people impaired. It's not that they're doing it on purpose, but because it's readily available for them, that's what they do.

I can give you a nice example of that. Like I said, it didn't kill my wife, but it certainly altered her life, her parents' lives, my daughter's life. We have to do more for impaired driving, and fines aren't the answer. And the question is—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Response?

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** Thank you for that question. You are absolutely correct with what you're saying. Think about this: For eight years, our metrics and data on impaired driving and accidents on the road and on the highways have increased every year. This government has ignored CAA reports about what is causing these accidents, why these accidents are happening.

We see Bill 197, we see Bill 75, and I'm just wondering what is the real difference between the two bills, because we haven't even done the data on Bill 197 to see if it's effective, and we've gone aggressively increasing fines—for who?

The people of Ontario will continue to suffer under this government for not taking responsibility for educating the public and just looking at other measures to bring back safety on the highways and on the roads.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Question?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** To the member from Don Valley East, I was taken aback when the member suggested—and

I quote, "We do not support leniency." It's good to hear that assertion. I guess my interest is in understanding the application as it applies to the Criminal Code.

So when the government of Canada amended the law to remove mandatory prison sentences for violent criminals, including an individual in my own riding who was shot in front of his wife and children—a real incident that happens in too many municipalities and communities afflicting this country; crime is up across the land. Do you and your party support removing the discretion of judges to impose mandatory prison sentences on repeat violent offenders? Yes or no?

1750

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** My sympathy to the Minister of Energy and Mines about what happened to his constituent.

The reality is that if someone breaks the law, they deserve to go to jail. Under this government, there's nowhere for them to go because jails are overflowing. In fact, during COVID-19, this government was removing prisoners from jail because it was unsafe and they couldn't maintain the conditions.

So my question back to the minister, who should be the one answering all the questions, is, why has he created a circumstance in which the people who are harming his own constituents can't be held to account because he won't stand up for them, he won't make sure that there are adequate jail places for them? How is it that he can sit there with a straight face even as he has been the architect of all the reasons that those people can't go to jail?

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Questions?

**MPP Jamie West:** During this debate, there's been a lot of conversation about how important it is to the government to be tougher on crime, but it also occurs to me that this bill was tabled in December, and the Conservative government decided not to have us return to continue debate on this until mid-March.

I have, in my debate, talked about how maybe this is more about headlines than actually holding people accountable. I just wanted your opinion on this. Does it seem like a valuable and important bill if they've decided that three and a half months of a pause between debating the bill wouldn't be a big deal to ensuring that criminals are held accountable?

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** What is apparent, as we have a province being confronted by a housing crisis, health care crisis, education crisis and certainly one of crime and safety, is that this government actually has no urgency in addressing those issues. We've been adjourned for 102 days. We sat for 15 weeks out of 52 last year.

A government that was serious about protecting Ontario would be keen to roll up their sleeves and actually take action. Instead, what they do is engage in performative measures, throw up their hands, say, "Sorry, we can't actually protect you anymore. Carry pepper spray in your purses and in your backpacks."

That's not what Ontarians are looking for. If they thought that this Premier would protect Ontario, it's very evident that they're not going to get it from him.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Questions?

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** I have a question for my friend and colleague from the Don Valley.

As we all know, our country is governed by a Constitution, and that Constitution divides power between the federal government and our provinces. The powers related to the Criminal Code are the responsibility of the federal government.

Of course, since this government in Ontario was elected in 2018, there have been three federal elections. There have been three opportunities for members of that government to put their name on a federal ballot to seek federal office, to go to Ottawa and change the Criminal Code, and none of those members have taken that opportunity.

So my question to my friend from Don Valley is, if the government was so interested in changing the Criminal Code, if members of that side were so interested in changing the Criminal Code, should they simply wax poetic in the Legislature and write letters to the Prime Minister, or should they have the balls to put their name on a ballot and run for federal office?

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** I thank the member for Orléans for that question. It's a very good question, but I will encourage him to be a little bit more understanding, because though he accuses none of the members across of being willing to put their name on a ballot, all I have to say is, stay tuned, because it certainly seems like the Premier is getting ready to do it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** A very quick question and response—no? We've got no time. We have no time.

Further debate?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Speaker, I rise today with my community of London—Fanshawe and in considering the utmost importance of their safety and the concerns that have been brought to me regarding the criminal justice system. I rise in support of this bill because there are measures that are not only worthwhile but necessary, and I'll discuss schedule 1.

As a member representing London, I can tell you that reports of unethical animal testing happening in our own community were deeply disturbing. They shocked residents, they angered animal lovers and they exposed a gap in oversight that should never have existed in the first place. People in my community expect better, and they expect that animals are treated humanely and that scientific advancements never come at a cost of basic ethics.

I want to acknowledge that the government acted quickly. They proposed restrictions on breeding cats and dogs for research, and increased penalties and the new licensing requirements are meaningful steps forward. These changes are worth passing. These are changes worth protecting, which is exactly why I have to ask why this government chose to jeopardize them. Why bundle

important animal welfare reforms into a bill that includes provisions that are, quite frankly, constitutionally questionable? Why risk all of this on schedule 2?

Schedule 2 introduces something that should concern every member in this House: cash bail. Let's be clear about what this means. It means that whether someone goes home or remains in custody before a trial could depend on their risk to public safety but not their ability to pay. Speaker, that's not justice. This is a two-way system: one for those with means and for ones without.

We've already heard serious concerns from legal experts that this proposal may not even be within the provincial jurisdiction. Under the Constitution, criminal procedures, including bail, are a federal responsibility. So the question becomes, what is this government doing here? Are they genuinely trying to improve public safety or are they picking a constitutional fight that they know they can't win?

Because if this provision is challenged—and all indications are that it will be challenged—then taxpayer dollars would be spent defending a law that may ultimately be struck down. If that happens, what becomes of schedule 1? What becomes of those animal protections that people in my community have been contacting my office pleading for? This is the problem with omnibus legislation. When you tie in good policy to bad policy, you risk losing both.

Speaker, if the government is serious about public safety, then I suggest they start by fixing what's already broken. Because Ontario's bail system is not failing due to the lack of harshness; it's failing due to the lack of resources, coordination and basic functionality.

Bail hearings are supposed to happen within 24 hours. In many parts of this province, that simply doesn't happen. Crown prosecutors are overwhelmed, carrying caseloads so high that they can't properly assess risk. Court backlogs are so severe that serious cases—and I mean very serious cases—are being thrown out due to unconstitutional delays.

So when members across the aisle talk about being tough on crime, I have a simple response: Fix the bail courts, fix the delays, fix the system that's already in your hands, because introducing cash bail does nothing to address the underlying failures. In fact, it makes them worse.

There are better ways, smarter ways and more effective ways to improve public safety. One of them is ensuring that people actually have access to legal counsel at bail hearings. Too many individuals are navigating this complex system alone, leading to delays, repeated adjournments and poor outcomes—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Thank you.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, OOnt  
Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Donna Skelly  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day  
Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim  
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,  
Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

| Member and Party /<br>Député(e) et parti         | Constituency /<br>Circonscription  | Other responsibilities /<br>Autres responsabilités   |
|--|--|--|
| Allsopp, Tyler (PC)                              | Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte   |  |
| Anand, Deepak (PC)                               | Mississauga—Malton   |  |
| Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)                       | London—Fanshawe  |  |
| Babikian, Aris (PC)                              | Scarborough—Agincourt  |  |
| Bailey, Robert (PC)                              | Sarnia—Lambton   |  |
| Bell, Jessica (NDP)                              | University—Rosedale  |  |
| <b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>    | Pickering—Uxbridge   | Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances  |
| Blais, Stephen (LIB)                             | Orléans  |  |
| Bouma, Will (PC)                                 | Brantford—Brant  |  |
| Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)                             | Mushkegowuk—James Bay /<br>Mushkegowuk—Baie James  |  |
| Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)                          | Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest   | Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu   |
| Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)                           | Haldimand—Norfolk  |  |
| <b>Bresee, Ric (PC)</b>                          | Hastings—Lennox and Addington  | Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House /<br>Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative  |
| Burch, Jeff (NDP)                                | Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre  |  |
| <b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>         | Markham—Stouffville  | Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation  |
| Cerjanec, Rob (LIB)                              | Ajax   |  |
| <b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b> | Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord   | Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité   |
| <b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>              | Willowdale   | Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Jeux  |
| Ciriello, Monica (PC)                            | Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain  |  |
| Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)                            | Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre  |  |
| Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)                  | Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes | Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement   |
| Coe, Lorne (PC)                                  | Whitby   |  |
| Collard, Lucille (LIB)                           | Ottawa—Vanier  | Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu   |
| Cooper, Michelle (PC)                            | Eglinton—Lawrence  |  |
| <b>Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>      | Oakville   | Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement /<br>Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises et de l'Approvisionnement   |
| Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)                              | Mississauga—Lakeshore  |  |
| Darouze, George (PC)                             | Carleton   |  |
| Denault, Billy (PC)                              | Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke   |  |
| Dixon, Jess (PC)                                 | Kitchener South—Hespeler /<br>Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler   |  |
| Dowie, Andrew (PC)                               | Windsor—Tecumseh   |  |
| <b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>           | Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte   | Attorney General / Procureur général   |
| <b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>           | Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord   | Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence   |
| Fairclough, Lee (LIB)                            | Etobicoke—Lakeshore  |  |
| <b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>         | Nipissing  | Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres<br>Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade /<br>Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce |

| <b>Member and Party /<br/>Député(e) et parti</b>        | <b>Constituency /<br/>Circonscription</b>                   | <b>Other responsibilities /<br/>Autres responsabilités</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| Fife, Catherine (NDP)                                   | Waterloo  |   |
| Firin, Mohamed (PC)                                     | York South—Weston / York-Sud—<br>Weston                     |   |
| <b>Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)</b>                    | Elgin—Middlesex—London                                      | Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires<br>municipales et du Logement   |
| <b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>                    | Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord                            | Premier / Premier ministre<br>Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires<br>intergouvernementales<br>Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti<br>progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario |
| Fraser, John (LIB)                                      | Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud                                   | Leader, Third Party / Chef du troisième parti   |
| <b>French, Jennifer K. (NDP)</b>                        | Oshawa  | First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première<br>Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative   |
| Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)                             | Newmarket—Aurora  |   |
| Gates, Wayne (NDP)                                      | Niagara Falls   |   |
| Gélinas, France (NDP)                                   | Nickel Belt   |   |
| Gilmour, Alexa (NDP)                                    | Parkdale—High Park  |   |
| Glover, Chris (NDP)                                     | Spadina—Fort York   |   |
| Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)                                     | Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest                                |   |
| Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)                              | Brampton East / Brampton-Est                                |   |
| Gualtieri, Silvia (PC)                                  | Mississauga East—Cooksville /<br>Mississauga-Est—Cooksville |   |
| <b>Hamid, Hon. / L'hon. Zee (PC)</b>                    | Milton  | Associate Solicitor General for Auto Theft and Bail Reform /<br>Solliciteur général associé responsable de la Lutte contre le vol<br>d'automobiles et de la Réforme relative aux mises en liberté sous<br>caution                   |
| Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)                      | Oxford  |   |
| <b>Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)</b>                  | Kitchener—Conestoga   | Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles   |
| <b>Hazell, Andrea (LIB)</b>                             | Scarborough—Guildwood                                       | Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House /<br>Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée<br>législative   |
| <b>Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)</b>                | Thunder Bay—Atikokan  | Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé<br>des Forêts et des Produits forestiers  |
| Hsu, Ted (LIB)  | Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et<br>les Îles          |   |
| <b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>                 | Dufferin—Caledon  | Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre<br>Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé  |
| <b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)</b>                 | Chatham-Kent—Leamington                                     | Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de<br>l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise   |
| Jordan, John (PC)                                       | Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston                                   |   |
| Kanapathi, Logan (PC)                                   | Markham—Thornhill   |   |
| Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)                                | London North Centre / London-<br>Centre-Nord                |   |
| <b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>           | York Centre / York-Centre                                   | Solicitor General / Solliciteur général   |
| <b>Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)</b>               | Barrie—Innisfil   | Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des<br>formalités administratives   |
| <b>Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia<br/>(PC)</b> | Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-<br>Centre                 | Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée   |
| Leardi, Anthony (PC)                                    | Essex   | Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du<br>gouvernement  |
| <b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>                | King—Vaughan  | Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines   |
| Lennox, Robin (NDP)                                     | Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre                           |   |
| <b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>                 | Hamilton East—Stoney Creek /<br>Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek   | Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport   |
| Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)                                      | Kiiwetinoong  | Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition<br>officielle   |
| <b>McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)</b>             | Durham  | Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de<br>l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs  |
| McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)                                  | Kanata—Carleton   |   |
| <b>McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)</b>              | Brampton North / Brampton-Nord                              | Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires<br>civiques et du Multiculturalisme  |
| McKenney, Catherine (NDP)                               | Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre                               |   |
| McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)                            | Beaches—East York   |   |

| <b>Member and Party /<br/>Député(e) et parti</b>   | <b>Constituency /<br/>Circonscription</b>                           | <b>Other responsibilities /<br/>Autres responsabilités</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>       | York—Simcoe   | President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor<br>Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones  |
| <b>Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)</b>          | Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest  | Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie   |
| Pang, Billy (PC)                                   | Markham—Unionville  |  |
| <b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>           | Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill                                     | Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires  |
| Pasma, Chandra (NDP)                               | Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean                            | Deputy House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle   |
| <b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>           | Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud | Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences  |
| Pierre, Natalie (PC)                               | Burlington  |  |
| Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)                           | Lambton—Kent—Middlesex  |  |
| <b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>            | Timmins   | Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement et de la croissance économique du Nord  |
| <b>Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)</b>             | Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry                                     | Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security / Ministre des Collèges et Universités, de l'Excellence en recherche et de la Sécurité  |
| Racinsky, Joseph (PC)                              | Wellington—Halton Hills   |  |
| Rae, Matthew (PC)                                  | Perth—Wellington  |  |
| Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)                               | Humber River—Black Creek  |  |
| <b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>           | Kenora—Rainy River  | Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations<br>Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire Economic and Community Partnerships / Ministre responsable des Partenariats économiques et communautaires pour le développement du Cercle de feu |
| Riddell, Brian (PC)                                | Cambridge   |  |
| Rosenberg, Bill (PC)                               | Algoma—Manitoulin   |  |
| Sabawy, Sheref (PC)                                | Mississauga—Erin Mills  |  |
| Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)                               | Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest                                      |  |
| <b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b> | Brampton South / Brampton-Sud                                       | Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports   |
| Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)                            | Glengarry—Prescott—Russell  |  |
| Sattler, Peggy (NDP)                               | London West / London-Ouest  |  |
| Saunderson, Brian (PC)                             | Simcoe—Grey   |  |
| Schreiner, Mike (GRN)                              | Guelph  |  |
| Scott, Chris (IND)                                 | Sault Ste. Marie  |  |
| Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)                   | Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock                                     |  |
| Shamji, Adil (LIB)                                 | Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est                                    |  |
| Shaw, Sandy (NDP)                                  | Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas      |  |
| <b>Skelly, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)</b>            | Flamborough—Glanbrook   | Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative  |
| Smith, Dave (PC)                                   | Peterborough—Kawartha   |  |
| Smith, David (PC)                                  | Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre                             |  |
| <b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>           | Parry Sound—Muskoka   | Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement   |
| Smith, Laura (PC)                                  | Thornhill   |  |
| Smyth, Stephanie (LIB)                             | Toronto—St. Paul's  |  |
| Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)                   | St. Catharines  |  |
| Stiles, Marit (NDP)                                | Davenport   | Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle<br>Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario   |
| <b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>             | Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre                                 | Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure  |
| Tabuns, Peter (NDP)                                | Toronto—Danforth  |  |
| <b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>             | Mississauga—Streetsville  | Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises   |
| <b>Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)</b>      | Scarborough—Rouge Park  | Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances  |
| <b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>        | Huron—Bruce   | Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales  |

| <b>Member and Party /<br/>Député(e) et parti</b> | <b>Constituency /<br/>Circonscription</b>                  | <b>Other responsibilities /<br/>Autres responsabilités</b>  |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>    | Vaughan—Woodbridge   | Associate Attorney General / Procureur général associé  |
| <b>Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)</b>          | Oakville North—Burlington /<br>Oakville-Nord—Burlington    | Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente<br>Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative       |
| Tsao, Jonathan (LIB)                             | Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord                         |   |
| Vanthof, John (NDP)                              | Timiskaming—Cochrane                                       | Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle   |
| Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)                             | Thunder Bay—Superior North /<br>Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord |   |
| Vickers, Paul (PC)                               | Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound                                      |   |
| Wai, Daisy (PC)                                  | Richmond Hill  |   |
| Watt, Tyler (LIB)                                | Nepean   |   |
| West, Jamie (NDP)                                | Sudbury  |   |
| <b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b> | Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre                          | Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity /<br>Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes |
| Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)                          | Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre                            |   |
| Vacant   | Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-<br>Sud-Ouest          |   |