

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

---

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

No. 59B

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

N° 59B

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
44<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Thursday  
2 April 2026

1<sup>re</sup> session  
44<sup>e</sup> législature

Jeudi  
2 avril 2026

---

Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly  
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly  
Greffier : Trevor Day

### **Hansard on the Internet**

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

<https://www.ola.org/>

### **Index inquiries**

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

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

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

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

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

---

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

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

## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 2 April 2026 / Jeudi 2 avril 2026

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

#### **Restraining orders / Ordonnances de ne pas faire**

MPP Monica Ciriello.....	3533
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam.....	3535
Mme Lucille Collard .....	3536
Ms. Natalie Pierre .....	3537
Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy.....	3538
Mr. Andrew Dowie.....	3539
MPP Monica Ciriello.....	3539
Vote deferred.....	3539



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 2 April 2026

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 2 avril 2026

*Report continued from volume A.*

1800

PRIVATE MEMBERS'  
PUBLIC BUSINESS

RESTRAINING ORDERS

ORDONNANCES DE NE PAS FAIRE

**MPP Monica Ciriello:** I move that, in the opinion of the House, the government of Ontario should develop opportunities to modernize and strengthen Ontario's restraining order system.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**MPP Monica Ciriello:** I am honoured to rise today to speak on my motion to modernize Ontario's restraining order system, an initiative that, at its core, is about supporting victims, whether they be survivors of intimate partner or family violence.

As a lawyer and the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General, I have seen first-hand how our justice system can both support but also fail the people that it is meant to protect. This motion is about closing that gap. The purpose is straightforward: to ensure that individuals who fear for their safety can access protection through a justice system that is practical, responsive and centred on their needs—centred on victims' needs.

Restraining orders are an essential legal tool in our province. They are meant to create distance, provide protection and offer peace of mind during some of the most difficult moments in a person's life. Yet what I have heard clearly and consistently is that the system often falls too short. Instead of providing clarity and support, obtaining a restraining order can be complex, confusing and intimidating, forcing victims to navigate a legal process at the very moment that they need stability the most.

At the same time, it's important to understand that restraining orders serve a broader range of situations. They are also sought by individuals facing harassment, stalking, family conflict and, in some cases, those attempting to exit situations of human trafficking. For many of these individuals, the need for protection is urgent and unpredictable and deeply tied to their ability to safely move forward with their lives.

In preparing this motion, I have consulted extensively with front-line professionals in both my home city of Hamilton and those right across the province. I've con-

nected with those who directly work with victims every day, whether that be police services, intimate partner violence units, special victims units and human trafficking teams, as well as community partners through victim services and representatives from the Salvation Army, the largest non-governmental direct provider of social services right across this country.

In my community and in communities across Ontario, I have heard directly from those who have lived this, and during every conversation, the message was the same: The system must become more victim-centred.

For many victims, obtaining a restraining order is not just difficult; quite frankly, it can become overwhelming. Forms are complex. Court procedures are intimidating. Evidentiary requirements feel out of reach for those that don't have legal support. These challenges are compounded by accessibility barriers: language differences, limited legal resources and geographic constraints. And for many, the process becomes so difficult that they're discouraged from pursuing the very protection that they need, because the system is too hard and complex to navigate by themselves.

One example raised during the consultations illustrates this clearly. A survivor seeking protection faced weeks of delay due to confusion around documentation, limited guidance and the need to attend court multiple times in person. During that time, the individual causing harm continued to contact her and appear at places she frequented, including her home. Even after the restraining order was granted, repeated breaches were met with inconsistent enforcement, leaving the survivor to feel that the order she obtained offered little immediate protection.

But it goes deeper than paperwork, Speaker. Many victims must repeatedly face their abuser in open court, for the initial order and then again every single year just simply to renew it. Short order durations and burdensome renewal logistics mean that protection is not permanent. It must be relitigated, re-experienced and re-justified on an ongoing basis.

For survivors carrying trauma, those hearings can carry a profound psychological cost. The in-person nature of these proceedings forces victims to relive their experience and trauma while sitting in the same room as the person who harmed them, at times undermining their ability to heal, rebuild and move on with their lives.

Speaker, what we're seeing across sectors is that individuals seeking protection are already in the most highly vulnerable situations. Many have experienced patterns of control or manipulation over years. By the time someone seeks a restraining order, they are not acting pre-

emptively; they are responding to a situation that has already become unsafe.

We cannot forget that many of the victims are also caregivers themselves. They have children, parents or others who depend on them. When the system falls short, the ripple effect touches the entire family, and too often those impacts go unseen.

A review by the Law Commission of Ontario found that of 76 reported Family Court decisions from 2021 to 2023, many women seeking protection were simply not believed. In fact, more than half of the applications heard were dismissed. Victims shouldn't have to fight not only for their safety, but also against a system that undervalues that their fears are real and provides tools that fail them when they need them the most.

And the consequences are stark. Some victims have chosen to relocate outside of their community, outside of their city and, at times, outside of the country entirely, rather than face the process. Let that sink in, Speaker: People are leaving Ontario not because they want to, but because navigating the court to obtain a restraining order is more daunting than the threat that they are fleeing.

Many individuals seeking restraining orders are also navigating housing instability, financial insecurity and ongoing safety concerns. Some require assistance simply to understand the process, access services or attend court proceedings. Without broader support, even well-intended legal protections can fall short of providing meaningful safety to those who need it most. And this is not rare. It's not isolated. Front-line organizations are supporting thousands of individuals each year through case management, court accompaniment and safety planning. The reality speaks to both the scale of the issue and the everyday experiences of those who are simply trying to feel safe in their own home.

And the data reinforces what we are hearing on the ground. In 37% of intimate partner stalking cases reported to police in Ontario, a restraining order or a protective order was obtained, yet in nearly half of those cases—47%—the order was violated, and that's just those that were reported. In fact, restraining orders in Canada are breached so frequently that they have been described by some as simply "a piece of paper [that] does not stop a knife or a bullet." Survivors are often living with the knowledge that the protections intended to keep them safe may not actually stop someone who's determined to harm them.

Speaker, these are lived experiences. They reflect the voices of victims who I have personally spoken to, the expertise of front-line professionals across various sectors and the shared responsibility that we all we carry to ensure safety within our communities. That's exactly why this motion matters.

The Law Commission of Ontario has found that Ontario's protection order system is a patchwork of different laws, processes and courts that are incredibly difficult to navigate, especially without legal representation. Individuals must determine what type of protection they need, which court has the authority to grant it and how to move

through that process, often across family and criminal courts simultaneously, each with their own rules, timelines and requirements.

From an enforcement perspective, this patchwork creates its own challenges. When orders are unclear, inconsistently worded or difficult to enforce across systems, police can't always apply them in the same way. Enforcement can vary from one situation to the next causing further delay. For survivors, this inconsistency adds yet another layer of uncertainty at a time when they need protection the most.

So the motion today calls on the government to undertake the work to examine and consult on four concrete areas:

(1) to streamline accessible online application pathways so that geography, language and extra complexities are no longer barriers to protection for victims who need it. We want to give victims the option to appear virtually, to reduce fear and safety concerns from seeing respondents or those who attacked them again, allowing those victimized to seek justice in a way that also makes them feel safe. This approach has already been successfully adopted within victim services, where victims of human trafficking are supported in appearing virtually for testimony;

#### 1810

(2) improved clarity around restraining order processes, timelines and available protections so victims can make informed decisions;

(3) strengthening a coordinated access across justice partners. Restraining orders touch so many different sectors, and we want to make sure that they're all aligned—whether that be the police, courts, crown and victim services—so that safety is consistently at the forefront of every decision that is made, from the issuance through to enforcement and release planning. Oftentimes victims are not even aware if a restraining order is expired or if an individual has been released, and so having them be a part of that release planning goes a long way for those that are directly impacted; and

(4) a meaningful review of order durations and renewal requirements, so that victims are not forced back into court year after year to prove that they still deserve to be safe. We hear too often there's a variation between how long someone can get the restraining order for. It would be nice if we had some consistency so victims could have some natural ability to get back to their life. They can feel safe in doing so.

This motion recognizes that there's still work to be done, and it needs to be deliberate, collaborative and with the victims at the centre of every decision that we take. I encourage all members to support this motion. It's aimed to keep victims safe, but also simultaneously holding offenders accountable. Together, we can work to strengthen Ontario's restraining order system and ensure that victims and survivors are truly at the centre of the protections our justice system is meant to provide.

Speaker, as members in this chamber, we owe it to the victims to re-examine the current process that is in place

and determine how as a group we can do better to put victims first and hold those others accountable.

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

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I'm pleased to rise in this House to speak to motion 53. The text of the motion is very straightforward; it's actually very, very short: "In the opinion of the House, the government of Ontario should develop opportunities to modernize and strengthen Ontario's restraining order system."

Let me begin by saying I support this motion. It's non-binding. It's symbolic. The four pillars that the member from Hamilton Mountain just spoke about are actually not embedded in the motion, but nevertheless, the motion itself is fine. We should move forward with it.

I must note, Speaker, that the government had released an 877-page report on intimate partner violence. There are all sorts of ways for the government to take real action, including tabling bills that will actually reform the system, as opposed to putting forward a symbolic, non-binding motion. Nevertheless, I'm prepared to support it, and we should all support it. But we need to follow-up with real action, real legislation, real reform.

I want to add that motions are oftentimes brief, but they should never be this vague. Any reader of the motion will probably want to ask, "Who did the member speak to? What are the opportunities that are being presented in front of us?" That's why a bill would actually be very helpful, especially after a year-long consultation process with many legal experts, with survivors, who are all saying the same thing: that we need to reform not just the restraining order system, Speaker, but also peace bonds. That is the other piece of the puzzle, which doesn't necessarily cover the spouses who are looking for the restraints—rather, it doesn't cover intimate partner violence; it is not going to cover intimate partner survivors if they are not a spouse or common-law. So the restraining order has specific limitations, and we know that not everybody is married; not everybody in a relationship that has experienced abuse is in a common-law relationship.

I do want to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain for tabling this motion. I think it's still very important for us to seize every opportunity to talk about this issue that so many people have spoken about in Ontario, so often that intimate partner violence actually has been declared an epidemic by 106 municipalities. This government is still keeping the community of survivors and their advocates waiting for that declaration.

I recognize that the Law Commission of Ontario has already initiated a year-long process through a consultation paper calling the government's system right now, Ontario's system pertaining to restraining orders, and I quote their consultation paper, "confusing, disconnected, and outdated protection" orders, "including restraining orders" that need to be improved for their "effectiveness" and accountability "for victims of intimate partner violence."

Restraining orders are just one tool in the tool box for survivors who need to leave those violent and dangerous

relationships. Survivors are already navigating so much bureaucracy as they work to rebuild their lives, so we need to make this process as easy as possible and as survivor-centred as possible.

The Ontario government must do everything they can to change the legal system, which many survivors have described as not legal, not fair. Instead, they find themselves put through a system that is more punishing than ever before. They feel like they're being revictimized, and some have described the assault of the justice system as worse than the assault that they experience in that relationship.

I want to note that restraining orders don't cover, as I noted before, partners who are not common-law and not spouses. So there are many, many survivors in those relationships where the restraining order doesn't cover it.

From a feminist legal perspective, and we have to take this into consideration, restraining orders in Ontario can be improved by addressing the "patchwork" of fragmented laws, enhancing trauma-informed judicial training and centring child safety and risk assessments. Despite reforms intended to protect survivors, many still face a very "cold and unforgiving" process in the courts where their testimony, as rightly noted, is dismissed. Survivors have to fight to be heard, to be seen and to be believed.

I want to share some ways that the Ontario government could modernize and actually could strengthen their restraining order system. I'm indebted to the Law Commission of Ontario, to the Barbra Schliker Commemorative Clinic and to the deputants of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy subcommittee study on intimate partner violence for the ideas I'm going to share.

Simplify the legal patchwork: Survivors currently navigate a complex system of provincial family laws and federal criminal laws with different eligibility criteria with evidentiary standards that are all over the place. A more unified and better-coordinated system would reduce the risk of conflicting orders. Some families have to deal simultaneously with a criminal no-contact order and a family court access order, forcing them to choose which one to follow, because they contradict each other. How is anyone supposed to know who they hand their baby over to because they've been ordered to do so, and at the same time they need to protect themselves?

The system could also see some revisions with respect to how we gauge "reasonable fear" standards. This is something that's very important to legal survivors. It actually monitors the effectiveness of the current evidentiary tests, which require survivors to prove their fear is objectively reasonable. Many critics have argued that this test often fails to account for the nuances of coercive control and trauma, leading to the dismissal of over 50% of all applicants. Simply put, Speaker, you almost need to be an absolutely perfect witness before the courts before they grant these protective orders, the restraining orders. I challenge anybody in this House—anyone—to declare themselves a perfect witness, especially after living through all that trauma and all that harm.

Adopting a trauma-informed process is another way to strengthen and modernize the restraining order system. The court system is often described by survivors as insensitive or uneducated, and those who preside over the courts have been accused of not understanding the dynamics of intimate partner violence. There is a need to provide specialized training for judges and legal personnel on the impacts of this systemic type of trauma and how inequities can feed into it.

**1820**

We need to make sure that our court processes and procedures are safe, modifying standard processes so that survivors who are leaving these vulnerable situations—they are already hanging on for dear life. They have fought as hard as they could to get in front of the courts, and they should not have to then face retaliatory measures or violence just as they go through relitigation, or the litigation and the retraumatization caused by the litigation.

I want to share, Speaker, a study that was written by Jennifer Kagan, Keira's mother, that found that 11% of the 231 women killed by their intimate partners had been granted restraining orders against their abusers. About 20 of those had been granted restraining orders and then they were killed within two days of that restraining order being granted. So the reality is that restraining orders alone do not keep women who are fleeing violence or their children safe. We need to follow up with a lot more supports, and those supports to keep women safe include access to housing, include making sure that they have a pathway to financial security, ensuring that they have the ability to place their child into child care when appropriate. All of this means that we have so much more to do within the system of protective orders and restraining orders.

We should also recognize that family violence often-times impacts the child's best interests, and how that is deliberated in the courts—oftentimes women find it very punishing on them, because they have to choose between, "Do I hold on to my child? I want to continue being the parent, but at the same time, I am forced to stay with my abusive partner." A restraining order may not always be the right solution, which means that we have to be able to invest in other tools in that tool kit, which include supports for rehabilitation. How do we get men and boys the supports that they need in order for them to have healthy adult relationships that are consensual and respectful? All of that has to come together.

Obviously, the motion is one piece of it, but there is so much more to do, including creating centralized databases so we can track those who have committed harm, who are repeat offenders. We need to increase legal aid funding, which is all part of the tool kit. I can't stress this enough, because women who are accessing the courts are often-times financially strained and dependent on their abuser through coercive control, and they will not be able to get a pathway to justice because they cannot get access to independent legal aid.

I want to share one story before I conclude my remarks. This is the story of Cait Alexander, who I now call a dear friend. Cait, as many people in this House will recognize,

is someone who had been beaten on multiple occasions to within an inch of her life. She captured video evidence. The police told her it was an open-and-shut case, but because of court delays caused by the government's overloaded backlogs, the court case was tossed out and her abuser received absolutely zero consequences. Every year, Cait has to return to Toronto to renew a peace bond—not a restraining order, because she doesn't qualify for that, but a peace bond—against the man who nearly destroyed and killed her. This is just one example of a system that continues to fail us.

This motion, as I mentioned, is supportable. We should move forward with it, but we should also then follow up and move forward with legislation that will bring about the real, effective change that survivors in Ontario and their families truly deserve and need. Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to bring my remarks to a conclusion.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I do welcome the opportunity to speak in favour of this motion today, but I also want to convey a sense of urgency, because when someone seeks a restraining order, they're not asking for convenience. They are asking for safety. And yet, too often in Ontario, a restraining order is not a guarantee of safety; it is a hope that the system will respond in time. The reality is this: Ontario's restraining order system is not failing in theory; it is failing in practice.

Madam Speaker, we know that intimate partner violence remains a serious and persistent issue. According to Statistics Canada, the period immediately following separation is one of the highest-risk times for escalation, and even homicide. The Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability has shown that in many cases, there were prior warning signs and sometimes even court orders in place.

So we must confront an uncomfortable truth: Having a restraining order is not enough if the system behind it does not function effectively.

Let us begin with delays. Family courts are stretched, civil courts are stretched and restraining orders, urgent by nature, are processed in a system that cannot always respond with urgency. When someone applies for a restraining order, they are often doing so in a moment of crisis. Delays of weeks—or longer—leave individuals exposed during the most dangerous period. Justice delayed is not just justice denied; it is safety deferred. And yet, instead of strengthening the system, this government has reduced funding to the Ministry of the Attorney General by \$118 million.

This is not theoretical. It is happening in our communities. In Ottawa, legal professionals have described a system already operating in backlog. At the courthouse, the clerk's counter is open only four hours a day, and only for self-represented litigants, while lawyers must rely on an overloaded online portal. And confirmation of submitted documents can take weeks—sometimes arriving after a hearing has already taken place.

But let me make this real: This means a woman trying to leave an abusive relationship may file for protection and

then wait days, weeks, not knowing whether the order is in place, not knowing whether it will be enforced. During that time, she may still encounter the person she is trying to be protected from, at her workplace, in her neighbourhood or even near her children's school. This is not just delay. This is risk.

Madame la Présidente, à Ottawa–Vanier, cette réalité est bien concrète. La situation actuelle est profondément préoccupante. Lorsqu'une personne demande une ordonnance de protection, elle le fait souvent dans un contexte de peur, d'urgence et de vulnérabilité. Mais au lieu d'un système qui répond rapidement, elle se trouve face à des délais, à des obstacles administratifs et à un manque de ressources.

La justice ne doit pas dépendre de la capacité du système à suivre le rythme; elle doit être capable de protéger et de le faire immédiatement.

Ce sont des personnes—et souvent des femmes—qui tentent de se protéger, mais qui se retrouvent coincées dans un système trop lent pour répondre à leur situation. Donc, elles attendent, elles vivent dans l'incertitude et pendant ce temps, le danger, lui, ne disparaît pas.

La justice doit être à la hauteur de l'urgence de ces situations. Sinon, ce n'est pas seulement un problème administratif; c'est un problème de sécurité publique.

Madam Speaker, access to legal representation remains a major barrier. Many Ontarians cannot afford a lawyer and must rely on legal aid, but legal aid is overstretched and underfunded. Eligibility thresholds leave many in a gap—they're either too rich to qualify or too poor to afford representation.

Organizations like Luke's Place Support and Resource Centre for Women and Children have documented how survivors are often left to navigate complex legal processes alone. And when that happens, we see delays increase, errors increase and safety decrease. We are asking people in crisis to advocate for their own safety in a system that is not designed for self-navigation.

1830

Madam Speaker, we must also modernize what restraining orders actually cover. Today, abuse is not limited to physical proximity. It includes digital harassment, stalking through technology and indirect contact through third parties. Too often, restraining orders do not clearly address these realities, so we must ensure that orders explicitly prohibit digital contact and protect children and extended family members, where appropriate, in our written and clear enforceable terms, because ambiguity creates loopholes and loopholes create risk.

Even when orders are granted, enforcement remains inconsistent. The Department of Justice Canada has identified breaches as a key indicator of escalating risk, and yet survivors report repeated violations, inconsistent police response and gaps between systems. We must ask: Are orders accessible in real time to all police services? Are breaches tracked and responded to consistently? Because if a breach does not lead to action, this system simply loses credibility.

Other jurisdictions are moving forward. Countries like Spain have implemented electronic monitoring for high-

risk offenders, including GPS tracking and victim-alert systems. These tools are not theoretical; they are operational, and they provide proactive protection, not just reactive enforcement. Ontario should be asking: Why are we not scaling similar tools here?

Finally, we must address prevention. Restraining orders are reactive, but a strong system prevents harm before escalation. And yet, community support remains underfunded. Organizations providing shelter, counselling, legal guidance are stretched thin. As Women's Shelters Canada has emphasized, legal tools must be paired with wraparound support. Without that, we are managing symptoms, not solving the problem. Restraining orders are reactive, but prevention requires housing support, counselling and early legal intervention. Organizations like Women's Shelters Canada remind us that legal tools alone are not enough.

We must also recognize that these gaps do not affect everyone equally. Those with financial resources can navigate delays; those without cannot. Marginalized communities, including women, newcomers and francophone populations, often face additional barriers. A system that works only for some is not a system that works, period. These barriers disproportionately affect those with fewer resources. A system that only works for those who can navigate it is not a system that works.

A restraining order should not be a piece of paper; it should be a real guarantee of safety. But today, too many people in Ontario and in Ottawa are left waiting, uncertain and vulnerable. These are the results of choices, and we can choose differently: We can fund our courts, we can strengthen legal aid, we can modernize enforcement and we can invest in prevention, because when someone turns to our justice system for protection, they deserve more than hope; they deserve safety.

I like what the member for Hamilton Mountain is proposing. It shows that she actually understands the issue and the system's flaws. So I'm very pleased to support this motion.

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

**Ms. Natalie Pierre:** It's an honour to rise in this House to speak to my colleague from Hamilton Mountain's private member's motion on strengthening Ontario's restraining order system.

I want to begin by recognizing the importance of this motion and the thoughtful way it brings attention to an issue that impacts many individuals and families across the province.

At its core, this motion is about people. It's about individuals and families who, in the most difficult moments of their lives, are simply trying to feel safe. Restraining orders are meant to be a tool for protection. They exist to provide security, to create clear boundaries and to help prevent further harm. They are meant to offer peace of mind at a time when it is most needed. But for many, the current system does not always live up to that purpose. Instead, sometimes it can feel complex. It can feel slow or

overwhelming, especially in moments of crisis, when time and clarity matter most.

When someone is seeking protection, they should not be faced with confusion or unnecessary delays, and this motion recognizes that reality. It calls on the government of Ontario to review and modernize the restraining order process, so that it is more accessible and responsive to the needs of victims and survivors, because right now, too often, the burden falls on those who are already carrying so much.

Victims navigating the system can face unclear processes and barriers that make it harder to access timely protection. In some cases, these challenges can discourage individuals from seeking help at all, and that is not what this system should be.

This motion puts forward a thoughtful and practical approach. It encourages exploring streamlined and online application pathways, making it easier for individuals to access support when they need it the most. It highlights the importance of clearer information so people understand what steps to take, what timelines to expect and how to move forward with confidence. It also speaks to the need for better coordination across justice partners, ensuring the system works together and not in silos. A coordinated approach can make a meaningful difference in how effectively support is delivered.

It also proposes reviewing how long restraining orders remain valid between renewals, so protection does not lapse at critical moments. All of these measures are grounded in an important principle: that victims and survivors should be at the centre of this system. When someone is seeking a restraining order, they should not have to navigate unnecessary complexity or delays, they should not feel discouraged from seeking help, and they should not feel that the system is working against them. They should feel supported, they should feel heard and, above all, they need to feel safe.

By modernizing this framework, this motion aims to reduce barriers and create a system that is more compassionate and more responsive. It's about ensuring that our justice system evolves to better serve the people who rely on it.

Speaker, this is a meaningful step toward strengthening protection for Ontarians. It reflects a commitment to improving access to justice and ensuring that our systems respond to the realities people are facing. I'm pleased to support this motion, and I thank my colleague for bringing it forward.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** I rise today in support of this private member's motion, because this Legislature does have a responsibility. It has a responsibility to ensure that when a survivor reaches out for protection, the system does not hesitate, does not delay and does not confuse. It must protect. It must respond and it must keep people safe.

Across Ontario, survivors of intimate partner violence, harassment and stalking are navigating a restraining order system that too often feels slow, complex and unpredict-

able. Complex procedures, inconsistent enforcement, and limited availability after hours leave survivors exposed at the very moment they are trying to secure their safety. Police services across the province warn that restraining orders must be timely, understandable and responsive to the realities that are faced by survivors.

Speaker, when those on the front lines tell us the system is not working the way it should, we cannot afford to wait. Lives depend on our willingness to act.

**1840**

This motion calls on the government of Ontario to “develop opportunities to modernize and strengthen Ontario's restraining order system.” It is a simple sentence, but behind it, it is a clear message: The status quo is not good enough. Modernization is not a luxury; it is a necessity.

Survivors deserve a system that is survivor-centred, not system-centred. They deserve processes that are clear, accessible and trauma-informed. They deserve digital pathways that allow them to apply for protection without navigating a maze of forms or waiting days for support. They deserve a justice system that holds offenders accountable while keeping survivors safe, not the other way around. They deserve a system that works consistently across this province.

In my riding of Newmarket–Aurora, local advocates and justice partners have long highlighted the challenges survivors face when navigating both family and criminal court processes. They have called for clearer timelines, better coordination and more accessible information, because when someone is in danger, they should not have to become an expert in the court procedure just to stay alive.

Pour la communauté francophone de l'Ontario, l'accès à la justice doit inclure l'accès en français. Les survivants ne devraient jamais se heurter à des barrières linguistiques lorsqu'ils cherchent la protection. La modernisation doit comprendre des ressources claires et accessibles en français, des outils numériques et des services de soutien. La sécurité ne devrait jamais dépendre de la langue que l'on parle.

Madame la Présidente, cette motion vise à responsabiliser les parties. Il s'agit de veiller à ce que les ordonnances de protection de soient pas de simples bouts de papier, mais de véritables outils qui protègent les survivants et dissuadent ceux qui voudraient leur nuire. Il s'agit de garantir que les services de police, les tribunaux et les organismes d'aide aux victimes disposent des systèmes coordonnés nécessaires pour intervenir rapidement et efficacement.

Donc, madame la Présidente—there's so much more to say. I'm going to be passing this off to my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh. But by supporting this motion, we affirm that Ontario believes survivors. We affirm that their safety is not negotiable, and we affirm that a justice system worthy of their trust is one that responds swiftly, clearly and compassionately.

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

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I rise in strong support of this motion because it goes to a basic principle: In moments of danger, the justice system must serve victims.

I want to congratulate the member for Hamilton Mountain for bringing this forward. As a lawyer by training, the member understands exactly how protection orders succeed or fail when safety is on the line.

I also want to recognize the many members who are here today from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. Their work over the past few years has been transformational. The committee's report on intimate partner violence, which was ultimately authored by the member for Kitchener South–Hespeler on behalf of the committee, was very troubling to read and certainly left a lasting impact on myself, as a member who was oblivious to a lot of what was happening out there. The member from Kitchener South–Hespeler, as a lawyer and former crown attorney, brought a practical justice-system lens to that work.

Madam Speaker, the report is really clear about the problem in Ontario. The victims “must navigate a fragmented legal landscape that offers no unified statutory framework, no emergency order infrastructure, and highly variable access and enforcement practices.” It further warns that protection orders “operate as disconnected tools rather than as elements of a cohesive system.” Victims can be dealing with “a family court restraining order, a peace bond, and a set of bail conditions—all with different terms, expiry dates, and enforcement pathways.” The report notes that “there is no provincial database to aggregate these orders, and no standardized format for issuing, sharing, or updating them.” Timely protection is functionally out of reach. Ontario lacks “a statutory mechanism for emergency access ... outside regular court hours.” So imagine you're being harassed and there's nothing for you. It's not just frustrating; it's dangerous.

Where legal protection is delayed or denied, victims are left without recourse at critical points of risk escalation. That's truly why this motion matters. It calls for practical modernization; streamlined access, including online pathways where appropriate; clear information and timelines; stronger coordination among justice partners to support consistent enforcement; and review of duration and renewal, so protection does not lapse because of administrative delay.

Victims should not have to become experts in procedures just to be safe. And if someone has the courage to come forward and ask for protection, the system must truly be ready to deliver it.

Madam Speaker, with that, I urge all members to support this motion. It's something that is going to make a tremendous amount of difference for the public of Ontario.

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

In that case, I return to the member for Hamilton Mountain. The member has two minutes for her reply.

**MPP Monica Ciriello:** I want to start by sincerely thanking everyone who has spoken on this motion today and those who have already provided feedback. I've already taken notes, and it's really reassuring to hear that we have a collaborative approach moving forward.

Speaker, what has come through clearly is that regardless of where members sit, there is support and a shared recognition that we have an opportunity to modernize a system that puts survivors and victims first. That consensus is meaningful, and it's a foundation that we can build on together.

To those who have raised questions about scope or implementation, I do want to note that the motion was intentionally vague to ensure that we had voices come to the table, including survivors and victims. And I encourage any member in this chamber who would like to work on moving this forward—I'd be happy to have you at the table, to ensure that we are doing everything we can to build a victim-centred process.

I want to leave the members with this: Speaker, somewhere in Ontario tonight, someone is deciding whether to seek a restraining order. They're scared, and they're weighing their fear against the complexities of a system that may feel impossible to navigate. They're wondering whether they have to sit across from the person who harmed them, not just once, but every single year. Some have already made the decision to leave their home, their community, or our province, rather than face that process.

This motion says that we can do better for victims while still ensuring that we are holding offenders accountable. So I ask all members to support motion 53 for every person who deserves a justice system that protects them. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you. The time provided for private members public business has expired.

MPP Ciriello has moved private member's notice of motion number 53.

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.

*Vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, this House stand adjourned until Monday April 13th at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1849.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, OOnt  
Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Donna Skelly  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day  
Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim  
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,  
Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Allsopp, Tyler (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
<b>Bresee, Ric (PC)</b>	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
<b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Cerjanec, Rob (LIB)	Ajax	
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Jeux
Ciriello, Monica (PC)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton- Mountain	
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Cooper, Michelle (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
<b>Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement / 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	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence
Fairclough, Lee (LIB)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Firin, Mohamed (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
<b>Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	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
<b>French, Jennifer K. (NDP)</b>	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	
<b>Hamid, Hon. / L'hon. Zee (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)</b>	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Hazell, Andrea (LIB)</b>	Scarborough—Guildwood	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de 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	
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
<b>Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)</b>	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
<b>Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)</b>	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
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines
Lennox, Robin (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
<b>McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)</b>	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	
<b>McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
<b>Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)</b>	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Deputy House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	Timmins	Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement et de la croissance économique du Nord
<b>Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)</b>	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security / Ministre des Collèges et Universités, de l'Excellence en recherche et de la Sécurité
Racinsky, Joseph (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire Economic and Community Partnerships / Ministre responsable des Partenariats économiques et communautaires pour le développement du Cercle de feu
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Rosenberg, Bill (PC)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Chris (IND)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
<b>Skelly, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)</b>	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smyth, Stephanie (LIB)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises
<b>Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)</b>	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Attorney General / Procureur général associé
<b>Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)</b>	Oakville North—Burlington / 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	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	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	