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(Hansard)**

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Wednesday
25 March 2026

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44^e législature
Mercredi
25 mars 2026

Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly
Greffier : Trevor Day

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 25 March 2026

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 25 mars 2026

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLY ACT, 2026

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2026

Ms. Mulroney moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026 / Projet de loi 95, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2026.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Honourable Caroline Mulroney.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Good morning. It is my honour to rise today to speak to the Supply Act. I would like to begin by noting that I will be sharing my time with my colleagues and parliamentary assistants, George Darouze and Bill Rosenberg.

The procedural exercise we are undertaking today is required every fiscal year and it ensures that government spending receives proper legislative oversight. The passage of the Supply Act represents the final approval of all spending by the government of Ontario and legislative offices for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026.

In simpler terms, it is the point when the Legislature formally authorizes the use of public funds. This step marks the conclusion of the annual financial cycle when members of the House give their full and democratic approval for the spending as outlined in the expenditure estimates. This is more than just routine procedure. The passage of the Supply Act is a vital part how we uphold transparency, accountability and responsible government. For that reason, the Supply Act plays an essential role in supporting a healthy and functioning democracy.

At the outset of this debate, I would like to take a moment to outline the key steps in the annual fiscal cycle, beginning with the release of the budget. The budget sets out the government's fiscal plan and priorities for the next year.

Après l'adoption du budget, le gouvernement dépose le budget des dépenses qui présente en détail les prévisions de dépenses des ministères et des bureaux de l'Assemblée législative. Au besoin, un budget supplémentaire des

dépenses peut être déposé pour couvrir des pressions qui excèdent les autorisations existantes. Ces crédits sont examinés par les comités législatifs, puis font l'objet d'un rapport à l'Assemblée.

À l'issue de l'examen en comité, le gouvernement présente une motion de concurrence afin que l'ensemble des crédits, qu'ils aient été examinés ou non, soient mis aux voix dans le cadre de la Loi de crédits. Ce qui nous amène à l'étape actuelle, soit la prise en considération de la Loi de crédits devant l'Assemblée.

Il est important de préciser que le gouvernement ne soumet aucune nouvelle dépense aujourd'hui. Le gouvernement demande uniquement l'approbation des dépenses prévues dans les crédits de 2025-2026 qui reflètent les engagements et les priorités dévoilés dans le budget de 2025 et l'énoncé économique de l'automne. Ces engagements sont au cœur de notre plan, qui vise à protéger les travailleurs et les entreprises de l'Ontario contre les tarifs douaniers imposés par les États-Unis. Ils contribuent également à l'objectif de notre gouvernement de faire de l'Ontario l'endroit le plus concurrentiel du G7 pour investir, créer des emplois et pour faire des affaires. Parallèlement, notre travail renforce la capacité de la province à offrir des soins de santé, une éducation et d'autres services publics essentiels de grande qualité.

All of this is done with a continued commitment to maintaining a responsible fiscal path. Our government's fiscal approach is guided by one single and simple fact, and that is that every single dollar spent by government is provided by our province's hard-working taxpayers.

At Treasury Board, our responsibility to Ontario's taxpayers is always at the forefront of every decision that we make. That sense of responsibility is inseparable from our commitment to transparency. This commitment is reflected in the fact that for the eighth year in a row, our government has received a clean audit opinion from the Auditor General. This is a significant achievement. The independent Auditor General has carefully reviewed the government's financial statements, and she has approved them with a clean audit opinion. The fact that this government has received this clean audit opinion for eight consecutive years speaks to our steadfast dedication to openness and to transparency.

Madame la Présidente, alors que la province continue de faire face à la menace tarifaire persistante, il est plus important que jamais de maintenir notre engagement envers une gestion des finances publiques responsable. Les choix financiers que nous faisons aujourd'hui façonneront les possibilités qui s'offrent aux générations futures.

Dès le début des pressions économiques exercées par les États-Unis sur l'Ontario, nous avons été clairs : notre gouvernement ne ménagera aucun effort pour protéger notre province, nos entreprises et notre population.

Nous ne pouvons pas nous opposer aux tarifs américains tout en tolérant des obstacles similaires à l'intérieur de notre propre pays. Cela ne fait simplement pas de sens. C'est pourquoi je suis fière que l'Ontario soit un chef de file dans les efforts visant à faciliter le commerce intérieur.

Avec la Loi de 2025 pour protéger l'Ontario en favorisant le libre-échange au Canada, ainsi que de nouveaux accords conclus avec 10 provinces et territoires, notre gouvernement élimine les obstacles au commerce intérieur, améliore la mobilité de la main-d'œuvre et élargit les possibilités pour les entreprises et pour les travailleurs ontariens.

Dans le cadre de cet effort, l'Ontario supprime l'ensemble des exceptions restantes en vertu de l'Accord de libre-échange canadien.

Madam Speaker, there is much more that I could say about the government's plan to protect Ontario, but in closing, it is my honour to participate in the final procedural process of the fiscal cycle today.

Now my colleague PA George Darouze will take it from here, after which PA Bill Rosenberg will conclude the government's portion of this debate.

I urge all members to support the passage of the Supply Act in order that government spending can be authorized for the current fiscal year.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I'm pleased to stand up and offer some comments on the spending of the government in general. This is an opportunity to talk about all kinds of things that the government spends money on, and issues in our ridings as well. I appreciate the opportunity.

I've got a few topics I wanted to discuss, but I wanted to start with—as many people know, we've had quite an interesting couple of months in Niagara with talk about amalgamation and governance issues. It has been a real distraction, and this government seems to like distracting from the business that we really should be focusing on, like health care and education and support for university students.

0910

I received a letter from a number of councillors, in particular from one regional councillor in Niagara, Haley Bateman, who offered some comments asking for a new deal with municipalities. This is nothing new and something that the government could embark on that would really help communities at the grassroots level. There are so many problems that municipalities are facing, and they're feeling abandoned by this government.

These are some of the points that regional councillors have been making to me as they feel disrespected recently by comments that the Premier has made and that others have made about the jobs of councillors, in particular, part-time municipal councillors who are hard-working and not very well paid. All three of the members from Niagara are

former municipally elected folks. I remember I sat on a St. Catharines council with my colleague from St. Catharines, and we were paid, I think, \$18,000 at the time for an incredibly difficult job. Regional councillors—it's like a full-time job; they call it a part-time job—are making about \$45,000.

But they wanted to point out that a lot of the comments from Conservatives recently in Niagara have been about tax increases. There has been a lot of misinformation about the reason for tax increases in Niagara and municipalities across Ontario, and I just wanted to bring up a few points that regional councillors have made to me about the tax increases in recent years.

Policing in communities all over Ontario—understand this: Policing is 39% of the Niagara regional budget. The councillors say, "I can guarantee you that will grow every year with the changes this government is making and lack of support for communities," and each change falls on the municipal taxpayer, not on the province.

Our EMS—and my colleague and I from Niagara were out on the picket line for an information picket during negotiations for Niagara EMS workers recently, with CUPE 911. They're funded to serve 500,000 people, but they are asked to serve 13 million: "Speaking with a member of CUPE 911, they told me the number of phone calls 'explodes' in the summer. This is not sustainable—and these are incredibly stressful jobs on a good day. So as the region negotiates with CUPE 911, we have to take into consideration"—that their contract is not sufficient for workers. They're asking for parity with firefighters and police. They're not getting the mental supports that they need. And the province is not providing those supports or financial supports to the community so they can fund that in the collective agreements of these workers.

Some 36% of EMS workers are considered part-time, but they have to maintain 36 hours a week. These part-timers get no benefits, and that needs to change. EMS workers deal with incredible stress issues like PTSD, and many of them don't have benefits and are not getting proper mental health support. So congratulations to CUPE 911, and I hope the government will listen and start to fund municipalities so that they can properly support workers, like EMS workers in Niagara.

Homelessness and housing services: Homelessness, obviously, is a provincial jurisdiction, but, over the years, so many responsibilities have been downloaded to municipalities. The province, these councillors say, funds homelessness, but they don't fund housing: "In 2025, just last year, there were 5,097 visits to the ER by people in Niagara who are not housed"—and those statistics come from Niagara Health. This is for "flu, pneumonia, cellulitis," issues that are highly preventable if we were investing in housing and those other supports. This was a 51.7% increase over the previous year. That's how costs are skyrocketing, not just in Niagara but in regions and municipalities across Ontario.

This is causing tremendous stress on our downtown. I know my colleagues in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls are dealing with those issues as well. My constituency

office is right in downtown Welland, and a lot of folks are living on the street right outside my office. When I go there to work, I talk to many of them living under the bridge across from my office, along the Welland Canal. It's sad to see, and it's sad to see the increase of that over the last number of years.

I want to congratulate another hard-working municipal councillor from Welland, Sharmila Setaram. The councillor has been working very hard. She's the downtown councillor in Welland. She's been going around to businesses talking about this increase in poverty, homelessness and mental health and addictions issues in the downtown and its effect on businesses. I want to just congratulate her for all the hard work that she does and for her care for the local small businesses in the community.

She says, "Local businesses are identifying a clear gap in protections for commercial tenants in Ontario. Unlike residential tenants, they rely almost entirely on private lease agreements and have limited accessible recourse when issues arise."

The businesses in Welland are experiencing:

"—disruptions to essential services such as heat and electricity;

"—unsafe or unsuitable working conditions"—I have staff that work downtown too. We're all talking about extra security in our offices and our homes as we see things getting worse. Downtown businesses are really suffering with these issues.

On East Main Street in Welland, there's a mixed-use building that lost hydro for several days, disabling critical safety systems and requiring the fire department to intervene. Enforcement action was eventually taken. Businesses and residents were left to navigate the immediate impacts without clear timelines for resolution.

When enforcement results in fines, as many businesses are struggling to deal with the homelessness issue and being fined as well, it places a lot of stress on those businesses. They want:

"—enforceable timelines for maintenance and restoration of essential services;

"—protections against sudden or disruptive changes;

"—accessible dispute resolution options outside of the court system;

"—consideration of compensation mechanisms when operations are interrupted."

There's a whole list of recommendations for many small businesses in downtown Welland. This is something, if the government was really concerned about business, where there's lots of opportunities they could find to support municipalities and to support small businesses with issues that support actions taken by the municipal governments to address homelessness.

Of course, it wouldn't hurt for the provincial government to listen to every expert out there and opposition parties and increase social assistance rates, which are disgustingly low and are really just sponsoring more and more poverty in downtown areas.

Congratulations to this councillor for the work that she's doing. My office is certainly going to be working

with her and bringing suggestions here to the Legislature on ways to help downtown areas with poverty and homelessness.

I want to talk a little bit about OSAP. There's obviously an issue that people feel very, very strongly about. We had a large protest here yesterday. Students and families are outraged by the changes being made to OSAP under the guise of sustainability, as if slapping extra fees on students and taking away their access to loans somehow addresses the problem when all it really does is place the financial stress on students.

I had a number of communications to my office that I wanted to raise on behalf of these constituents. One is from Melissa Hampson. She says, "Dear Mr. Burch, I'm writing to you on behalf of my three children, two of whom are currently attending Niagara College, in the baking and pastry arts program and the carpentry program. My third child, Derek, is anxiously awaiting a response from the highly prestigious Sheridan College in the hopes of being accepted to their theatre tech program. He's currently attending Welland Centennial with a specialist high-skills major in information and communications technology.

0920

"All three worked too hard to get where they are and I will support them however I can. My husband and I have worked hard since they were born to save what we could to help them reach their academic goals. Ford's cuts to OSAP and changes to tuition are very concerning to us. I would like to know what you as our representative plan to do to fight this. Ford is making a mess of everything and change is necessary. This government needs to know that the arts matter. They need to know that we are extremely stressed as a family."

Thank you for your communication, your letter, Melissa. We're going to work, as an opposition, as hard as we can to reverse these changes to OSAP.

Another letter: "I have three children who are very talented in their skill set. Each one discovered their passion in high school and worked hard, earning honours all four or five years. So far, two of them have pursued their goals in post-secondary education. My daughter, Alex, loves to bake, so she's completing the baking and pastry arts program. Talk about building homes and infrastructure: My son Zack loves to build stuff, so he's learning to be a carpenter. My youngest is completing grade 12 and hopes to attend Sheridan College."

This letter from George and his wife talks about the difficulties that they face as a family. We know that groceries are getting more expensive. We know that gas is getting more expensive. Families are under incredible stress, and this is just another affordability problem that we're piling onto families. We're going to work as hard as we can, as I've said, to get this government to reverse these changes and properly fund OSAP.

I want to thank all of the constituents that have—I've got many, many letters, many, many emails from them. I want to thank them for the time that they took to send those.

I would also like to talk, Speaker, about health care. Health care in Niagara is obviously a huge issue and is right across the province. There is a huge gap between what we hear in the Legislature from the minister, who—I saw Colin D’Mello yesterday joking that she was missing lately and we need to put her picture on a milk carton. I don’t blame her for being missing, because the policies have been missing in action as well in health care, and hospitals across Ontario are dealing with tremendous deficits.

The Financial Accountability Office of Ontario projected a \$10.7-billion health funding shortfall by 2027-28. They say that based on the current spending plan of the Ford government, that is going to increase but is not keeping up with inflation.

The Ontario Hospital Association highlighted growing financial strain in its pre-budget consultations. They say that many hospitals are projecting year-end deficits, experiencing eroding working capital and are unable to properly plan due to revenue uncertainty. Yet their cost pressures, their expenses, are rising by more than 6% annually, driven by population growth, aging population and inflation, so that’s not going to stop. And there are annual funding increases of only 4%, resulting in a structural deficit of approximately \$1 billion.

The president and CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association stated, “Unfortunately, many hospitals are also grappling with significant challenges.” They are predicting, “year-end deficits, have eroded their working capital, and, in the absence of certainty about their revenues, cannot properly plan for the future.”

These pressures, of course, create situations in hospitals where they are cutting not only frills, but essential things. They’re making things more expensive, and folks like cancer patients and those that need dialysis are facing more and more financial pressures to pay for things in the health care system.

One of those examples—and we’ve talked about it; my colleagues have talked about it—is hospital parking. That is a direct result of rising deficits in hospitals, and those parking rates are going up and up as hospitals struggle to deal with those deficits. Those are costs that have to be footed by families with people suffering from cancer, people who need dialysis, people who are visiting. I’ve talked to people who’ve spent \$7,000, \$8,000 in parking in several months just visiting relatives in the hospital. It costs every time they go to the hospital to park there. That’s just a tax on sick people.

In Niagara region, we’re already seeing the impact. Niagara Health reported a \$26-million deficit in the last fiscal year. Their ongoing efforts to find savings included the elimination of 98 positions, which Niagara Health has said will save them \$9 million. It was reported the positions include cuts to recreational therapy, reduced PSW coverage and reduced administration. My colleague from St. Catharines very capably raised this issue yesterday in her member’s statement, and I want to thank her for doing that.

These cuts are on top of the cuts that have already been happening in Niagara for the past several years due to

budget constraints and lack of staffing, and no one in the Legislature is a stranger to us talking about the cuts that have happened in Niagara. I’ve talked about the Welland Hospital for seven, almost eight years now here in the Legislature, and it just closed its long-term-care facility.

The Welland Hospital site had a long-term-care home that’s now going to close in June. Its operating licence was not renewed, and no one from this government or the local health system planned ahead, so that’s just a complete loss of over 100 beds—about 117 beds—in Niagara. We heard all of the excuses when it happened, but there really is no excuse in this day and age with the lack of long-term-care beds for us to lose over 100 beds due to a lack of planning. With an aging population, the loss of 75 long-term-care beds and 40 long-term-care interim beds will have a profound impact on our community.

I’ve talked to the workers. Myself and our leader went to the hospital, toured it, spoke to the residents, spoke to their families and met with them inside the lobby of the long-term-care facility that was closing. I’ll tell you, it was a really sad time. Over 100 workers, who the residents just love—excellent care at this facility, and it is being closed due to neglect by this government. There’s no excuse for closing long-term-care beds without first having a replacement for that long-term-care licence in this day and age.

The operating rooms at the Welland Hospital remained closed for several months starting last June due to major water damage, which is a direct result of our aging health care infrastructure, which has been ignored. The one good thing in the last budget was that finally the government came forward with a planning grant, so Welland Hospital is slated to be renovated. Right now, the community is in discussions with Niagara Health to make sure that it is a full-service hospital once it’s renovated because the current plan, due to lack of funding from this government, is to continue to not have surgical beds after hours at the Welland Hospital. So that’s a conversation that’s going to continue in our community, and I’m going to continue working with the Niagara Health Coalition and the Ontario Health Coalition, who have done a fantastic job standing up for the community.

Welland Hospital was actually slated to close under the Liberals, and people in Niagara can’t believe that a government would actually close one of the main hospitals, but that was the plan. My predecessor Cindy Forster and the mayor of Welland and others banded together with the health coalition, and they forced a reversal of that decision. People can see today how crucial that hospital is and what a disaster that would have been if the Liberals had been allowed to shut that hospital down, which was the plan prior to 2018.

0930

But things have continued to deteriorate. We’ve had floods. We’ve had surgical procedures that had to be rescheduled, creating a lot of stress on families, because that infrastructure has been allowed to fall apart.

Niagara Health announced ongoing reduced hours at both centres in Port Colborne and Fort Erie for the summer season due to a shortage of physicians, and we’ve con-

tinued to see reduced hours at holiday times. That is a continuing debate in our community because due to a lack of health care funding and a lack of support for our hospital and ongoing hospital deficits, Niagara Health is planning to close those urgent cares in Port Colborne and Fort Erie, placing huge pressure on the rest of the system. Those cuts are being fought in our community.

I wanted to also raise the issue of hallway health care, Speaker. We're seeing that more than ever in our community. I spent a lot of time at the hospital over Christmas with a family member who was there for weeks at a time, and I couldn't believe, in emergency, seeing the number of people taking up beds in the emergency room and in the hallways suffering from dementia.

I had a meeting with the Ontario Medical Association recently, and they informed me—I know the government knows this—that the number of people suffering from dementia in Ontario is going to increase by 20% in the next 10 years. We can't even deal with it right now with the resources that this government is making available. The emergency department over Christmas was filled with people suffering from dementia, and that is the worst place someone with dementia can ever be. They're not supervised. They don't have the staff to look after each person who is in the emergency ward, so they have to be restrained, strapped to gurneys, sometimes in hallways. These are elderly people with dementia. It was absolutely shocking to me. About a third of the patients in the emergency department at one time when I was there were dementia patients—the worst thing that can ever happen to someone suffering from dementia.

Those folks are there because we don't have the proper support in the community. There aren't the proper home care supports. There aren't proper medical supports. There aren't enough geriatric clinics that administer medication and are places where families can take their loved ones who are suffering from dementia. And if they are released from the hospital, there is not consistent supports in the community, so you're getting different home care agencies providing support and inconsistent care—incredible stress on families. This all has a toll on families. It takes up hospital beds in our hospital, which cost almost \$2,000 a day, as opposed to just providing the proper supports in the community.

There are all kinds of things that this government can do that they are not doing, and the situation—my family has dealt with a number of medical emergencies over the last 10 years. My father suffered from a stroke about 10 years ago, and we were saying then how bad the system is. My father spent 36 hours on a bed in emergency in a hallway after having a stroke. He ended up paralyzed. He was a victim of hallway medicine. We thought, how can it get worse than this? Well, somehow this government has succeeded in making our health care system even worse than it was under the Liberals. It's absolutely incredible. It has just gotten to the point where people in the community are so frustrated, especially if you're trying to care for an elderly loved one and you end up in the hospital over and over and over again because the proper supports are not

there in the community, which would actually be much more cost effective.

There are all kinds of solutions to these issues. We have brought those solutions in the form of motions and private members' bills to this government, but they don't want to support those clear initiatives that we're suggesting to make our health care system better. Instead, the Minister of Health is just missing in action.

Those are my comments on what's happening in my community, the things that I care about, the communications I've received from members in my community.

We're going to continue to fight. We have a budget tomorrow. We're going to fight for better health care, more affordability, proper supports for our children, restoring OSAP. Those are the issues that our constituents are telling us they care about, and those are the things that we believe this government should be spending money on.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: You've heard us talk about the critical needs of Ontarians today: a family doctor, an affordable economy, an education system that works, a job. But life only keeps getting harder and more expensive.

Since 2018, Ontario's provincial debt will have grown by \$180 billion in 10 years, rising from roughly \$320 billion to well over \$500 billion by the next fiscal year—half a trillion dollars of debt. Where did this \$180 billion go? What do we have to show for it? More provincial policies creating hardships for municipalities, more crime, more homelessness, more people in distress, longer wait times, more downloading to municipal levels. That debt places Ontario among the most indebted provinces in Canada. On a per-person basis, Ontarians carry one of the highest debt burdens in the country, far higher than provinces like Alberta and British Columbia.

Furthermore, Ontario's debt per person has risen significantly from 2017 to 2027, reflecting sustained provincial borrowing. In 2017, Ontario's debt per person was about \$22,000. By fiscal year 2024-25, the per-person net debt had increased to \$26,500, ranking second highest in Canada, behind Newfoundland and Labrador.

Projections from the 2025 Ontario budget indicate that net debt will reach \$501 billion by 2027-28, translating to a per-person share of roughly \$33,000 or \$34,000, depending on population estimates. This represents a more than 50% increase in per-person debt since 2017, driven by ongoing deficits and rising interest costs.

The debt burden is expected to continue growing, with interest payments alone projected to exceed \$16 billion annually by 2025, diverting funds from public services like health care and education.

Alberta has recently reduced its debt significantly, while provinces like New Brunswick have made deliberate efforts to bring debt down. Ontario, by contrast, has seen steady increases without the same level of long-term correction.

So what is this government spending all this money on? I can tell you, it isn't people.

In Ontario, the priorities are wrong. This government has consistently chosen the wrong spending path in so many areas. People are struggling, and there's no help for them. There seems to be plenty of money for fantasy and luxury infrastructure projects like spas, airports, convention centres and tunnels, but nothing for people. And life for people just keeps getting harder.

Today I want to talk about something that rarely makes headlines, rarely wins elections and yet quietly underpins every aspect of our society: our justice and public safety system.

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In Ontario, we pride ourselves on being a place of fairness, safety and opportunity, but those values don't exist on their own. They depend on systems that are functional, accessible and effective. Right now, those systems—our courts, our prisons, our policing and our emergency preparedness—are under serious strain. Unless we make significant, meaningful investments, we risk undermining the very foundation of justice and safety in this province.

Across Ontario, our courts are backlogged. Cases take months, sometimes years, to be heard. Victims wait for closure. Accused individuals wait in limbo. Families are left in uncertainty. When courts are underfunded, we see fewer judges, fewer prosecutors, fewer clerks and fewer support staff. Courtrooms sit idle, not because there's no need, but because there aren't enough resources to operate them. Cases are delayed, sometimes withdrawn or stayed or dismissed because they cannot be processed in a timely manner, and public confidence erodes.

We cannot call ourselves a fair society if timely justice is a luxury instead of a guarantee. True public safety requires a coordinated system. It requires partnerships between police, social services like supportive housing and mental health professionals, and community organizations. Investing in policing must go hand in hand with investing in the broader supports that prevent crises before they happen, because the goal isn't just to respond to emergencies; it's to prevent them from happening in the first place.

We need stronger investment in emergency preparedness, better coordination between agencies, clear response plans, modern communication systems and the resources to act quickly when it happens. Because when disaster strikes, there is no time to build capacity; we either have it or we don't. Preparedness saves lives. It protects communities and it reduces long-term costs by preventing small crises from becoming major ones.

Another critical part of our system is our correctional facilities. Ontario's prisons are overcrowded, staff are overworked and rehabilitation programs are underfunded or unavailable. But here is the reality: The vast majority of individuals in our prison system will eventually return to our communities. So we have a choice: We can invest in rehabilitation, education, supportive housing, mental health support, addiction treatment and job training, or we can continue cycling people through a system that fails to prepare them for reintegration. One path reduces crime;

the other guarantees its repetition. And the investment path will actually save money over time.

Judges, lawyers, police officers, court staff, correctional officers, paramedics, emergency planners—they're all facing increased pressure. Burnout is rising. Retention is becoming more difficult. If we want a high-functioning system, we must invest in the people who make it work. That means better training, better working conditions and the resources they need to succeed.

Some might ask, can we afford all of this? But the better question is, can we afford not to? An underfunded justice and public safety system comes with hidden costs. When courts are delayed, costs increase. People reoffend due to lack of rehabilitation. When policing is stretched too thin, response time grows and trust declines.

What does a meaningful investment look like? Expanding court capacity, strengthening police services, building integrated public safety systems, upgrading correctional facilities and funding rehabilitation programs and supportive housing. This isn't about being tough on crime or soft on crime; it's being smart on justice.

Trust is the centre of everything—trust that the law is applied fairly, trust that help will come when it's needed, trust that our institutions are strong and capable and prepared. Ontario has the resources, the expertise and the responsibility to lead. It needs action.

Do you know that there are solutions that actually end up saving us money? Do you know that supportive housing costs less than 30% of what a year in jail costs the taxpayer? Why wouldn't you choose to invest in solutions that actually make things better and save you money? Why would this government choose differently? Your plan is not working; it's actually worse.

In closing, Speaker, public safety and our justice system are absolutely essential to our well-being as a province. Investing wisely with proven programs that actually promote a healthier and safer society are investments worth making.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

MPP Bill Rosenberg: It is my honour in my capacity as parliamentary assistant to Minister Mulroney to rise to speak to the Supply Act today. Minister Mulroney gave a full explanation of the procedural necessity of the Supply Act, so I will be happy to focus my remarks on two different topics.

Firstly, I will discuss the province's current fiscal situation. This picture will be framed by the third quarter release, the government's most recent financial disclosure.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, I will be happy to discuss the government's plan to build. This information was most recently detailed in the 2025 fall economic statement. I would like to remind the House that both releases in and among themselves illustrate the government's full transparency and openness when it comes to the finances of this province. The government has remained steadfastly committed to these principles, and I believe the results speak for themselves.

Just last month, the government released its third quarter financial results. This release outlined some of the results of the government's fiscally responsible approach. It is an approach that has never been more important because the province continues to face the disruption of our long-standing trading relationship with the United States and, it should be added, the overall economic uncertainty that continues to adversely affect economies around the globe. Despite these factors, I am pleased to tell members that the positive third quarter results reflect the government's responsible path. They clearly show how the government is protecting workers, supporting growth and keeping costs down for families.

The government's plan is working. The province's finances are in the strongest position they have been in in more than a decade. Because of the resilience of the good people of this province and the hard and prudent decisions of the government, Ontario's balance sheet is strong, and this strong position will enable government to act quickly to protect our workers and communities. This means making investments in strategic priorities that will finally unleash the province's economy. It has been said many times, but it bears repeating: The government's stated goal is to make Ontario the most competitive jurisdiction in the entire G7 to do business.

Now to the most recent results. The province's real gross domestic product—GDP—increased by 0.5% in the third calendar quarter, supporting the gains in net trade. This is impressive given the economic context. Overall, the province's real GDP rose by an estimated 1.2% in 2025. As well, net debt-to-GDP is now projected to be 36.9%, a decrease of 0.8 percentage points from previous projections. These two results are stronger than what was expected at the time of the 2025 budget. Again, considering the economic context, this is striking. Both the results show Ontario's resilience in the face of unfair US tariffs. Also, they both show that Ontario will not wave the white flag when it faces economic uncertainty.

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In terms of the provincial deficit, I'm happy to note that the third quarter release contains some positive indications. The province's 2025-26 deficit is now projected to be \$13.4 billion, an improvement of \$0.1 billion from the outlook presented in the 2025 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review. At the time, revenues were projected to improve to \$223.7 billion, \$600 million higher than expected in the 2025 fall economic statement.

As presented in the 2025 fall economic statement, the government is forecasting a deficit of \$7.8 billion in 2026-27 and a surplus of \$0.2 billion in 2027-28. It was not that long ago that a surplus in Ontario's provincial budget was not considered a possibility. Now, because of the careful fiscal management of the government, the latest projections are indicating that we are only a couple of years away from this milestone. To release future generations from the burden of debt is undeniable positive news.

Madam Speaker, when I said that Ontario's finances are in the strongest place they have been in a decade, I do not want members to just take my word for it. The government

has always valued and respected unbiased third-party opinions, and it is no different in this financial realm.

Members might remember that in 2024, S&P Global and Morningstar DBRS upgraded Ontario's credit rating. This was noteworthy because it reversed the trend of credit downgrades. The timely reversal clearly illustrates that Ontario's prudent and responsible fiscal plan is working.

A higher credit rating alters investors' view of the province. In fact, Ontario can be seen as a lower-risk borrower. This reduces Ontario's borrowing costs, and the upshot of that is obvious: It supports investments in the province, creating more jobs while financing the government's historic infrastructure plans.

Since the initial credit rating upgrades, Ontario has seen a flood of new international buyers of its bonds. That is an indication that the world believes in the economic future of this province. I am happy to tell the House that Ontario continues to have the lowest interest rate of all provinces in the 30-year term. Of course, that first upgrade was a couple years ago; however, that momentum has continued last year. In 2025, all four major credit rating agencies—Moody's, Fitch, Morningstar DBRS and S&P Global—affirmed Ontario's credit rating. In short, they projected Ontario's economic outlook as stable.

The word "stable" might not have the same meaning for some members that it really should have. Like all fiscal information I am going to relate today, it must be seen within the global economic context. Amidst this storm, as our number one trade partner inflicts mutually destructive tariff policies, achieving stability is a triumph. It reflects Ontario's commitment to fiscal responsibility and long-term sustainability.

The third quarter release noted that revenues in 2025-26 are now projected to be \$3.8 billion higher than forecasted in the 2025 budget. Additionally, overall program expense in 2025-26 is now projected to be \$219.9 billion, \$3.6 billion higher than the 2025 budget projection. It is a credit to the government's fiscal projections that these numbers are close to offsetting each other.

Madam Speaker, our government has taken the opportunity to invest in what can be accurately described as the most ambitious capital plan in Ontario's history. The government has planned investments over 10 years totalling more than \$201 billion. That is money that will rebuild this province, including highways, transit and community infrastructure. This money will keep workers on the job, strengthen Ontario's economy and ensure communities thrive for generations to come. Of course, this includes tackling a major problem that has been holding our province back for decades. The cost of gridlock is real. Who amongst us hasn't wasted valuable time sitting in traffic, wondering, "Why?" Bad traffic has a stranglehold in this province. It delays the movement of goods for businesses and, more importantly, it steals time away from our families and our loved ones.

The Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis estimates that the economic impact of gridlock in Ontario was \$56.4 billion in 2024. If these congestion levels remain unaltered, the annual cost to Ontario's economy could reach \$108

billion by 2044. That is more than \$100 billion down the tubes.

That is why the government has begun to get shovels in the ground to build the highways and roads that will finally alleviate this problem. To get people and goods moving efficiently, Ontario has started construction of Highway 413. This new 52-kilometre, 400-series highway will better connect the transportation network across Halton, Peel, and York regions. The new highway will also shorten travel times by up to 30 minutes per trip.

After years of careful planning and consideration, the corridor will extend from Highway 400 in the east to the Highway 401/407 Express Toll Route interchange area in the west, and it will include a six-lane, 400-series highway and a planned dedicated transitway. As you can imagine, a project of this scope and magnitude takes an incredible amount of planning and patience.

To give a status update, the government has awarded the first two contracts to begin construction. That marks a significant milestone in the province's plan to fight gridlock and to get drivers moving. Of course, the construction of this project will not be done in a vacuum. This impressive project will support more than 6,000 jobs per year and contribute more than \$1 billion to the Ontario GDP. As of last fall, the province has completed 90% of the preliminary design work, and the work is actively under way to acquire the necessary properties for highway construction and transitway protection.

As further testament to the government's commitment to transparency and responsibility, impacted landowners have been engaged and are being provided project updates and information on the acquisition process. This work is done in tandem with ongoing property acquisition discussions with impacted landowners.

As well, the government is advancing early works construction projects to get shovels in the ground for this project, including an embankment at the Highway 401 and Highway 407 interchange, the Highway 10 resurfacing and underpass and the Bovaird Drive underpass.

There are many projects that are part of the government's unprecedented infrastructure. So along with the building of Highway 413, I will highlight the work that is being done on the Bradford Bypass.

As Minister Mulroney knows all too well, the people of her riding spent 50 years urging action on this highway. That includes the growers of the Holland Marsh, Canada's most productive vegetable-growing region. For decades, they appealed to previous governments, seeking a commitment that never came. It was not until our government and her advocacy and leadership that the necessity of this project was taken seriously. Madam Speaker, we are helping to prepare York region and Simcoe county for rapid population growth with this project.

The Bradford Bypass will feature a new four-lane highway to relieve congestion on existing east-west local roads and connect Highways 400 and 404. The new 16-kilometre highway will relieve gridlock, save commuters time and keep goods moving across the greater Golden Horseshoe.

Last year, the province issued two requests for proposals to complete the detailed design for both the central and east sections of the bypass. Crews have completed tree clearing along the proposed route of the west section of the Bradford Bypass to streamline utility relocations and clear a path for the bypass. In addition, a southbound lane on Highway 400 connecting to the Bradford Bypass is currently under construction.

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This project will radically change the flow of traffic in one of the busiest corridors in the country. Once complete, the Bradford Bypass will save drivers an estimated 35 minutes in travel time, compared to using local roads. And much like the building of Highway 413, the benefits will be felt throughout the province's economy. During construction, the project is expected to create up to 2,200 jobs per year and contribute up to \$286 million to the province's GDP.

Madam Speaker, it should be noted that the government's ambitious infrastructure plan does not just benefit southern Ontario. The government is also making major investments in highways in the north to improve road safety, connect communities and unlock economic opportunities. There are many projects, including investing in Geraldton's Main Street rehabilitation project, a critical road infrastructure project in Greenstone that will be the gateway to the Ring of Fire.

The government has also awarded a contract for the detail design of a new two-lane bridge that will replace the Little Current Swing Bridge on Highway 6 in the town of Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands. The planning, preliminary design and environmental assessment have been completed, and the project is proceeding with the next steps with property acquisition, right-of-way designation and detail design.

In the name of both safety and convenience, the government is also working to increase passing opportunities on highways in northeastern Ontario. This includes innovative designs such as a 2+1 highway, which is a three-lane highway with a centre passing lane that changes direction approximately every two to five kilometres. This is a good example of the government's adoption of new ideas to fix old problems.

Innovation and creativity have always informed the government's plans, and the building of new infrastructure for this province is no exception.

The government is also expanding Highway 11/17 from two to four lanes between Thunder Bay and Nipigon; this includes from east of Highway 587 for 14.4 kilometres and from west of Highway 582 to Coughlin Road for 8.3 kilometres. These two projects are part of a larger series of projects to widen more than 100 kilometres of the highway between Thunder Bay and Nipigon.

Also in eastern Ontario, the government is undertaking the widening of Highway 17 between Kenora and the Manitoba border. Section 1 of this project was already completed last year. The broader project will widen Highway 17 from two to four lanes for approximately 40 kilometres.

It is important to note that the government worked in partnership and consultation with the local First Nations on these projects—projects that will build and improve highway infrastructure that will connect more First Nation communities to the province's highway network.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all the members for taking time to attend this portion of the supply debate. It was my pleasure to outline the province's current fiscal situation and give a cursory look at the government's substantial investments in roads and highways across the province.

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.

Now my colleague parliamentary assistant George Darouze will conclude the government's portion of this debate with his remarks.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: It's always a pleasure to rise in this House and represent the wonderful people of beautiful Beaches–East York.

I'm rising today to discuss the concurrence in supply act in relation to the 2025 budget. The government may claim that this is "A Plan to Protect Ontario," but what I see are repeated lessons about the high cost of inaction, literally and metaphorically. As my clever colleague from Don Valley West always says, never has a government spent so much to do so little. Billions of dollars in debt—hundreds of thousands of people are unemployed. The affordability and housing crisis rages on. Parents cannot find daycare, and more than 2.5 million Ontarians cannot access a family doctor. Student funding is way down and class sizes are way up. Tens of thousands remain on the wait-list for core clinical services under the autism program, with average wait-times reaching five years—a five-year wait-time—and this is merely a snapshot of the bleak reality that this government has authored for Ontario.

I will start with education, elementary and secondary. Per-student funding at the elementary level has decreased by approximately \$1,500 per student since this government was first elected. We hear horror stories of class sizes, teachers burning out and students unable to receive the help that they need, and trustees eliminated, along with access to school board committees, after completely annihilating parent and student advocacy routes. This government has placed school boards under provincial supervision, which parents have described as screaming into the void. In my riding, I hear regular reports that parents are unable to get in touch with the supervisor assigned to their school, or that they do not know who to go to for help at all now.

The backlog of schools that need repair is monumental. I've been screaming into the void in this chamber about Secord public school, a beautiful school in the Main and Danforth area, if you ever come to this area. It has the largest and oldest portapack portable system in Ontario, probably in Canada. It's usually the first area where new immigrants land in Toronto, and this is how we welcome

them, with this kind of system. These kids have been in portables their whole lives, most of them.

Secord public school is always on the top five list of shovel-ready projects with the TDSB, and it's never chosen. Actually, I will advocate for the other schools on that list, including in the Acting Speaker's riding and in Toronto–Danforth. They don't get chosen either. It seems the schools that get chosen for repair—finally to get repaired—are in Conservative-held ridings. Wow, it's the haves and have-nots.

Post-secondary education? Since this government took office, students are underfunded from the beginning, and this continues throughout the whole education life cycle. This lack of investment was made even more stark when the government announced catastrophic cuts to OSAP, reducing grants from 85% to 25%.

Let us be clear that this will result in more intense poverty, greater unemployment, fewer young people will be able to buy their first homes, rising reliance on social assistance, increased experiences of being unhoused and reduced workforce capability.

The Premier's comment to not pick "basket-weaving courses" is not advice. That is not advice. That is not leadership. It is an indication, however, of how he feels about the future of this province and how he feels about education, quite frankly. This government is completely at peace with the reality that this cut will mean that education will depend on your income, basically expanding their pay-to-play approach. Moreover, this value hierarchy assigned to paths of study is defined by the Premier.

The cost of failing to invest in Ontario's future will disadvantage future and current generations.

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ODSP, OW and social services: I mentioned that limited access to post-secondary education is intimately connected to poverty, increased social assistance and a whole gamut of socio-economic implications.

The reality is abysmal. Despite what the Premier would have us believe about ODSP and OW recipients, it is not a relaxed, comfortable or chosen life. Currently, you can receive ODSP income of up to \$1,408 per month. That is the best-case scenario. I invite you to go anywhere, to any rental site, and find a basic apartment for \$1,400. Now try to find one for less, so you can afford food, transit, clothing and medication.

The harmful stereotypes that this government perpetuates about social assistance and the lack of investment in programs to support program participants is exactly why unemployment is at 7.7%, homelessness is at 85,000 and poverty persists, with 1.7 million people in poverty.

Compiled with that, we have food security. Relatedly, one million people in Ontario needed the help of food banks to survive this year, with over eight million visits to a food bank. Is that something to be proud of? I'm not, yet food banks and food insecurity were not mentioned once in the 2025 budget.

What is extremely frustrating is that innovation, technology and ideas already exist or are in the process of being developed which could help address food insecurity.

The government could literally sit back and wait for impactful initiatives to come to them, and the initiatives would, if you would be receptive.

Just this past week, my team met with GoodLeaf, a global leader in vertical urban agriculture. Companies like this are growing tons of produce a day with less water, less land, right here in Ontario.

Were vertical growing and similar innovations mentioned once in the 2025 budget? No—that's a hard no. These organizations have the capacity and desire to bolster our made-in-Ontario strategy to achieve food sovereignty and address the affordability crisis. Why are we not supporting them?

Climate resilience and infrastructure: Well, we'll start with the conservation authorities and the high cost of inaction.

We know flooding is the number one public emergency in Ontario. The average basement flood costs around \$43,000—you would know; some of you have mentioned to me your basements have flooded—and the total cost of flooding across Canada is \$2.9 billion, not to mention the physical and mental hardship. Why would you want this to happen to your residents when we can prevent it?

Yet this government amalgamated the 36 distinct authorities that are supposed to address floods with one-of-a-kind knowledge and expertise of our watersheds into only nine centralized bodies. Conservation authorities have raised questions and concerns about job losses, cost, the role of local voices and expert knowledge and why this government needed to do this in the first place.

Hydro: This past week, we have likely—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 9(h), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required. Therefore, the House shall commence at 9 a.m. on Monday, March 30, 2026, for the proceeding orders of the day.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ISMAILI COMMUNITY

MPP Mohamed Firin: Madam Speaker, His Highness Prince Aga Khan is arriving in Canada, so I rise today to welcome His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan to Ontario on his first official visit to Canada as the 50th Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims.

Ontario is home to a vibrant and growing Ismaili community. Tens of thousands of Ismaili Muslims contribute to the social, cultural and economic fabric of our province.

For generations, the Ismaili Imam has advanced a powerful idea: that strong institutions, economic opportunity and pluralism are the foundations of a thriving society. That vision has shaped communities worldwide, especially here in Ontario.

Next week, His Highness will be joined by the Premier for the opening of Generations Toronto, a multi-generational housing and community centre.

Across our province, Ismaili Canadians are entrepreneurs, professionals and community builders who drive growth, create jobs and strengthen prosperity.

Globally, through the Aga Khan Development Network, that same commitment is realized through building hospitals, schools and economic systems that foster stability and self-reliance.

At a time when Ontario is focused on building more, growing our economy and competing globally, the contributions of His Highness and the Ismaili Imam remind us that success is the strongest when grounded in service, responsibility and common good.

I welcome His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan to Ontario and thank the Ismaili community for its continued and meaningful contributions to our province.

ISMAILI COMMUNITY

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I rise to recognize the arrival in Ontario of His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan on his first official visit following his succession last year as the imam, or spiritual leader, of the global Shia Ismaili Muslim community.

The Aga Khan's legacy and the continuing work of the Aga Khan Development Network speak to the values that New Democrats hold dear: human dignity, inclusion and justice.

For decades, that work focused on improving the quality of life of those most in need, tackling the root causes of poverty and building stronger communities through health care, education and opportunity. It reflects a long-term commitment to human development, to restoring dignity and to ensuring people are not left behind because of poverty, war, displacement or inequality. Across some of the world's most vulnerable regions, these institutions have helped build and expand access to care, support learning, strengthen livelihoods and build self-reliance.

At the heart of this work is the belief that every person, Speaker, regardless of their background, deserves the opportunity to live in safety with hope and dignity. That is a belief worth recognizing in this House.

Here in Ontario, the Ismaili community has carried some of those same values into action through service, volunteerism and profound commitment to the common good.

As we welcome His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan, we must recognize and recommit ourselves to the work of building a more just, compassionate and caring province.

Democracy and pluralism are grounding principles that underpin peace and progress. Words are not enough. Let our actions speak for our values.

ISMAILI COMMUNITY

Mr. Adil Shamji: On February 4, 2025, His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan became the spiritual leader of the global Shia Ismaili Muslim community, continuing an unbroken line of Imamats spanning 50 generations.

Today I rise to welcome him to Ontario on his first official visit to Canada as imam of the time.

His Highness the Aga Khan has devoted his life to uplifting social welfare, strengthening democracy and fostering civil society worldwide, including in Ontario.

In Don Valley East, our community is home to the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Park and the Aga Khan Museum—institutions that have transformed Ontario's cultural landscape.

The Aga Khan Museum hosts more than 1,200 masterpieces from the ninth to the 21st century and reaches millions worldwide, fostering intercultural dialogue. Ottawa's Global Centre for Pluralism, founded by His Highness with the government of Canada, helps societies address inequality, exclusion and division.

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These institutions are declarations of confidence in Canada and Ontario, testaments to the belief that diversity is a strength, that beauty builds bridges and that culture brings people together. As the MPP who represents some of these institutions, I know this visit will inspire reflection on service, community and pluralism. Our province is so much stronger and vibrant because of the Aga Khan's vision and the contributions of the Ismaili community.

On behalf of this House, I proudly welcome His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan to Ontario.

BLOOMLAND IN OZ

Ms. Natalie Pierre: I'm pleased to rise today to share a truly enchanting experience taking place in my riding of Burlington right now. From January 31 to April 6, the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington is welcoming visitors to its latest floral showcase, Bloomland in Oz.

Inspired by the timeless story *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, this indoor experience invites guests of all ages to step into a vibrant world where nature and imagination intertwine. Featuring more than 25,000 blooming flowers, this event offers a bright escape from winter, transforming the space into a colourful landscape reminiscent of Oz itself.

Alongside the floral displays, visitors can also explore *Of Wonders Wild and New*, a remarkable art exhibit that brings the themes of Oz to life through contemporary woodworking. With contributions from artists across Canada, the Six Nations, Italy and Spain, as well as members of the Ontario wood carving association, this exhibit showcases incredible talent from near and far. The showcase is a wonderful example of how art and nature can come together to spark joy and community and creativity.

I encourage everyone to take part in this experience and enjoy all that it has to offer.

ADDICTION SERVICES

MPP Catherine McKenney: On March 9, OSTA, our yellow school bus company, invented a new designation for our neighbourhood, a community hazard zone, and began offering school bus service to children because their walk to school poses a risk to their security. That is a third-party institution contracted by the school board formally documenting that my neighbourhood has reached a crisis point.

I live there, Speaker. My neighbours and I know what brought us here.

Somerset West Community Health Centre was forced to close its consumption and treatment site in March 2025 by this government. And when its promised HART hub finally opened that September, there was no 24/7 health care, no harm reduction, no new housing, no real increase in treatment services, not the wraparound services that were promised.

When the site was closed, the impacts were immediate and visible. Drug use did not stop. Instead, it moved into the open. The need did not disappear; the risks simply increased for both people who use drugs and the surrounding neighbourhood.

Into that gap came a private, for-profit clinic that does not properly monitor their patients. What has followed is an increase in the diversion of drugs and, as I hear from my constituents daily, chaos in the community that previously did not exist. When the school bus authority has to invent a new category of social hazard for a neighbourhood, that is the consequences of this government's choices.

We need a funded, community-integrated supervised consumption model, a fully funded treatment service and housing that is equipped to support the complex needs of people.

HELLENIC HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Today Greek Canadians and Greeks around the world proudly celebrate Greek Independence Day. On March 25, 1821, the Greek people rose up in revolution and launched their valiant struggle for independence, having lived through 400 years of Ottoman occupation. It was a defining moment in history, rooted in courage, sacrifice and unwavering belief in freedom and democracy.

Their triumph was not only a victory for a nation but a powerful affirmation of the universal values of freedom, democracy and human rights. From these fundamental values to the enduring legacy of the Greek language, Hellenism continues to shape our communities and to guide and inspire future generations.

Yesterday, I was honoured to host our annual Hellenic Heritage Month reception at Queen's Park. Community leaders and legislators from all parties came together to celebrate Hellenic culture, language and heritage, and to recognize the contributions made by the Greek community in our society.

Today, as Hellenes and philhellenes all over the world mark Greek Independence Day, we celebrate the shared values and ideals that unite us all as Ontarians: freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

Zito É Ellas. Zito O Kanadas.

Long live Greece. Long live Canada.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Families in Ottawa are struggling with the cost of living, unaffordable housing and expensive groceries. They want to see our kids get a good start in life, get a good education and a good job when they graduate, and be able to build a life here in Ontario. But it's clear that the government doesn't share that vision. They're not investing in deeply affordable housing. They're doing nothing to bring down the cost of groceries. They've cut more than \$6.3 billion from our elementary and secondary schools. Youth unemployment is at record highs. The government's persistent underfunding of post-secondary institutions means that institutions like Algonquin College are cutting programs and closing campuses—37 programs last year and another 30 this year.

Instead of addressing these challenges, the government is raising tuition, making it harder for students to afford post-secondary education, while also cutting OSAP grants, pushing students deeper into debt.

I've spoken to high school students—like the students from Merivale High School who came to my office—who aren't sure now whether they're going to be able to go to college or university.

Students at Algonquin are telling me they're not sure they're going to be able to finish their program.

And parents are telling me how worried they are that their kids will never be able to afford a home, that they will have to delay starting a family, if they graduate with a huge debt load.

Instead of making life harder for young people in Ontario, the government should invest in them.

Reverse the OSAP cuts, and fund our schools from ECE through PSE.

CARROUSEL OF THE NATIONS

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I'm proud to rise today to highlight the government of Ontario's support for one of the most iconic cultural attractions in Windsor–Essex. Through the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund, our government is investing \$30,000 in this year's Carrousel of the Nations.

Hon. Graham McGregor: Right on!

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Right. Mr. McGregor is a frequent, frequent and honoured guest—welcome any time, by the way.

This event reflects the very best of our community's diversity and community spirit.

Since its beginnings in 1974, Carrousel has grown into Ontario's longest-running cultural festival and one of its most cherished traditions, recognized among Ontario's top 100 festivals for more than a decade.

This investment will support enhanced programming, improved accessibility, and new partnerships, including with the Windsor International Film Festival.

Hosted in cultural community halls and centres across Windsor–Essex, each of the cultural sites offers an authentic experience, brought to life by volunteers from the very communities whose traditions are being shared.

I want to thank the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County and all of the dedicated volunteers who make this event possible each and every year. It's a great time.

I encourage all my colleagues to come out June 12 to 14 and June 19 to 21.

It's this spirit of celebration that reminds us that diversity is not just our strength; it's our story.

BIRTH OF MEMBER'S SON

Mr. Matthew Rae: It's an honour to rise today in the Legislative Assembly to welcome an important constituent to the chamber: my son, Arthur. Arthur joined the world last fall, and it has been a wild ride ever since.

My wife and I would like to thank all the nurses at the Stratford maternity ward, Dr. Hillyer, the Stratford Midwives—in particular Siobhan and Caitlin—for all their support during a very long labour.

As with all first-time parents, there have been many, many sleepless nights. And as some of my colleagues have remarked, I have gotten more grey hair in the past few months.

I would also like to recognize and thank the many other health care professionals who have been there to support our little family, whether it has been our lactation consultant, Claire, or Huron Perth Public Health employees such as Cindy. We are truly blessed to live in a province and country where we have access to these health care supports.

Speaker, before I conclude, I would like to recognize the true superstar in our family: My wife, who puts up with my hectic schedule, is caring for Arthur, all while having a career of her own—and, Speaker, it is her birthday today, so happy birthday.

Singing of Happy Birthday.

Ms. Catherine Fife: That's the best prop ever.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Yes, we allow some props.

1030

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): If I could have your attention, members. We have with us in the Speakers' gallery today Louis Dimitracopoulos, who is the new executive director of administrative services at the Office of the Assembly. Louis oversees the division that provides services to MPPs and staff in the areas of business resilience, financial services, human resources, and purchasing and operations. Welcome, Louis.

Also joining us today in the Speaker's gallery is a face—but rather a voice—that you will all recognize. For more than 40 years, Joe Bowen has brought joy to hockey fans across Ontario and beyond as the iconic voice of the Toronto Maple Leafs, but, colleagues, the bittersweet news is that Joe will be retiring at the end of this hockey season. I've had the privilege of knowing Joe as a friend, and I've long been a fan of his work as a broadcaster. Please join me in welcoming Joe Bowen to the Ontario Legislature.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): And following question period, I invite all of you—and in the chamber, as well—to join us in the library event space, where you have a chance to meet Joe and grab a selfie.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'm proud to introduce a delegation on behalf of His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan, on the occasion of his first official visit to Canada.

I welcome Kiran Hayat, Shazin Karim-Prebtani, Lotf Jan Ali, Zahir Velji, Nishita Atdani-Patel, Lailah Hajiyanee, Karim Karim, Selin Jessani, Mehreen Rahim, Masooda Rahmani, Fayaz Noormohamed, Nurrudin Ladha, Mohamed Dhanani, and Sholina Rhemtulla. Thank you, and welcome to the House.

MPP Mohamed Firin: I also would like to introduce some guests who are also here as part of a delegation for the Honourable Aga Khan: Nimira Dhalwani, Khalfan Khalfan, Fiaz Basaria, Amin Panjwani, Jawid Darvesh, Tasleemah Jessani-Ladak, Nadia Surani, Raj Makani, Lala Borornieva, Shahinoor Pirani, Sheniffa Velji, Aminmohamed Ladak, Zahra Mehri, SherAli Amiree, and Naseer Afghan.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm also proud to rise in this House to recognize some members from the delegation here on behalf of His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan. They are Zak Rhemtulla, Aly Shamsy, Arif Ismail, Khursandi Azizsho, Zahra Dhanani, Sara Bawany, Ilyana Jiwa, Aaniqa Hemnani, Sadru Jetha, Abdul Madhani, Hussein Sunderji, Ghazanfar Sukkurdwala, Shaifa Kanji, Tanisha Panjwani and Sikin Kherani.

And a very special welcome to Cindy Manohararaj, who's the chaplain of Queen's Park.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I rise today to introduce page captain Robbie Robinson, who is here from the riding of Nipissing. He's joined by his mother, Kirsty, and his grandmother, Irene, who's a great lady.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I would like to wish a warm welcome to the Association des enseignants et enseignantes franco-ontariens, l'AEFO; the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, the OSSTF; the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, ETFO; and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, OECTA. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'd like to join in welcoming educators from AEFO, ETFO, OECTA, OSSTF and the Ontario Teachers' Federation this morning—along with Parents of Black Children, and in particular Charline Grant; Florence Gyimah and her children; and Shannon Liverpool. Welcome to your House.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I have over 50 constituents who are going to be joining us today in the galleries at some point during question period, the Niagara Reformed seniors' group. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I can't introduce them all—too many names—but I have to mention Uncle Jake and Aunt Winnie, who are going to be there as well.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I want to welcome two of my staff members who are here for the first time: Nicole Fitzpatrick and Tanjot Gill. Welcome to the House.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I'd like to introduce an amazing public school student in beautiful Beaches East-York. She's so keen on politics she's shadowing me today. Cleopatra Tryssenaar, welcome to your House.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I'd like to introduce a dear friend of mine and colleague in the United Church of Canada, Carolyn Smith. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to welcome Martha Hradowy from OSSTF and Heather Latam from ETFO. Welcome Queen's Park.

MPP Monica Ciriello: I want to take the opportunity to introduce a legal colleague, John Wu, who is doing incredible work here in Hamilton Mountain. Welcome to your House.

MPP Jamie West: I have a couple of introductions. I want to first introduce my friend Liana Holm, president of Rainbow ETFO local and on the ETFO provincial executive. As well, CUPE Local 416—they're the outside workers for the city of Toronto, and their paramedics and firefighters are here with us today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Don Valley East on a point of order.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I seek the unanimous consent of the House to move private member's notice of motion number 65 without notice, requiring the Ontario government to reimburse all publicly insured Ontario patients for any private fees they have paid to obtain medically necessary services delivered by nurse practitioners, if nurse practitioners have not already been publicly funded by the federally mandated deadline of April 1, 2026.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Don Valley East is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move private member's notice of motion number 65 without notice, requiring the Ontario government to reimburse all publicly insured Ontario patients for any private fees they have paid to obtain medically necessary services delivered by nurse practitioners, if nurse practitioners have not already been publicly funded by the federally mandated deadline of April 1, 2026. Agreed? No.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

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

Hon. Kevin Holland: I'd like to take the opportunity to wish our great member from Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston a very happy birthday.

Singing of Happy Birthday.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Last week, the government decided to change the law to hide the Premier's cellphone records. The Premier has since then attacked the privacy watchdog whose job it is to maintain transparency and accountability of this government. He has attacked journalists who, I will point out, have no other option but freedom of information, because this is just the least transparent government we've seen in Ontario's history.

The Premier proudly claimed that nobody cares about that, but I've got to tell you, the research is showing pretty clearly that the majority of Ontarians do very deeply care about this issue.

Speaker, it is not too late. The people have spoken. I would ask the Premier, will he commit today to scrapping these outrageous changes and handing his phone records over to the court, as the courts have ordered him to do?

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

Hon. Stephen Crawford: We're introducing legislation this week that is going to modernize Ontario's FOI and cyber security rules that have been outdated—40 years old. There are probably very few people actually even in this House that were born at that time, when this legislation was actually written. That legislation was written—

Interjection.

Hon. Stephen Crawford: Well, there's a few of us, yes. But that legislation was written before smartphones, before cloud computing, before artificial intelligence. The effects of this legislation no longer are valid today.

1040

What we're doing is codifying existing jurisdictional prudence which has been seen throughout Canada and other jurisdictions, whether it's cabinet confidentiality or privacy. We're updating a system that is old. It's going to increase the public's access to information through the public sector: 95% of information that you are able to see today, you will still be able to see. The only information that will still be confidential, which should be under the cabinet confidentiality rules that have been set in the rest of the country, is discussions amongst cabinet members themselves.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, have you noticed that the Premier always pretends it's all about law and order until it's all about him? Until law and order applies to him and then suddenly—yes.

Speaker, these are the Premier's own supporters who oppose these changes—voters who elected him because he sold himself like he was some kind of straight shooter, didn't he? He was going to tell it like it is. And now he's hiding government records on his personal phone and changing the law to protect himself. This is the opposite of what the people of Ontario called for from this government.

It is very clear that the government gravy train has been completely derailed as they try to cover up this mess. So I would like the Premier to answer us: What more evidence does the Premier need to understand that people don't like government cover-ups?

Hon. Stephen Crawford: Speaking of the gravy train derailed, that's exactly what happened in 2018. When we were elected with a majority government, the first thing we noticed when we came into government was the books that were cooked by the previous Liberal government—hiding a \$15-billion deficit.

That's what the people of Ontario care about, Speaker. The people of Ontario care about good fiscal management, about affordability, about having a job, and we're very focused on that.

And speaking of accessibility and transparency, Speaker, there has never been a government in history of Ontario that has been more accessible than this government. Whether it's the Premier or—everyone here has the ability to call. I don't know the Leader of the Opposition's phone number. She probably doesn't take calls from anybody. She doesn't talk to the people of Ontario.

The Premier of Ontario has his number out there. You can call him with a problem. I certainly get texts and calls from him, dealing with constituents at 11 o'clock at night. This is the most accessible government in the history of Ontario.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I would point out to the member opposite that we wouldn't have learned about all what the Liberals were up to without freedom-of-information laws. Are you kidding me?

And I have to say, is it really worth it to the member opposite to get up here and defend the Premier's personal text messages? Have we learned nothing from Hillary? My goodness.

People don't like it when their government covers things up; they don't like it when they hide secrets away. It is not what you were elected to do. It is not what you were elected to do.

I want to be very clear: Nobody is asking for the Premier's family text messages. I couldn't care less what he is up to in his personal life. We are not asking for his TikTok log-in. We're not asking for his Wordle scores. We are asking for information about what government business he is conducting on his personal devices, and the courts have ordered him to release that.

Will the Premier do the right thing and stop hiding his personal devices from the people of Ontario?

Hon. Stephen Crawford: Yes, I can assure the member opposite that the Premier is not on TikTok. We, on this side of the House, follow the rules of cyber security in this province, in this country. Where are you? Are you on TikTok? Are you giving information to foreign sources?

Actually, speaking of that, Speaker, this government is committed to cyber security. That's a major part of this legislation. We have over one trillion incidents of cyber

attack on this province every single year. That's 30,000 a second. What we are doing is ensuring that cyber security—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Don Valley North will come to order.

Hon. Stephen Crawford: Part of this legislation is ensuring the cyber security protections we have provincially—which it sounds like the members opposite don't adhere to—are broadened to the broader public sector so that hospitals keep their data safe, so that schools keep their data safe, so that provincial associations keep their data safe. We're focused on cyber security on this side of the House, protecting the information—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I will remind the members to come to order, or they will be warned and they will be named.

Leader of the Opposition.

MINISTER'S LETTER ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Yesterday, teachers and education workers all across Ontario received a pretty insulting letter from the Minister of Education, trying to control graduation ceremonies. By the way, graduation ceremonies are those celebrations of our students, their achievements and what they've achieved with the help of our teachers and education workers—I would point out against all odds, because under this government they have seen cuts and underfunding for years. Now it sounds like the minister is telling young people to stay silent.

Let me ask the Premier this: If a high school student giving a speech at graduation, as, say, their class's valedictorian, talks about how they can no longer attend college or university because of this government's OSAP cuts, would that be considered too divisive or contentious for a graduation ceremony, or are they allowed to only praise your government?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: It's interesting that she didn't like the letter, but she quoted from the letter quite extensively. I made it very clear in that letter that I don't want teachers put in the middle of disagreements between students and school boards. There was a memo that went out from the Hamilton district school board to teachers. A faceless superintendent in that board decided that graduation ceremonies shouldn't focus on student achievement—student achievement, by the way, which comes about because of the hard work of teachers.

A graduation ceremony is about the students' success, but it's also a way for parents to recognize what teachers have done to build on that success. So this superintendent in Hamilton decided, "Let's make it divisive. Let's turn it away from success of students and put that responsibility on the shoulders of the teachers organizing." Well, you

know what that superintendent should do? Go to every single one of these graduation ceremonies so that when parents are upset by the divisive nature of it, when parents are upset that the focus is not on students, let them take the heat from the students, not the teacher. We should focus on the success of students and what they have accomplished.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I will point out, first of all, to the minister the hard work of our teachers, yes, but with no thanks to this government, because they have treated our education workers just dismally.

We have a government that is changing the laws to hide everything from the people of Ontario, and now you are trying to muzzle students. The minister cannot force teachers and students to agree with him. That is not how democracy works.

Our classrooms don't need political interference from this minister. They need education assistants. They need windows that aren't broken and hallways that aren't flooded. That's what they need. They need smaller class sizes. Let's start there. Why is this Premier policing what students and teachers can say instead of focusing on fixing Ontario's struggling education system?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Madam Speaker, there is a very clear indication of the difference between the New Democrats and the Liberals, and the Progressive Conservatives. When it comes to education, the focus needs to be on students, parents and teachers—full stop.

Now, 85% of an education budget goes for the salaries of educators. You know why that is? Because educators are the backbone of the education system. Without educators, none of us would be here. That is what the system focuses on. It should not be about putting teachers against parents. The opposition are suggesting that when that 5% of teachers, like any profession, aren't good, aren't focused on bringing student achievement up, we should protect them. No. Is the Leader of the Opposition suggesting that when two teachers went on a racist rant in Toronto, I should not fire them? Well, I disagree, and that's why I fired them.

When a superintendent, a high-ranking board official, went on a rant on TikTok and said that President Trump should be assassinated, you know what happened? That superintendent got fired. That—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member of Ottawa West–Nepean.

1050

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Speaker, let's talk about what teachers and parents want to hear from this minister on racism, because this morning, Parents of Black Children is here with a request for the Premier. A year after the Human Rights Commission confirmed that there is systemic racism in our schools and offered a road map with 29 recommendations, nothing has happened. This govern-

ment has been completely silent while Black students continue to suffer discrimination in our schools.

Parents and teachers want to hear a firm commitment that the government will implement the recommendations along with a clear timeline. Will the Premier make that commitment to them this morning? Yes or no?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Look, I tend to agree that, under the current governance structure across the province of Ontario, a governance structure where trustees have been in charge of a system where we have seen failings across the province of Ontario—that has led to challenges. I know the former minister moved very quickly in the Peel situation to put a supervisor in place. Very soon, we will be bringing governance reforms to this House which I think will, in part, deal with this.

As you know, Bill 33 allows the minister to step in much quicker. It's a bill that they did not support. So in instances where we are seeing challenges in the system that aren't being addressed by school boards, we will step in and we will make it right. That is part of Bill 33, and significant reforms are coming very soon, which will allow us to continue these reforms, which will allow us to address very serious situations like this.

I completely agree. Trustees have failed us. Boards have failed us, but change is coming.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Tomorrow we'll hear from the half-trillion-dollar man, aka the finance minister, on what vanity projects and gimmicks the deflated Doug Ford Conservative government will put in this year's budget. From what we've heard, we'll see the work of the Premier of Toronto, who wants his own airport and a shiny new convention centre, instead of doing his job as the Premier of Ontario and helping people who are out of work, out of a home and feeling so out of luck.

People know that after eight years of this Conservative government, life is harder here in Ontario. My question to the finance minister: Will this budget put an end to the shiny new toys for the Premier and actually make life better for people here in Ontario?

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

Mr. Dave Smith: It's interesting hearing the third party talk about this the way that they're talking about it.

When you take a look at the fiscal management that this Premier and this Minister of Finance have done—let's take a look at the history of it. There was a time when Ontario's debt-to-GDP ratio was above 41%, and the Liberal government at the time said that if it got above 40%, that would cause problems for us. In their term as government, we saw a decrease in Ontario's credit rating.

But what have we seen since 2018? We've seen that debt-to-GDP ratio drop. We are now at 36%. That is because we've improved the economy. We have done things to make the economy stronger, and we've never raised a single tax while doing that.

On top of that, DBRS and Standard and Poor's have given a credit rating increase to Ontario. And I'll have more to say in my supplementary.

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

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Speaker, after eight years of this Conservative government, life is harder here in Ontario, especially for the record number of people out of work under this government.

The government's response? Spend hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on delusional self-promoting ads. They are bombarding us with them: during a Super Bowl, the World Series, on billboards, online and in full-page newspaper ads.

Here's how the next one should go: "Soon, Ontario taxpayers will pay for a brand new convention centre in Toronto—but Ontario residents will have no new homes, worse hallway health care and bad learning outcomes for our kids. That's how this government neglects Ontario."

Back to the finance minister: Will he please tell us when he'll stop wasting hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on ads and actually start making life better for people in Ontario?

Mr. Dave Smith: June 4, 2018, is when it started to make life better for the people of Ontario. Our economy was at \$717 billion for our GDP in 2018. This year, it exceeded \$1 trillion.

You do not have the money that you need to spend on social infrastructure if you do not have a strong economy. That's why we've spent the last eight years building that economy back up. We've seen the growth in the GDP. We've seen the growth in employment. More than a million people today are employed in Ontario than what there was at the end of 2017, at the end of the disastrous rule of the Liberals.

This government has been doing things to increase the number of employment opportunities, to support workers, to support people all throughout this province, and we're seeing the results of it, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Speaker, we know about the reckless spending habits of this deficient Doug Ford Conservative government. No fiscally responsible minister would spend over 100 million taxpayer dollars on self-promoting ads. No fiscally responsible minister would let hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars go to Skills Development Fund applicants who got a failing grade. No fiscally responsible minister would give out \$340 million in blank cheques to parents and call that "education spending" while cutting the number of adults in the classroom and failing our students. But this minister, this finance minister, has done all of this.

Back to the finance minister: When will he wise up, step up and deliver a budget that makes life better for the people of Ontario?

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

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, those ads, which incidentally run all around the world, have had success:

—Massilly, from France, \$85-million investment in Ontario;

—Sandvik, from Sweden, \$85-million investment in Sudbury;

—Element5, from Austria, \$107-million investment, 150 jobs in St. Thomas;

—Ferrero, out of Italy, \$445 million, 500 jobs;

—Marvell, out of the US, \$238 million, 350 jobs.

Speaker, our trade with the European Union is up 38% since we were elected; India, up 88%; South Korea, up 94%—they see these ads at every airport, in every magazine—Switzerland, up 132%; United Kingdom, up 194%; Brazil, up 241%; Vietnam, up 288%.

People around the world understand that when you want to build something in the world, you build it here in Ontario.

EDUCATION ISSUES

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of Education. After eight long years, this minister and this Premier and this Conservative government continue to make life harder for Ontario families. Our schools are not safe places to learn or to work. Class sizes are too big, special education has been starved and there is a mental health crisis in our schools that's not being addressed. Speaker, Ontarians don't want much; all they need is for their kids' schools to be safe places to learn and to work. And they're not.

Speaker, my question to the minister is, why are you making it harder for young families with kids in Ontario schools?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I'll remind the member opposite that, under a Progressive Conservative government, we are seeing the highest graduation rates in the history of the province. We are seeing reading and writing scores on the increase across the province—at their highest level ever. We are seeing increases in math scores. Since that government left office, we're seeing them increase. But you know what? It's not good enough for us. That is why we are doubling down to make sure that we can improve our math scores for our students.

Now, under the previous Liberal government, what did they do? They starved teachers, right? They starved teachers for all of their pet projects.

Under our government, you know what we're doing? We're putting \$750 back, giving it directly to teachers. Do you know why? So that they can fund their classrooms, so that they don't have to go to parents like they did under the Liberals and say, "Can you help us? We need to go to Dollarama. We need to go to the dollar store to buy supplies for our classroom."

1100

Do you know what we're doing? We're giving money directly to teachers so that they can outfit their classrooms. That is good news for teachers, it's good news for

students, great news for parents and it's all about putting students—

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

Mr. John Fraser: Speaker, I have a four-letter word for the minister: EQAO. It's all on you. Eight years—look at those results.

Let me tell you a story about Marigold. Marigold is six years old. She lives in my riding. She's a young girl with exceptional needs. She's a bright young girl. She got into grade 1 with an assessment that identified her exceptional needs. Two years later, nothing—nada, not a thing. Two years—no support, Minister. And Marigold is not the only child in this province that this is happening to. There are thousands and thousands of others.

My question to the minister is, life is hard already for Marigold. Why are you making it harder for her?

Hon. Paul Calandra: You started off this question by talking about the EQAO. I would remind the member that again, under this government, we have the highest graduation rates in the history of the province of Ontario. Under this government and under the reforms started by my predecessors, we have the highest scores in reading and writing that we have ever had in the province of Ontario. Under this Progressive Conservative government, we are seeing math scores finally increase. Because you all remember, right? You remember, under Liberals, you discovered math; under Progressive Conservatives, you learn math. That is the difference.

But it simply isn't good enough. It's simply not good enough for us, Madam Speaker. That is why we're putting more supports and resources into the classrooms so that our students can do even better. That's why we're directly supporting teachers: because we know that the system works better when you actually listen to the people who deliver that service.

I said in one of the earlier questions, teachers are the backbone of the education system, and the people I'm listening to are teachers, not an opposition that failed—

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

Mr. John Fraser: This government has starved special education, and that's why there are stories like Marigold's.

Both of Marigold's parents work. They can't take time off work. And they couldn't afford the help that Marigold needed. It would've put a big hole in their family budget. But their aunt helped them out. She actually drives Marigold to her appointments every week, because they can't take time off work, Minister. They can't take time off work and they can't afford it. They're lucky they've got an aunt. There are thousands of kids who don't have an aunt or someone who's going to do that. It shouldn't be this way.

Speaker, it's really, really hard for Marigold and her parents and thousands of other families like that. Why is this minister making their life even harder?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, just the opposite, Madam Speaker—I've said this on a number of occasions. I don't think parents care when the minister gets up here and says,

“Oh, we have the highest level of funding in the history of the province.” I don’t think parents care. I don’t think they care when the Leader of the Opposition talks about funding cuts that they know aren’t actually in the system.

Do you know what they care about? It’s “When my child goes to school, does the teacher have the resources they need to deliver the best possible outcome?” And that is what we are focused on: making sure that our students, parents and teachers have the resources that they need to give us the best-quality students.

That is why in Ottawa, in the member’s own community, we stepped in to take over a board—he did not support it—where parents were flooding the Ministry of Education because the trustees were not listening to them. They were taking money out of the classroom and putting it into pet projects.

What we’re doing is we’re refocusing the system to put students first, and the way you put students first is by listening to teachers because they are the ones who deliver for students and parents. I’ll continue to do that regardless of what the opposition says. I’m going to focus on teachers, the backbone of the education system.

LABORATORY SERVICES

MPP Jamie West: Speaker, let me tell you about LifeLabs. LifeLabs was sold to an American company, and now they’re going to close the Sudbury laboratory testing facility. Under the Premier’s watch, that means that another 40 northern Ontario workers will lose their jobs. That means, under the Premier’s watch, even fewer opportunities in northern Ontario for our lab tech students. Most importantly, because the samples are going to be shipped down to southern Ontario, they may be delayed or lost, and northern patients will face greater uncertainty.

So my question, Speaker, is, the Premier loves to say, “Protect Ontario;” why isn’t he protecting northern Ontario from American companies?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: First and foremost, I think the member should check his numbers. In fact, there are not 40 layoffs in northern Ontario. He would know that if he’d had those conversations.

The important piece to remember here is that we have organizations that have signed binding contracts with the Ministry of Health to ensure and provide services. In fact, we’ve actually increased the number of collection points in northern Ontario so people don’t have to travel as far to get those critical diagnostic tests done. We will monitor and ensure that they continue to maintain and follow the contract as signed, but the assurance today is that there is no impact to the individuals who live in northern Ontario and, specifically, Sudbury.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, Quest Diagnostics, the American for-profit company that bought LifeLabs, is closing their testing facilities in Sudbury and laying off

their staff. This is not acceptable. For us in the north, it means that the quality of samples will be compromised. The test results will be delayed. We’ll become more vulnerable during emergencies. We’ll lose a training facility for our MLTs—and the list goes on.

Rather than paying an American company to collect, transport to Toronto and test northern samples, why doesn’t the minister pay northern hospitals to do the exact same work, just better, faster and cheaper?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again, to reinforce: Urgent lab testing remains in our local hospitals across Ontario—and, of course, in northern Ontario—and remains unchanged. As I mentioned, we actually have six increased opportunities for people to go so that they don’t have to travel as far. We have a contract, and we will ensure that the terms of that contract are followed and that there is no impact that is patient-focused in this situation.

Again, I would ask the member, when they raise these issues, to actually look at the facts and make sure that the numbers they are throwing out—in, I understand, a chamber that they can call without impunity—that they actually get the numbers right.

MINISTER’S LETTER

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of Education. Like many of us here, I was at the education breakfast this morning and heard the Minister of Education speak to teachers. I was gobsmacked; I couldn’t believe it. I’ve never heard anything quite like it, but I shouldn’t be surprised because if I’d read the letter, which I did earlier, I would have known why. It was the same tone. It was imperious, condescending and out of touch with the people, the adults, who are responsible for our kids every day. Why would you send a letter like this to every teacher when, admittedly, you say it’s a very—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Prop?

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you. The letter is right here, folks. This letter—why would you send it? Why would you send it to every teacher when you say it’s a small problem? You’re trying to make a problem bigger than it actually is, and you’re trying to vilify somebody in doing that.

Will the minister apologize for the condescending, imperious tone he took with teachers this morning and what he put in the letter?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I encourage the member to do two things. First, table the letter, and, after question period, I’ll ask for unanimous consent for him to read the letter, and then we’ll see what the tone was in that letter. I will simply not apologize for what is in that letter.

As I said earlier when I was speaking with teachers—you know what? We have a situation where, in Toronto, two teachers went on a racist rant on Instagram. The Liberals and the NDP would like to see those teachers in the classroom. I fired them.

In the northern Ontario board, a high-ranking school board official went on TikTok because that official thought it was important to tell everybody that the Pres-

ident of the United States should be assassinated. You know what? That person is fired because they don't belong in an education system.

The backbone of our education system is teachers; 95% of our teachers are hard-working, but we're going to weed out those 5% that have a different agenda than supporting our parents and supporting our students.

1110

I won't be swayed by the opposition. We're going to deliver a system that works for parents, a system that works for teachers, and we're going to give our students every opportunity to succeed.

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

Mr. John Fraser: When you send a letter to everybody in an organization when you have a small problem, it's because you're trying to make it a bigger problem and you're trying to deflect from the real problems, which are class sizes that are too big, special education that's being starved and a mental health crisis in our schools.

If the minister loves the letter so much, I am going to read him a bit of this letter. What it says is, "Those in positions of authority must be held to a higher standard, consistent with their responsibilities." Minister, consistent with your responsibilities, will you make class sizes smaller? Will you stop starving special education? And will you address the mental health crisis in our schools?

Hon. Paul Calandra: What we have done since we've come to office is ensure that students, parents and teachers are put first in the system. Under the Liberals it was a war zone in our schools. What we're doing is depoliticizing it so students can focus on one thing: learning. What teachers have told me is they don't want to be parents; they want to be educators. We're going to deliver a system that allows them to do that.

The member opposite is supporting a graduation ceremony in Hamilton and a superintendent who has decided that we shouldn't focus on students, that it shouldn't be focused on student achievement; it should be focused on colonization. Well, you know what? Students work hard. By that point, education for them in that year is done, and what we should focus on is students. We should focus on our parents and teachers. And do you know what? We should always be proud to be Canadian. We should always be proud of the achievements that we've accomplished. I will step in every single time someone goes off of that message.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

MPP Mohamed Firin: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. For years, commuters across Ontario were stuck in gridlock while previous Liberal governments made promises it failed to deliver. But when our government came to office, we came with a real plan to finally build transit that our province needs.

That plan includes the Ontario Line, a new rapid transit connection throughout the heart of one of the fastest-growing regions in North America that will create jobs and

drive economic growth for communities across this province.

Today we're seeing the plan is becoming a reality, with the construction under way and real progress being made every single day. Can the minister update this House on how our government is delivering the Ontario Line and cutting commute times across the greater Toronto area?

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

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you to the great member from York South–Weston for bringing such an important point to this House. For the last 15 years, the previous Liberal government promised transit but delivered delays. Our government came forward with a real plan to get shovels in the ground and build the transit Ontario needs. Construction is advancing on the entire Ontario Line corridor. Our crews are at work at every single station site, and progress is being made every single day.

The Ontario Line is a 15.6-kilometre project with 15 new stations, connecting riders to GO Transit at East Harbour on the Lakeshore East and Stouffville corridors, TTC line 1 at Osgoode and Queen, TTC line 2 at Pape; and the Eglinton Crosstown LRT at Don Valley, while supporting 4,700 good-paying jobs. While the opposition members voted against, we're building and delivering faster and more reliable transit, and getting people moving in our region.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for York South–Weston.

MPP Mohamed Firin: I'd like to thank the wonderful parliamentary assistant for that important update.

What our government is delivering with the Ontario Line is remarkable by any measure. Workers are tunnelling beneath one of the densest urban cores in North America, building stations with world-class complexity, and doing it with the engineering and expertise that Ontario is known for.

But this is also about more than one project; it's about generational commitment to building the transit infrastructure our province needs to grow and compete.

Can the parliamentary assistant tell this House how the Ontario Line fits with our government's broader vision for transit, and what it means for the future of Ontario?

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: The member is absolutely right; what our workers and engineers are doing right now is truly remarkable. They're tunnelling beneath one of the busiest urban cores in North America, building 15 complex stations and delivering a brand new rapid transit line through the heart of our region. The Ontario Line is a key part of our government's historic \$70-billion investment in public transit, the largest expansion in Canadian history.

Projects like the Ontario Line, the Scarborough subway extension, the Yonge North subway extension and the Eglinton Crosstown West extension will expand capacity, reduce congestion and connect more people to jobs. The Ontario Line alone is expected to serve 390,000 riders every day while taking 28,000 cars from our roads.

While the NDP and the Liberals vote no, our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford and the support of this great PC team, are going continue building for the people of Ontario, ensuring we have transit ridership and quality transit for generations to come.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

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

Speaker, Julia is a first-year med student. She is president of her class and active with the Ontario Medical Students Association. Medical school tuition is about \$25,000 a year. Medical training costs well over \$100,000. Julia is worried that the cuts to OSAP grants will make it financially impossible for qualified students from diverse backgrounds to become physicians.

Why is the Premier making it harder for qualified students to access medical training?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I'm sure that member knows about Ontario Learn and Stay Grant and our new Ontario Learn and Stay Grant that's going to be for family physicians. We're going to cover 100% of tuition, books and other costs that are associated with that.

Do you know what? That party loves to cherry-pick facts and only present half of the facts to the general public. The cherry blossoms haven't even bloomed yet, but they're all about cherry-picking the facts. Please give all of the information to the students. There is a significant amount of information you're not sharing with the students. We have a significant amount of grants; the universities have \$1.8 billion of grants every year that they give out every year as well.

We will continue to be there with our Ontario Learn and Stay Grant, our PSW Learn and Earn Program as well as our new Ontario Learn and Stay Grant that will coming online this fall for family physicians, bringing 400 every cohort.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would encourage the minister to listen to the Ontario Medical Students Association about the kind of support that medical students need.

The Ontario Nurses' Association estimates that Ontario will be short more than 30,000 nurses by the end of the decade. OSAP cuts are going to make things worse. Ontario desperately needs more nurses from diverse backgrounds, and students should not have to take on a lifetime of debt in order to go into nursing.

Will this government reverse its damaging cuts to OSAP grants so that Ontario can graduate the nurses we urgently need?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I guess she didn't hear me, because she's speaking about the nursing shortages, and I guess she didn't hear about the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant that we've invested over \$170 million into, helping 13,000 students come online in nursing and high-priority programs.

But if she wants to speak about OSAP, let's speak about OSAP. The Auditor General in 2017 said the desperate moves by the Liberal government were unsustainable, and they are unsustainable. The Premier and I have been very clear about that they are unsustainable. But OSAP is not going away. We have ensured that OSAP has sustainability and stability, not just for these students but for the next generation of students behind them.

We'll always be there for our students, but they need to make the investments into themselves and into their future careers, and it will pay tenfold with their future earnings.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Before I get into my question, I just need to echo the comments of my colleagues about the appalling remarks by the Minister of Education this morning towards teachers. The tone was much more like the emperor of education. They deserve more respect.

1120

Speaker, on the eve of the budget, though, the government is trying to fix something that isn't broken. Freedom of information exists so that taxpayers know how their money is being spent. After eight long years of this Conservative government, life is harder and taxpayers deserve to know why. Instead, the government is set on hiding the truth. Speaker, this is dead wrong, and everyone knows it.

There are 700,000 people without a job, and many more are worried. One million people rely on food banks, and kids are going to school hungry. To the Premier: Why is this government more focused on hiding their track record than fixing it?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The minister of business and public service delivery.

Hon. Stephen Crawford: We are a government that's committed to fixing the problems that we inherited. In fact, this Minister of Education is the first one that's stood up for students, stood up for teachers and stood up for parents—since she brought it up—so let's give him a round of applause, please.

Interjections.

Hon. Stephen Crawford: On that note, Speaker, I do want to talk about what we are doing with the legislative changes because it does pertain to children's safety. In fact, I have four kids; I have two that are in high school. There are many people in this House that have kids in high school or public school, and they don't know how these third party software providers are accessing children's data.

With the legislation that we're proposing today, you are going to have notification to parents. We are working in the best interests of the parents of Ontario. Whether it's the Minister of Education, whether it's the Premier or whether it's our caucus colleagues, we're working together to protect the children of Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Folks—

Interjections.

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

I recognize the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Polling shows that Ontarians reject the Premier's freedom-of-information changes; 73% reject doing it retroactively.

Hon. Graham McGregor: What else do the polls say?

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I know you care about the polls a lot, actually.

Transparency and accountability are not optional for a government; they're fundamental. These changes will bury information about how decisions are made at the very top. This is not the government's money; it's the people's, paid for by their hard work and sweat. That money should be going to creating good jobs. It should be going to health care. It should be going to education. We know it's not.

Speaker, to the Premier: With life getting harder, why is this government more focused on keeping its record secret than fixing it?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the minister of economic development.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Let's talk a little bit about our record. In your very own riding, Kinectrics invested \$22 million and hired 15 people. Oakhill Distribution invested almost \$6 million and hired 20 people. All across we can find—Andriani in London, \$55 million, hired 42 people; Jungbunzlauer, a \$200-million investment, hired 50 people; in MPP Gates's riding, Siltech, a \$100-million investment, 51 people; Heddele Shipyards, \$107 million, 30 people.

These companies continue to expand in Ontario because they know exactly what they're going to get: dependability, reliability, predictability. That's why, all around the world, we've seen such huge increases in economic development and in companies coming here to Ontario. They know what they're going to get and they trust it.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Brian Saunderson: My question is for the Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries. Speaker, we all know that the protectionist measures of Donald Trump have created uncertainty and disruptions to the global economy, which is directly affecting the cost of living for the people and industries in my riding of Simcoe–Grey and across our great province. At the same time, our population is growing rapidly, and, with that, we are seeing a significant increase in energy demand.

The industries and workers of Ontario need assurance that we have their backs and that we will protect their jobs and livelihoods today and for generations to come.

Through you, Speaker, can the associate minister tell this House how our government is ensuring that our energy-intensive industries remain supported?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank the excellent member for Simcoe–Grey for his advocacy and his work on behalf of industry in his riding. I know, when we had the opportunity to go through Pilkington glass in your community, we heard about how crucial having reliable,

affordable and secure energy rates is for the future of industry, especially for energy-intensive industries, trade-exposed industries.

Our government is laser-focused on keeping costs down and ensuring that they have access to all the supports possible to keep them competitive. One of the ways that we are doing that is through the XLerate program. We spoke about this: up to \$15 million in grants, up to 75% of capital needs that will support industrial energy-efficiency programs.

Why is this important? It helps save the grid money because we don't have to build excess capacity; it helps save the business money on their monthly bills; and, ultimately, it also ensures that they're able to upgrade equipment, keep those jobs, protect workers and protect Ontario families.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you to the associate minister for his response and for taking time in his busy schedule to come to my riding and work with one of my constituents.

The people of Ontario remember the damage that Liberal policies caused to our energy sector, causing a massive surge in electricity prices. Now, with the added threats and uncertainty from Donald Trump and growing geopolitical uncertainty, we have even more reason to support local and to build Ontario's energy self-reliance.

Our government has been at the forefront of prioritizing affordability through a made-in-Ontario energy supply chain, while keeping our industries and businesses competitive.

Speaker, can the associate minister share the details about how our government has been protecting Ontario's industries so that they can continue to power our homes, our businesses and our economy?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I have to tell the member, he knows as well as I do that industries say it's been like night and day to have a government that now is supporting them when it comes to energy affordability, when it comes to supporting investments in their communities so that they can grow their businesses.

We saw a 300% increase in electricity rates when the Liberals were in power. Since we came to office, we renegotiated thousands of contracts to realize an average 30% reduction in the cost of those contracts, and we've been able to save billions of dollars for businesses.

But we know the work is not done. In an era of geopolitical risk, Ontario is an ocean of calm and stability. We're going to continue to support and ensure that we use competitive procurement and every tool in our tool box to drive costs down, keep businesses growing and ultimately keep the workers who they employ in their communities and actively growing as well.

I want to thank the member for his work, and I encourage all members to work closely with them to ensure that they're able to access every program and support available.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

MPP Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. Communities across Niagara were thrown into chaos when the Premier-appointed regional chair Bob Gale began pushing for forced amalgamation. First, it was outright amalgamation; now it looks like it's amalgamation-lite, where three big cities get more control and smaller Niagara communities get pushed aside.

I get hundreds of emails saying the same thing: Decisions about Niagara should be made in Niagara.

Will the Premier commit to consulting Niagara residents, honour their wishes and rule out forced amalgamation, yes or no?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Our government has been clear from day one: The process is driven by Niagara, decided by Niagara, from the people of Niagara, for the people of Niagara.

If the member opposite doesn't think Niagara has too many politicians, I question his math, colleagues. Right now, one regional councillor in Peel, who is doing great work, is representing four times the amount of people a Niagara regional councillor represents. And what does Niagara get? Well, the mayors can tell you: dysfunction, higher taxes.

Half the Niagaras support reforming the system. This is about better service for Niagara, and we're going to continue to work with the local mayors to bring about those reforms.

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

MPP Wayne Gates: I didn't hear a clear yes on that one. Data from forced amalgamation in this province shows higher costs, worse service and less local accountability. The confusion this Premier and his hand-picked chair have caused, along with the lack of proper consultation, has made it harder for businesses in Niagara to plan for the future.

1130

Will the Premier promise the residents of Niagara that any changes to Niagara's governance will only happen with full public consultation and the support of local municipalities—all of them?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Speaker, I find it a bit rich from the members opposite when they talk about investments to this great province, when they vote against every initiative to make Ontario the most competitive place in the G7 to do business. They're going to have an opportunity soon to vote on a budget that will continue to do that, and I hope they will vote with us to protect Ontario and ensure we're attracting more businesses to Niagara and all of Ontario.

Speaker, going to the question at hand: I don't know if the member opposite was aware, but the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy went to the region of Niagara twice a few years ago. I was part of that committee, and it did important work on regional governance. We heard directly from mayors, we

heard directly from business owners, and we heard directly from those in the community, and that is informing the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and our government as we move forward with regional government reforms, working with our local municipalities.

CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: The government's announcement to amalgamate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities caused mass confusion with all parties involved, including their own.

The Minister of Rural Affairs was worried that watersheds feeding into Lake Huron bear little resemblance to those in the northwest, Lake Superior, and a single regional governance model risks diluting the focus and expertise required to address local shoreline, flood plain and agricultural impacts, and an authority dedicated specifically to Lake Huron was necessary.

Lo and behold, shortly thereafter, the government added two more conservation authorities to the matrix, and the Minister of Rural Affairs' wish came true.

My question to the Premier: Can we also write you letters to save our conservation authorities?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I thank the member for Beaches-Woodbine for the question. The former leader of that party supports our conservation authority reform. He is among thousands from whom we've received consensus for the amalgamation and the strengthening of conservation authorities into nine watershed-based regional conservation authorities, to better equip them equally with updated mapping and the best technology to fulfill the core mandate of flood prevention, protecting people and property from natural hazards, and strong watershed management. They will be supported and advised, if this House approves our legislation, by local watershed councils so that the local voice is maintained, municipal governance continues, the funding model continues. This will be better than ever.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Last time I checked, I haven't been to the racetrack lately. So we need to get a map, as I represent Beaches–East York.

This government claims that tens of thousands of comments informed their final plan to slash Ontario's conservation authorities from 36 down to nine. Yet submissions received expressed warnings of:

- loss of local expertise;
- fear that smaller municipalities and rural voices will be lost;
- doubt that amalgamation will not affect staffing;
- concerns that changes will result in deteriorating standards; and
- confusion about whether centralization is the best way to achieve efficiencies.

So my question to the Premier: Besides feedback from your colleagues, exactly what comments did you use to inform your final plan?

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: To the member for Beaches—East York—and we've met in her riding several times to discuss this, among other issues, so I appreciate the question.

Speaker, 14,000 submissions were received—six regional workshops we were involved in, hearing from municipal leaders and conservation authority participants. We listened and we've acted. More than ever before, conservation authorities will be able to fulfill their core mandate; that is backed up by new additional funding with a central conservation agency. The new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency has been established. It is funded with \$20 million of new funding.

And we've recently announced \$3 million of new annual funding, beginning this year, to support the transition to our new regional watershed-based conservation authorities to equip them in the transition period. When the consolidation is complete and they're up and running: new, \$3-million-a-year funding.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: My question is for the amazing, incredible Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. We know that accessibility is essential to daily life. Whether it's getting to school, going on public transit or visiting local facilities, residents in my wonderful community of Oakville North—Burlington and across Ontario want to see real progress being made so everyone can fully participate in their communities.

Since 2018, our government has heard from families, advocacy groups and municipalities, and we are taking action.

Speaker, could the minister share how our government is helping make Ontario more accessible and what progress has been made in communities across our province?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Project by project, community by community, Ontario is becoming more accessible every day. We are working with all levels of government to meet, achieve and exceed the goals of the AODA. All 444 municipalities have accessibility plans that outline how they will implement the AODA. This includes the 2,200 accessible buses we've delivered to municipalities. All GO trains and new subways are accessible. This year alone, \$275 million is being invested in making schools accessible.

This is how we are driving accessibility: project by project, community by community. We are getting it done.

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

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Thank you to the minister for that incredible response.

Speaker, we know that when barriers are removed, accessibility improves; daily life becomes easier and more inclusive for people of all abilities. They notice the impact

no matter where they are in the province. All over Ontario, neighbourhoods, organizations and community partners are working to make sure people of all abilities are supported.

Speaker, could the minister share what supports are available to help communities enhance accessibility and create more inclusive spaces across Ontario?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I'm so glad the member asked this important question. This morning, I was so happy to announce that the next round of applications for the Enhancing Access to Spaces for Everyone, or EASE, grant is opening today. This is now the second year of the grant. Earlier this year, we invested in 48 projects all across Ontario. This grant invests \$2.25 million for local communities to become more accessible.

These opportunities didn't exist under any previous government, but they do now. Under the leadership of this Premier, Ontario is more open than ever before for people of all abilities.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I seek unanimous consent to allow the leader of the Liberal Party to read the letter that I sent to school boards into the record.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Education is seeking unanimous consent to allow the leader of the third party to read a letter he referenced earlier in the chamber for our records. Agreed? I heard a no.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

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

DEFERRED VOTES

KEEPING CRIMINALS BEHIND BARS ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 VISANT À MAINTENIR LES CRIMINELS DERRIÈRE LES BARREAUX

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

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

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

On December 9, 2025, Mr. Kerzner moved second reading of Bill 75, An Act to enact the Constable Joe MacDonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund Act, 2025 and to amend various other Acts.

All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Gates, Wayne	Quinn, Nolan
Anand, Deepak	Gélinas, France	Racinsky, Joseph
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gilmour, Alexa	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Glover, Chris	Rakocevic, Tom
Bailey, Robert	Gretzky, Lisa	Rosenberg, Bill
Bell, Jessica	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Sabawy, Sheref
Blais, Stephen	Gualtieri, Silvia	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bouma, Will	Hamid, Zee	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bourgouin, Guy	Hardeman, Ernie	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Bowman, Stephanie	Harris, Mike	Sattler, Peggy
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Hazell, Andrea	Saunderson, Brian
Bresee, Ric	Holland, Kevin	Scott, Chris
Burch, Jeff	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Calandra, Paul	Jones, Trevor	Shamji, Adil
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jordan, John	Shaw, Sandy
Cho, Stan	Kanapathi, Logan	Smith, Dave
Ciriello, Monica	Kernaghan, Terence	Smith, David
Clark, Steve	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, Graydon
Coe, Lorne	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Laura
Collard, Lucille	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smyth, Stephanie
Cooper, Michelle	Learidi, Anthony	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Stiles, Marit
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lumsden, Neil	Tangri, Nina
Darouze, George	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Denault, Billy	McGregor, Graham	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	McKenney, Catherine	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dunlop, Jill	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fairclough, Lee	Mulroney, Caroline	Tsao, Jonathan
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Pang, Billy	Vaugeois, Lise
Firin, Mohamed	Parsa, Michael	Vickers, Paul
Ford, Doug	Pasma, Chandra	Watt, Tyler
Fraser, John	Pierre, Natalie	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Pinsonneault, Steve	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pirie, George	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

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

Nays

Clancy, Aislinn

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 105; the nays are 1.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? I heard a no.

Minister, would you like to refer it to committee?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Yes. The Standing Committee on Justice Policy, please, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The bill is ordered to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1150 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I wanted to take a moment to welcome the parents of Black children who were here this morning. They were also joined by friend and supporter, former MPP Jill Andrew. It was really great to have you here.

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I would like to welcome one of my employees, Jeremy Shin; his current fiancée and soon-to-be wife, Dong Hee Kim; and her parents, Hyun Sam Kim and Min Jeong Kim. They are getting married this week, on Saturday. Welcome to Queen's Park, and congratulations.

NOWRUZ

Hon. Michael Parsa: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I rise with your permission.

At 10:46 a.m. last Friday, members of the Iranian community in Iran and around the world marked Nowruz, the Persian new year.

Nowruz is about light overcoming darkness. And while this year, for Iranians who are observing Nowruz, they're doing so with very heavy hearts, I know there will be brighter days ahead for all Iranians around the world—and in doing so, I also want to remember the tens of thousands of Iranians who were murdered by this ruthless regime in their struggle and fight for freedom and democracy in Iran.

To each and every Iranian observing this Nowruz, Nowruzetan Pirouz.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

P. GREGOR MEDICINE PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION ACT, 2026

Ms. Shaw moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr29, An Act to revive P. Gregor Medicine Professional Corporation.

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

First reading agreed to.

2417633 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2026

Ms. Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr36, An Act to revive 2417633 Ontario Limited.

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

First reading agreed to.

KCI PROPERTY INVESTMENT INC.
ACT, 2026

1510

Ms. Pierre moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr27, An Act to revive KCI Property Investment Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

778624 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2026

Mr. Bailey moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr39, An Act to revive 778624 Ontario Limited.

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

First reading agreed to.

STEP BY STEP INVESTMENTS INC.
ACT, 2026

Mr. Pang moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr40, An Act to revive Step by Step Investments Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

2771280 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2026

Mr. Sabawy moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr41, An Act to revive 2771280 Ontario Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

1092167 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2026

Mr. Sabawy moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr44, An Act to revive 1092167 Ontario Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

R&J DRAGO CONSULTANTS INC.
ACT, 2026

Mr. Coe moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr43, An Act to revive R&J Drago Consultants Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

ANTI-SCAB LABOUR ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 SUR
LES BRISEURS DE GRÈVE

Madame Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 96, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 with respect to replacement workers / Projet de loi 96, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail en ce qui concerne les travailleurs suppléants.

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 explain the bill?

M^{me} France Gélinas: As you will remember, in 1992, Ontario had anti-scab legislation in place. The act was repealed in 1995 with the Labour Relations Act. What we're trying to do is just bring it back so that it keeps workers and communities safer.

PETITIONS

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I have a big stack of petitions here from folks who are from the Upper Grand District School Board, which includes my riding in Guelph. They're calling for lower class sizes. Cuts to the education budget over the last number of years have led to larger class sizes, increased violence and inadequate special education and mental health supports for students.

All these hundreds, maybe thousand people who have signed this are calling on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit to making the necessary investments in public education, to lower class sizes, increase student supports and ensure students have the high-quality schools they need.

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

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I'm pleased to be here to present this petition on day two of tabling many signatures calling on the government to fix OSAP ASAP. Yesterday, my colleague MPP Watt submitted about 3,000 signatures and this is now day two in that request. We know that this decision is only adding to the financial burden for young people and their families.

I'm very pleased to add my signature to it and give it to page Ibrahim.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Chris Glover: I'm pleased to read this into the record here. It's "Save OSAP," and it's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

It's about asking the government to reverse the OSAP cuts. These OSAP cuts are going to add an additional \$3,400 of debt onto an average undergraduate student next year. It means that some students will not be able to pursue the education that they had been planning. There are students who have signed this from Keswick, from Oshawa, from Omemee, from other places across this province, and students have walked out in protest against these OSAP cuts.

They're asking the Minister of Colleges and Universities to reverse the cuts to OSAP, to stop Doug Ford's tuition hikes and to provide colleges and universities with the funding they need, because currently, the level of funding for colleges and universities is the lowest in the country and it has been both under the former Liberal government and under this Conservative government.

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and pass it to page Achilles to take to the table.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Stephen Blais: I'm delighted to present a petition on behalf of students in Orléans to fix OSAP ASAP. Amongst other things, it calls on the government to immediately reverse their proposed changes to OSAP and to conduct consultations with students, institutions, financial aid offices and advocacy groups to ensure that post-secondary education in Ontario remains affordable for all of our students.

I completely agree with this petition, will happily affix my name and pass it to Sara.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'm really proud to represent a riding that has McMaster University, Mohawk College and Redeemer college. Since the government has cut OSAP and cut the grants and is hiking tuition fees, I've been hearing from students all across my riding and from parents and grandparents, who are so disheartened that these kids will not be able to pursue their education. This decision of the government will download a burden of debt on these young people, and some young people will choose not to pursue their education.

This is at a time when they're struggling. They can't find a job. They have high rent. They have costs, as everyone does, of groceries. And they see at the same time a government spending billions on other things but not willing to invest in their education. So it really is a disheartening time for these young people.

I agree with this petition that we "direct the Minister of Colleges and Universities to reverse the cuts to OSAP ... stop Doug Ford's tuition hikes, and provide colleges and

universities with the funding that they need so" our "young people can get ahead."

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's my honour to present the following petitions that were gathered within the Thames Valley District School Board. As I look through these pages, I think of so many friends and former colleagues, people who are dedicated and caring teachers, people who look at education as a calling. Within the school board, they collected signatures with parents, neighbours, families and friends—people who care about young people and their futures.

This petition calls upon the government to reverse the \$6.35 billion that has been cut from public education since 2018, which has resulted in larger class sizes, more violence and woefully inadequate special education supports. The way for this government to show care for young people is to reduce class sizes, as indicated in this petition.

It's something the official opposition has been calling for since the pandemic. We were calling for classes of 15 to make sure kids had those supports. I remember a time when education assistants could help those students in the middle with literacy circles, with numeracy circles, giving them that extra boost.

Now is the time. I hope this government will listen to educators, listen to students, listen to families and listen to the entire community and reduce class sizes now.

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I'm pleased as well to be here today presenting this petition with 638 signatures from the Toronto District School Board asking the government to focus on reducing class sizes in our public elementary schools. We know that there's a direct link between the size of classes and the quality of education.

Parents are extremely worried about the impact this is having on their kids' ability to learn. I share that concern. I hear from many of my constituents about this. I am also a parent, and I have seen the growth in class sizes over the course of the last eight years, so I cannot support this enough. I think that the government needs to be investing in quality education and looking to reduce class sizes.

I will gladly add my signature to this petition and give it to Chen.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today on behalf of thousands of education workers, parents, community members whose children attend schools in the Thames Valley District School Board, and they have all signed petitions calling on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take action to reduce class sizes in our public elementary schools.

The petition points out that almost \$6.4 billion has been cut from public education in this province since 2018, and the result of those cuts has been larger class sizes, more violence in schools, inadequate special education and a very significant lack of mental health supports for students. This affects the quality of education that our kids benefit from. It also affects teacher burnout, which is a big problem in this province.

The petition notes the benefits of smaller class sizes, calls on the government to make the necessary investments that would help lower class sizes, increase student supports and make sure that students get the quality of education that they deserve.

I couldn't support this petition more strongly. I affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Avish.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank André Lepine from Val Caron in my riding, as well as people from all over Ontario who have signed this petition. We have thousands of names. It's called "Remove the HST from Massage Therapy Services."

1520

As you know, Speaker, massage therapy is a regulated health profession in Ontario. They are used to manage pain, rehabilitate injury, and improve mental and physical health. The service provided by a registered massage therapist in Ontario is taxed, which makes it unaffordable for a lot of people. Taking the HST off of massage therapy would make the service more affordable for a lot of people, so they petition the Legislative Assembly to direct the Minister of Health to take the HST off of the service offered by registered massage therapists.

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

VETERANS

Ms. Catherine Fife: This is the first time I'm presenting this petition. It's entitled "Raise the 'Lest We Forget' Veterans' Flag at Queen's Park." I've been working with Chief Petty Officer Donald Eenkooren to ensure that the Legislature honours the military's selfless service to the nation.

For those who don't know, the "Lest We Forget" flag is a symbol to honour veterans and active members of the Canadian Armed Forces, as well as first responders and their families, recognizing their sacrifices and their dedication and service to our communities and country throughout history. Other provinces have moved forward with raising the "Lest We Forget" flag; British Columbia, Nova Scotia and the Northwest Territories are considering this, as is the Canadian government.

Essentially, the petition calls on the Legislature to raise the "Lest We Forget" veterans' poppy flag at Queen's Park the last Friday of October each year, which will be flown at half mast from sunrise to sunset for Remembrance Day, at which time it would be fully raised again.

Obviously, honouring veterans is truly a non-partisan event and issue for all of us here in this Legislature. I hope that we can come together in agreement in a non-partisan way, honour veterans, honour first responders and raise the "Lest We Forget" veterans' flag here at Queen's Park in 2026.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Jessica Bell: This is a petition entitled "Invest in Public Education." It is a petition that is calling on the Ministry of Education to properly fund our public school system in Ontario to address a lot of the issues that we are currently seeing, from cuts to special education, to kids who are being denied access to school because there's not enough educational assistants to support them, to very large class sizes, to aging buildings that in some cases are not in an adequate state of repair.

I fully support this petition, I'll be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Ibrahim.

EDUCATION FUNDING

MPP Lise Vaugeois: It gives me great pride to be able to present this large stack of petitions from the people of northwestern Ontario from Thunder Bay–Superior North and also from the neighbouring riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, really addressing the cuts to education from K to 12 of \$6.35 billion since this government came into office in 2018. It has obviously led to increased class sizes and an enormous amount of distress within schools, as teachers try to look after their kids in their classrooms, and simply can't, because the numbers are too high and because the resources have been removed.

We've seen a lot of scapegoating of trustees, frankly; in a previous Conservative government, we saw the scapegoating of teachers. It's a slightly different twist on an old story.

I fully agree with this petition. I will give it to page Else and affix my signature to it.

PHARMACARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Louise Baliski from Hanmer in my riding for these petitions. They're called "Pharmacare."

Basically, the current programs that exist in Ontario leave a lot of people facing high costs and barriers to access to the medications they need. When Ontarians are forced to pick whether they're going to pay their bills or get their medication, those are tough choices to make. Gaps in coverage force too many Ontarians to skip medication altogether. There are many expert recommendations and national studies that support a national universal single-payer pharmacare system as the best way forward.

As you know, Speaker, the federal government has a program that would cover birth control as well as all diabetes medication. People are wondering, especially people living with diabetes, how much longer we are

going to have to wait before Ontario joins Manitoba, British Columbia, PEI and the territories and signs on to the pharmacare program offered by the federal government.

I fully support this petition. I want a fully funded pharmacare program, but I would be happy with the first step that the government of Ontario should sign on to. I will add my signature to it and ask Chen to bring it to the Clerk.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Chris Glover: It's my pleasure to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly. It's asking for funding and to reduce class sizes in our public elementary schools.

It's signed by people from Kerwood, from Alvinston, from Strathroy, from London, Ontario, and from all over southwestern Ontario. These people are saying to the government that they've made an inflationary cut of \$6.35 billion to our education system, and it has resulted in larger class sizes, increased violence and inadequate special education support so that students with special needs are often not allowed to go to school because the staff that are needed to support them are not available.

This is parents, students, educators. They are all asking the government to invest in our public education system; to restore the class sizes, to make them smaller; to provide the mental health supports; and to provide the special needs supports, so that every student gets what they need to succeed.

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and pass it to page Lily to take to the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLY ACT, 2026

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2026

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 25, 2026, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026 / Projet de loi 95, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2026.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

MPP George Darouze: It's my honour, in my capacity as parliamentary assistant to Minister Mulroney, to rise to speak to the Supply Act today.

So far during this debate, Minister Mulroney outlined the procedural need for the Supply Act and PA Rosenberg provided the House with the latest financial information pertaining to the province's current fiscal situation. Additionally, PA Rosenberg outlined some of the major infrastructure projects that the government is undertaking to prepare Ontario for a prosperous future.

Now, Madam Speaker, I'm going to speak to the other actions the government is taking to protect Ontario and unleash the province's economy.

The disruptions caused by the US tariffs is a topic that is never far from the headlines. Impacted industries, including automotive and steel manufacturing, are the backbone of our province's economy, and threats to these industries put livelihoods of workers at risk.

The government reacted to the seriousness of this situation by wasting no time to help protect Ontario's workers and families. That's why, starting in April 2025, the government announced nearly \$30 billion in relief and support for workers and businesses, including measures to build long-term resiliency and prosperity.

While time does not allow me to provide a comprehensive rundown of all the support available, I'm happy to discuss some of the topline supports today. The sheer number of initiatives shows just how many actions the government is taking to help affected workers and families.

En août dernier, le gouvernement a lancé le Programme de financement pour protéger l'Ontario. Ce programme représente la première phase du compte Protéger l'Ontario d'un montant de 5 milliards de dollars. Les députés se souviendront que celui-ci faisait partie du budget de l'Ontario de 2025.

Le Programme de financement pour protéger l'Ontario offre un soutien aux entreprises ontariennes directement touchées par la hausse des tarifs sur l'aluminium, l'acier, le cuivre et sur le secteur automobile. Ce programme met jusqu'à un milliard de dollars à la disposition des entreprises pour soutenir leur liquidité. Ce montant ira directement à la protection des travailleurs et des opérations. Cette nouvelle liquidité peut contribuer à appuyer les entreprises dans le versement des salaires et le paiement des loyers et des services publics.

1530

Ce fonds illustre une forme d'aide qui est à la fois flexible et immédiate. Il s'agit d'un financement qui aidera les entreprises des secteurs touchés à combler un manque de liquidités immédiat. L'objectif du fonds est d'aider ces secteurs ciblés à traverser une période turbulente.

Comme je l'ai mentionné, ce fonds a été annoncé pour la première fois en avril dernier. En raison de la réaction des industries touchées, le gouvernement élabore maintenant les deuxièmes et troisièmes volets du programme. Les prochains volets seront financés par les quatre milliards de dollars restant du fonds. Les nouveaux volets de financement serviront à aider les entreprises qui souhaitent réduire leur dépendance excessive envers leurs partenaires commerciaux américains. Les entreprises peuvent y parvenir en augmentant leur productivité et en investissant dans les chaînes d'approvisionnement nationales et dans les secteurs à forte croissance.

Madame la Présidente, lorsque je parle de secteurs à forte croissance, je parle de l'intelligence artificielle, de la défense, de la fabrication de pointe, des sciences de la vie et de la recherche et du développement dans le secteur de

minéraux critiques. Ces secteurs représentent l'avenir de l'Ontario.

Et ces nouveaux volets de financement permettront aux industries qui subissent actuellement la pression de tarifs injustes de s'orienter vers de nouvelles avenues de croissance. Au total, le nouveau financement alimentera l'innovation, renforcera la résilience économique et accélérera le développement des entreprises à forte croissance afin d'aiguiser la compétitivité mondiale de l'Ontario.

Madame la Présidente, le Programme de financement pour protéger l'Ontario n'est pas le seul programme élaboré pour atténuer les effets négatifs des nouveaux tarifs américains. Le gouvernement travaille également à s'assurer que les collectivités et les industries locales sont soutenues. Le Programme d'aide aux collectivités affectées par les barrières tarifaires a été créé précisément dans ce but. Ce programme offre jusqu'à 40 millions de dollars en financement flexible et adapté aux besoins des collectivités et des industries locales.

Il y parvient en soutenant, au niveau communautaire, des projets visant à améliorer la résilience locale, à élaborer et mettre en oeuvre des stratégies locales, et à aider les collectivités à élargir leurs possibilités d'exportation. Le fonds soutient également des projets de collaboration de grande envergure visant à développer et transformer les grappes locales et les chaînes d'approvisionnement industrielles.

Alors que le Programme de financement pour protéger l'Ontario est conçu pour être utilisé par les industries touchées, le Programme d'aide aux collectivités affectées par les barrières tarifaires s'adresse spécifiquement aux administrations municipales, aux organismes de développement économique, aux accélérateurs et incubateurs d'entreprises, ainsi qu'aux associations sectorielles ou industrielles.

Il s'agit d'un fonds important parce qu'il illustre l'étendue du soutien que le gouvernement offre aux collectivités et aux organisations touchées.

Another aspect of the government's rapid response to the current economy context is the new support for at-risk workers. To protect these workers, the government is continuing to invest in the protect Ontario workers employment response—or POWER—centres. These important centres provide access to training and upskilling to workers affected by, or at risk of, layoffs.

For the first time, the province will be able to launch a centre proactively before a layoff has occurred, with the added ability to respond within 24 hours. Last year, 10 of these centres were operational across the province, and together, they provided nearly 15,000 Ontario workers with services and support.

The final example that I will give today is related to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, or the WSIB. Through the WSIB, the government has implemented premium rate reductions and the distribution of surplus rebates. Both actions were designed to safeguard employment and strengthen business stability across Ontario. Effective in January, WSIB premium rates were further reduced to the lowest level in half a century. This means

additional annual savings of approximately \$60 million for Ontario employers this year. The average premium rate reduction has resulted in total savings for businesses of approximately \$21.5 billion over the last decade. Those are billions of dollars that businesses can reinvest in their workers at a time when it is needed the most.

As part of the government's effort to protect Ontario, we are taking concrete actions to unleash the incredible potential of the provincial economy. Our 2025 budget clearly outlined our government's goal to transform Ontario into the most competitive jurisdiction within the G7. And the first step to doing this is creating the long-term foundation for a strong, resilient and competitive economy. Perhaps the silver lining of the arbitrary and harmful US tariffs is that they highlighted the pressing need of strengthening Ontario's economic resilience. This includes putting increased emphasis on domestically sourced critical minerals to create secure supply chains that will power Ontario's economy for generations to come.

For this reason, Ontario has never needed to unlock the Ring of Fire more than it does right now. Located more than 500 kilometres northeast of Thunder Bay, the Ring of Fire currently has an active claim area of about 8,000 square kilometres in size. It contains one of the most promising mineral development opportunities in the world, representing enormous economic potential. The region includes reserves of critical minerals that play a significant role in supporting innovative technologies, including EVs, electronics and clean tech.

The development of the site will help ensure that northern communities feel the benefit of critical mineral development. It is First Nations communities who will greatly benefit through partnerships that offer economic opportunities spanning generations. Of course, leveraging the Ring of Fire is a complex issue. The current permitting and authorization process for mining and major infrastructure projects require proponents to navigate a complicated process of overlapping and duplicative approvals.

In Ontario, we believe there is a better way. So in April last year, the government passed the Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025. The legislation—crafted by Minister Lecce and our colleagues at the Ministry of Energy and Mines—cut the red tape and duplicative process that have held back major infrastructure, mining and resource development projects, including the Ring of Fire.

Madam Speaker, it should be noted that a key component of this legislation is a new “one project, one process” permitting model. The intent of the model is to cut government review time in half. It should not take 15 years to open a mine. To that end, last December, the government signed a corporation substitution agreement with the federal government to finally remove duplicative and overlapping federal impact assessments from Ontario's world-leading environmental assessment process. This historic agreement will make it easier and faster to build the infrastructure that will unlock resource development across the province.

1540

The second example of unleashing Ontario's economy that I will discuss today is related to nuclear energy. With a keen eye towards the future, it was announced in the 2025 budget that the government is advancing four small modular reactors, or SMRs, at the Darlington nuclear site. This expansion will provide a total of 1,200 megawatts of electricity generation, enough power for 1.2 million homes.

Last April, Ontario Power Generation received a power reactor construction licence for unit 1 from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. This approval is a major milestone for the project, which could sustain up to 2,000 jobs each year during the 65 years of operation. As well, this has the potential to contribute more than \$13 billion to the province's GDP. Our government is currently investigating additional opportunities at both the Bruce nuclear generating station site in Bruce county and at OPG's Wesleyville site in Port Hope.

While still early days, it is worth considering the vast impact these projects could have for Ontario's economy. According to Signal49 Research, a potential nuclear development in Port Hope would contribute \$235 billion to Ontario's GDP and support 10,500 jobs across the province.

The actions being taken to unlock the Ring of Fire and increase the province's use of nuclear power are just two of the many actions the government is taking to unleash the potential of the economy. And, it should be noted, they are both being undertaken with the safety and well-being of all Ontarians foremost in mind.

Together, these examples demonstrate a long-term, forward-thinking approach that is informing every action we take to protect Ontario.

Madam Speaker, as the government portion of the Supply Act debate draws to a close, I would like to thank all members for taking the time to listen to me today. I would like to thank the House for allowing me to outline the many ways the government is both protecting Ontario and unleashing its economic potential. It has been my pleasure to be able to discuss this topic in the context of the Supply Act, which represents the final approval of all spending by the government and legislative offices for the fiscal year that ends March 31, 2026.

In closing, I urge all members to—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Ms. Jessica Bell: I rise today to speak to the supply bill. This is essentially part of the government's formal request to the Legislature for approval for ministries to spend money, a whole lot of money, about \$200 billion in money. And this happens after we go through the estimates process, which is when government makes public what they are allocating to each ministry and what they are allocating to each line item. For a few ministries, some ministries, it gives opposition members and independent members the opportunity to ask ministers questions about why they are making the financial decisions that they are making.

I think just about every single opposition MPP would agree that the estimates process is incredibly truncated to the point of being undemocratic because, in most cases, we have maybe two hours to question the minister, who is able to refuse to answer questions, on how they are choosing to spend billions of dollars in some cases on behalf of Ontarians. I think we would be better served as a province if we were given ample time to ask ministers questions and that they were required by oath to respond to them.

But this government, for some time now, has shown quite a disrespect for democracy and has engaged in what is called democratic backsliding, where they make policy decisions and announcements that really impact people's ability to speak freely, to hold government to account, to ensure government is transparent and to meaningfully engage in public consultation and the political process.

Because of the time that I have, I'm only going to briefly speak about three ministries that were subjected to estimates as part of this supply bill. The first one is the health ministry. The reason why I chose the health ministry is because it spends over \$95 billion—so nearly half of the Ontario government's budget. It is responsible for doing that thing that Canadians love, which is to provide high-quality public health care to Ontarians.

We have heard from Ontarians again and again and again that Ontario wants to be able to go and see their family doctor or their nurse practitioner using their OHIP card and not their credit card. They want to be able to see a specialist or get a test in a timely manner, so that they can get the best health outcomes. And if they have to go to a hospital, they want to make sure that the emergency room is open when they arrive, they can see a specialist or an internal medicine specialist or a triage nurse quickly, and they can get the care that they have paid for within clinically recommended time frames.

What we have seen with the government's budget is that—estimates are showing us that there are cuts. Now, when you look at the face of it, you might say, "Well, they're not really cuts." But they are cuts when you factor in population growth, the fact that Ontarians are aging as a whole, the fact that our use of the health care system has increased. You will see that we are seeing cuts in the health care sector. We will continue to see cuts in the health care sector unless this government reverses course. And this is at a time when, quite frankly, things in our health care system are not looking so great.

I just did pre-budget consultations. In many of the committee hearings, we heard from hospital executives who are basically pleading and saying, "Our hospital is at 120% capacity"—it's at 170% capacity, in the case of Ottawa—"and we need help to deal with the increased demand for our services."

That's just one of a whole host of issues that we're seeing in our health care sector, from the rise of for-profit care, which just costs more and doesn't deliver the kind of outcomes that we need; to issues with people getting a family doctor and a nurse practitioner; to delays in having people get tests that they need; to, quite frankly, the fact

that we are pretty much last, compared to other provinces, on all of the major indicators that assess our health care system: hospital funding, how many long-term-care beds we have per person, how many nurses we have per person. We're pretty much dead last on almost all of them. This estimates process and this supply process are not going to see a lot of improvements on that.

The final thing I'm just going to speak briefly about—well, I'm going to do two quickly. The second one is education—that's the second-most spending when it comes to the province; it's about \$31 billion. From what we saw in estimates, the government has reduced funding over the last seven years. Now they're going to be keeping it at a low rate, which means all the issues that we see in our school system—I have two kids in the school system, so I see it a lot. The overcrowding in the class sizes, the fact that special education kids—what's happening to them is, quite frankly, unethical, in some cases: the increase in class sizes; the denial of the right to attain school; the fact that we're seeing triple classes with three grades and 35 kids in a class. Teachers and schools don't even have the money to buy textbooks. There's nothing. Unless there's an increase in investment, these problems are going to continue.

The final thing I just want to touch base on is housing. We heard the minister. I read through the Minister of Housing's comments before I came here. His promise was to build more housing, help municipalities and help the vulnerable. On every single one of these accounts, the government has failed to do their job. Housing starts are down, homelessness is up, rent is going up and this government has cut funding to affordable housing by 50%—not a good look.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: It's an honour to rise today to speak to Bill 95, the Supply Act. It feels good to be back in the chamber after this government's extended break of over 100 days. Just like unemployment is up, just like the number of people not working is up over 700,000, the time we were away from the Legislature is up—about 30% longer than we were expecting.

1550

And while we did our job—we continued to try to hold the government to account; that's our job as opposition members. We do press conferences, we do social media posts, conversations with the media, but it feels so much more democratic to do that where we're actually supposed to be doing it: here in the Legislature. But I understand why the government, why the Premier wanted to take that extra long break. Because if they're here, they actually have to be held accountable for what they do, and there's a lot to be accountable for. Today we're not talking about the FOIs and all their antics around that to basically make things more hidden, less transparent, but those are the kind of things they don't want to be accountable for.

But they also don't want to be held accountable for this spending record. We see today over \$220 billion in

taxpayer spending, but we know it's not responsible spending, and it's far worse than they care to admit.

Speaker, they actually might have wanted to extend the Legislature even further, but they are required by law—and it's one law they've decided not to break—to table their budget by March 31. I think that's why they felt compelled, really, to bring us back, so they could table their budget, but more on that in the days ahead, of course.

In front of us today with Bill 95—it shows the record spending of this government. “Historic”—they're always talking about that, right? It is. It actually is historic spending. But we've also got an historic number of crises. We have an historic number of people, as I said, out of work. We have an historic number of young people who can't find a job. We have an historic number of people who are living in their parents' basements because they can't afford rent or to buy a home. So there is a lot of historic stuff going on, Speaker, but not in a good way.

We have a very high, maybe even historic, cost-of-living crisis, yet the government isn't talking about that. They're not talking about affordability. They're not including affordability measures in all of this \$220 billion of spending that they've done. I think it's because they just don't see it as important. This Doug Ford Conservative government is tired, and they are out of touch, and their spending reflects just that.

We know that the Premier and the government take every opportunity that they have—in fact, more than they should take—to tell us in ads what a wonderful job they are doing. In this money, this \$220 billion that we're talking about today, over \$100 million was spent on telling the good people of Ontario, with the money that they work so hard for, how wonderful a job this government is doing.

Does that put food in anyone's mouth? Does that put a rent cheque in anyone's bank account? No. That is wasted money. It is self-promoting. It is not helping the people of Ontario and, frankly, I think it's kind of funny. I know this government loves to do polls and that's how they make their decisions. I think if they asked people right now, everybody would say—they certainly say to me—“Why do I see these ads everywhere? They're on the Super Bowl. They're in my local newspaper. They're online.” Speaker, they are everywhere.

We don't see them bragging about the \$2 billion they're giving to Therme, a foreign-owned company, to build a spa at Ontario Place. They're spending billions of dollars to move the beloved Ontario Science Centre out of Don Valley to Ontario Place.

The Auditor General—who they talk about when it's convenient and they don't when it's not—did a very thorough investigation where she talked about how it would be less expensive to rehabilitate the Ontario Science Centre where it is, where it was built to be, than it would be to move it. So what does this government do? They throw that report out and find a new excuse to move it, to justify moving it. “Oh, the roof is falling in.” Well, the roof is caving in but it's on this government's finances, not at the Ontario Science Centre.

You know, Speaker, we hear this government beat their chest about their ability to be capable fiscal managers, and how they implemented—the President of the Treasury Board last summer talked about how they were implementing a hiring freeze, because we are so responsible. But guess what, Speaker? They did that out of one side of their mouth, and on the other side of their mouth, they doubled the number of people working in the Premier's office—a little bit hypocritical to me, Speaker.

And the worst part of that is that in the estimates tabled in the fall, we couldn't even get a clear picture of what the Premier was paying his staff. The estimates told us that the budget was about \$2 million. It's been stuck at the same number for a few years. But the publicly available information—which is transparent, contrary to this government—on the sunshine list shows that the staff in total, the staff and cost of the Premier's office, is at least triple that. It's like \$6 million, \$8 million or something like that. So it's another great example of how not transparent this government is.

So again, it's \$220 billion—over \$220 billion—that the taxpayer is on the hook for, and that doesn't even include the \$16 billion that we've paid, that taxpayers have paid, this year in interest costs. Do you know why? Because we have a half-trillion-dollar man sitting over there who has raised the debt, contrary to what this government said. The PCs said it was a moral imperative to reduce the debt. Well, they've clearly lost their way, because they've added more than \$100 billion of debt and it's costing taxpayers \$16 billion just last year. It's the fourth largest item in the budget. This is a lot of money, and it's not even all of the money that the government is spending.

Speaker, I only have limited time, as has been pointed out. We have limited time to talk about the supply bill. In my time, though, I do want to highlight a few of the things—more things—that the government has been misspending on. Again, the misguided Doug Ford Conservative government has been spending a lot of things on absolutely the wrong things in the past eight years, so here are a few more examples.

The Beer Store: Look, I'm not against having the drinks in the corner store, but they spent over \$1 billion to make that happen a year early. I think we could have waited. I think that people would have felt they were getting their money's worth for that \$1 billion if it had been spent on nurses, on education assistants, on special education for our teachers, to have more adults in the classroom in our schools so our kids could feel safe. I don't think we got our money's worth for that \$1 billion, Speaker—\$1 billion. You still could have put the beer and the ready-to-drink drinks in the corner store; just wait a year and we could have saved \$1 billion. That's part of why we have a half-trillion-dollar man sitting over there, Speaker.

And all of the promises that this government has made—we know that they're broken, right? The 1.5 million homes that the government said they would get built: They're so far off that number that they won't even talk about it anymore. I mean, they tried everything, right? They tried to include the beds in retirement homes and

student residences and all these things, and they finally even gave up—

Mr. Chris Glover: Doghouses.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Maybe. They finally even gave up on that, Speaker, because they know they know they were just nowhere near making their numbers.

So all this money is being spent, and what are we really getting for it? Crisis after crisis: crisis in our schools, crisis in our hospitals, crisis in our streets with people suffering from addiction and homelessness, and a crisis in crime.

Just last month, I had a town hall meeting on crime with just one neighbourhood in my riding that had—just one neighbourhood, again—15 cars stolen; violent break-and-enters and cars stolen, just in one neighbourhood. We're having another one with another neighbourhood, because now the criminals—they move around, right? These are the kind of crises that we're experiencing, and yet the government is spending \$220 billion. We are not getting our money's worth.

1600

We can look at the gimmicks, right, Speaker? The government talks about cutting red tape. Again, we know that the government cut cheques to people, the pre-election cheques. They said, "Oh, we want to give you some of your money back." Well, they took an advance on the credit card to give us that money back. We were in a deficit position, and they decided to write \$200 cheques to the people of Ontario a month before the election. Interesting, isn't it, Speaker? I'm not sure we got our money's worth for that money.

Let's talk about the Skills Development Fund. I know it's a favourite topic of this government. They brag about it, but you know what? Now they're not bragging so much because they've got court cases. They're suing somebody now that somebody is suing them. "You said we did this, and we said you did that." Speaker, it's a fiasco. It's another fiasco of the failed Doug Ford Conservative government. They spent billions of dollars. The finance minister approved the program, the President of the Treasury Board signed the cheques, and they both report to the Premier.

Speaker, this money has been, again, wasted. We are not getting our money's worth. When you give hundreds of millions of dollars to people who couldn't pass the test about creating jobs in this province or improving skills, that's not getting our money's worth.

It's hard to understand, to be honest, why the President of the Treasury Board or the finance minister won't stand up and brag about the program, because they know that there are issues. They know that it has got a big, fat F on that program. The Auditor General told them that.

Again, it's selective hearing. They quote the Auditor General when it suits them; they ignore her when it doesn't. The Auditor General told the government that the process for the Skills Development Fund was not fair, not transparent and not accountable. Speaker, all of that money spent, all that money wasted—we are not getting our money's worth.

I do want to leave a few minutes for my colleague from Ottawa South in the next round to talk about this, so I will just close by saying that the issue that we have before us is that we have a government that has got their priorities all wrong. They are spending money on things that help their friends. They are spending money on things that the Premier of Toronto would like—a new convention centre and an extended airport—and they're ignoring the needs of the people of Ontario who are living through an affordability crisis; who are worried about putting food on their table; who are worried about paying rent; who are now worried about their kids and whether or not, without OSAP grants, they will be able to afford to get a good education so that they have a promising future.

I think the fiscal conservatives on that side of the House should have a hard time voting for this Supply Act because we are not getting our money's worth from this government.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to join the debate this afternoon on the Supply Act. I was here in the house on Monday when we were debating concurrence, and I'm still shaking my head at some of the language that was used to describe the financial position of the province of Ontario at the time. I think it's important for context as we contemplate what we're going to be spending money on as a province.

The finance minister gave a speech not that long ago at the Empire Club on March 10, and he compared the economy of Ontario to that of the United States. He said, "Look at the US right now. Their deficit is 5.8% of GDP. That is an unsustainable number. If you look at, in Canada ... BC just did a deficit over \$13 billion. We're three times the size of BC, so that means our deficit should be ... \$40 billion. It's not going to be \$40 billion"—thank goodness, Madam Speaker. But in what world would the finance minister for the province of Ontario compare our economy to the dumpster fire that is the United States economy right now?

Our current deficit, just for the record, sits at \$13 billion. Ontario is forecast to pay \$16.2 billion in interest costs on its total debt in 2025-26. It is projected to go to \$17 billion for 2026-27 and \$17.8 billion—almost \$18 billion—in interest costs on our debt. And to hear the PC members in this House talk about a pathway back to balance—I mean, for the love of humanity, this is the fourth-largest number that we are spending out of \$200 billion.

I agree with some of the comments that have been made in this House, because not only does this province have a structural deficit, you've lost the compass on how to spend and invest to make lives better for the people that we're elected to serve. Actually, we take an oath. Remember, we take an oath, Madam Speaker; some of us even say a prayer. We are actually called to serve in this place to make the lives of Ontarians better right now. But if you look at every file, from education to health care to the forestry sector to the highways—Highway 11 and Highway 17 that our northern members highlighted for

this government—what a cluster mess we have going on right now.

The budget that's coming down tomorrow, our finance critic has quite smartly designed a—what is it, a score-card?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Report card.

Ms. Catherine Fife: A report card, yes. Hopefully, the Minister of Education doesn't send out a memo to everybody not to read the report card.

It's a report card with the lens of how it will impact the lives of Ontarians. Instead of the government taking out millions of dollars in advertising telling us how great the health care system is, maybe the health minister should spend 12 hours in an emergency room at Grand River Hospital in Kitchener, or maybe they should go to Hamilton or McMaster hospital and spend 13 hours with a small child in the emergency room. Maybe instead of wasting money on advertising, trying to gaslight the people that we're elected to serve, why don't you actually sit down and spend some time with the people who are hurting in this province?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Hear, hear.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you, Sandy.

I come from a Conservative riding. Conservatives are calling you worse things than the Liberals, let me tell you, because there was a time and a place—I'm thinking of Bill Davis, who was a real Conservative Premier, who found the balance between investing in the social infrastructure and ensuring that our public institutions had the appropriate resources, and then also around fiscal responsibility so every dollar that was spent in this place had an accountability measure.

What do we have here right now in the province of Ontario? We have a Premier who is trying to change the law so that the people of this province can't find out how he's spending their money. We know the end results. We know your taxpayer-funded Therme spa. I can tell you, in the 13 years that I've been in this place, no constituent from Waterloo has ever come and said, "Please, MPP Fife, Ontario needs more spas." No, no. We need more ECEs, we need more PSWs, we need more nurses and we need highways that aren't shut down for over 300 days in a year. That's what we need.

But does this Premier, who waltzes into this place and gossips and doesn't answer questions, understand the actual goal around public service? I would say no. I would say that this Premier shows up rarely, but when he does, he shows up for himself. And right now, he's trying to change the laws in this province to protect himself and his cellphone records. It's a long-standing tradition in this place, Madam Speaker, that you do not do government business on your personal phone. It's an issue of ethics and integrity.

Thank goodness that the privacy commissioner has come out very strongly against this government, as have your own members that you serve. Conservatives across the province, they know what you're up to. They are not buying what you're selling. Stop trying to do it. This is

greenbelt and Skills Development Fund scandal levels, Madam Speaker.

We need to make sure that this government understands that the way they are choosing priorities around their pet projects, like the tunnel under the 401, which is, honestly—SCTV and This Hour Has 22 Minutes: You have to stop giving these outlets so much material to work with. It's getting embarrassing on the whole, Madam Speaker.

1610

This Supply Act, right now, needs an ethical lens, it needs a fiscal responsibility lens, and it certainly needs someone other than this Premier to oversee it.

Thank you very much for your time, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate? Further debate?

Pursuant to standing order 67, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Mulroney has moved second reading of Bill 95, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Interjection: On division.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Carried on division.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Pursuant to standing order 67, the bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

SUPPLY ACT, 2026

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2026

Ms. Mulroney moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026 / *Projet de loi 95, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2026.*

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Pursuant to standing order 67, I am now required to put the question.

The minister has moved third reading of Bill 95, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Interjection: On division.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Carried on division.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Orders of the day?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Madam Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Agreed? Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

PROTECTING RENTERS FROM UNFAIR ABOVE GUIDELINE RENT INCREASES ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 VISANT À PROTÉGER LES LOCATAIRES CONTRE LES AUGMENTATIONS INJUSTES DE LOYER SUPÉRIEURES AU TAUX LÉGAL

MPP Smyth moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to above guideline rent increases / *Projet de loi 82, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation à l'égard des augmentations de loyer supérieures au taux légal.*

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Thank you, Madam Speaker and everyone here tonight. I am honoured to rise to speak this afternoon to Bill 82, the Protecting Renters from Unfair Above Guideline Rent Increases Act, 2025. Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge in the House today tenant advocates from my riding of Toronto—St. Paul's as well as the Ontario renters' coalition. Thank you for your knowledge and for your support.

This is my first private member's bill in this Legislature, and I want to say that I approach this moment with a great deal of humility. Any member who has had the privilege of serving in this chamber understands that private members' bills don't always come with large teams or government machinery or, least of all, the certainty of passage. What they do come with is something equally important, and that is the voices of the people who we represent. In that spirit, I am proud to say that Bill 82 comes directly from conversations with tenants in my community of Toronto—St. Paul's.

I can tell you that there are three top stressors in life that we've always heard about: death, divorce and moving. Good mental health requires stable housing.

Over the past year, I've spoken with seniors in rent-controlled apartments who told me they worry every time they receive a notice from their landlord. I've spoken with families who have lived in the same building for 20 years and fear that they may soon be priced out of the neighbourhood their children grew up in. And I have spoken with students and young workers who feel that stability in the rental market is slipping further out of reach. Again and again, these fears were underlined by one issue: above-guideline rent increases.

In Ontario, most tenants know that there is an annual rent increase guideline. For example, this year's guideline is 2.1%. That guideline exists for a reason. It provides predictability for tenants while allowing landlords to adjust for inflation. However, the law also allows land-

lords to apply for increases above that guideline under certain circumstances, typically when they undertake major capital expenditures in a building. These can be up to a 3% increase over three years, totalling a maximum of 9% per AGI. And every year, this is compounded.

In principle, this all makes sense. Buildings need to be maintained. Elevators need replacing. Structural repairs need to happen. Safety and accessibility upgrades are essential. Responsible landlords should absolutely be able to maintain their properties and keep them safe. But what tenants in my community have told me over and over, over the past year, and what advocates across Ontario have also echoed, is that the system for approving these increases is not always working as intended. Too often, tenants are facing rent increases well beyond that guideline, based on applications that are difficult for them to understand and difficult for them to challenge. Many tenants simply do not have the time, the legal knowledge, or the financial resources to navigate the process of the Landlord and Tenant Board.

And so they find themselves in a situation where the rent for their home can raise significantly, sometimes for years, without clear transparency about the underlying costs. Here's an example: In one building, tenants were charged to fund new laundry machines. They're charged again to use them. So they paid for the upgrade but now pay for access to that upgrade. That's double-dipping, and just like a bowl of salsa, it just shouldn't happen. If tenants cover capital costs through an AGI, they shouldn't face additional service fees. This is the kind of situation that Bill 82 seeks to address.

I really want to be clear about something else at the outset. This bill is not about punishing responsible landlords. There are many good landlords right across Ontario who take their responsibilities seriously. They maintain their buildings. They respond to repairs. And they treat tenants with fairness and respect.

Bill 82 doesn't interfere with legitimate building improvements or necessary repairs. What it does is ensure that when an above-guideline increase is requested, the process is fair, transparent and accountable.

1620

This bill introduces several key improvements. First, it raises the evidentiary standard for applications. Under Bill 82, landlords looking for an above-guideline increase based on a capital expenditure would be required to provide professional documentation demonstrating that the work is genuinely necessary. This includes engineering or professional reports confirming that the expenditure is required for structural integrity, health, safety, or vital services within the building. So this is a simple principle: If tenants are being asked to pay more, it should be mandatory to provide clear and credible evidence explaining why they are being told to pay more.

Second, the bill clarifies what kinds of work should not qualify for above-guideline increases. Cosmetic improvements, luxury upgrades, and routine maintenance should not be used as justification for rent hikes beyond the guideline. Routine building upkeep—things like regular

maintenance or basic repairs—are part of the normal responsibilities of property ownership. Bill 82 makes it clear that these costs should not be passed on to tenants through extraordinary rent increases.

Third, the bill strengthens landlord accountability. Currently, the Landlord and Tenant Board has the authority to dismiss or pause an above-guideline application when a landlord has committed a “serious breach” of maintenance obligations. Bill 82 will remove that “serious” qualifier, ensuring that any breach of the maintenance obligations can be considered when assessing whether an above-guideline increase is appropriate. This sends a really important message: that landlords should not be able to raise rents above the guideline while failing to meet their obligations to maintain the building.

Fourth, the bill introduces a new consideration for tenant hardship. For the first time, the Landlord and Tenant Board would be required to consider factors such as the proportion of income tenants spend on rent, local vacancy rates, and rental market pressures. If the board determines that an above-guideline increase would impose undue hardship on tenants, it would have the ability to dismiss the application. Housing policy shouldn't exist in a vacuum. Decisions about rent increases should take into account the real circumstances facing the people who live in those homes.

Fifth, Bill 82 addresses cost transparency and fairness. The legislation prevents landlords from including costs associated with non-arm's-length transactions—essentially, situations where work is contracted through related companies—in the calculation of an above-guideline increase. It also excludes expenses that have already been subsidized through public funds. So that's another element. Taxpayers should not pay for repairs through government programs and then see the tenants pay for those same repairs again through their higher rents.

Finally, the bill strengthens notification requirements for tenants. When an above-guideline increase tied to capital expenditures expires and rents are meant to decrease accordingly, landlords will be required to provide clear notice to tenants ahead of time. If tenants overpay because that notice wasn't provided, the legislation requires landlords to reimburse them at one and a half times the overpayment. Again, this is about transparency and fairness.

Speaker, another important element of this legislation is the transition period. Bill 82 proposes that the new rules come into force four months after royal assent. This allows time for landlords, tenants, and the Landlord and Tenant Board, which we know is overworked and backed up like crazy, to prepare for the updated process. Applications already in progress would continue under the current rules to ensure fairness and avoid the disruption of any applications under review.

Private members' bills often serve an important purpose in this Legislature. They bring forward ideas, highlight emerging issues and spark the conversations that shape better public policy, and Bill 82 is part of that tradition. It doesn't attempt to solve every challenge in

Ontario's housing system—that's not realistic—but what it does do is it addresses a specific gap in the law, one that many tenants feel acutely, and it proposes practical improvements to make the system more transparent, more balanced and more accountable.

Housing policy works best when it recognizes that the interests of tenants and landlords aren't mutually exclusive. Tenants need stability and protection from unjustified rent increases; landlords need clear rules that allow them to maintain their properties and to invest responsibly. Bill 82 respects both of those realities. It ensures that necessary building improvements can still be made while preventing the misuse of the above-guideline process. Most importantly, it restores a measure of confidence for renters who simply want to know that the rules governing their homes are fair.

Introducing a first private member's bill is both exciting and humbling. No single member, obviously, can solve complex challenges alone, and that is why I sincerely hope that members from all parties will consider the intent behind this legislation and engage constructively with this proposal.

Housing stability matters to every community in this province. It affects students, seniors, families and workers right across Ontario. And while we may approach the issue from different perspectives, I believe that we all share a common goal, and that is ensuring that people in this province have access to housing that is safe, secure and fair, and I believe Bill 82 is a step in that direction.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Ms. Laura Smith: I appreciate the opportunity to rise today to speak to Bill 82. I want to begin by acknowledging the intent behind this legislation. We can all agree this is a bill with good intentions at its core, one that describes and talks about the understandable affordability challenges for many residents of Ontario and that some renters across Ontario are feeling the pressure, especially in the areas here in the GTA where the member opposite is from.

Ensuring that tenants are treated fairly and protected from unreasonable rent increases is an objective I believe all members of this Legislature share, but we should also be clear with the facts. Rents are actually decreasing, including here in Toronto. Ontario has seen year after year record rental housing starts, and more are on the way. These are good things, and they're happening right now. The opposition talks about a picture that is grim for renters, but right now there are a lot of good things that are happening for renters.

However, while the intent of this bill may be well-meaning, public policy must be judged not only by its intent but by its outcome. The government's concern is of implementation, unintended consequences and the impact on housing supply—where this bill raises serious concerns.

Speaker, our government's focus has been clear: We will need more housing of all types in Ontario, including purpose-built rental housing. The reality is simple: You cannot reduce the rents if you do not increase the supply.

So more supply in the long term is the only way to stabilize rent and improve affordability for renters. This is our focus, and the numbers are showing it's paying off.

This is why our government has created the conditions to build more rental housing across this province, and we are seeing the results. Last year alone, we saw nearly 25,000 rental housing starts, and that's a record. That didn't happen by accident. This is the result of policies designed to encourage construction, reduce delays and create the right economic environment for rental housing to be built, such as eliminating the HST—we had an incredible announcement this morning.

As mentioned, we're also seeing rents decrease as new supply comes online, and that is an important point. The path to affordability is not through policies that discourage housing construction or bringing units to rent. The path to affordability is building more homes, including more rental homes.

1630

Just a couple of days ago, the Ontario government is supporting the conversion of 2,200 condo units into rental apartments in the GTA, and approximately 550 of these homes have rents set at 25% below-market rental rates. Once again, the path to affordability is through building more homes. By adding new restrictions, new uncertainty and additional administrative requirements, this bill could discourage investment in existing rental housing and future rental housing construction. It's an important point to remember that above-guideline increases already have strict rules in Ontario. They're not automatic. Landlords must apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board. They must demonstrate why they are needed. Tenants are notified. The board reviews the applications and there are caps in place. These protections already exist in Ontario law. So the question becomes, what problems are we trying to solve and will this bill actually solve them?

One of the major changes proposed in this bill is requiring that the Landlord and Tenant Board consider additional hardship and financial factors when evaluating applications. And while that may sound noble, the practical effect is that it introduces uncertainty and unpredictability into the decision-making process. Housing providers, lenders and buyers rely on predictable rules, and we must be very careful not to pass legislation that feels helpful in the short term but makes housing shortage worse in the long term.

Unpredictability means less rentals coming to market. It means future delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board. It means more time for the board to adjudicate legitimate grievances among responsible tenant and rental providers. Adding additional considerations, additional documentation and additional analysis requirements will inevitably make hearings more complex and decisions will take longer. That does not help tenants and it does not help rental providers. Delays help no one. If the board becomes slower and more complicated, tenants waiting for decisions will wait longer, landlords waiting for approvals will wait longer and the entire system becomes more difficult to navigate.

Speaker, our government believes strongly in tenant protections. That's why rent increases are capped. That's why above-guideline increases are regulated. That's why there are strict rules around evictions, maintenance and tenant rights. Ontario already has one of the most structured and regulated rental systems in North America, but there must be a balance to ensure the system works for everyone. If we make it too difficult to operate rental housing, fewer rental homes will be built or units will be coming into the market. If fewer rental homes are built, we will lose the market that already exists. Affordability gets worse, not better.

This is the fundamental balance that housing policy must always consider. Our government approach has always been to increase supply and speed up construction, reduce delays and create the conditions for both ownership housing and rental housing to be built faster. We need more homes. We need more rental homes. We need more purpose-built rental buildings. And we need more policies that support these goals, not policies that risk undermining them.

Speaker, I want to be very clear: The concern here is not with the intent of the bill. The intent is understandable. The concern is with the implementation and unintended consequences. Public policy must always ask the question: What will happen next? What happens to supply? What happens to investment? What happens to repairs? What happens to maintenance? What happens to the speed of decisions at the board? What happens to the future rental construction?

When we ask these questions, there is a real risk that this bill could discourage rental housing investment, slow down repairs and add bureaucracy to the Landlord and Tenant Board and, ultimately, reduce rental housing at a time when Ontario needs more rental housing, not less.

Speaker, if we truly want to help renters, we must focus on increasing supply, maintaining strong tenant protections that already exist and ensuring that our housing policies encourage the construction and maintenance of rental housing across the province. That is the path to stable rents. That is the path to affordability. That is the path to ensuring people have a place to live.

For those reasons, I cannot support this bill as written, and I believe the House should carefully consider the unintended consequences it may create for rental housing supply and affordability in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to congratulate the member from Toronto—St. Paul's on your first bill in the Legislature here. It's calling for greater transparency for above-guideline increases, and this is a small step, but it's not going to solve the housing crisis.

We've got an enormous housing crisis in this province. We've got 85,000 people homeless. The average rent in downtown Toronto—and the Conservative member was just talking about, "Oh, rents are coming down a little bit." Well, they're coming down marginally, but the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto is \$2,300.

And if a corporate landlord applies for above-guideline increases each year, that would go up by 5% per year, so at the end of three years it would be \$2,670 for a one-bedroom apartment. That would be the average.

If we're going to solve the housing crisis, we've got to look at the root cause: How did we get into this absolute awful crisis that we're in right now? And it begins back in the early 1990s when the Chrétien Liberals cancelled the national housing strategy and then brought in real estate investment trusts. Real estate investment trusts are corporate vehicles that allow companies to buy up mass amounts of housing, evict tenants and then jack up the rents, and this is what's been happening for 30 years. And they keep taking over a greater and greater proportion of our housing. So they are jacking up the rents. If you're wondering why rent keeps going up, a big part of it is the corporate takeover of the housing market. And this bill doesn't address that in any way.

In the mid-1990s, the Harris Conservatives got in and they downloaded the existing affordable housing onto municipalities that don't have the tax base even to maintain the housing that was downloaded onto them. So for 35 years now, we've been in this crisis. This housing crisis has been developing—actually, 30 years, because the last government that built affordable housing in this province was the NDP government, and they built 15,000 units during their five years in the early 1990s. They had another 17,000 units that were going to be developed, and then the Conservatives got in and cancelled it.

This is the root of the crisis. If we are not going to address the corporate takeover of the housing market, we are never going to get to a point where housing is affordable and where everybody has a home, and those are the two things that we need to really focus on.

I can point to a number of examples of where above-guideline increases are impacting community members. There's a group at 75 Spencer Avenue that are on a rent strike because the landlords applied for and got a 5.4% increase, even though they say the tiles are broken, the heat doesn't work, the plumbing doesn't work. So this landlord has applied for this increase, even though the services that are essential for the building aren't working. Another is Mallory Gardens and, again, the corporate landlords applied for a 5% increase.

We need to rein in these corporate landlords if we are ever going to get to a province where everybody has a home that they can afford. And the other thing we need to do is bring back rent control on all buildings, because right now, when this Conservative government got in, one of the first things they did was remove rent control on anything built after 2018, and we've seen the impact of that. There were two women who were renting a place and their landlord tried to raise the rent by \$7,000 a month. Legally, he was allowed to do that because of the laws passed by this Conservative government.

I'm concerned about the Liberals as well because, in 2022, their campaign said that they would bring back rent control on all units, but in 2025, their campaign platform said that they were not—they were silent on that. So will

the Liberals, if they ever form government again, actually bring back rent control on all units?

Because it wasn't in your 2025 platform.

1640

Anyway, two solutions: Bring back rent control on all units and rein in the corporate takeover of the housing market.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

MPP Tyler Watt: I will be sharing my time with my colleagues. I'm proud to rise today as a renter, and I want to congratulate my fabulous colleague on her first private member's bill. I also want to apologize to all the rental advocates up there that had to listen to that garbage that came out of the member from Thornhill over there. It's really sad that you all preach about working together, and you immediately stood up and rejected this bill outright. It's so disappointing.

In my riding of Nepean, and across this province, I hear from people who are doing everything right: working hard, paying their bills, raising their families and still living with constant uncertainty about whether they'll be able to afford to stay in their homes. That uncertainty is not abstract; it's showing up at kitchen table conversations, in emails at our offices and in the stress people carry every single day. A big part of that stress is the lack of predictability in rent. It's the fear of opening a notice and seeing an above-guideline increase that they simply cannot absorb, with little clarity on how that number was even justified.

This bill addresses that directly by bringing transparency and accountability back into the system—something this government pretends that they care about. It says that if a landlord is going to ask tenants to pay more than the guideline allows, they must clearly demonstrate why that increase is necessary, backed by real evidence and professional documentation. That matters because, right now, tenants are too often being asked to pay more for work that doesn't actually improve their safety or living conditions. This bill draws a clear and reasonable line by ensuring that cosmetic upgrades, luxury improvements and routine maintenance cannot be used as justification for above-guideline increases. Maintaining a building is not optional; it is a basic responsibility. Tenants should not be asked to pay extra because that responsibility was delayed, deferred or ignored.

What this bill also does, and what I think is long overdue, is bring the lived reality of tenants into the decision-making process. I had a wonderful conversation with some of them earlier today. It requires the Landlord and Tenant Board to consider how much of a tenant's income is already going towards rent, what the vacancy rates are in their community and whether there are even realistic housing alternatives available. If those factors point to undue hardship, the board has the authority to dismiss the increase. That is a meaningful shift because it recognizes that housing decisions are not just financially calculated; they are decisions that impact stability, health and people's ability to stay rooted in their communities.

This bill also tackles the issue of fairness and how these increases are calculated. It ensures that landlords cannot pass on inflated costs through non-arm's-length transactions and that tenants are not charged for costs already covered by government funding. That's about restoring basic trust in the system; people should not be paying twice, once through their taxes and again through their rent.

It strengthens accountability on the back end as well. If rent is supposed to be reduced after an increase, tenants must properly be notified. If they're overcharged, they must be compensated at a higher rate.

We also have to be honest about how we got here. This government made a deliberate decision to remove rent control on all new builds right after they were elected in 2018, creating a two-tier system where many renters have no protection at all from sudden and significant increases. You talk a big game about how rent is coming down, but you got rid of rent control in the first place. Here, we're giving you a solution to part of your problem. That decision had real consequences. It has created more instability, more anxiety and more opportunities for rents to rise in ways that people simply cannot keep up with.

This bill is a step towards restoring balance in a system that is tilted too far away from tenants. It reinforces the idea that, while landlords have legitimate costs, tenants have limits, and those limits matter. At the end of the day, people in Ontario are not asking for special treatment; they're asking for fairness, for predictability and for a system that doesn't feel stacked against them. This bill delivers on that. It closes loopholes, strengthens oversight and ensures that above-guideline increases are truly justified, not just assumed.

I want to thank my colleague for bringing this forward, and I urge all members to think for yourselves and vote for this bill. Because this is about more than legislation; it's about whether people in this province can afford to stay in a place they call home.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I will be supporting Bill 82, the Protecting Renters from Unfair Above Guideline Rent Increases Act. I don't think it does everything it needs to, but it does touch on some important issues.

Before I talk about the bill itself, I want to give some history of how the Conservative government has created levels of homelessness never before seen in this province. In 2018, one of the first acts of the government was to remove rent control on new buildings. Also in 2018, the government fired most of the members of the Landlord and Tenant Board, creating a backlog that has created misery for both tenants and landlords—misery that was entirely of this government's making.

Then they moved all hearings online, putting low-income tenants at a tremendous disadvantage, and the government knows this. But it should be quite clear by now that this government does not work for all the people of the province; they work for those with the deepest pockets who fund the PC Party. Even from the records we

are currently allowed to see, it's clear that this government's actions are always based on quid pro quo deals. We've seen this with the greenbelt, the Skills Development Fund and with vacancy decontrol and the automatic approval of above-guideline increases.

There's a lot of talk in this Legislature about keeping people safe, but on the government side, it's mostly performative as they refuse to address the court backlogs. That means cases, no matter how egregious, never get to court and perpetrators go free. But what about keeping people safe from homelessness, from the constant fear of above-guideline rent increases?

We've seen how this government treats people on OW and ODSP who can't possibly afford housing on income supports that are three times below the poverty line. And then they bring in Bill 6 to criminalize homelessness. We saw it again with Bill 60, a bill to support landlords at the expense of tenants. First, they create the backlog and then, instead of fixing the problem, they side with their big money backers and throw renters under the bus.

Above-guideline increases, as the name suggests, are applied on top of the guideline increases for very specific reasons. But it's open to question whether specific claims are actually legitimate or whether a landlord is shirking their obligation to actually maintain the property. Frankly, there are so few checks and balances required to prove the need for an AGI. Above-guideline increases function as eviction by a thousand cuts by pushing out tenants who have been priced out, and since there is vacancy decontrol, landlords can impose unlimited rent increases on a unit once a tenant has moved out.

It's all about corporate profiteering, as we saw specifically when Chartwell sold a seniors' residence in Mississauga to Minto that turfed out 200 seniors—a massive renovation that left seniors on fixed incomes with no possibility of finding an equivalent place to live.

Real estate trusts, like Chartwell and Minto, are not shy at all about describing AGIs and vacancy decontrol as ways to get around rent control and significantly increase their profits. With the rules set out by this government, it's all about the profits and people's lives be damned. This is why Bill 82 is important because it brings a level of accountability to AGIs: An AGI can't be used to do the work a landlord should have been doing all along. They can't double-dip if they're already getting money from the government. They have to provide notice to the tenant if the increase has expired.

I'm going to stop there because I don't want to steal time from my colleague.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I'm honoured to rise today to speak to Bill 82, the Protecting Renters from Unfair Above Guideline Rent Increases Act, 2025, introduced by my wonderful colleague the member for Toronto–St. Paul's. I want to sincerely thank her for her work on this bill, as well as her team and the tenants who are here who worked on it because, as she said, putting forward these bills takes

work and it takes input. I'm so delighted that she's had the input of her community on this very important piece of legislation.

I'm also really honoured to rise in support of this bill on behalf of the tenants who live in my riding of Don Valley West. Approximately 40% of the residents in my riding are tenants, so I hear on a regular basis about tenants who are worried, again, about AGIs being used in what they believe is an improper way to try to pass on costs to those tenants.

1650

Recently, we had some buildings that were in a dispute with their landlord. It took place over a couple of years, and all during that time, they were of course very worried about what was going to happen in terms of the outcome at the Landlord and Tenant Board. In that case, they settled.

But just last week, I got a text message from a tenant—yes, I do give out my cell number too—and the tenant sent me the AGI notice that was slipped under the door late on a Friday night, saying that the building will be subject to a five-point-something per cent AGI.

What the tenant was really trying to understand, Speaker, was, “Does this mean I have to start paying this now? I can't afford that. I'm barely making ends meet.” So I reminded the tenant that, no, they did not need to pay that right away, not until—if and when—it gets approved. They can continue to pay their rent.

But, Speaker, these are the kind of situations, the kind of stress that tenants are put under on a regular basis, as landlords look to basically exploit loopholes in existing legislation. Again, we're talking about the bad landlords here. Of course, there are lots of good ones, but we know that people will look to exploit loopholes.

These AGIs that are happening in my riding sometimes feel to tenants like they're for vanity projects, kind of like some of the vanity projects that this government wants to put forward and pass the cost of onto taxpayers—a new convention centre in Toronto; a new science centre down at Ontario Place, instead of keeping it where it is, in Don Valley West.

Speaker, this bill will improve the lives of renters. It will help close some of those loopholes and prevent weak AGI requests from getting to the LTB in the first place, doing things like strengthening the transparency standards by requiring professionals to sign off on work that's necessary.

It's modernizing a system that has really, again, not given enough due process to renters who are feeling like they are always fighting against the big guys when this thing happens. They're working so hard to organize and take time off of work to go to these hearings, and quite often, of course, it lands in the landlord's favour.

Certainly, the bill acknowledges that AGIs are sometimes necessary, but they must be proven beyond a shadow of a doubt to know that they are important and necessary. Speaker, we know that home ownership is out of reach for so many and we know that some renters feel like they are

living in a precarious situation because of the cost of living and rising rents. AGIs that are really for things that are not that necessary are not the right way to protect renters' rights and they're not the right way for landlords to behave with their tenant community.

Speaker, I want to just stand again in support of this bill that will protect millions of renters not just in Toronto—St. Paul's, not just in Don Valley West, but across Toronto, across our province.

I want to again join with the MPP from Toronto—St. Paul's in urging the government to listen to people who have good ideas. I once heard—I forget—one of the ministers say, "Oh, we'll listen to good ideas." Speaker, people here, on both sides of the House, have good ideas, and it would be nice if the government would take this bill, look at it, examine it in committee if you want to and think about how it can actually help the lives of renters who are struggling through this affordability crisis.

I hope you will consider supporting this bill.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's always an honour to rise to debate in this House, today on Bill 82, and I always appreciate the opportunity to talk about ways that we can protect renters in the province of Ontario, because they need it. They need a government that's going to be on their side instead of on the side of the wealthy and well-connected.

So I appreciate the member from Toronto—St. Paul's for bringing this forward. I want to congratulate you on your first private member's bill.

I also want to acknowledge something you said in your remarks which I thought was important: that this is one tool. It's a small tool, but it's an important tool. I appreciate you acknowledging this is one of many things we need to do to protect renters, things like bringing back vacancy control, bringing on rent control for all units, fixing the Landlord and Tenant Board so it works for both tenants and landlords, legalizing mid-rise developments along major transit and transit corridors so we can quickly increase housing supply of multi-residential buildings. There are many things we have to do.

The reason we have to do that, Speaker, is because we live in an Ontario right now where far too many people are working one, two and three jobs just to have a shot at paying the rent. But we live in a province where there is no city in Ontario where a full-time minimum wage worker can afford average monthly rent. As a matter of fact, in the city of Toronto, you would have to earn \$44 an hour to be able to afford average market rent.

I heard the member opposite, from Thornhill, say that rents are coming down. If they go from \$2,100 to \$2,000 a month, it's still too expensive. As a matter of fact, Bloomberg News just released an article saying that even with the recent slight decline in rents, which were at historic, all-time and unprecedented highs, 34% of renters in Ontario are paying over 50% of their income just to cover rent. We know affordability is defined at 30% of

income, so we have a crisis in the province of Ontario, a crisis brought on by a government that says no to all the solutions around how to make housing affordable for people, whether you are renting or owning.

Part of what is driving this is the increasing corporate takeover of much of our housing rental stock. As a matter of fact, for every one new unit of affordable housing that is built in Ontario, Ontario loses 15 units. It is even worse in places like Kitchener. My colleague from Kitchener Centre likes to point out that in Kitchener, for every one new affordable unit, we lose 39 in Ontario.

And these big corporate landlords are the ones that are driving up above-guideline rent increases, which we have seen a 107% increase in in the last two decades. Speaker, over 80% of the AGI requests come from these big corporate landlords—the same corporate landlords that pay out 20% to 30%, and they advertise this. They advertise this: "We're going to use AGIs. We're going to use renovictions. We're going to use demovictions. We're going to use the fact that we don't have vacancy control to kick renters out, jack up rates, and give you a return on investment of 20 to 30%," that actually could be going back into investing and keeping their rental units upgraded.

What happens, oftentimes, is they don't invest, the building deteriorates—yes, it will need some renovation, but they put it on the back of the renter because they have been paying out so much in dividends to their investors. I can tell you, as a small business owner, I had to reinvest in my business to keep it up all the time. Why can't big corporate landlords do the same thing? That is why we need to close the loopholes that allow them to have these above-guideline rent increases.

If the government is not going to vote for a bill like this that just brings in a few protections, then it tells you what side of the equation they're on. They're about the wealthy and well-connected getting richer, and the rest of us struggling just to get by. That's why homelessness is at all-time highs in Ontario. It's why over a million Ontarians have to go to a food bank just to put food on the table every month because they can't afford the rent. Are we going to build an affordable Ontario or not? Part of building an affordable Ontario is protecting renters. That's why I will be voting in favour of Bill 82, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I rise to speak in support of Bill 82, a piece of legislation that may help protect the most vulnerable members of our society from unfair rent hikes and resulting financial hardship. This bill provides some protection for tenants, ensuring that working families, seniors, students and people living with disabilities are not left to struggle in an increasingly unaffordable housing market.

I want to start by asking, how much more can people take? Many people in my riding of London North Centre are on the verge of losing everything. They're living

paycheque to paycheque, struggling with constant stress and anxiety about the future. The fear of rising costs, the fear of eviction and the fear of being able to make ends meet is affecting their mental health.

That's why I stand in support of Bill 82. It brings us a step closer to fairness in the rental market by limiting rent increases to a reasonable, predictable guideline. The idea that landlords can increase rents as much as they please without any regulation is untenable in a province when so many people are already struggling.

1700

We've heard government members say that supply is the issue, and I would say that if you have not heard that real rent control is what people need across this province, then I would suggest that you have not listened to your constituents. Creating yet more unaffordable units is illogical and will not solve the problem of unaffordability whatsoever.

It's important to recognize that rent increases are not just an economic concern; they are a social justice issue. Tenants, particularly in cities like London, Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa, are under increasing pressure from corporate landlords who treat rental properties as nothing more than investments and people as nothing more than numbers on a ledger. These companies are more concerned with maximizing profits than providing tenants with secure, stable housing.

Bill 82 seeks to address this imbalance by creating clear rules around rent increases, ensuring that tenants are not at the mercy of arbitrary decisions by landlords looking to profit at their expense. This is a small step in the right direction, but the Ontario NDP believes that rent control is a critical protection for tenants, especially as housing affordability reaches a breaking point.

This government has left people and renters vulnerable to predatory practices, exposing them to unreasonable rent hikes. Removing rent control from buildings first occupied after November 2018 was ridiculous. Bill 82 is a step forward in the right direction, but rent control is not just about keeping prices in check; it's about protecting stability and security of tenure for renters, something this government was threatening to attack with Bill 60. We can't allow tenants to live in constant fear of eviction or soaring rents. We need to strengthen protection for tenants, not weaken them. My Ontario NDP colleagues and I believe we need stronger protections for stronger rent control, not more measures that make it harder for people to stay in their homes.

Bill 82 will not solve the broader issue of the housing affordability crisis or finally deliver real rent control, but it will at least ensure that rent increases remain fair and predictable. It may protect working families, seniors, students and people living with disabilities from being priced out of their homes due to the greed of corporate landlords.

In my riding of London North Centre, people are working hard but still facing the real and serious fear of

losing their homes to rising rents. Bill 82 might be a step forward to protecting them from this uncertainty.

We need a government that will finally treat housing as what it is: It is foundational; it is fundamental; it is the basis for the rest of our life. Housing is a human right. Housing is health care. I trust that this government will get out of the pockets of corporate landlords and real estate investment trusts and actually listen to the real people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mr. Adil Shamji: I want to begin by acknowledging my fabulous colleague from Toronto—St. Paul's. It's very clear that she's listened to what her constituents are experiencing, taken their feedback and then thought to herself, "How can I bring this forward into the people's House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and actually stand up to confront the challenges that they're facing"—challenges that are of this government's creation.

We are in the midst of a housing crisis. Rent has skyrocketed. One of the members across said rents have come down. Yes, they've gone up by record amounts and then just barely came down. It's what we call in science an outlier. You don't get to call that a success.

As we face this massive crisis, we need real, actionable, serious policy solutions, and that is what my colleague has delivered. In my riding of Don Valley East, 55% of people are renters. Of those renters, 39% are spending more than 30% of their household income on their rent. That is wrong. It's even worse in Scarborough. In the neighbouring riding to mine, Scarborough Southwest, 46% are renters, and something like over 33% are spending more than 30% of their household income. This calls upon a government to address this with seriousness. They're not getting it from over there, so they're going to get it from over here.

My colleague has put forward an exceptional bill that seeks to ensure that above-guideline increases, which may in some circumstances be necessary, are used fairly, are used judiciously, so that they're not used to do things like just engage in cosmetic repairs and use that as a justification to drive up rent.

This is the same government that eliminated rent control. This is the same government that tried to eliminate security of tenure until they were forced to back up on that. But I will warn anyone who's watching, whether you're in North York, Willowdale or Scarborough: They haven't given up on that, and they've only said they're going to stop thinking about it for now.

I fully encourage all—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): The member has two minutes to reply.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I'm feeling a couple of things right now. One is embarrassment—a little bit of rage. I'm feeling completely let down. I actually believed the housing minister when he looked me in the eye last December and said, "We can work together." What? How naive am I? "Maybe there's a way."

And then when I hear what the member from Thornhill—her debate on my bill. Did she even read it? What did my colleague from Nepean say? Something about—

Interjections.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Yes. Okay. Malarkey, rubbish—you name it.

How insulting, to stand there and say this is about, “Rents have come down”—completely unaware.

Let me tell you something: 102 days I had off, and almost all of those days were filled with people worried, concerned about housing, concerned about rent. And guess what? You’re not listening to me? They are mobilizing. They’re not done. They’re here tonight, and they are continuing to mobilize across this province, from community to community. This is not going away. We are not going to stop fighting for renters in this province.

You think, “Oh, my gosh, we’re hearing about rent control and all the things we’ve done wrong.”

Thank you to some of my colleagues who are saying they’re going to vote in support.

“But really, we support rent control.” I don’t want to talk about other governments of the past. Keep going back there. Right now, here, we are advocating for the renters in Toronto—St. Paul’s, in Toronto, across this province. So I want to say thank you to all those who are supporting this bill tonight.

Shame on you for not seeing that this is a very small step in a massive problem. But do you know what? If we can’t take small steps together, we will never be able to take leaps. This isn’t over.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): The time provided for private members’ public business has expired.

MPP Smyth has moved second reading of Bill 82, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to above guideline rent increases.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Pursuant to standing order 36, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

EDUCATION ISSUES

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): The member for Ottawa South has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Education. The member has up to five minutes to debate

the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

Mr. John Fraser: That’s right, Speaker. I ain’t ever satisfied, especially when it comes to this ministry and this minister.

I asked a question this morning, and I started by talking about a young girl in my riding, Marigold. She’s six years old. She started school two years ago, and when she started—well, she had exceptional needs. And when she started, her parents were able to get her an assessment of what she needed for her special needs. It’s two years later. She’s a bright young girl. She’s not getting the help she needs, not at school. Two years—no help.

1710

Two years, in the development of any child—five, six, seven, eight years old—is really important, and Marigold is like thousands of other children across this province. Marigold’s parents both work, and they can’t afford the kind of help that Marigold needs. It would put a big hole in their family budget. So, lucky for Marigold, her aunt is helping out, and in fact, she is who drives her to her appointments every week as well, because her parents can’t take the time off work.

Speaker, Marigold is just one child. There are thousands and thousands of other children and their families that are experiencing the same thing. This government has been underfunding special education by at least \$800 million, because that’s what the school boards across Ontario are having to go and take out of other things, just to ensure that children’s needs in some way are met, and they still can’t do it.

I was asking that question this morning. I was thinking of my question the day before. I was at the breakfast this morning where the Minister of Education was addressing teachers, and I couldn’t believe my ears. I wasn’t the only one; my colleagues from the NDP were there—five or six of my colleagues—and I could not believe the imperious, condescending, out-of-touch tone from the minister. It was combative. It didn’t fit in the room. These are people, these are teachers, the people that represent teachers—they’re the adults in our schools who are helping our kids. But it all makes sense. If you take a look at this letter and the other letters that the minister has sent over the last—they’re literally decrees. They are like royal decrees: “Thou shalt.”

Speaker, there are 100,000 teachers in this province—more than 100,000 teachers—and there are a handful that aren’t doing things the right way, which is normal in any organization. But you’ve got to ask yourself: Why would you send a letter about a problem that you say is small, and send it to everybody? A hundred thousand people? Why? Because you’re trying to make the issue bigger than it actually is. And actually, you’re trying to show you’re the boss. Well, you know how they say about millionaires: They don’t have to tell you they’re millionaires, because they are. The boss? He doesn’t have to tell you he’s the boss, because he is. And if he’s telling you that he’s the

boss, he's not the boss; he's just trying to be the boss, and that's not what we need in education.

What we need in our schools is smaller class sizes. Let's see that in the budget tomorrow. What do we need in our schools? More than \$800 million into special education, because kids aren't getting what they need. We also know there's a mental health crisis in our schools that's just reflective of what's going on in our broader society. The government needs to make an investment in that and not distract and play games.

Speaker, playing games is for recess. And after 100 days, to the minister and this government, recess is over.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Further debate?

Mr. Billy Pang: I welcome this opportunity once again to set the record straight, because from day one, our government has been focused on building an education system that puts students, parents and teachers first. Every single year we have been in office, we have increased education funding, strengthened classrooms supports, and made targeted investments to ensure that students have the tools they need to succeed. But once again, we hear the opposition repeat the same tired talking points, ignoring the facts and the real progress that has been made in classrooms across this province.

Let's start with class sizes: Despite what the opposition would have Ontarians believe, the independent Financial Accountability Officer has confirmed that since 2018, class sizes have remained stable. That means students are continuing to learn in consistent classroom environments, and teachers continue to have the support they need to do what they do best: teach. The opposition can try to rewrite history, but the facts simply do not support their claims.

I also want to talk about special education, because this is where the contrast between our government and the previous Liberal government could not be clearer. For years under the Liberals, special education was underfunded and the most vulnerable students were left without the supports they need to succeed.

We have taken a very different approach. Since 2018, we have increased special education funding by almost 40%, to the highest level in Ontario's history. That funding has helped support the hiring of more than 4,000 additional education assistants in our schools. That matters, because behind every one of these education assistants is a student who is receiving more one-on-one attention,

more tailored support and a better chance to succeed in the classroom. It means a child with autism has someone there to help them stay engaged and navigate the day. It means a student with learning challenges can receive the individualized help they need to build confidence and achieve their full potential.

Speaker, imagine for a moment if these investments had not been made. Imagine if we had continued with the Liberals' failed record of underfunding, and what it would mean for students who rely on these supports. Students would not get the attention they deserve, and their outcomes would suffer. That is the reality we inherited, and that is the reality we are fixing. We are making sure that the most vulnerable students are not left behind, but instead given more opportunity to succeed.

While we are making these historic investments, the opposition stands here and accuses this government of arrogance. There is nothing arrogant about putting students first. There is nothing arrogant about increasing funding year after year, supporting teachers and ensuring that resources are reaching the classrooms, where they belong.

What would be arrogant is ignoring the facts, dismissing real progress and choosing politics over students. This is not what this government is about. We are focusing on results. We are focusing on building an education system that prepares students for the future, a system that equips them with the skills they need to succeed. We will not be distracted by political games or ideological debates.

In fact, as the minister has said, it is time we had an honest conversation about the role of politics in our classrooms. Our schools should be places of learning; places where students build skills, develop critical thinking and prepare for the future; not places where they are subject to political or ideological agendas. We need to take politics out of the classroom and put learning back at the centre of education. This means ensuring that every student, regardless of their background, has access to a high-quality education grounded in knowledge and opportunity, not ideology. We will stay focused on what matters: student success.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): There being no further matters to debate, pursuant to standing order 36(c), I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1719.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, OOnt
Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Donna Skelly
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day
Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,
Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Allsopp, Tyler (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Cerjanec, Rob (LIB)	Ajax	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Jeux
Ciriello, Monica (PC)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Cooper, Michelle (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	Oakville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises et de l'Approvisionnement
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Darouze, George (PC)	Carleton	
Denault, Billy (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence
Fairclough, Lee (LIB)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Firin, Mohamed (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Leader, Third Party / Chef du troisième parti
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gilmour, Alexa (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Gualtieri, Silvia (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Hamid, Hon. / L'hon. Zee (PC)	Milton	Associate Solicitor General for Auto Theft and Bail Reform / Solliciteur général associé responsable de la Lutte contre le vol d'automobiles et de la Réforme relative aux mises en liberté sous caution
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé des Forêts et des Produits forestiers
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines
Lennox, Robin (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiwiwinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	
McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
McKenney, Catherine (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Deputy House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement et de la croissance économique du Nord
Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security / Ministre des Collèges et Universités, de l'Excellence en recherche et de la Sécurité
Racinsky, Joseph (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire Economic and Community Partnerships / Ministre responsable des Partenariats économiques et communautaires pour le développement du Cercle de feu
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Rosenberg, Bill (PC)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Chris (IND)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smyth, Stephanie (LIB)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Attorney General / Procureur général associé
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Tsao, Jonathan (LIB)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Vickers, Paul (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Watt, Tyler (LIB)	Nepean	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Vacant	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	