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(Hansard)**

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Mercredi
22 avril 2026

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 22 April 2026

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 22 avril 2026

Report continued from volume A.

1800

PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I move, that in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should adopt a regulation or regulations, and issue procurement directives as appropriate, that would prioritize Ontario-made goods, services and supply chains in public sector procurement, including capital infrastructure and construction projects.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Mr. Leardi has moved private members' notice of motion number 64. Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for their presentation.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Speaker, I grew up on the 2nd Concession of Anderdon township. As a young person growing up in Anderdon township, I went through a rite of passage, and that was getting a job at Boblo Island Amusement Park.

That's when I joined my brother and my sisters. In the morning, we would pile into a car. We would drive down to the south end of Amherstburg, to a large parking lot that was gravel-paved. We would jump out of the car, race across the parking lot, and we took the tunnel underneath old Highway 18, and on the other side of that tunnel, there was a long white dock that stuck out into the Detroit River. At the end of that dock, there was a ferry, and that ferry was called the Papoose, and the Papoose took us over to Boblo Island, where we worked.

Once we got to the island, we would join all the other workers—there might be 700 or 800 workers in any given summertime on Boblo Island—and we would get ready for the day. Some people would clean off their games and get the spider webs out; some people would wipe off the rides, clean off the water from the previous day. And then we would wait. We would wait for the Americans.

The Americans would come to Boblo Island Amusement Park, but they didn't take the Papoose. They took these large, large ferries that came down from the city of Detroit, and they were multi-decked ferries. They were called the Ste. Claire and the Columbia. They came from the city of Detroit, and they took hundreds and thousands of Americans from that side of the river down the Detroit River to Boblo Island. We waited for them to arrive, but we could not see the dock from where we were working,

so we would listen, because these were party boats. And when we heard the party music, we knew that the Americans were coming. When we heard Marvin Gaye, and when we heard Stevie Wonder, when we heard the Temptations or the Supremes, we knew that the Americans were arriving.

And the boats pulled into the dock, and then all the Americans would pour off the ferry boats by the hundreds, thousands. They would come in big, big groups. Some picnics were sponsored by General Motors. Some picnics were sponsored by Ford Motor Co. Some picnics were sponsored by Chrysler or the United Auto Workers or the American Automobile Association.

Then sometimes there were big, huge family reunions, and you could tell who the family reunions were because they would be arriving with identical T-shirts that always said, "We are family." That's how we learned about Americans, by working on Boblo Island. We learned that Americans were friendly and kind, that they were generous. We learned that Americans were very patriotic and that they had a very powerful sense of fair play. And I learned that Americans were some of the nicest people in the world.

Some people who worked on Boblo Island even fell in love with Americans and married them. In Amherstburg, where I live, there are a lot of people who have parents who are Americans. And some workers on Boblo Island—some, not me—even got their first kiss from Americans.

So if you told me back then, in those beautiful days of summer working on Boblo Island Amusement Park, that one day they would elect an American President who would threaten to annex Canada, I would have told you, "No, that's not going to happen. Americans are not like that."

And if you would have told me back then, in those beautiful days of summer, that the Americans would have a President who would threaten to invade the territory of an allied nation, a NATO ally, I would have told you "No, Americans are not like that. That is not going to happen."

If you would have told me that those Americans would elect a President who would breach their treaty obligations and turn their backs on their closest friends and allies, I would say, "No, that's not going to happen. Americans are not like that," because they, as I knew them, were the friendliest and kindest and nicest people you could ever have.

In fact, growing up in Essex county, we didn't even consider Americans to be foreigners; we just thought of them as our neighbours. Speaker, those were good days. I don't know if we're ever going to go back to those days when we thought of Americans as not foreigners, but just our neighbours. I hope we do. But until we do, we need to take the actions that are set out in this motion.

As much as I love Americans, I am first and foremost a Canadian. Canadians are friendly and generous and kind. Canadians are patriotic, and Canadians have a powerful sense of fair play. We Canadians have our own traditions and customs. We honour our heritage. We respect the rule of law. We celebrate our history. We recognize our failures, and we work towards justice, peace and reconciliation.

Canada has never started a war. Canada has the technology and the materials to build nuclear weapons, but we don't. Canadians respect sovereign territory. Canadians respect their allies. Canadians honour their treaty obligations. We would never turn our backs on our closest friends and partners. Canadians are some of the nicest people you will ever meet.

It's time to take care of our own. That's why we need policies that prioritize Ontario-made goods, services and supply chains in public sector procurement, including capital infrastructure and construction projects, supporting Ontario's economy and workers. We need to protect Ontario, we need to protect Ontario workers and we need to protect Ontario businesses.

We need to promote Canadian free trade, and that's why we need to offer to every other Canadian province free trade, in so long as they give us reciprocity in return. Speaker, I know you know about what I'm speaking.

Boblo Island Amusement Park closed in 1993. It doesn't exist anymore. I loved those days. They made me part of who I am today, but the past belongs in the past.

We will always have an economic relationship with the United States of America. But until we can return to a normal relationship with our American trading partners, we need to take steps to promote Ontario.

1810

I am optimistic for the future. And while we continue to build Ontario industries and protect Ontario workers, I will end with the words of the great Prime Minister John A. Macdonald who said the following: "I am a strong party man; I will go as far in favour of my party, and in upholding my party, and in securing the success of my party as any other man ... but I will not do it, and I have never done it, if there was a question of the interests of my country. Our maxim has always been—by a party, with a party, but for the country."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Dowie): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I thought the member from Essex was going to break out into "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

Hon. Steve Clark: He has another two minutes.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I know. I'm just giving you material. I'm just trying to help out a brother here in the House.

It does appear, though, that the member of Essex is trying to do the right thing, actually. Of course, this is building on the Buy Ontario legislation that was introduced over a year ago in response to a legitimate financial crisis that has been created by that orange guy south of this country.

I will say, he's looking to adopt a regulation or regulations and issue procurement directives, as appropriate, that would prioritize Ontario-made goods, services and supply chains. I just want to say, quite honestly, we thought that this was already happening. But I will say that, as the chair of the leader of the official opposition's tariff council, which has a number of us who are sitting on this, including the shadow minister for economic development and trade—that's me—shadow minister for finance, shadow minister for labour, shadow minister for small business, shadow minister for municipal affairs and skilled trades and the shadow minister for colleges, universities, research and excellence.

The leader of the official opposition asked us to sit down and meet with stakeholders to talk about procurement, to talk about creating a more resilient and stronger economy in the face of the threat that was created by that orange guy—he's kind of like Voldemort; I don't want to say his name—so we did. Over the last 18 months, we've had amazing meetings, and in the spirit of reaching across the aisle and trying to work with this government—elbows up and all of that—we've recommended and amplified the voices of industry leaders across the province. To date, many of those recommendations have not been—you haven't taken them to heart. I don't even know if they made it into the recycling bin. They may have just gone right into the shredder, quite honestly.

I'm going to give you two examples, because I've got some time. Of course, most of these letters go to MPP Crawford, who's the minister responsible for public and business service delivery, and I understand the member is a PA to that minister. But we met with the Ontario Construction Secretariat and they were making the case for a robust contractor pre-qualification framework as it relates to Ontario or Canadian companies getting contracts from this government. They had such good ideas, we felt we must share them with you.

This is all the way back from December 19, 2025. The Ontario Construction Secretariat, they know what they're talking about, and they wrote that, "The current low-bid award model in public procurement often promotes a race to the bottom, driving contractors to compete primarily on price at the expense of innovation, quality, and long-term project performance." Just talk to Metrolinx about some of these things. "As the OCS shared, this dynamic can unintentionally incentivize predatory bidding practices and lead to downstream issues such as cost overruns, rework, delays, and reduced durability of public infrastructure." Again, please reference Metrolinx. "Ultimately, the taxpayer bears these additional costs."

So what did the Ontario Construction Secretariat advise us to advise you about? They said they've advocated "for a modernized procurement approach." I'm going to send this over to the parliamentary assistant, because I think that, based on the fact that you've used your motion to try to strengthen Buy Ontario—for good reason, for good reason.

And I'll actually say at the outset, of course, we're going to be supporting this motion. Of course, we are,

right? You're admitting that, right now, the Buy Ontario procurement strategy is not working as it should. You're admitting that it's not been as effective as we would like. You are trying to strengthen it. Of course, we are going to support that motion.

But what the Ontario Construction Secretariat has also asked for is they want you to centre on "a comprehensive prequalification." And this would mean that with the "capacity, organizational culture, proven health and safety performance, financial stability, workforce training, and other social value factors, public entities can make more informed decisions that extend beyond the initial bid price."

We are talking about prioritizing Ontario companies, Ontario workers, Ontario innovation in a very streamlined and strategic way. That is not happening right now in Ontario, so there is room for improvement. This motion gives us an opportunity to talk about this.

Some jurisdictions have adopted the prequalification-based models to great success. In fact, it has reduced cost escalation. Who doesn't want that? New Democrats want it, of course. Conservatives want it. Liberals want it. Green members want it. Of course, they want better-matched project teams, more predictable performance, higher quality workmanship. Who doesn't want this in government?

I'm going to send it over to you. I just really want you to read it. I'm sure it may have ended up in the shredder.

One other example really quickly I'll give to you is that we did meet with a company called RecordXpress. This is an Ontario company. The tariff council met with them. We learned about how the bidding process has been happening. And this regards the contract for record storage. Now, who doesn't care about record storage? This is our personal information, right? We don't want Americans to have our personal information. They will commodify it, they will sell it, and they will use it against us. We've known this. Predatory pricing is just one of the examples.

But this example that I wrote to the minister—and this was just on February 12, 2026—I said, listen, they've raised a legitimate concern around record storage: "Specifically, it is deeply troubling that Iron Mountain, a United States-based corporation, holds the only vendor of record ... contract for these services, leaving no meaningful opportunity for domestic companies to compete, bid, or participate until at least 2034...."

We're locked in. This is a weakness in the regulation around Buy Ontario. There should be some flexibility. If we do not find a vendor serving the people of this province well, in a fiscally responsible way, they should get fired. There have to be some strings attached here. There have to be some accountability levers in the way that the government of Ontario secures contracts with vendors.

And this is \$30 billion. It's not chump change here, right? And these services impact the people that we're elected to serve.

It goes on to say that "RecordXpress began operations in Scarborough, Ontario in 2008"—strong Scarborough business—"and has since become the 'local competitive option for securely storing and managing confidential in-

formation and data with reasonable, flexible and transparent costs....' Domestic businesses are effectively shut out of providing services to their own provincial government." This is something we can correct, okay? "This not only undermines confidence in Ontario's procurement fairness, but also represents a significant lost opportunity to support local industry and build economic resilience here at home."

Let's be clear: We can't control what that guy down south is doing or saying. If you read it, it's like a Saturday Night Live skit three or four times a day. We should control as a province, economically, what we can control, and we should amplify our own innovation, our own workers, our own opportunities. That means a significant shift in the way we procure public services, which is what Buy Ontario and Supply Ontario, after four presidents—maybe five presidents; I've lost track—were supposed to be doing all along.

1820

So if it requires a motion from the member of Essex to now say that we will prioritize Ontario-made goods, services and supply chains in public sector procurement, including the capital infrastructure and construction projects—I'm not sure why it is needed exactly, but I'm taking it as a gesture of goodwill on behalf of the government, acknowledging that if we were to prioritize capital infrastructure, say, in our own communities, like schools, like hospitals—you can't outsource those jobs. Those are good local jobs. The net benefit to the people that we're elected to serve; the return on investment for rebuilding, maintaining, renovating our schools: Those are good investments. Those are good jobs. The not-for-profit sector in housing has so many applications in to this government. They have projects ready to go—good local jobs that house people. That's what we can control.

I do feel for RecordXpress, and I will also send this letter over to the parliamentary assistant. But the other concern as it relates to procurement is the security of sensitive provincial and national government documents, public records and taxpayer information. Canadians and Ontarians should not have to worry that provincial records could be subject to foreign legal regimes beyond our democratic oversight. Ontario must ensure that the management of public documents remains firmly under Canadian jurisdiction and protected by Canadian law. RecordXpress, a good Ontario company, should obviously have access to bid on jobs here in Ontario, not only to protect good local jobs, but to protect our data.

Finally, what I will say about this is that procurement can be such a strong economic mechanism. We have not hit this point right now as a province. There's so much more potential that procurement can have as part of the solution.

I do want to say that the volatility of the President of the United States means that we need to refocus on ourselves. We need to protect this province. The President of the United States has bragged about sexually assaulting women. That should preclude him from any contracts that we ever put out from the province of Ontario.

Let's do the right thing. I'll support the motion. Let's get it done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Dowie): Further debate?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker—I was almost going to say “Madam Speaker”, not “Mr. Speaker.”

It's great to be here in the House with all of you tonight, debating a private member's motion from my colleague from Essex. It's that “in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should adopt a regulation or regulations, and issue procurement directives as appropriate, that would prioritize Ontario-made goods, services, and supply chains in public sector procurement, including capital infrastructure and construction projects.”

It does not always happen, but with this motion, I think most of us can get behind this and have a nice kumbaya unanimous vote. We all recognize the urgent need to prioritize Ontario goods, Ontario manufacturing, Ontario services, labour and skills. It's about time, right? We should have been doing this all along, but there's nothing like some nuttiness down south, shall we say, that kind of pushes us forward into really being proud of everything that Ontario does already, but pushing it that much farther to be self-sufficient.

I think we need to focus beyond words, beyond a motion or a bill, and look at how we are engaging in actions to actually support Ontario and Ontarians and Ontario innovators.

The actions of our neighbours to the south, as we said, have necessitated this focus on shoring up our capabilities here at home. But before that, COVID-19 certainly did a bit and should have done more, not to mention the current global tensions and wars that have taught us that we cannot take anything for granted.

I'm sure we all remember going to the grocery store and being unable to find toilet paper, soap or eggs at one point. In more recent days, everyone is suffering the blows of rising gas and food prices. This has made many of us rethink our choices.

For gas, it makes us question how often we fill the tank and, hopefully, to think about other modes of transportation: “Maybe I should take transit today,” or, heaven forbid, “I should bicycle,” not just for our health, but of course the well-being of our earth. Especially on Earth Day, we want to be thinking about this.

We know transit is the hallmark of any world-class city, and we have manufacturing and labour capacity in Canada. These are good, well-paying, stable jobs that encourage upskilling. There are bike mechanic courses at high schools, which is great.

With transit especially though, we want to get it right. There was a situation back in the day in Toronto when we had ordered 204 low-floor vehicles for the TTC. The components came from Mexico—they were Bombardier, which is a great Canadian company—and then they went to Thunder Bay for assembly. Things took a long time in Mexico, which delayed—you can imagine the delay for 204 street cars in Toronto. So we do want to make sure we

get it right with the whole supply chain in Ontario or in Canada and learn from that bit of a mess.

For food—and I noticed that there's a new bill that just got dropped, so I'm very intrigued to read that—it has made us question where we get our food from and wonder why we cannot grow more here instead.

We just had a big agritourism group yesterday. We're all very supportive of Ontario farmers. We know farmers feed cities, and that is a thankless job and we're very appreciative of Ontario farmers.

We're also happy to support—I think we all should be and are—startups. There are lots of innovative people and organizations in Ontario—hydroponic. Vertical growing is the frontier in securing this province's urban produce capabilities and addressing food security. My team just went and toured GoodLeaf, and were blown away. Unfortunately, I couldn't make it, but I'm hoping to get out there.

I have a friend who's actually doing a startup putting greenhouses on rooftops, so you have—what do they say?—well, it's a very short commute from the rooftop for greens and microgreens to your kitchen table in Toronto. Back in the day we had Victory Gardens, and we should be promoting that more—allotment gardens—because food scarcity is only going to worsen as the climate emergency grows.

We need to invest in climate action, especially because it's inseparable from the success of Ontario. When we have clean air quality, regular weather patterns and good soil, crops can grow. That's another reason why we need to retain our environmental assessments and how important they are. That's a concern with Bill 105.

Also, back in the day when I was a city councillor, we had an idea to have a little label for your fruit or your produce that said “Grown in Toronto,” just to educate people that you can have food grown in urban centres. It's grown differently, of course, but we do have urban farms here. We have some at Downsview, in Scarborough, and that is just really smart to do that and keep it local because we know, with shipping food from so far away, often the produce loses its nutrient value with the long distance.

1830

Moreover, we need to invest in climate education so, as a society, we appreciate where our food comes from and support those businesses. We must all be innovative in how we create dedicated spaces for farmers and artisans to showcase their goods.

I probably talked about it here. I started a farmers' market back in my former life, because I was very worried about food security and I wanted to promote, showcase and honour Ontario farmers. I may have been known to wear a pea-in-a-pod costume, a carrot costume or a broccoli costume just to encourage people on the street to come and support Ontario farmers.

Now, I'll talk about some innovation in Beaches–East York about buying Ontario, simply because Ontario is so great and easy to support, and we have wonderfully talented skilled workers, inspiring creatives, effective and knowledgeable teachers ready to instill this knowledge to

the next generation. Importantly, our strong workforce is composed of people both born in Ontario and Canada, and those who have chosen our wonderful province and nation as a whole. We're so lucky that people with so many skills and so much potential would pick Ontario as a place to contribute to and help build, and we are fortunate to have all of the capability, knowledge and willpower that we need right here in Ontario. It would be an affront to look elsewhere without recognizing our own potential if it's nurtured and supported correctly.

In my own riding of beautiful Beaches–East York, I've spoken to you before about Mondelēz, which employs 660 employees. The Beach area is known for artists, musicians and theatres. The arts-and-culture scene is alive and well there. We have lots of local great businesses, including in the area of my riding called Banglatown. It's a Bangladeshi area that has lots of shops, restaurants and cultural communities, and they employ a lot of people and add huge vibrancy to our streets.

I guess that's all I'll say about the private member's bill from the member from Essex. Thank you for bringing it forward. Thank you for putting Ontario first. I'm happy to get behind it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Dowie): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: This timely motion reaffirms that procurement should primarily look to Ontario suppliers while continuing to ensure the value of taxpayer dollars and protecting priority projects from unnecessary delays. By using a whole-of-government approach, we would be leveraging provincial purchasing power to support the public sector in delivering programs Ontarians can rely on, while addressing procurement barriers for businesses like Atlantic packaging and Gerdau steel in Whitby and building a resilient, adaptable supply chain.

Organizations like the Whitby Chamber of Commerce, representing manufacturers, suppliers and local businesses, have consistently highlighted the importance of Ontario-first procurement policies. This motion is meant to update the existing policy to meet the growing needs of the province.

Now, to support the needs of the Whitby Chamber of Commerce and the downtown Whitby business improvement area, procurement directives would apply across government, including capital and infrastructure projects. Strong accountability measures would be put in place such as compliance reviews, audits and penalties to ensure the rules are followed. This approach, Speaker, ensures fairness, transparency and value for money, while giving Ontario businesses a fair opportunity to compete. We've heard that not only in the town of Whitby but also across other parts of the region of Durham.

What it does in the process is it ensures the \$30 billion of procurement spending is spent right here in Ontario. Our government is committed to using Ontario's purchasing power to protect Ontario workers, support local businesses, strengthen supply chains and ensure public dollars, as they should benefit Ontarians first, going forward.

Overall, I want to stress this particular motion is adopting regulations and issuing procurement directives that

prioritize Ontario-made goods and services across the public sector, including capital, infrastructure and construction projects. Again, it's what our business community has asked for.

We're building to make Ontario the most competitive economy in the G7, and that's why I urge members here in the legislative chamber to support this motion going forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Dowie): I recognize the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

MPP Billy Denault: I'm pleased to rise today and speak in support of the member from Essex's motion, which is about protecting Ontario workers, supporting local businesses and strengthening Ontario's resilience by prioritizing Ontario-made.

Speaker, I've spoken about this topic a number of times in this chamber because this matters to me. It matters to me on a personal level, because I come from a manufacturing family. I come from a family with a history in these sectors that matter to people in my community: my friends and neighbours, who still go to work on the factory floor; my grandparents; my father; my aunts, uncles and cousins—many who built a career working in manufacturing in my community.

In the Ottawa Valley, we still make pretty remarkable things. If you go to Nu-Tech in Arnprior, you'll find pressure tubes manufactured by folks who make that most important part for another Ontario-made innovation, the Candu reactor.

If you go to Nylene in Arnprior, you'll find people like my friend Chad's dad, Peter, who works there at a manufacturer that makes polymer chips for fabric around the world, right in my backyard.

If you go to Magellan in Haley Station, you'll see people I know and have met building the next generation of aerospace.

If you go to Pembroke MDF, Ben Hokum's, Heide-man's, McRae Lumber, Killaloe Wood Products and many more, you'll see the pride people have in being a part of one of Ontario's most seminal sectors: the forestry sector.

It's clear that the moment is now. The moment is now to stand up for these folks right here in this Legislature. It's time to stand up for Ontario workers, Ontario businesses, Ontario families and the communities that they call home.

Speaker, this motion is not only straightforward; it is common sense. We must be committed to using Ontario's purchasing power to protect Ontario workers, support local businesses, strengthen supply chains and ensure public dollars benefit Ontarians first.

I strongly support this motion. I encourage all members of this House to do the same, and I'm really encouraged by what I'm hearing around the room.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Dowie): I recognize the member from Cambridge.

Mr. Brian Riddell: I'd just like to say, Speaker, you look great in that chair.

Anyway, I went to school in Chicago and then South Carolina, and I have a lot of American friends that apologized to me for what's happening from a few people in the States. I come from Galt and the member from

Waterloo will remember that we had a lot of heavy industry in Cambridge that has slowly migrated to the United States.

I think this motion is absolutely crucial and an excellent motion to put through, because I really feel we need to buy our own, rebuild our economy and have resilience for ourselves.

1840

I would like to commend the member from Essex for what he's doing, and I loved the story about Boblo Island. Now, it was getting a little steamy for me, I have to admit, with the kiss. I didn't want to hear any more than that, but I hear there's a book coming out. We'll just leave it there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Dowie): Further debate? Further debate?

Member for Essex, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I want to thank the speakers this evening. I want to thank the gunslinger in our caucus, the MPP from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I want to thank the most professional individual in our caucus, the MPP from Whitby. I want to thank the gentlemanly gentleman in our caucus, the MPP from Cambridge. I do want to thank the sharp member from Waterloo.

Interjection.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I think she knows what I mean when I say that.

I want to thank the marvelous member who loves alliteration from Beaches–East York.

I also want to thank the supporters of this motion from my region, including the Windsor Essex Chamber of Commerce, the Amherstburg Chamber of Commerce, the Kingsville Business Improvement Area and the Belle River Business Improvement Area.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Dowie): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Mr. Leardi has moved private member's notice of motion number 64. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PLAN TO PROTECT ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2026

LOI DE 2026 SUR LE PLAN POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Ms. Khanjin, on behalf of Mr. Bethlenfalvy, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 97, An Act to implement Budget measures, to enact, amend or repeal various statutes and to revoke various regulations / *Projet de loi 97, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires, à édicter, à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois et à abroger divers règlements.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Dowie): I'll recognize the minister.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: It's a great pleasure to always rise to speak on behalf of the residents of Barrie–Innisfil who are always advocating in terms of ideas that we perform here at the Legislature, whether it's lowering the small business tax, which we're getting done; whether it's lowering the price at the pump, which we're getting done. But none of this would be possible without the great work of team finance, and it's with great pleasure that I am sharing my time with the member for Peterborough–Kawartha and the great parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Dowie): I recognize the member from Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you, Speaker, and I recognize you as well, although I'm not allowed to say your name.

When we were elected back in 2018, we took on a totally different approach to how we were going to do government. And there have been changes to what the world has been. When we look at it, where were we in 2018? What changed in 2019-20? We went through COVID. We had significant uncertain times with respect to COVID.

Interjection.

Mr. Dave Smith: I have a member opposite asking about my glasses, so I will take a moment and talk about that. I have diabetes and my diabetes greatly affects my blood sugar levels. When my blood sugar levels are high, I need my glasses. When my blood sugar levels are not high, I don't need my glasses. Because it is affected by my diabetes, it changes every hour. Sometimes I have to wear the glasses 45 minutes in the hour. Sometimes I wear it 45 seconds.

I leave them here because if I put them up here, you get a film on it from your hair. It sits here because I have a Neanderthal brow that allows for it to sit there. And if you notice, I can move my head up and down and they do not move very often. So that is why my glasses—for the official record. And if I set them down, I lose them. This is the fifth pair like this that I have, because I have sat them down and lost them, and my wife has threatened that I will not be allowed to get another pair of glasses if I set them down and lose them again. So I leave them here, so I know where they are.

But getting back to what I was actually talking about: We went through a period of time with COVID. It was a lot of uncertainty. We came out of COVID, and we thought we were in great shape as we were moving forward. Our economy was growing. We saw good things happening in Ontario. And then we got hit with something else. What we were hit with was somebody down in the United States. That individual has thrown a wrench in the worldwide economy.

We're in a position now where we have to take measures to protect Ontario. We have to do things differently than what historically we had done. The good part, if there is a good part: There's never a road map, there's never a manual that describes what you should do in uncertain times. But we just came through COVID, and we saw some uncertain times. And now we're in a trade war with the United States—a trade war that we didn't start, a trade war that we didn't want. But we need to make sure that what we do is protect the economy here in Ontario.

And I've had people say to me, "Why? Why does it matter?" We've seen our revenues grow by over \$50 billion in Ontario since 2018. We've seen our budget go from about \$150 billion to well over \$200 billion. This year will be closer to \$240 billion. But through all of that uncertainty, we've also grown the economy. Our GDP has gone from about \$700 million—sorry; \$700 billion—to about \$1.1 trillion or \$1.2 trillion. That's a measure of the economy. That defines how much product is moving, either being sold or purchased, in your jurisdiction. And if our economy is not going well, we don't have the money to have our social safety network.

And that is something that's very important to the people of Ontario. When we look at this budget, this budget is about \$240 billion. Some 80% of it is on social infrastructure—things like health care, education, community and social services—all of those things that are part of that social infrastructure for the province. You don't have the money to do that if you don't focus on the economy.

So this budget really is about three things. Obviously, we want to make sure that the economy is going well. We want to have a strong economy, because what a strong economy does is it provides revenue for the government. And it provides revenue for the government without having to raise taxes.

Now, some of you know—I've mentioned it a couple of times—I'm currently in the process of doing a PhD in corporate income tax and the effect on the GDP and the economy. And what we know is that when you raise taxes, you actually damage the GDP. It becomes a downward spiral, because your revenues start to drop. And what you'll see from other governments, then, is they'll continue to raise taxes or they'll cut services to make up for that.

Our belief in Ontario is that we're not going to damage the economy. We're not going to increase taxes to damage the economy. We're going to grow the economy so that we grow revenues. And the reason we're going to do that is that we don't want to cut services.

What you're seeing across all of Canada right now: There are a number of provincial governments who have issued their budgets. They have deficits as well. British Columbia is a prime example of it. Their deficit is very similar to the deficit in Ontario. But our economy is four times the size of theirs. So, the deficit relative to the economy, or relative to the GDP, we're in a much stronger position than British Columbia is. British Columbia is also reducing services, and they've also announced layoffs of public servants. We're not doing that. We want to protect the people of Ontario. We want to make sure that that social infrastructure is there for everyone when they need it. We want to make sure the service levels are there. The only way you can do that is by ensuring that money is being spent in the appropriate places and that the levels of staffing are appropriate for it.

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If you get to a position where you're a government who's cutting services, you're doing a disservice for the people. If you get to a position as a government where you're laying off public servants, that is a disservice to the

people. Our entire focus is on ensuring that we're providing those services for the people of Ontario.

I'll go back to the three components of this budget. Obviously, growing the economy is one of the key components. Because if the economy is not doing well, we don't have the revenue.

The second part to it is ensuring that we're not raising taxes. That is a non-starter. We are not going to be raising taxes on anyone. We have to ensure that our social infrastructure is in place. So that component, that second key component is proper levels of taxation and investment in those social services, in that social infrastructure.

The third one is a continued investment in infrastructure itself. The reason you have to continually invest in infrastructure is that when you stop you fall behind, and it is so hard to get caught back up. Previous governments in Ontario have tried to cut their spending by not investing in that infrastructure. That infrastructure is things like schools, hospitals, roads, water and waste water. We know that we have to continue investing in that.

It shouldn't take a rocket scientist. I've said this multiple times: It shouldn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that as your population is growing, you have to continually invest in both the social infrastructure and the physical infrastructure. If you don't, you fall behind on it.

We know right now that to get some of that infrastructure built, it can take upwards of a decade. So, if you defer it this year, you might be saving a little money this year. But that infrastructure falls behind, more stress is put on that existing infrastructure and you get to a point where it's a critical level.

The other key component to it is that in business it is known that the value of a dollar today is greater than the value of a dollar tomorrow. So, if you're not investing in that infrastructure today, that bridge that may have cost \$25 million, tomorrow will likely cost \$30 million. That hospital expansion that could be \$500 million today, is likely going to be a billion dollars tomorrow. So you have to continue to invest in that infrastructure.

When we look at the structure of our budget, there is an investment in all of that. Yes, there is a deficit, but the deficit is based on investing in that infrastructure. It's a long-term investment. If we build a waste water system for a municipality, that's an asset for that municipality for 75 to 100 years. That allows that municipality to grow. That allows industry to come in. That creates jobs. And all of that helps to grow the economy.

So when we look at that investment that we're doing, those investments are long-term investments. They are amortized over a longer period of time, but they are long-term investments that will make a difference both today and tomorrow for the people of Ontario.

We know that with the rising global trade and economic tensions, it is more difficult for business to be successful. And we know that businesses can succeed when there is a stable and predictable marketplace for them. The trade tensions that we have with the United States have taken that away. It's not stable. It's not predictable.

Part of the thing that we're doing in this budget is making Ontario as stable and as predictable as we can make it. We don't need the President of the United States to sign legislation that says Ontario can do business with Quebec and Manitoba; we have the power to do that ourselves. We don't need the President of the United States to say we're going to release critical minerals to a jurisdiction, because all of the critical minerals that the entire world needs are right here in Ontario. We have that infrastructure; we have the mining companies; we have the natural resources, and we're investing in that.

But we're also investing in the supply chain for it. We're investing in the value-added product that comes at the end. When you think about that, what other jurisdiction in the world has the ability to have the raw material, to have the logistics to transport those raw materials, to have the manufacturing capacity to manufacture them, and the value-added component to it, all in the same jurisdiction? That's what we have in Ontario. And that's why we're doing some of the things that we're doing. Because we in Ontario have the opportunity to provide that stable and predictable environment for business to succeed.

And you're seeing that: You're seeing that in companies like Toyota with their investment in Ontario. You're seeing that in companies like Volkswagen with their investment in Ontario. These are global companies who are looking for an opportunity for stability. They are looking for a predictable market. They are looking for a high-skilled labour market. They're looking for a low-cost market. They're looking for a market that operates ethically. And that is what we have here in Canada and specifically in Ontario.

We know that there's going to be continued growth with that, and we know that that continued growth means that we need investments in power. When you look at what we have been doing with power, Ontario is leading the G7. We will be the first jurisdiction in the G7 that has small modular reactors connected to the grid. There are four of them. Construction has started at the Darlington plant. We're leading the world in that type of energy.

But that's not enough. That's about 1.2 megawatts. That's a good amount of electricity, but it's not enough. And that's why we're doing the investment in Wesleyville. The world's largest nuclear power plant is being built, or will be built, here in Ontario. We will be leading the world again in nuclear power. That is by design, because we know that nuclear power does not generate any greenhouse gas emissions. We know that it is stable. We know that it is predictable. We know that it is the baseload. It just runs. It goes and goes and goes.

That's why we're refurbishing the power plants in Pickering. We know that we can keep those online. We know that they can be brought up to what today's standard is. We know that we can extend the life of that for another 35 or 40 years.

One of the other things that we know when it comes to nuclear: With these refurbishments, Ontario has an opportunity to lead the world again in another area, and that's medical isotopes. Our Candu reactors in Ontario have the

ability to take a critical mineral like molybdenum and turn it into molybdenum-99, something that is used in diagnostic imaging. We have other medical isotopes that are being produced in Ontario right now with our nuclear fleet, and we're expanding that. What that does is it shows the rest of the world, if you're looking for this type of medical device, if you're looking for a stable, secure place to secure the health of your population, come to Ontario because we're leading the world in medical isotope development.

We know that regardless of what happens anywhere else in the world, we have an opportunity here to create that environment that is stable. We have the opportunity here to ensure that businesses across the world look to this jurisdiction and say, "I want to be there." And when they come here, they employ people in Ontario, and they employ people in Ontario with good-paying jobs, career-based jobs. It provides an opportunity then for all of the residents of this province to enjoy that prosperity as well.

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We know that affordability is something that has come up by a number of people. When we travelled gathering information about this budget, we did an unprecedented amount of consultation. The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs went to 11 different communities. They had seven hours of delegation at each of those. In fact, every single Liberal member came to at least one of those delegations or to at least one of those consultation days. There was a large number of NDP members who travelled as well and came to it and heard from people, just like we did. And there was a number of members from the Progressive Conservative Party. There were also independent members who came. This was one of the most consulted on budgets. On top of that the Ministry of Finance did their consultations as well. Combined, there were 35 different days—35 days of consultation, 35 days of hearing from people and more than 1,200 delegations in total.

That number might sound fairly large, but it pales in comparison to the amount of submissions, because we asked people to submit to us in writing what they were looking for. We had a website, a portal for them to come and give us those. More than 12,000 submissions were made on this budget. This is one of the most consulted on budgets. We heard loud and clear from the people of Ontario what their concerns were, and that's what's being addressed in this.

We heard from small businesses. We heard about some of the struggles that they are having. They had just come out of COVID. They were starting to recover and then again, the uncertainty from the trade position from the United States has created problems for them. We heard from them on that.

So what did we do? We went back, we crunched the numbers, and we gave a 30% reduction in the corporate income tax for small businesses. That is a massive game-changer for them. Why is that important? We have companies like General Motors and Stellantis and Toyota and Volkswagen that are going to employ thousands and thou-

sands of people. Why would we be concerned about the small business? Why would we care about that company that employs two or three, possibly five employees? I'll tell you why. The reason we did this is we know that better than 95% of businesses in Ontario are small businesses. And we know those small businesses are the heartbeats of their community. We know that.

Look at all of your communities. Think about the sports teams that your kids or your grandkids play on, whether it's hockey or baseball or soccer or football, cricket or any other sport: Look at the back of that player's jersey. What's the name on the name bar? It doesn't say "Amazon." It doesn't say "Temu." It doesn't say "Walmart." It says "Joe's Pizza." It says "Larry's Gift Shop," "Sue's Dry Cleaning." It's all of those small businesses in your community who are giving back to the community, and we recognize that.

That's why we gave a 30% reduction in small business corporate income tax. Because we know those small businesses are employing your neighbours. They're sponsoring things in your community. They're giving back to your community. This is one of those ways that the government of Ontario can say, "We recognize the good that you do, and we want to give back to you." We want to make it easier for you to do the things that you do because we know that you are giving back to your community. It's about \$1.1 billion in tax relief over the next three years for those small businesses. That's not chump change; that makes a difference to them. That's something that will benefit 375,000 small businesses in this province. That makes a big difference.

When we look at the critical minerals side of it, I said earlier that all of the critical minerals that are needed in the world can be found here in Ontario. All of the critical minerals that are needed for any product can be processed in Ontario. We are working on bringing all of those industries in as well so that once those products are processed, they can be manufactured into something else.

I know a lot of people don't really understand what a critical mineral is. It's something that we talk about here, it's language that we use, but the average person has no idea what we're talking about. I would hazard a bet that every one of you has a cellphone. In fact, I know that anyone that's on the government side has three cellphones. They have their personal cellphone, their constituency cellphone and then they have their ministry cellphone. Every one of them has multiple critical minerals.

Now, you can go to China and get all of those critical minerals, but I don't think that there is anyone in North America who is going to say that China is a secure provider of those products. I don't think that there is anyone in North America who is going to say that China is environmentally friendly in the production of their power. I don't think that there is anyone in North America who is going to say that China has great labour laws to protect their employees.

We do. We have one of the greenest grids for electricity in the entire world. We have some of the most secure labour laws protecting people, and Ontario has always

been a great place to do business. So when those companies are looking for minerals—whether it is for modern technology, whether it is for defence, whether it is supply chain, your vehicle, your refrigerator, your washing machine, your television, your cellphone, your computer—all of them require it.

And through the "one project, one process" process that we've started, we are accelerating the approvals on this. When we were first elected, it took 15 years from concept to shovels in the ground for a mine. That's way too long. That's a generation. If I look at it from a technology standpoint, every 18 months, the microprocessor doubles in speed. If it's taking 15 years to have that mine open so that you can get the product for that microprocessor, you're talking about almost 10 generations of technology. That's not acceptable.

We have changed that. We know, right now, projects like Frontier Lithium, Canada Nickel and Kinross Gold will move along faster because of the "one project, one process" initiative. We know that we are unlocking our Critical Minerals Strategy. We know this is technology that is needed today, tomorrow and into the future. We know that if we build that entire supply chain—from raw material to finished product—we know that we're creating that whole string of jobs, all the way through.

We know that those are high-paying jobs. Right now, in Ontario, the average salary for somebody working in a mine in Ontario is greater than \$100,000 a year. That's a good-paying job. And when we open one of these gold mines or a lithium mine or a copper mine, we know that the mine is going to last for an entire generation. That's a whole generation of people who will be able to provide for their family.

It all comes back to, how do we make sure that we're looking after the economy? These are all measures to look after the economy. They grow our GDP. They grow our economy. They grow our tax base. They grow revenues.

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They allow for people to have good-paying jobs, career-based jobs so they can provide for their families, so that they can raise their kids the way they want to raise their kids, so they can enrol them in the different things that they want to have them enrolled in—all because we're focusing on, what can we do to ensure that the economy is moving well? What can we do to provide opportunities for businesses to succeed? That's what this budget is about.

We know that it's not just the high-paying jobs that are being created. We know that we have an entire generation of youth who are looking at the world today. And for the last 10 years, probably longer than 10 years, they've been renting. They've been saying, "How am I going to get into the housing market? How am I going to be able to afford that house?"

We know that. We've heard that. We've taken action on that. We're removing the HST. We're working with the federal government on it so their portion of the HST is removed as well: the 8% from the province of Ontario, the 5% from the federal government, all being taken off. That's a 13% drop in the cost of it.

That means that million-dollar home isn't a million dollars; it's \$870,000. That's a difference of about \$400 a month on your mortgage. That's the difference between being able to qualify for a mortgage or being stuck renting. If I use my own community of Peterborough as an example, the average home price in Peterborough is just under \$600,000 now. If I take \$600,000 as the dollar value and I take off the HST, I'm now down to about \$500,000 for that home. That's about \$2,200 a month for a mortgage right now.

A young couple is paying \$2,500 or \$2,600 to rent. For less than that, they can buy their first home. They can build their family. They can grow, and they have a little bit of money left over that they can either save or invest in themselves.

That's something that makes a difference because when you take away that financial stress you have a higher quality of life. We know right now across North America that about 58% of first marriages end in divorce, and we know that it's all based around stress for them. This is one of these ways that the Ontario government can reduce the stress for that young couple, because they will be able to actually afford their own home. They won't be renting, and they'll have a little bit of money left over in their pocket because of it.

We know that when people are buying homes, they're also looking at where they're going to work, how they're going to get to work. There are things that we can do there to make a difference, and we have. If we look at the 407, if we look at the 412, the 418—the 407, that section between Highway 115 and Brock Road was a toll highway. It's owned by the province. We removed those tolls; the 412, we removed those tolls; the 418, we removed those tolls.

So whether you're in Oshawa, Whitby, Bowmanville, Clarington, Newcastle, Peterborough, Lindsay, it's easier for you now to commute. It's easier for you to come into those smaller communities and buy that first home because it's less expensive, and commute into the GTA area for a job, if you so choose.

If you're driving in, obviously you're using gas. We know that; that's why we permanently removed the gas tax. That makes a difference of \$400 to \$500 per year.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Or you could take transit.

Mr. Dave Smith: I heard from the member across the way, Beaches–East York, saying they could take transit. Please demonstrate the transit that you could take from Lindsay to Oshawa, demonstrate the transit that you can take from Pontypool or Tyrone. This is obviously what the challenge is for a member who lives in Toronto, who's Toronto-centric, who only thinks about Toronto.

This government thinks about Ontario. This government is taking actions in this budget to benefit all of Ontario. That's why we're looking at things in northern Ontario, eastern Ontario, southwestern Ontario, central Ontario. There are things in this budget that benefit everyone across this province. Because we know it's not about Toronto, although the member from Beaches–East York

would probably like it to be all about Toronto. It's about all of Ontario, and we're taking that all-of-Ontario approach.

When we look at all of Ontario, and I go back to that investment in the social infrastructure, what is it that every person in Ontario needs? It doesn't matter what age you are. At some point you're going to want to see a doctor. At some point you either will go to the hospital, or you have already been to the hospital. We're making these investments. When we were first elected in 2018, the health care budget was \$61 billion. This year, eight years later, it's \$40 billion more because we know we need to be investing in our health care system to make sure our health care system is working for the people of this province. We know that.

We embarked on a process to provide primary care for everyone who wants primary care, and we're working through that. We've made investments at universities. We've increased the number of residents positions by over 400. That's 400 more new doctors being trained every single year. I'm going to contrast this with the previous government. In 2009, the previous government cut the number of residents positions by 50. Had that one action not taken place, we would have 850 more doctors in Ontario. That one action took out 850 doctors in this province.

A family doctor has a roster somewhere around 1,500 patients. So when you do the math on that, we're talking a million people who don't have a family doctor simply because a previous government was short-sighted and said that they needed to reduce expenses and reduce the investment in the social infrastructure and reduce the number of doctors. That means more than a million people today do not have a family doctor because of that one action.

That's why you have to continue to invest in social infrastructure. I've used the expression once already in this speech: It does not take a rocket scientist to figure some of these things out. As your population grows, you need more doctors, you need more nurses, you need more nurse practitioners, more RPNs, more PSWs, and you need to continually invest in that, or you fall behind.

When you look at any province—it doesn't matter what province it is. When you look at the challenges that they face today, look at the decisions that were made 10 or 12 years ago by a government. That's why they have the problem that they have. Because it takes that long for those short-sighted decisions to have that much of a big impact. More than a million people today in Ontario would have a doctor had that one decision not been made.

We're playing catch-up and you continue to play catch-up. We're graduating almost 400 more doctors today than we did in 2018, and I say almost 400 because it does take between six and eight years for a doctor to go through from start to finish on this.

We started this in our very first budget in 2019. We increased the number of residents positions that year by 50 to get us back to where we should have been 10 years before that. That first cohort is working their way through. And we added in 2020. We added in 2021, in 2022, in 2023, in 2024, in 2025, and we're adding. We continue to

add because we know that we need to. So, the number of doctors that are graduating every year now is going up. The number of doctors that are available to take on patients is going up. It is getting better. It's going to take a bit more time. It's not something that can be fixed overnight.

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We recognize that we can't do it just by adding resident seats at universities. We recognize that there are other levers that we can pull, and we have done that. Ontario was the first province to say, "If you have a medical licence anywhere in Canada, we will recognize it. Come to Ontario. You can work here." I want you to think about this for a second. Think about the logic of a government going down the previous path and saying, "Your licence is only valid in that province."

I'm going to use Queen's University as an example. Queen's has a medical program. I'm going to take three students: Francis, Mary and Joe. Francis, Mary, and Joe are in medical school at Queen's University. Francis, Mary and Joe are taking classes side by side. They are sitting next to each other in class—same instructor giving them exactly the same information. They write the same exams. They pass. They get the same degree. They are wearing the same hat, the same gown. Everything is identical. One goes to Quebec. One goes to Ontario. One goes to Manitoba. They went to the same university, but they can't practise medicine in the same province.

Tell me the logic of that. Tell me how that makes our system better. Tell me why any government would have set a system up like that and said that no, despite the fact that every single class you took was in the same classroom together and all of your exams were the same and you stood side by side, you're not allowed to practise here and you're not allowed to practise here because that's not what we want.

We changed that because it didn't make sense. If you have a licence to practise medicine anywhere in Canada, you can come to Ontario right now, and we're glad to have you. We'll welcome you with open arms.

On top of that, we've got Ontario high school graduates, very smart people, who chose to go to a different jurisdiction to get their education. Perhaps they went to the United States. Perhaps they went to the UK, France. "Whoa, medicine in the UK. Well, no, no, no. If you get educated in the United Kingdom, no, that's like the Dark Ages. You can't practise medicine in Ontario. No, whatever they are doing over in the UK, that's wrong. You went across the bridge to Detroit? Whoa, man, nope, forget it. That quality of education that you got by driving across the river, no, no; you can't practise in Ontario. We're going to make it difficult for you."

That is what decisions were made by previous governments. We changed all of that. We said, "If you're trained in one of these jurisdictions that's a first-world country that's competing with us, we're going to make it easy for you to come here. We're going to recognize your credentials a lot faster. We're going to make it so that you can come to Ontario, so that you can help us, so that you can

have that quality of life that we're trying to have for everyone here in Ontario, and you're going to be contributing to that. You're going to make it easier."

Now, sticking with the line of doctors on this—because some of the decisions that have been made by previous governments, they baffle me at times. We have a number of different organizations that are set up for medical care in Ontario. There are acronyms that we use; most people don't really understand what they mean. FHT or PHO: What's the difference between them? How does that work? What's Ontario Health? Why are you referring to it as OH?

And we had a very prescribed set-up for it. It had to be this type of a clinic and only this type of a clinic. You had to be working together as a team, only in this way, but if you didn't want to work as a team, you could work as an individual by yourself, but only under these certain circumstances. If you wanted to work over here in the hospital, you could do that and you could do this as well.

But it was a patchwork of things, and it really wasn't conducive to any kind of expansion. When you think about the cost to set up a clinic for a doctor and prescribing it, making it as difficult as it was, why would anyone want to become a doctor? Why would anyone want to put that capital out to set up that clinic?

We said that doesn't make sense. We said, "We've got facilities that can already do a lot of this stuff. Why are we making it difficult?" And that's why we have pharmacies now that have doctors' clinics right in them: because we're making it easier for that doctor who wants to practise in that town to get set up in that town. Working with pharmacies that way makes a lot of sense.

We've expanded the scope of practice for nurse practitioners, so that nurse practitioners can do the things that they're educated on because, for whatever reason, the previous government had decided that, "No, I know that you're getting this education at an accredited university in Canada." We were only saying that an Ontario university or Canadian university was good enough for someone to get the education. You couldn't get an education someplace else. So we're making them go to the Ontario or the Canadian universities. And we know that they were learning to do a lot of stuff in medicine, but we weren't letting them do it. So we've expanded the scope of practice so that what nurse practitioners can do actually matches what their education was. What a novel concept, to look at the system and say that we need to change it so that it matches what the education is for these individuals.

We're making those kinds of changes. And the reason we're making those kinds of changes is because it makes sense—it makes sense.

We want to make sure that, as we move forward, we have education available to all of those kids in Ontario, whether it's elementary, secondary, college, university. We're making investments in all of those things. When we were first elected in 2018, the education budget was about \$27 billion; it's just over \$43 billion or \$44 billion now. Why does that matter? It exceeds the consumer index when you look at the rise in the funding on it. The con-

sumer price index over that period of time was about 27%. This is more than a 40% increase. More money is being put into the system. In 2018, Ontario had about 1,890,000 students in elementary and secondary school. In 2026, for September, the projection is that Ontario will have 5,000 students more than we did then.

I bring this up because in one of our previous debates, the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane asked me, if there were more students and the funding didn't go up, is that a cut? There will be about 5,000 more students in 2026-27 than there were in 2018-19, and it's about \$16 billion more in the education budget. So not only is it more money, it's also more per capita. We're spending more on students.

We know that the post-secondary education system needed some support after some radical changes that were made by the federal government with respect to international students. So we've injected \$6.4 billion into that system—\$1.6 billion per year. That's a game-changer for colleges and universities. That's ensuring their stability. It's ensuring that they're going to be there to provide the education for those kids who graduate from high school, making sure that we have that steady stream of highly skilled, highly trained, highly educated workforce, because it's one of the comparative advantages that we have to attract companies. When companies look at a jurisdiction, they look at what's the tax rate, what's the cost of energy, what's the employability, what are our supply chain costs? Those are the things that they look at.

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What we can do as the government of Ontario is we can implement measures that keep the cost of electricity low. We can implement measures that provide opportunities for our workforce to be trained. We can provide opportunities for a competitive tax environment. And that allows that company to look at our jurisdiction, to look at Ontario and say, "This is where I want to go." We see those results when you look at the number of companies that our Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade has brought to Ontario, the investment into Ontario, the hundreds of billions of dollars of investment from companies. It's because they took a look at what Ontario was doing. And when they measured it, they said, "This is the jurisdiction to go to. This is the place where we can create a future. This is a place where we can employ people and we can reinvest back into people." That's why so many of them have looked at this jurisdiction. That's why so many of them have moved here.

When we look at interprovincial trade, we can make changes on interprovincial trade without having to worry about what the orange guy down in the United States is doing. And one of the things that has been brought forward on this: An independent study has been done by multiple economists, and by reducing trade barriers between provinces, we can increase our GDP in Ontario alone by more than \$200 billion. When you look at the trade barriers that we have right now, that study showed it equates to a 9.5% tariff. The average tariff that we have with the United States right now across all products is

about 5%, 5.5%. So we've been treating Canadian companies worse than we've been treating foreign companies. And that changes. Ontario is the first province to step forward and say we're breaking down those barriers, we're not going to have protected industries, we want to work with the other provinces.

We want to have labour moving back and forth between them. If I'm in Kenora, why can't I work in Manitoba? It's a short drive. Why can't I employ somebody from Manitoba if I'm in Kenora? It's a short drive. Why can't I work with my neighbouring province? We couldn't because there were barriers put up, and when we looked at it, it didn't make sense. This is an easy opportunity for us to grow our economy in Ontario, to increase it by \$200 billion.

What does that mean for Ontario? A \$200-billion increase is going to represent about \$10 million more in revenue for the government of Ontario through taxation without raising a single tax. By breaking down those trade barriers, we increase revenue to the province. We make it so we can invest in that social infrastructure. We make it so that we can invest in the hard infrastructure—the water, the waste water, the roads, the hospitals, the schools—all of the things that people expect. It's a simple thing to do, and we're the first government in Ontario to do it. It's because we're focused on the people of Ontario. How do we do things that make life easier for the people of this province? How do we do things that provide opportunities for better employment? How do we do things to ensure that when you need the doctor, the doctor is there, when you want to go to school, the school is there, when you want to turn your tap on, the water is there? This is the guiding principle: making sure that what we are doing makes life easier for people, making sure that what we do has that positive difference for the people in this province.

I have talked a fair bit about small business. I have talked a fair bit about large companies. I have talked about mining. I have talked about health care. One of things I haven't spoken about is innovation productivity and intellectual property. These are things that, for some people, are a little bit abstract because you don't deal with it in your everyday life. Most people have a traditional type of job where they're either providing a service for someone or they're making a product, selling something.

But when we look at things like innovation and intellectual property, these are the things that lead to the jobs for tomorrow. Little known fact: Artificial intelligence started in Ontario. Ontario is the birthplace of neural networks that way. We haven't taken advantage of that; we're changing that. We want to make sure that we have sustainable growth on these things. We want to be the world leader in this as well.

We're getting that type of investment. Just as an example, the Vector Institute invested \$27 million to work on this. Intellectual Property Ontario, IPON, was launched three years ago. We now have more than 1,200 companies and individuals who are supported. Their research is supported through this because we know that you have to be looking to the future.

It doesn't make sense for some of those great minds to come up with the concept, to come up with the product

here in Ontario and then have to go to another jurisdiction to capitalize on it, to commercialize it. We want to make sure that all of those bright minds in this province who are doing that fantastic work know that the government of Ontario has their back. We're supporting them and they can grow their companies here. They don't have to leave.

We want to turn research excellence into an economic driver for this province and that's why we're making those types of investments. We want to make sure that those minds who are doing that fantastic work, who are coming out of our universities, who are leading the world in that type of research, know they can grow a company here. Investment can be done here. They can make a life-changing product for the entire world right here in Ontario. They don't have to go some place else.

When I look at our economy and I come back to it, I know the opposition is going to point out that we have a \$13-billion deficit in this year's budget and they are going to hammer on that number: \$13 billion sounds like a large number. However, your deficit, when you look at it as a reflection of your economy or your GDP, is very small. It is a small percentage of it. When we look at the United States, just as an example, their deficit is about six times higher than ours here in Ontario as a comparison to the GDP. When we look at British Columbia, their deficit as a reflection of their GDP is about two and a half times higher than Ontario's. British Columbia has had a credit-rating reduction as a result of how they've managed their money.

I'm going to contrast that with Ontario, and the reason I am is Ontario has seen two increases in our credit rating. We're AA across the board now. All four major credit agencies have rated us as AA. Why does that make a difference? When your credit rating is higher, when you as an individual have a better credit rating and you walk into the bank and you want to get a mortgage, it's easier for you to qualify for that mortgage and they give you a lower interest rate. It's the same thing with governments. When our credit rating is higher, our interest rate is lower.

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We've lowered our average interest rate on our 30-year bonds to the lowest it has been in almost 50 years. We are in better shape today than we were in 2018 when we first took office. Our debt-to-GDP is a better percentage than it was in 2018 when we first took office. Our interest payments as a reflection of our economy are lower as a percentage than what they were when we first took office. And it's because we have been focusing on reducing those interest costs, managing the money well.

We're still in good standing with all of those credit agencies. Ontario still looks good. Ontario is still a jurisdiction for people to invest their money in. That hasn't always been the case. That's the case now, and it's because we have prudent fiscal management. It's because we're focusing on investing in the things that we need to invest in. When we borrow money, we're borrowing to invest in infrastructure. We're investing in the long term.

It's no different than the average person taking a mortgage out, borrowing money to buy the home. They're going to live in the home, potentially for decades. It is

cheaper for them to own the home than it is for them to rent. It's an investment. And this is the same thing.

That's why we're doing things the way that we're doing. That's why we're making the investments that we're making. And more importantly, on it, we have said, and we've stuck to this, "We're not raising taxes." We've raised revenue without raising a single tax. In fact, we have cut taxes. In this budget alone, we've made a 30% cut to small business tax.

There are people who will say, "But you're reducing your revenue." No, we're not. What's happening is these companies survive, these companies thrive, these companies employ more. When more people are working, more people have an income. That's more income tax that comes to the province. When more people have more money, they're going out and they're buying more things, and when they buy things, that's retail sales tax that comes back to us.

And when they're buying enough things, in the aggregate, across the board, those companies are doing better, those companies are busier and those companies need to hire more people. When they hire more people, there's more people with income who are then spending their money, and it becomes an upward spiral.

That's the approach that we're taking. We're building the economy from the bottom up. We're making sure that people can afford things. We're making sure that that social infrastructure that they rely on is there for them, and we're investing in their futures. That's what this budget is about.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to focus my question on schedule 7 of Bill 97, which, of course, are the government's changes to the freedom-of-information laws and is something the member did not address. I hope he is aware of the statement that was issued by the privacy commissioner in March that talks about the government's changes and says, explicitly, that it's about hiding government-related business to evade public accountability. She goes on to say that if these kinds of records can be shielded from scrutiny simply because they sit in a minister's office or a staffer's device or within a political account, public accountability is eviscerated.

My question to the member is, did the government block this bill from going to committee and hold these late-night hearings because they did not want to hear from the Information and Privacy Commissioner and the many other Ontarians who care about transparency and accountability?

Mr. Dave Smith: We've heard the minister of public service delivery talk about this and say that 95% of all items are still FOI-able that way.

When the member opposite talks about listening to the people, this is a budget that had more consultation than any other budget. This is a budget that received more than 12,000 submissions. We've heard from the people of Ontario. We've made the changes in the budget for the people of Ontario. It is all about listening to the people of

Ontario. That's what this budget is about. There was more consultation, more transparency because of that. The budget represents what the people of Ontario have said they're looking for.

So I would ask the member opposite: Will you vote in favour of the budget, or will you tell the people of Ontario you don't think they're worth it?

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I want to ask a question about credit ratings, because I learned last week something I didn't know. I learned that the government of British Columbia has now suffered not its second, not its third, but its fourth credit rating downgrade, and that sounded to me like it was very serious.

Now I hear the remarks made by the member from what I will call God's country and he says that the province of Ontario, through our government, has now successfully achieved two credit upgrades. He used the term "AA." Most people would think that refers to a battery, but that actually refers to a credit rating.

I would like to ask the member: Could he please explain the AA credit rating and why that's such a good thing?

Mr. Dave Smith: I want to thank the member for the question because it's an excellent question. When our credit rating was below AA with some of the credit agencies, it meant that there were investors who were not able to actually buy the bonds for Ontario. It limited the number of investors who could put money into this province, and it also meant that the province of Ontario had to offer a higher interest rate because we weren't as stable, we weren't as predictable. That meant that we had to pay more to borrow money.

By improving the credit rating, it brought us back to a position where all of those institutions who want to invest in a strong, stable environment were once again able to purchase the bonds for Ontario. And it meant that Ontario didn't have to provide as high an interest rate. So we're saving the people of Ontario money, we're opening up opportunities for more investment in the province because our credit rating has improved.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

MPP Jamie West: To my colleague across the aisle: We've been talking about FOI a lot, which is buried in the budget, on page 139. He's talked many times about how this budget is about protecting people in Ontario. In fact, that section is titled "Protecting Ontarians with Stronger Safeguards for Public Information." But the privacy commissioner, who is independent from any party, actually says, "This amendment is about hiding government-related business to evade public accountability" and that "public accountability is eviscerated" if this were to pass.

How is hiding information from a Premier who is under criminal investigation about helping the public and not just helping the Premier?

Mr. Dave Smith: There's a flaw in the logic of the member opposite's question. He referred to a criminal investigation. Criminal investigations are not subject to

FOI. Criminal investigations can go about their business without FOI. So his logic, to start off with, is flawed.

When we take a look at what we have done, the FOI legislation was written in the 1980s, prior to the Internet being available, prior to cellphones, prior to email. They never envisioned what the world was going to be like in 2026 back in 1986. No one knew.

I was actually one of the first students at Trent University to have an email address when I first started. And the only reason I had an email address at Trent was because I was a computer studies student. No other students had email because the Internet didn't exist. The world is different in 2026 than it was in the late 1980s, when this legislation was first introduced.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Ted Hsu: I just have a question, since we're at third reading and we skipped the committee stage. I went to the budget bill and I found a typographical error: the word "to" missing in one place. Then there's a grammatical error in another section, where the bill discusses conservation authorities. I'm just wondering what the member's suggestion is for how to fix that one typographical error and that one grammatical error.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'll focus on what's good for the people of Ontario, what is going to provide them with the relief that they want, what's going to give them the social infrastructure that they need, that they expect, and what's going to make jobs better for them—all of the things that the people of Ontario are focused on.

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The member opposite can focus on grammar. I'm focused on the people of Ontario and ensuring that they have the best province available to them.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Thank you to the member from—we'll say God's country—for his remarks this evening. I really appreciate it. He and I both serve on the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. We took part in budget consultations all across the province and heard from lots of folks, and I was just so encouraged to hear and see, in this budget, so many of the things we heard in those consultations reflected: more funding for the autism program, a small business tax cut. But one that I want to really focus in on is more money for home care: \$1.1 billion for home care.

We heard from multiple communities that that was really important, so I'll ask the member if he could elaborate on why that's so important, especially for rural, smaller communities.

Mr. Dave Smith: I want to thank the member for the question. It's an excellent question. The \$1.1 billion specifically for home care is because we know that people want to age at home. We know that people want to stay in their own home as long as possible. We've made investments in long-term care. We knew that that was something that had to happen. In my riding alone, there are more than

800 new long-term-care beds that are under construction right now and will be completed within the year.

But we also know that those who are aging want to stay at home as long as possible. This \$1.1 billion will provide opportunities to hire more staff and to pay them at the rate that they should be paid at so that they continue providing that high quality of care for our parents, for our grandparents, to give them the opportunity to remain at home as long as they want to.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member for Sudbury.

MPP Jamie West: In his response to my previous question about the criminal investigation, the member said that FIPPA would not be shielded from criminal investigation, but the privacy commissioner actually says in her statement:

“The government of Ontario is currently seeking leave to appeal a court ruling that unanimously upheld my office’s order to produce call logs from the Premier’s personal cellphone that relate to government business. This is to ensure independent examination to determine whether they may be subject to access under the law. Based on evidence showing that the Premier routinely uses his personal phone to conduct government business, it is likely that they are.”

I wonder if the member would like to correct his record, based on this new information.

Mr. Dave Smith: The member opposite is talking about the Premier’s personal cellphone, not talking about a government cellphone, and what he’s conflating are the two things. What the freedom of information controls or oversees is government cellphones, government devices, communication between government. That is what we’re talking about here. The member is conflating things and it’s unfortunate that he’s doing it that way.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I will be dividing my time with the member from Parkdale–High Park and, I believe, also the member from Sudbury.

Thank you; I arrived just in time. I was on my commercial economy flight back and forth to Thunder Bay, as I always am, meeting with the good people at NOMA—municipal leaders from across northwestern Ontario, lots of community organizations. I want to thank them for once again sharing with me some of their concerns, their priorities.

It’s always wonderful—wonderful—to get back up to northwestern Ontario and, let me just say, perfectly accessible on commercial airlines. I have to say, the options are always very good. In fact, as I’ve reminded the members opposite a number of times already, I believe—and others up there were talking about it—you cannot reach most communities on a Challenger private luxury jet. I know, that’s astonishing, because the Premier seemed to be saying something different.

But, anyway, listen: The reason we are here tonight is we are debating the government’s budget bill, and I’ll start by just saying a little bit about the budget bill itself

specifically and then I’m going to focus on some very specific aspects of this legislation, which really, in many ways, have nothing to do with the budget.

When the budget was released, we took a look at it and dug in. We decided, and we had announced previously, that we, the official opposition, were going to be giving the government a grade—a budget report card, if you will. So we did that. Myself and the member from University–Rosedale, our shadow minister for finance, we looked at the budget very carefully. I’m going to give away the ending here, but we actually did—you’ll be shocked to know—give the Premier and his government a failing grade. And the questions we asked were pretty straightforward.

First of all, we asked, does this budget lower the cost of rent and groceries? Because the biggest line items, without question, in every family’s budget, right now, are the cost of groceries and the cost of housing. Does this budget do anything to make life more affordable for regular people, for everyday Ontarians? In fact, I would say that this budget makes an affordable future feel even more out of reach for most Ontarians, with more cuts, with bad spending. This budget delivers nothing for renters, nothing for sky-high grocery prices and nothing to lower your costs. That’s the truth. And that, unfortunately, is the budget that this government has chosen to table. A budget, Speaker, is about a government’s priorities, and it is about choices.

The other thing we looked at was whether or not this budget fixes our health care and education systems. I would say the reason this was such a focus for us is because now more than ever it matters. Building a competitive economy means strengthening the basics, like taking care of our kids, like taking care of their future, like delivering better care faster.

Budget 2026 is failing the next generation. The Premier is gutting OSAP; he is cutting nearly \$70 million from colleges and universities. Kids are learning in overcrowded classrooms. Teachers and education workers are stretched thin.

OSAP cuts are going to force young people—it’s happening right now—into making decisions that they shouldn’t have to be making right now. High school students have come to me in tears—I’m sure they’ve come to many of you—and said, “I had an offer, but I can’t take it anymore, not only because I don’t want to take on the debt, but also I have siblings, and they need to go to university or college one day. I can’t be the only one.” This is a terrible, terrible, heartbreaking choice, and we hear it every day, but those cuts are forcing those young people to make a choice between a lifetime of debt and families worried about their children’s future.

In fact, I would say what the government has done here is made a choice between hiring more teachers, more education workers, more caring adults in our schools to bring down class sizes, to help our children who are still struggling after the COVID shutdowns, after the cuts that have already hit their classrooms. Instead, this budget means another \$150 million in cuts.

I'll say this. I was at the airport in Thunder Bay. I was about to board the flight, and a woman came over to me with tears in her eyes. She pulled me aside and she said, "I never do this. I never express my opinion about these things." She said, "I'm a principal, and I've recently retired from the public education system, and what is happening in our schools is unconscionable." This is just hours ago, because, believe me, it's a very short trip actually—commercial airline, economy, highly recommend it, never take anything else. Anyway, she said to me that it's awful what's happening in our schools with the children, but also the workers: the teachers, the education workers, the kids that are being left behind—what we're seeing in our communities. She was in tears, and it really broke my heart.

But this is not unusual, unfortunately, because just moments before I had a teacher come up to me, an elementary teacher, at the same line in the airport to say the same thing: "Please keep fighting for more from this government because what's happening in our schools is devastating." She talked to me as well about the kids that she teaches in grades 7 and 8 and the struggles that they have, the struggles of their families, and how far behind we are and how awful that is to be a teacher in those classrooms and see what those children—really, what they just need is a hand up and a little bit of extra help. What a difference that would have made.

Education: major failure, continuing to go in the wrong direction.

Then when it comes to health care, it was the previous government, the Wynne Liberals, where we saw the beginning of hallway health care. This was the government, when they were in opposition—we remember—who called that out and said they were going to end hallway health care.

Let me tell you about—I think she was 95 years old—the woman that I met a few months ago in Niagara region who told me that she had broken her hip, ended up in the emergency room in Niagara—and remember that we have urgent care centres and emergency rooms, and they're just closing everywhere. But where she ended up—she was in the hallway, being treated all night and the next day in the hallway of the emergency room.

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I wish I could tell you this was an unusual story, that it shocked and horrified me, but it doesn't because I hear it all the time. Actually, I think she was 93 years old and she talked about the indignity of having her clothing removed, the lack of privacy. This is the state of Ontario and our health care system today and this is something that will and is harming us, not just patients like her but the people who work in our hospitals.

I was in Belleville a few months ago, in February. I held a round table with health care workers. I had a registered nurse say to me—she had this funny way of talking about it. She talked about the profound moral injury that she experiences, that all of the nurses experience in the inability to support patients, to treat people, to use the skills that they have and the knowledge they have to help

people in a system that is falling apart under this government's watch, and how much worse it has gotten. She actually referred to it—and I wrote it down—she said, "Health care workers have turned into spray foam." What she meant by that was, she said, "I just fill the gaps." And then she said, "Can you build a home with spray foam? No, you can't. And you can't keep a health care system working like that either."

She talked about how wild it was to see how unprepared the system was under this government's watch for such predictable situations that are evolving. She talked about how people who cannot participate in the economy because they can't work, because they're unwell—how much she sees that, how often she sees that.

I met, of course, paramedics who talked to me as well and I've heard from paramedics all across this province. I met with paramedics in Wawa recently on our northern road tour. I met with paramedics in Belleville who talked about the burnout, the stress, the fact that they have so much less access to facilities, how they're seeing people leaving the profession, which is something I hear a lot about because of burnout. And also, I'll point out, on the northern highways, it's the trauma. It's the trauma that they experience in having to be the first responders on the scene often. I'll get to that again later.

Anyway, let's just say that this government, after eight years, has poured gasoline on the fire of the hallway health care system that was created under the previous Liberal government. And it is unforgivable, because not only is our public health care system and our public education system important for our kids, our people, the people of Ontario right now, but it is critical to our ability to attract and keep people in Ontario—the workers that we need here, the families that need to settle here. How are you going to attract people to this province when they come here and they know that that's what they can expect?

That's what I'm hearing, by the way, from businesses, from corporations who want to attract investment here, who want to build opportunity here in the province of Ontario. But they can't attract people because there are no schools to send their children to, because there are no emergency rooms.

I want to also point out what happens—and again, because these things all connect—when the road closes, on the road between one community to the next, in this case it was Wawa and a mine has to shut down every time that happens because the road to Wawa is the road to the emergency room. And so the mine can't keep going when that road is closed. You couldn't get a more direct impact on the economy right there. Anyway, I digress.

The other question we asked was, of this budget, does it build the homes you can afford? And I will point out, again, Ontario is in very last place in the entire country when it comes to building homes.

Instead of building more homes, in fact, what we've seen with this government is cuts to the housing budget that amount to \$347 million less. Can you believe it? In the middle of a housing crisis where they have failed so dramatically, then they make further cuts.

They have no housing strategy; we already know that. This budget just proves once again that this government has absolutely thrown in the towel on building the one and a half million homes that they said they were going to build by 2031. There is no target. That's how bad it is. And the one thing they could have put in this budget that would have actually helped at least save people's homes now is rent control. I mean, my goodness, just save the homes the people have, the roofs over their heads. Because, I tell you, the number of people, the demographic that we're seeing that's growing out there among the homeless population—older people; seniors; retired people, who worked their whole lives, and then under this government, they lose their homes—shameful.

So then another question we asked: Does it create good jobs and opportunities? We've seen all those ads out there the government is spending hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on to promote the idea that they're out there to protect Ontario. Well, I will tell you this: This government is a jobs disaster, and this Premier is a jobs disaster. Unemployment is at 7.6%, with almost 700,000 Ontarians out of work. Young people in Ontario: I think we are the second-highest youth unemployment now in the country.

I moved to Ontario from Newfoundland in 1988 to go to university, and then I stayed for opportunities. And I'll tell you, when I was growing up in Newfoundland, I used to go to the Canada Winter Games. I was an athlete. I went to the Canada Winter Games a couple of times. I would see the Ontario athletes come into the building, and we would all go, "Whoa, look at them. Look at their fancy uniforms. They have all the best coaches, they have all the best stuff. Oh, Ontario, land of plenty." Do you know what we are now? We are a have-not province. It is unimaginable: a province with the resources that we have, with the people that we have, hard-working Ontarians, so much potential—that's the Ontario we're in today. I can tell you, people from back home, they're moving back, right? More opportunity back there now.

This budget fails to deliver. It fails to deliver certainty and support for the auto industry—my goodness; for steel; for forestry workers—no plan for forestry from this government. They're just watching the mills fold one after another after another with no plan. They think the entire north is just one big mining camp. They have forgotten that there are people who live in the north, who have families in the north, who want their families to grow and live and thrive in the north, that communities are falling apart because of this government's decisions. And I can tell you, northerners aren't going to let that happen, though, because northerners are fighting really hard.

The Premier is cutting \$486 million to job creation and training and delivering no new investments for apprenticeships. It is one massive failure after another at a time when we need to invest in creating more opportunities and building a resilient workforce to weather the storm that we are in and that will continue to come.

Finally, I will say in terms of some of these other elements of the budget, we asked ourselves, does this budget spend your money wisely and responsibly? And I will say

that if wasting your money on vanity projects was a category, this government will get an A+ on that budget. I mean, this budget has money for a new Ferris wheel but can't invest in supporting our kids and staffing our hospitals. That's what it amounts to.

And again I will say, Speaker, that budgets are about choices, and this government is choosing to make cuts to our courts, to our schools and to support for very vulnerable Ontarians, and that is very shameful, because if nothing else, surely, we should be wanting to support those people who are the most vulnerable in our communities. And all of those choices that this government is making will result, I have no doubt, in Ontario being less safe and less resilient.

But, Speaker, the other thing that this budget does is it actually makes some other rather sneaky little changes that I'm glad to say Ontarians have really caught on to, which is that this government is using this opportunity to change the freedom-of-information laws to remove transparency and accountability for their government. I want to explain this for just a moment to people who might be watching, because in Ontario you have the right to ask the government what it's doing with your money—that seems like a basic part of our democracy—what decisions it's making, who it's talking to. It's called the freedom-of-information laws, right? And it's the only reason, honestly, that over the last eight years we have had any information, pretty much, about what this government is up to and what their Premier is doing. That is why this government is trying to kill those laws.

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Now, the Premier has said it's because he thinks that China wants his text messages, apparently. But here's why I think he's doing it: I think it goes back to the greenbelt and this government's decision—this Premier's decision—to carve up the greenbelt, because we remember the video that surfaced that showed him promising developers that he was going to carve that up for them and serve it up to them, and they were going to make billions. Then he said, "No, no, no, I won't do it. I promise I won't do it," and then he backtracked, and more things leaked. We went after this in freedom of information. Then they come in and start carving it up again.

Finding out anything about this was almost impossible, but luckily, we, the opposition, and journalists playing their role, put forward a bunch of freedom-of-information requests because we knew we couldn't trust the government. That's how we found out a little bit more about what happened.

And what happened was that the housing minister at the time, who is now the government House leader—his chief of staff sat down at dinner with a couple of very well-connected developers and close friends, by the way, of the Premier. I think we can picture it, right? One of them slides an envelope across the table, and inside, guess what? A list, a list of land they had already bought quite quietly, land that they wanted to open up to development, but it was, unfortunately, part of the greenbelt and therefore protected.

Then, weeks later, that's when the Premier announced that 3,700 acres of the greenbelt were going to be opened up for development; 92% of the land that was in that envelope was on the list. Coincidence? I think not. In fact, that land went from being worth about \$240 million to \$8.3 billion overnight. And here's the thing: We only found out, you only found out, the people of Ontario only found out because of freedom-of-information requests that we filed and that journalists filed. That's why we knew: not because the government came clean—oh my goodness, no—but because those requests revealed some very interesting information.

I would also say some other things that we found out when we went through freedom-of-information: emails being deleted, government staff and government members using code words to try to hide from freedom-of-information laws that they were talking about these greenbelt deals, doing government business on personal phones—because, unfortunately, somebody failed to tell the Premier this very important fact that I think everybody else was probably told, I've got to figure: that if you're using your personal devices for government business, then that is subject to freedom of information. So they thought, incorrectly, that they could do government business on personal devices, and that would be one way of hiding all of these things that were going on under the under the surface, but they were wrong.

The point that I guess I'm trying to make is that the government tried just about everything they could to not have a paper trail of what was happening around the greenbelt. And the RCMP, as you know, Speaker, has launched a criminal investigation. The Premier said, "No problem. I will hand over my phone records. I will do that because I have nothing to hide." Well, you know what? That was three years ago—three years ago. Has he done it? No; in fact, the government has fought tooth and nail. They've gone to court. I can't even imagine how many millions and millions of dollars they have wasted on lawyers to fight to keep the Premier's phone records secret. Why?

My goodness, if you had nothing to hide, why would you do that? I want to be very clear, Speaker. As I've said before, I have absolutely no interest—and I think no one here does—in the Premier's personal affairs, interests, things that are going on in his family. I don't care. That's up to him; that's him. And to be very clear, none of that would ever appear in any freedom-of-information request. It would all be redacted.

So why? What is it that they don't want to get out? What has followed has been this very drawn-out game of keep-away. We know that Global News filed an FOI for those phone records. The government, as I said, has said no. They continue to fight it. The judges have ruled against the government again and again and again. The records have to come out, they've said.

So what does the government do next? They change the law. I had people say to me, "Well, how can they do that? I mean, there are laws. They can't do that. There are laws." I said, "Yes, guess what? Government makes laws. Government may also break laws sometimes, but government

makes laws." And that's what they're doing. They are changing the law to protect the king. That is what is going on. And not only that—

M^{me} France Gélinas: Retroactively.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you to the member from Nickel Belt. They are doing it retroactively. So all of those requests that have been made by Global and others, the FOI requests we have in right now for lots of things, all kinds of things, people just looking for information about something, all of that ends.

It means also that not only the Premier but his cabinet, their offices, pretty much every Conservative MPP, because they've given themselves all lofty titles and more staff, they would all be permanently exempt from freedom of information. Can you imagine that? Retroactively—including, again, every request that has been filed.

So let me ask you something: What is in those phone records? What is so dangerous, so explosive, that this Premier would rather change the law than let you, the people of Ontario, see it? What did he say? Who was he talking to? What did he know, and when did he know it? Is he hiding some nefarious activity? I don't know. I can only speculate, because I can't imagine why else anybody would go to the extraordinary lengths that this government is going to to hide that.

The thing is that the people of Ontario deserve to know. They deserve to know, and if this Premier and his government gets their way, they never will.

Look, the government's own independent privacy commissioner called this move "hiding government ... business to evade public accountability." She said that.

This is not a government that got caught doing something embarrassing. This is a government that is methodically, deliberately, piece by piece trying to get away with using your tax dollars for their benefit.

I have to say, the last week, we got some insight into that with the Premier's decision to, I guess—and apparently the whole cabinet approved it, he says. He's now letting his whole cabinet wear this decision to purchase a private luxury jet. I'll get to that again in a minute.

But I was thinking today that a lot of people come up to me and they say to me, "Well, you know, like this is a big surprise. This is what politicians do. You know, they can't be trusted. They all do it." Well, I've got to say, it's very unfortunate that I find some people do feel that way, because the truth is it shouldn't have to be like that. And it isn't like that everywhere. There are honest governments. There are governments who don't change the laws to hide the truth like this government is doing.

I think, personally—and it's one of the reasons I've gone into politics—I really believe that we should be better than that.

Ontario is the largest province in this country. We generate 38% of Canada's entire GDP. We have one of the biggest economies in the G7. Trump's tariffs are threatening our economy. They're threatening our manufacturing, our jobs. They are destroying many sectors, and what we need is a government that is actually focused on protecting this economy, protecting our people.

But what this government is focused on is scandal after scandal and how they hide and how they protect their own endeavours. Your Premier is in court fighting to hide his phone records. When he loses, he changes the law. And look, this actually has a real cost because every time that this Premier and that government chooses to help the people who help them, that's a choice not to help you regular people. Every time that they make a backroom deal on some insider contract, that's money, that's attention, that's resources that could have gone to your local hospital, your local schools or your highways. To actually do something about the cost of groceries would be something they could do to give your kid a real shot at a future, to help workers weather the storm.

2020

I want to point out, about two weeks ago now, last time I was in Windsor and Essex, I met with some of the workers from Diageo who've lost their jobs. They told me they were absolutely disgusted by the deal that the Premier made—again, a backroom insider deal with Diageo, a lot of promises. Pouring out the Crown Royal real slow—he had a lot of trouble with that. He tried—he really tried. He said, “I’m going to fight. I’m going to take it off the shelves. I’m going to fight for every single job.” Did he save a single job?

Interjections: No.

Ms. Marit Stiles: No, he did not. You know what?

MPP Jamie West: He didn't lift a finger.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Oh, he didn't lift a finger, and he made a deal behind closed doors.

I can tell you that one of the women who had worked in that plant for 25-plus years—and all the workers I met with were there for 20, 30, 35 years and had poured their lives into that plant. They built that company with their hard work, and what did they get for it? Nothing.

She said to me, “We heard a rumour that the Premier was meeting with Diageo, and so I sent him an email. I said, ‘Please. This is what you need to do. Don't give them an exit. At very least, if they're going to leave, make sure that those of us who are so close to retirement but not quite there yet get a helping hand.’” She was one month away from retirement. She gets nothing.

Can she get a job now? Imagine. I mean, I'm middle-aged. If you lose your job at this point in life, good luck. That is not easy. I know so many people who've lost their jobs in this economy under this government, and it is really, really hard. Those people that I met—all of them—were in that age group. They were about to sell their homes, move out of Amherstburg. They said, “Thanks but no thanks,” to this Premier and his deal.

By the way, they said the member for Essex ran away when they tried to get answers. When the media tried to get a comment, he ran away. It's very shameful. It's very unfortunate, and I can assure you they will not forget.

Anyway, that's what's happening under this government. Again, it is all about choices. It's about choices, and this government is making the wrong choice again and again and again.

I believe that government can make good choices, better choices, responsible choices. I look at the Premier

in Manitoba, Premier Wab Kinew, who the Premier of Ontario claims to be such a big fan of. I look at how they are managing their budget in such a fiscally responsible way. I look at how they are making sure—

Interjection.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, they are doing very well—you're right—much better than Ontario by far, by a long shot.

There's another thing they did which I thought was so fantastic. Here they are, Manitoba, and I'm here. I just got back, as I said, from Thunder Bay, where we were talking a lot, of course, about the health care crisis in northern Ontario. They're saying, “Why is the government actually making it more difficult for us to attract internationally trained physicians? Why are they making it more difficult at this time of all times?”

You know what Manitoba did? Manitoba noticed that there were a lot of health care workers, physicians in the United States who were disgusted by their government, by their President, and they wanted an exit. They were looking for an exit. Manitoba said, “Come to us.” Premier Wab Kinew got up and he said, “You are welcome here,” and they're coming.

That's what a government does: understand, seize it—really, really impressive. That is a government that makes good choices. They are capping the price of some groceries. They're doing a lot of really good things. They're also—and we brought a motion forward on this earlier this week—cracking down on predatory pricing, surveillance pricing. They've been the first government in Canada to do that.

This is a government that could have taken this opportunity, help people with the cost of groceries, but do you know what they were doing instead, Speaker? They were focused on making sure that the Premier had his toys: his luxury private jet, the spa, which, for some unknown reason nobody can understand anywhere, this government is subsidizing by like \$1 billion.

MPP Jamie West: Worst deal in history.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, worst deal in history—a company, by the way, that we know is basically bankrupt, and this government said, “Don't worry about that. We'll just throw \$1 billion at you.” Because you know what Ontario really needs is another spa in downtown Toronto.

I can tell you, my colleagues from northern Ontario, from the southwest and elsewhere can definitely speak to this: Nobody has asked for a spa in downtown Toronto. And when you're talking about people dying on the highways in northern Ontario and then you want to tell them, “But don't worry, we're building a tunnel under the 401. Everything is going to be okay,” they laugh very hard, and then they cry, because it is worse than ever before.

It was one thing to have consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments lie—make promises and break them and make promises and break them, about Highway 11 and 17—but this is just so insulting. You're making choices to fund spas in downtown Toronto. Now he wants to build an island, apparently. You can't make it up. Now we figure out that he wants to bring jets to the island airport, they're going to expand the runway—he's all in on this. He's going to take it over; he's going to force it to

happen. And we're all going: "Why is Doug Ford so obsessed with the island airport all of a sudden? Oh, wait; now we know: It's the private luxury jet. He wants to land his jet."

I want to tell you, Speaker—I'm going to wrap up with this. I think, again, as I said, budgets are about choices. The Premier has spent the last few days on a private jet pity tour, where he goes around and he talks about how hard done by he is that he cannot have his luxury private jet. I don't know, but for me and I think for everybody I've talked to this week—renters, regular people, people in health care and education—there has never been a moment where it was so clear how out of touch this Premier and his government are. It's not just about the timing, because it's a really bad time to do that. But it would always be a bad time, because governments should not be wasting money on private luxury jets.

He even went out there and said, "Actually, you know what? Every other government, they all have this." He said that Quebec bought new planes and the federal government—boo hoo; he cried a little. I think there were some tears; I don't know. It even had me wondering: Should I feel bad? This is quite sad. He was wrong. It actually turns out—which is no surprise to us because we know some of these folks—that there's no other Premier in the province who has their own luxury private jet.

I am concerned about the Premier. I think the Premier has shown Ontarians who he is, and I think the fact that he has also then told everybody in the media that, actually, oh no, his cabinet approved this means that he has actually lumped all of his government into his terrible decisions. Now, apparently, he said Bombardier has bought the jet back. Well, good on them, but what we don't know is whether there were any changes made to the jet.

Again, I struggle here, actually. I struggle in talking about this kind of thing because I truly have very—well, no experience with private luxury jets, so I really do struggle with this. I don't know how this works, but I've been told that when you buy a private luxury jet, you might want to make some amendments to it—change things up a bit. I guess you might want to change up the fabric on the reclining chairs. I know that when the Premier asked for a souped-up van when he was first elected, it included things like a Blu-ray—that was, apparently, a big priority—reclining chairs, fridges, things like that, which I can imagine are easily accommodated in a private luxury jet. But again, I have very little—no experience with this.

I just keep thinking: Maybe this jet has already had some things fixed and changed and maybe there were some contracts lined up already to service it. I don't know. I don't know. And that's the question we want answered.

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By the way, Speaker, we have put forward a motion asking the government to provide that information; asking that the Premier himself cover the difference if we're out of pocket for anything as a province.

Now, going back again to this budget: Finding that information and getting this government to tell us anything and to share any information about how this terrible decision was made and whether there were any kind of insider deals there is going to be near impossible because

this government is changing the freedom-of-information laws.

I'll wrap up on this note: We are here tonight, late—what time is it? 8:30 p.m.—because this government wants to rush this through. They want to ram this through. They don't want to have—and believe me, there were many, many people that wanted to be consulted about the changes that are being made in this budget and this legislation that's before us.

This government won't allow that. They won't have any hearings. They won't have any conversation about it. They don't want to hear from anyone, because they just want to get it done fast, because they don't want the Premier's phone records to be revealed. That is how desperate they are. So they're going to keep everybody late tonight to try to get this through as fast as possible before they all have to go back to their ridings next week.

Because—guess what—we have another break week because this government hardly ever sits. They just can't get out of this place fast enough. They do not want to do the work, and so they're going to go back to their ridings and they don't want to have to worry about this. They want to put everything behind them. "Oh, my goodness, that embarrassing matter of the private luxury jet; we'll just sweep that aside." They just want to pretend none of that happened. They want to go back and have this all dealt with. But do you know what? The people are not going to forget, and we are going to remind them every single day.

I want to tell you this: I told you about my return trip from Thunder Bay this afternoon, but when I was going out to Thunder Bay yesterday and I was running to get onto the plane because we were a little late—I was getting on at the last minute—and standing at one of the other check-in desks there, there was a woman came to me, she said, "It's you!" And I said, "Yeah," and I walked over. She said—I'm not going to forget this—"My name is Princesa." What a great name, eh?

Anyway, she said, "My name is Princesa, and I just want you to keep doing what you're doing." And I said, "You got it. What do you think?" And she said, "I was sitting in the car on my way down here, listening to the radio," probably AM radio, "and I heard what you said about the Premier. I heard what you said about the Premier and his private luxury jet and the decisions he's making. And you said he better put his big boy pants on." And she said, "You just keep going at it, sister." And I said, "You got it, Princesa." So here I am, and we're going to keep doing it.

My colleagues and I, we have the best team in the Legislature in Ontario. We're going to keep fighting for the hard-working people of Ontario because this budget is about their money. They're right to know how deep his hands are in their pockets, what his priorities are, how he came to those decisions and which insiders he had back-room deals with. That is their right to know.

As I said to the Premier, the one consolation we all have, should this legislation pass, is that when the RCMP comes a-calling for his phone records, they're not going to need freedom-of-information laws; they are going to bring a warrant.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member for Parkdale–High Park.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I want to thank the leader of the official opposition for her comments tonight.

I am almost without words, though I have to find 20 minutes' worth of words. And the reason why I am almost without words tonight is because I am, yet again, standing in my place, representing the good people of Parkdale–High Park, and I have to tell them about another omnibus bill that does nothing for them, that cuts housing, that cuts education, that cuts social services, that cuts jobs, that destroys the environment, but that in that bill, just hiding, like a little Easter egg for the Premier, is schedule 7. What possible, possible connection could it have to the budget? And yet there it is, a major change to the freedom of information.

We have this omnibus bill with this piece of legislation that I will get to describing in a moment, and then, instead of taking this bill to committee, to public hearings, this government has pulled it so that it will not be looked over and spoken to by experts from around the province, by regular people from around the province, by members of the opposition and the other parties to strengthen it, to challenge it, which is our job to do. We have the eagle on the other side of the House there that faces me, and it says that's my job, but we won't get that opportunity.

I have to tell the people of Parkdale–High Park that it's almost 9 o'clock at night and, a few hours ago, this government made a calculation that they could ram this bill through under the cover of dark, that the people of Ontario might not notice and that the government, in particular the Premier and whatever he's terrified of us finding on his phone, will be hidden—all of this seemingly for a cellphone.

You know, Speaker, I had a boyfriend once who, every time I walked into the room, would hide his cellphone.

Interjection: That's not a good sign.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: That's right, it's not a good sign. You know what happened? We broke up because he'd been cheating on me, using his cellphone.

Interjection: You're better for it.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I agree that I'm better for it. The husband I have is an incredible one. He doesn't hide his cellphone, and he wonders, like I do, why this Premier is hiding his.

This Premier goes to every single rally—I've seen it now, the ones that I've been to—and says his cellphone out loud. This is not a personal cellphone, though there might be personal things on it that, like my boyfriend, he didn't want people to hear or find out about. But this is a work phone, the moment you use it for business purposes.

So, Speaker, I am standing here, wondering what to do when our job as official opposition is to hold this government accountable, and this government keeps slipping through the cracks, keeps finding new ways to hide, like a shell game: "Look over here," and there's nothing there. So now we are in darkness.

I've got to tell you, Speaker, when I came to the decision to become an MPP, I came as a church minister

and I had seen a fair number of things, enough to know that we were in pretty dark times, that the pendulum is swinging in such a way that the vulnerable, the marginalized, the poor, those whose rights are so, so fragile, are at risk of losing those rights, of falling further through to the margins, of the social safety net getting bigger and bigger holes in it.

I decided—and this is very much connected to my comments on the budget—that the image for myself, for my office, for my riding, for every neighbourhood in my riding was a lamppost. You'll see it on my bag that we created. It's a lamppost with a light shining bright, the rays are going out and on it is every single neighbourhood in Parkdale–High Park. It reminds me, especially on nights like tonight where it's dark out there and it is very dark in here, that we can focus on the darkness—it's there—but we are called to be the light.

2040

We are called to offer vision; we are called to offer hope. That is what our leader did moments ago, and that is what the NDP is doing. We are not going to ignore the dark, but we are going to continue to offer hope and light to the people of Ontario.

In order to do that, my tradition tells me we have to speak truth—prophetic truth that speaks truth to power, that speaks truth to the people around them, that says, "Here is one path and you are headed down it and woe is you. But here is another path and look, it's the path of abundance, the path of opportunity, the path of hope."

This budget, Speaker, is very much a woe-is budget: a \$70-million cut to post-secondary, OSAP grants cut. And you see, that's so key because the future of our province, of who gets rich and richer and who doesn't, is linked in how we provide equity and access to each and every one of our children, regardless of whether they were born with a sticker family or whether they were born with very little.

The grant situation means that there will be brilliant minds lost, that our province will be the poorer and that the same old families that can afford to pay their children's way will get the better-paying jobs, the better access to opportunities and will become richer. When this happens, we experience this ever-growing gap. From history of kings and wealthy landowners, we know this can't last—there's a revolution. But the suffering before, that is what we are in right now with this budget.

I carry with me the people who sat on my sofa when I was a church minister. I came into this role because all I could offer were Band-Aids, was charity, was opening up my food pantry when a woman came to me and said, "I don't have lunch for my child. I can't even send her to school." Talk about equity, access—can't even go to school because there's no food here.

I came to this job looking for the policy changes. And when I think about this housing, I want to tell my friends and colleagues across the aisle who are over there about this housing—can we call it a plan? We can't, really. It's not. It's a cut of \$347 million. It was 1.5 million homes promised but not delivered—never to be delivered.

I want to tell them about Nelson. Nelson lived in my riding; he was a congregant at my church with his son. They would come on Sundays, and they would come to the messy church program in the week. Then one day Nelson, who was a construction worker, got injured. He didn't have benefits and he wasn't part of a union and he lost his job, and then he lost his home. Speaker, for weeks he didn't tell me that he was living in his car. He was renting an Airbnb on weekends when he had his son so that he could still see his son.

I called the shelters every day with him. And this is where that social services cut that we see here—the FAO says that we are going to have \$1.5 billion less than is required. I saw it when I called day after day looking for a shelter for Nelson—day after day, night after night. We were told, “If you call at 2:00 in the morning, when they do the bed check, you might get in.” So we called at 2:00 in the morning. By this point he was sleeping in my basement because it was winter.

He finally got into the shelter, Speaker, but he couldn't see his son anymore. We couldn't be a big enough lamppost for him. This government had failed him in so many ways, the light got so dark, that one day he didn't answer his cellphone. And the next day he didn't answer his cellphone. And the next day his son came to the church with his mom, and they asked if I would do his funeral.

This budget is about choices, and this budget fails to keep people alive, to keep people housed, to keep people fed.

We offered light just a few days ago in a motion that would help people with their grocery costs. We offered hope, in a motion, to my friend Nelson and others. Grocery costs have gone up 30%; infant formula has gone up 80%. But this government turned down the light yet again. Yet again it turns down the light on the social services sector.

When I was a church minister, I walked with a woman facing intimate partner violence. Speaker, I don't know if you know what that is like, but the first time you're asked to help keep someone safe you haven't got a clue what that looks like, but you try. You try by calling the social services that the government here has put in place, and you're on hold. You're on hold.

Then you ask about the shelters that this dear friend of yours, this congregant, might go to because she's facing intimate partner violence, and you are told that it's days—days. Then you find yourself creating a safety plan with a code word. And if for any reason that code word is texted to you or called or spoken in a conversation, then your job is to call 911.

The services weren't there, and now this budget is going to cut the social services sector even further. The services weren't there, and so at 11:30 at night I had to call 911. I had to go to the hospital. I had to see the X-rays. I had to take her to the dentist for the missing teeth.

I don't understand how this budget has \$2.2 billion in the discussion for Ontario Place, has a billion dollars in relocating the science centre, has \$30 million for a jet, has millions more for a fantasy island in the centre of the lake, for a tunnel under the 401, and yet for my friends, my

neighbours, my constituents, your neighbours, your constituents, your friends, there's not enough in this budget to keep them fed, to keep them alive, to keep them housed, to keep them safe.

2050

We have a moment in time where we can choose between paths. It's not too late. We are apparently here for another few hours. Maybe when the clock strikes midnight, there is some magic. I don't know. But we are not too late to turn this around, to make this budget about people over corporate profits; to make this budget about just, equitable access over hiding one man's cellphone records.

We have a moment in time right now where the members across the way and the members on this side could be light to the province—could be light to the province. And yet I fear that this is not that moment. This is the moment of growing darker, the moment of selfish choices over common good, the moment when good people will fall through the cracks. And yet in these moments, Speaker, there will always be individuals like the Toronto Tenant Union that rallied last weekend, that are insisting that this is not the end of the story and the light is growing brighter because tenants are organizing.

This is the moment where the unions, the teachers, the health care professionals, the care economy built on the backs of women are saying, “No,” and they will rally and they will rise and they will be light in the face of this budget. And this is the moment that, no matter how hard this government tries in its omnibus bills to tuck things away, in its refusal to bring things to committee and public hearings, in its cover of night sittings—no matter how hard they try, Speaker, this budget isn't the end of the story.

The people of Ontario deserve better. They know it. And they will, one day, get it.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Before I go into questions, I just want to remind the members, it's late, but let's keep our voices down so I can clearly hear the members.

Questions?

Mr. Dave Smith: I heard the member talking about the budget and talking about developmental services and talking about social services. Developmental services have had the highest increase in Ontario's history in this budget. Autism services have increased by \$186 million in this this budget to \$965 million, almost a billion dollars. That's a 232% increase since 2018, when inflation is only 27% since then.

Will the member stand up and support the massive increases to social services in this budget?

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I thank the member for Simcoe—Grey for talking about this because, of course, he will know that the FAO actually says that we are \$1.5 billion short from 2025-26 than what is required to maintain the levels of the year before in the social services sector. And when we talk about real per-capita spending, it's a 10% cut over the years.

Now, this is a wonderful thing to see: the increase in the autism budget. What we're not seeing is a massive change

in that wait-list. There are children waiting five years. There are children waiting for services in northern Ontario and massive moments in their small lifetimes that are being missed.

So, no, not until that wait-list is down to a couple of weeks will it be an appropriate budget for those families.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The member is absolutely right that a budget is a time for choices.

There are things in the budget that have absolutely nothing to do with money. I am referring to schedule 7, where freedom-of-information laws will be changed to protect the Premier's cellphone records and some of his cabinet's cellphone records. Do you think that putting a restriction on the freedom of access to information for the Premier and his cabinet is going to do anything to help the people of Ontario struggling to put a roof over their heads and feed their kids?

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I'd like to thank the member for Nickel Belt for that question.

We don't have to take my word for it: The Privacy Commissioner spoke out in a remarkable way—usually, this independent body does not speak out.

What they said was, "Government records must be accessible to the people of Ontario, subject only to limited and carefully defined exceptions.

"Today's shocking announcement of proposed changes ... seriously undermines this principle. It raises serious concerns about the future of Ontarians' rights to transparency, privacy, and independent oversight."

It goes on to say it's an "alarming proposal"—I mean, it's pages, Speaker.

So, no, the budget not only doesn't help the people of Ontario; that particular schedule will cause future suffering, because we know that when deals are made behind closed doors, corruption follows.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member from Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Ted Hsu: I would like to invite my colleague from Parkdale–High Park to mention some more things that were not in this budget that should have been.

I'll mention one thing that was unfortunately not in the budget bill: the agricultural Risk Management Program. It's meant to phase in over three years. I know that farmers, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, have asked for that Risk Management Program—for the full amount to come in right now.

But the government has chosen not to do that. It's very hard to understand that because so many things have happened. I mean, we have a conflict in the Middle East, fertilizer prices are up, fuel prices are up. It's so much riskier for farmers this year.

I don't understand why the risk management plan hasn't been accelerated so it's at its full value this year.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I want to thank the member for that question because in my short 20 minutes, I wasn't able to get to everything. Of course, one of the things that's very dear to anyone who cares about the children and the

future, is the way that the Ford government is attacking local environmental protections to help developer friends.

We've seen this with the conservation authorities that have been created. In the past, you see each watershed was distinct. I have the riding that was affected by Hurricane Hazel. We know the importance of environmental protections, of safeguarding farmers, of safeguarding all of our watersheds.

What I would have liked to see in this budget was money to go towards that; money to go towards wildfire protection, but there was a cut there; money to make sure that this earth is there for us now and for our children in the future.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Brian Riddell: To the member across the way: One of the biggest causes of intimate partner violence is financial, and that's why the government is investing in preparing workers for in-demand jobs to make them financially secure and give them good-paying wages.

We're investing over \$6.4 billion in colleges and universities to fund over 70,000 more seats in STEM, health care, skilled trades and education, along with \$1.6 billion this year alone for skills and employment training.

2100 These are big investments. Through you, Madam Speaker, will the member opposite support this budget, through these investments, or will they vote not to and block the opportunities to improve the situation?

MPP Alexa Gilmour: To my honourable colleague the member across the way there, a couple of things:

(1) In order for individuals struggling with intimate partner violence to be able to afford to go to colleges, to universities—many of them are struggling with financial matters, as you just said—they need OSAP.

(2) My motion on November 25 proposed increasing the sector that women facing intimate partner violence depend on the most: the care economy. It is a sector that is 75% women workers, 96% women workers in the child care sector, and this government forces them to live in basic poverty—\$18 to \$22 in some of those cases. So if you want intimate partner violence to end by investing in women's economic security, then I urge you to vote with my motion that I offered last year.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: We know this government is bragging about this budget, how great this budget is and how much money they invested, but yet they time-allocate it so nobody can come and speak to how great this budget is, because they don't want to hear.

And then, tonight, we're debating this in the middle of the night, until midnight, where there are less people to listen, less people to say how good this budget is. So tell me: Why would they do this, and what do they have to hide?

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Thank you to my colleague for the question. "What are they trying to hide?" is indeed the big question at the moment. The galleries would normally

be full of people if it was daylight. People would line up a mile long to talk about this budget if we had brought it to committee.

And yet, we are not doing that. This government is clearly saying one thing—that they are proud of this budget—but people are known by their actions, and if a government is proud, they go out of their way to give opportunities for something to be seen. What we have here is a government that is once again—as it did with the greenbelt, as it did with the Skills Development Fund, as it did with the jet, as it did with the cellphone—hiding its failure of a budget.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Before I start the debate, I'm going to ask the members to just take the conversation a notch down. It's 9 o'clock; I get it.

Further debate?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you, Madam Speaker—

Interjections.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Wow, and a rousing welcome. I appreciate that on this late Wednesday evening.

Speaker, it's always a pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents in Don Valley West. I will be splitting my time this evening with my great colleague from Ottawa South, who I know will bring valuable insights to this debate.

You know, Speaker, as I said, it is always an honour to rise, but it is a little surprising that we are here tonight to debate Bill 97, Plan to Protect Ontario Act, because normally this budget bill would have been in committee right now and we would be having public hearings about it. We would be coming back to the Legislature in a bit of time with a whole bunch of new insights from the people who want to talk about the budget and what's in it and what's not in it, and that would inform our debate here. It would make it a really, I'm sure, even more interesting debate.

That really is the standard practice. I think it was my honourable colleague from Kingston and the Islands who talked about the purpose of committees and why bills go to committee: because accountable governments want to hear what people have to say about legislation, because, after all, it's the people who elect us to be here. Committees are their opportunity to speak directly with us—with their government, their elected officials—about what is in a bill, and in particular an important bill like a budget bill, Speaker.

While I say it's surprising and it's disappointing, it's not a surprise from this government, because they don't want to talk about this bill in committee. So we are here late at night on a Wednesday, 9 o'clock, as they try to rush this bill through the Legislature, I think because of the changes in schedule 7 around the freedom of information, but I'll come back to that.

I said that normally you would learn new things in committee, and you would come back to the Legislature and you would have some interesting things to say. But we do actually have some very interesting things to say and talk about, because there's one really, really big thing. It's

so big it can fly through the sky. It was a jet, Speaker: a big, powerful jet that this government did not put in its big budget bill. Why didn't they do that? Why didn't they talk about the jet? Maybe it's because they were ashamed. It wasn't something to brag about, so they didn't put it in their budget bill—almost \$29 million.

Actually, it's borrowed money, because we know this government has been running deficits. They're almost half a trillion dollars in debt, and this jet would have contributed to that because it's with borrowed money. So while people are struggling to put groceries on the table—they're worried about paying their rent; they're worried about making their mortgage payments; they're worried about if they will be able to put their kids in their favourite programs next fall—this government decides to spend \$29 million on a luxury jet. That is something new, Speaker.

We know that this Premier loves to talk about the gravy train. Well, now he's got a gravy plane, and he's not going to hear the end of it for a while. It just goes to show that this government is tired. They are out of touch with what is going on in their province, in their own ridings.

Another new thing that we've learned since the budget bill came out was that the labour minister, who's really being criticized for the scandalous Skills Development Fund, doling out money left, right and centre to their friends, lobbyists, their donors, the Premier's family dentist—I mean, that can't be a coincidence. Can we just say that that can't be a coincidence? They've got billions of dollars that they're giving out through that fund, and the labour minister is doubling down and saying they're going to keep scores secret.

Again, we don't have a transparent government. We have a government that is hiding the purchase of private jets; we have a government that is hiding how they scored applications, why they would give a certain amount of money to one of the applicants in the Skills Development Fund; and, of course, we have a government that is going to hide all of their dirty deeds through the passing of this bill by changing the freedom of information act.

Speaker, we know that life is harder after eight years of this tired, disastrous Ford Conservative government. We know that life is harder for people here in Ontario. This budget isn't about protecting Ontario; it's just pretending to protect Ontario. Again, just read the document. By their own admission, their plan is not working. Compared to the 2025 budget, this year's budget shows GDP growth is down, expected job creation down, housing starts down—Speaker, everything that should be up is down. In real dollars, program spending is also going to go down. That means people will be getting less services from this government. In a time, again, when we're in an affordability crisis and people are really worried, this seems like a very interesting thing to be doing.

2110

Speaker, one of my favourite topics as a chartered accountant is taxes. It's actually one of my least favourite times of year because I have to do my tax return and those of my family. It's a lot of work, as we all know. But when you get a little bit of money back, it feels kind of good, right?

This government—or actually, it was the PCs, the party—before they were elected in 2018, promised to cut middle-income taxes. Guess what, Speaker? This budget still doesn't do it. It's another budget of broken promises. Once again, there's no middle-income tax cut, and we've been calling for that. It would have put close to \$1,000 back in people's pockets, and that, again, during an affordability crisis, is money they really could use.

The path to balance—again, another promise that this government made: “Don't worry. We'll come into office. We're going to balance the books”—promise broken again. Eight years—eight years—and this government has yet to table a balanced budget. It's kind of hard to believe, to be honest.

We've got, of course, growth in the debt. We've got interest payments rising four to six times faster than program spending. I know the finance minister likes to talk about the upgrades to the credit rating. Those happened in 2024—again, not being transparent. Guess what he leaves out? I have yet to hear him talk about this ever, actually. I think he's delusional about this. He certainly doesn't want to admit it. In 2025, they actually did get a credit rating downgrade. They got a downgrade on their outlook. So again, we have a government that talks about being transparent, talks about being accountable, and it's just not so.

Today, in question period, I asked the finance minister, “Gee, you tabled this bill, your budget bill, and you didn't even talk about the jet once. You didn't talk about freedom-of-information changes once.” In all of the lead-offs that he's done, and I guess there have been three now—two now, I guess; sorry—there has been no mention of freedom-of-information changes by the minister who tabled the bill. If that doesn't, again, speak louder than his words, I don't know what does. He doesn't even want to talk about what is one of the biggest changes that this government is making to our ability to get information about what our government does. If he were proud of it, Speaker, he would be talking about it. So I can only conclude he is actually embarrassed; he's ashamed. He knows it's the wrong thing, so he's not talking about it.

He's not talking about that promise around lowering taxes. I want to just talk a little bit more about that because Ontario has one of the top marginal tax rates in the country and, of course, has a tax rate that is much higher than the US as well, about 10 points higher than the US. In Ontario, our top marginal rate is 53.5%, about 10 points higher than the US average of 43.7%.

The Fraser Institute wrote after this budget came out—and again, I would expect that the government members are quite familiar with the Fraser Institute. I know I pay attention to their research and their comments. Grady Munro and Jake Fuss wrote that on Thursday—this is, again, the day that the budget came out—“The Ford government ... released its 2026 budget, which introduces some initial measures from its highly touted ‘Tax Action Plan’ that's meant to help make Ontario ‘the most competitive jurisdiction in Canada.’ Based on the rhetoric”—Speaker, that's their word, not mine—“around this plan, it seemed the ... government,” led by Premier Doug Ford, “might finally follow through on its 2018 campaign promises to cut personal and business taxes. But unfortu-

nately for Ontarians, the measures only tinker with the province's tax system and fail to provide the tax relief necessary to achieve this worthy goal.”

Speaker, it goes on to talk about the cut in small business tax rate. I will say that I'm glad the government listened to our suggestion to cut small business taxes. The CFIB has been talking about it. They didn't go far enough. The CFIB and I had been calling for a 50% cut in the tax rate. They did 30%, so that's something. But there would have been over \$30,000 back into small business' pockets had they done this when we called for it.

The folks at the Fraser Institute go on to say that, yes, these measures will provide some measure of relief for Ontario homebuyers and small businesses but, overall, they fail to meaningfully increase Ontario's tax competitiveness, which has been a long-standing drag on the economy—again, a missed opportunity. This government could have cut taxes at a time when people need every dollar they can get back in their pockets to face the challenges, of course, of higher prices everywhere they go.

Speaker, let me come back to the FOI changes. Again, since the government didn't let this bill go to committee, it's really the focus of the debate. We've talked about the numbers; the numbers are really bad. It's a bigger deficit than they planned last year, higher debt. They continue their trend of broken promises. That's all old news now, but the FOI changes are going to live on. This government does not want to talk about what is on its books because they're not just changing this going forward, Speaker, they're going backwards. They're going back in history to protect something that's in the books, on the records, that they do not want us to see. They're going to immense measures to do that—again, pushing this bill through without public hearings on the most important bill the government tables.

They certainly didn't want to talk about FOI changes. That's what would have been talked about at those hearings. People would have been talking about it. I'll share one quote from James Turk, the director of the Centre for Free Expression at Toronto Metropolitan University. He told the Globe and Mail, “It is as if they're building a brick wall around each of the ministers, around the Premier, and saying the public has no right to know what happens within that walled-in space.”

These FOI changes are not about being more transparent, more accountable. I almost had to laugh when the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement tried to tell us that nothing will change in terms of access to information. I'll quote him here: “What we are doing is aligning our legislation with other provinces, with other Westminster democracies, ensuring people still have access fully to information in terms of government decision-making. Nothing is changing.”

Well, Speaker, that seems a little disingenuous because if nothing was changing, then they wouldn't be changing the FOI law.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Can the member withdraw?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Sure, I'll withdraw.

Speaker, it's something that we need to think about. Why would the minister say that—in the minister's own

words, “Nothing is changing”? In their own bill, Speaker, things are changing. They are changing FOI drastically.

One reporter—whose name I’m going to get wrong, Speaker, which one it was—showed a document that came back from a non-cabinet minister, from staff, a public servant—because they say, “Oh, don’t worry. You’ll be able to get everything you need from the public servants.” A document came back from the Secretary of the Cabinet—15 pages. I think the reporter said there were 25 words on those 15 pages, Speaker; everything else was redacted. So, if that’s what we’re going to, that is not more transparent. That is not more accountable. That is hiding. That is hiding what you’re doing and not just hiding what you’re doing now—call it what you want. Come up with a better word to say it, Speaker. When the minister says nothing is changing, how do you reconcile that with the act is changing? It doesn’t even make sense. I won’t keep dwelling on that, but again, from his own words: “Nothing is changing.” What he should have said is: Everything is changing. Everything is changing when it comes to FOI.

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We know that this shady Ford Conservative government is framing FIPPA as outdated, that that’s why we’re making these changes. That’s not why they’re making these changes. They’re making these changes to hide. They’re making these changes so that their dark deeds do not see the light of day. But we will be here, because that’s our job as opposition members. We will be here to keep fighting, to keep asking the government questions, to keep trying to find every way we can around the changes in these—the changes; not “nothing is changing”; the real changes that this government is making to FOI laws—to fight so that we can get the information that we need to hold the government to account, because that is what needs to happen.

The Premier was talking earlier this week to reporters about his jet plane. He was really wanting to leave on that jet plane, but now he can’t because people got all upset with him. Gee, I wonder why? They got upset because he wants to ride around like a billionaire while the rest of Ontarians are worried about putting groceries on the table. What did he say? “Oh, you guys are so hard on me; I’m the most scrutinized person in the country.” Speaker, maybe it’s because he deserves a lot of scrutiny. This Premier, this government, needs a lot of scrutiny.

We had the \$8.3-billion greenbelt giveaway. The Auditor General told us about brown envelopes; the RCMP is now investigating. That’s the kind of thing that this government is hiding and will be able to hide in the future, and going back in the past, it will be harder to find out information about what all that was about, the greenbelt. It will be harder to find out information about the Skills Development Fund, the billions of taxpayer dollars that they’re borrowing—again, they’re borrowing that money. An article came out today about some of that money maybe helping a union build a mansion north of Toronto. FOI laws might help us find out what’s really going on with that. These are the kinds of things, Speaker—this is why this Premier deserves a lot of scrutiny. He will certainly continue to get it from us.

We’ve really just scratched the surface on this FOI change. It’s really damaging to our democracy. It’s putting us in the Dark Ages. When we have taxation without representation—that’s what it feels like. The government will take our money—no tax cuts for the middle-income earners. They will continue to take our money and hide behind the changes to these FOI laws.

It’s a dark day. This government, I know, is going to rush this bill through. That’s why we’re here late at night. I’m just here to say that we will continue to fight against that because that’s our job as opposition members. I look forward to continuing to debate this government on this topic.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the member for Ottawa South.

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much. Hold your applause.

In the dark of the night, this government is here to cover up the cover up: to pass freedom-of-information changes that are going to protect the government; they’re not going to protect the people. They’re the wrong things to do. I’m not sure if the light is on over there, but it doesn’t look like there’s anybody home, because nobody is hearing what people are saying on the street.

I just want to go to this first because it’s been sticking in my head all day, because we’ve been talking about planes. We’ve been talking about planes a lot. I had someone who was here to visit me at Queen’s Park. He was coming as part of a lobby group and he said, “Don’t tell anybody I said this, but I was coming over in the taxi, and I said to the taxi driver, ‘Take me to Queen’s Park.’” And he said he turned around and looked at him and said, “Are you the guy who bought the jet?”

When taxi drivers are talking about the thing that happened, you know that everybody knows—everybody knows. What do taxi drivers do? They talk. They’re friendly. They’re good. I don’t take Uber. I never take Uber.

I had a private member’s bill—the House leader would remember it—the Protecting Passenger Safety Act. There shouldn’t be two rules. There shouldn’t be separate rules for people doing the same work. We shouldn’t create a heavy regulatory burden on taxi drivers while saying a whole bunch of other people don’t have that burden, don’t have those costs. It’s unfair. Taxi drivers are great people and they are great people to have as your allies. They are great people to talk to in a cab because they talk to other people.

So if taxi drivers are talking about the luxury jet, that’s something that should be of concern to everybody on this side. Because apparently, it’s in the budget—we couldn’t find it, but what I understand from the Premier’s comments is, it was unanimously supported by cabinet. Everybody said, “Yeah, we’re half a trillion dollars in debt, people can’t afford groceries, but you know what, Premier? You buy that plane, because you deserve it.” Everybody stood up, like penguins—now, penguins can’t fly, so maybe that’s not a good analogy—and they said to the king penguin, “Yes, you can have a plane because you can’t fly.”

Here's the thing. The Premier says, "I've sold the jet. It's gone back to Bombardier." But nobody can talk about what's inside it or how much it is. Everybody is talking about all the details: How did the Premier trick it out? What did he put in there? Did he get the same price? It doesn't matter. The Premier owns the luxury jet. He owns the luxury jet. I know you're going to say, "No, he sold it." No: He owns it. What he owns is, he owns the decision to buy the luxury jet.

You know who else owns the luxury jet, who owns that decision? Every member of cabinet. The President of the Treasury Board—so on top of the members of cabinet. I know there are other members who are on Treasury Board who aren't in cabinet, so they own the plane too.

At a time when Ontarians can hardly cope with the cost of groceries and gas and their rent, the Premier bought a luxury plane—a luxury plane. He owns the plane. He owns the decision.

Because you know what—okay, you've got me started now. The Premier said—I think I can do this—"I made a mistake, and you know what? I'm going to reverse course. I'm going to change my mind. I'm going to sell the plane. I'm going to sell the plane. I make mistakes. I'm only human." How many times have we heard that? A lot. It's been going on for more than a decade. "I'm only human," so we all feel empathy for him. Then the next thing the Premier says is, "Poor me. You all treat me so badly. You're all so hard on me. Poor me. Poor me."

And then—here's the kicker, folks; this is why he still owns the plane—he didn't say, "I'm sorry that I bought the plane. I'm sorry that I bought it." He says, "I'm sorry that I told you the wrong way about buying it. I'm sorry I said it the wrong way. I'm not sorry for the thing that I did, I'm just sorry I didn't communicate it in the right way." That's not being sorry. That's just saying, "I messed up. I fumbled it. I fumbled the ball. But I still think I deserve a plane."

And if you listen to the Premier—go and read his comments; don't take it from me. You all know it. The Premier is going, "No, I should have got that plane. No, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, but I should have got that plane. I'm sorry, folks. I reversed it; the plane is sold. But I should have got that plane." Give me a break. Buying a luxury jet when people are struggling is not a good thing to do.

The Premier owns that luxury jet. It's his. He's owning that decision. It's not going to go away. It's going to be here forever. We're not going to let it go away. He bought a luxury jet when people can't afford groceries. He bought a luxury jet when our hospitals are a billion dollars in the hole. He bought a luxury jet when kids with special needs, exceptionalities, can't get the help they need in schools. He bought a luxury jet when he's run up the provincial credit card to half a trillion dollars, folks—half a trillion dollars.

2130

That's the other thing. I don't understand it. Never has a government spent so much, borrowed so much, incurred so much debt to do so little. I'm not sure; maybe the Premier felt that he deserved it because of all the hardship

that he has had to live through and how difficult things are. My heart bleeds for him.

That he deserved a luxury jet—this decision is so disconnected from the reality of people's everyday lives. People can't afford groceries. You've got the highest unemployment rate in decades. People are hurting. People are losing their jobs. In 2018, there were 809,000 manufacturing jobs, and how many manufacturing jobs are there right now? There are 800,000; you're down 9,000. You have lost manufacturing jobs, but you can buy a luxury jet. We can buy a luxury jet. Two million Ontarians don't have a family doctor. They have no place to go to get primary care, but you can buy a luxury jet. People can't get the surgeries that they need on time; the Premier can get a luxury jet, though. Class sizes are too big, but a luxury jet is okay. That's good for the Premier, because he deserves it, because he's hard done by, because life is so tough.

Here's the other thing about the luxury jet: You can only land it in about 10% of runways in Ontario. You can't take it up north. It's not going to be an evac plane. All the stories that he told over the last couple days don't wash. No other Premier has one; they all fly commercial. The stories he was telling just didn't pan out.

But do you know where the plane can land? Can anybody tell me where the plane can land? Not Ottawa, not Toronto.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Muskoka.

Mr. John Fraser: Muskoka, ah, yes, the family place, where we entertain the rich and famous.

Now that we're talking about airports, Billy Bishop—Bill 5, right? Bill 5 is there to build Ontario, protect Ontario. "We're doing this because we need to move quickly. We need to move quickly in northern Ontario. We need to move quickly in southwestern Ontario. We have to build manufacturing." In Bill 5, what's the first thing? "We need Billy Bishop, because I'm getting a plane, and we're going to extend the runway. By the way, we're going to put a gigantic convention centre in the middle of Lake Ontario, because that's what Ontarians need, and I need a private jet." That's what we're hearing.

It's incredibly disconnected. This government is tired, out of touch, out of gas, out of ideas and disconnected from the reality of people's everyday lives, and they see it. That's why the cabbie said, "Are you the guy who bought the plane?" They know. They hear. Ontarians are watching. We may not think they are, but the jet plane—everybody tuned in. They're tuning in right now, and they're watching.

What they're thinking is, "The Premier can buy a jet plane, but my kid is going have to borrow more money to go to school because they changed OSAP." That's what they're thinking. "I can't get my mom a family doc, but the Premier can get a luxury jet." "My son can't get that extra help that he needs in school. He's autistic. I'm not getting what I need from government, but the Premier, he can get a luxury jet."

That's okay. That's good, because he deserves one, because—remember—he told us he's hard done by. He's the most scrutinized politician in Canada, maybe all the world. I'm sure if we gave him enough room, he would say that.

People are watching. They know. They're listening now, and they're listening because the Premier decided to do something that was totally, totally disconnected from reality. How is buying a luxury private jet protecting Ontario? So when we get to the questions, if somebody can just add in a line about that.

When the idea of a luxury jet came up, somebody should have said—the Premier should have said, if he was listening—because he says he's listening, because that's why he's changing his mind. Somebody should have said, "Premier, that's not the right thing to do," or at the very least, "That's not a good look." But nobody said that, apparently. Everybody put up their hand and said, "Premier, yes, we want to get the jet and can I have a ride? Can I go with you?"

Now, I know that some of you there are going, "It should never have happened." I don't expect you to say it and I don't expect you to indicate it. Because over there, I know there are people who are reasonable and thoughtful and aren't in it for themselves. Buying a luxury private jet is being in it for yourself. That's being disconnected. We serve people. We serve at the pleasure of people. Leaders are servants. That's the thing we're supposed to do; we're supposed to put them first.

When things aren't going well for them, when they're struggling to survive, when they don't know whether or not they're going to have a job next month or they're going to get that surgery that they need or they're going to find a family doctor, we shouldn't be going out and buying luxury private jets. It's not something these people should be doing. As I said, I know that there are people in the room on all sides that are going, "No, we shouldn't have." Maybe there's a few that are going, "Yes, we should have," and maybe people said, "Yes, we're going to do it because the boss said so." It was a mistake, though, because people aren't going to stop talking about it. It's a symbol.

So when I say the Premier owns the private luxury jet, he owns it. The reason that he owns it is, he owns the decision. You can't sell the decision. You can't not have ownership of the decisions that you made. That's the way it is. The decisions I make, decisions you make—you make a decision, it's yours. You stand behind your decision and it's yours, whether or not it's a good decision, or whether or not you want to change your mind. It works better if you're actually contrite for the thing that you did when you say, "I'm sorry I did that. I'll never do it again. You know what? I'm really sorry. It's the wrong thing to do." But you don't say, "I'm sorry I did that. I'm going to reverse that. But what I'm really sorry for is, I told you the wrong way about this thing that I did." That's like trying to put lipstick on a pig, right? That's what it is.

Speaker, I'm not going to talk about the plane all night. I think I've talked about it for a bit now. I can come back if anybody wants a refresher as we go through. But let's talk about FOI laws. That's why we're here in the dark of night, to cover up the cover-up, right? The only reason—

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: Oh, I can hear the bleating right now. Speaker, I can hear the bleating right now. I can hear the sheep on the other side bleating and saying, "Oh, the FOIs, it's not a change, baa."

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Baa.

Mr. John Fraser: Thanks for your help, Guy. Thank you very much, sir, for your help.

Interjection: Through the Speaker.

Mr. John Fraser: It's right through the Speaker. Changing the FOI laws—

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: Tell us about the gas tax.

Mr. John Fraser: I'll tell you about it later, okay? I can tell you about some other gas too, but we won't go there—like the price of gas.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I need the conversation to keep to a minimum. I understand it's very late, but I cannot hear the member. The member has the floor.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you, Speaker, and in fairness to my colleagues on the other side, I will do my best to behave and not engage them the way that I have been. I will go back to talking about freedom-of-information changes.

2140

So, here's the thing—again, covering up the cover-up. But what does freedom of information mean? We would not have found out—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I will start naming names. I'm going to ask again: Can the member keep their voice down?

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you, Speaker.

We would never ever, ever have found out about the greenbelt and the Premier's decision to carve up the greenbelt, sell it to his friends. That was another, "Oh, I made a mistake. I'm going to reverse my decision, and I'm only human. I make mistakes. And they're all so hard on me. Poor me." And then the voice goes down, you'll notice—I watched the presser yesterday—because he's very humble. It's a low voice. We've seen the movie a thousand times before. It's the same old thing.

So freedom of information would have actually not saved the greenbelt if it hadn't been here. It saved the greenbelt, because it would have been carved up and sold off if we hadn't found out that the Premier was trying to sell it off, the thing that he never said he would do. So the reason that freedom of information is there: It's for the public. It's so the public can see how the decisions are made with the resources that they give us, who we talk to, how we make those decisions, how they're influenced, and that's fair, and it's for all of us, all sides. It's been going for 40 years.

And if you're on this side of the House, which you will be one day; I'm not going to predict when, but you will be if you hang around, if you don't get beat—not that you would, because I think you're all great folks. But the thing is—

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: Sorry, Speaker; I'm taunting them. I am. I'll take some responsibility for this.

But the thing is, you need to know that. You want to know that information. You want that information. The people who live in your ridings want that information. They want to know. And there's things that happen that I know, because I've sat on the other side, and you hear them, and you go, "What?"

Mr. Brian Riddell: Remember the gas plant.

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, I know. Okay, enough. We'll get to that later, okay? That's good. We'll get to that later.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: You're going to talk about the gas plants?

Mr. John Fraser: We're going to get to it. I'm going to get there.

But actually, if you want to be accurate, to the President of the Treasury Board, who I just understand has a voice, because I've been asking her lots of questions: That was actually committee. And, oh my gosh, I'm not hanging upside down anymore.

So Speaker, back to the FOI changes: It is the wrong thing to do. We shouldn't be making those changes. They're there to protect the public. And, oh, we would never ever have found out about the Skills Development Fund and the \$9.8 million, or \$10 million, rounded off, to a strip club owner or the \$2 million dollars to the family dentist—the Ford family dentist, that is, Speaker. We would never have found out about Keel Digital Solutions and the minister's working with a lobbyist who was his friend, to award a company, I think, a million and change. We would never have found about that.

There are all sorts of things that Ontarians—and when I say "we," Ontarians—would never ever have found out about if we didn't have freedom of information. And it's on all of us. My colleagues to the right who are to my left, they were in government. I think I was in grade school, but freedom of information applied to them as well, too—I wasn't in grade school; I had three kids.

I think that there's a certain baseline or set of rules that we can all agree on. Weakening freedom of information just weakens democracy. It weakens democracy.

Speaking of democracy, conservation authorities are in here, democracy, local decision-making. We have Bill 100, I think, taking away more local decision making, centralizing power here in the corner office, whether it's in conservation authorities or in education, or it'll soon be in health. The government believes they can run everything from a corner office here at Queen's Park, and it's not going to work. Ontario is a big place—a really, really big place.

One of the other things—along with buying a jet plane, which was hard to find in the budget until it came out—is that in this bill, the Premier decided to take the family out of Family Day. What better to do than to take the family out of Family Day? Because he was unfortunately not able to get that set of gloves or that set of pliers that he wanted at Home Depot last Family Day, so he decided that Family Day didn't have to be for families; it could be for shopping.

I spent most of my life in retail, and what I can tell you is there are a few days throughout the year where retail workers get a day off to be with their family—a statutory holiday—because it's not all of them. Christmas is one, Boxing Day is one, and Easter. But February was Family Day; we set it aside for family. And those families in retail—people say, "They don't have to work if they don't want to." Well, it doesn't actually work that way. It doesn't actually work that way, because if everybody says no, then they go, "Well, you said no, but it's you and you and you. And if you say no, maybe you won't be working here anymore, or maybe your shifts will change, or I won't be very happy with it, because you need to work, because I don't want to work that day, because I'm the manager." I've been there. Been there, done that.

Of all the things—of all the things to do—to change Family Day didn't seem like a priority. But I guess if you go to Home Depot and you're disappointed, and you're trying to get some leather polish, because you know you're going to be polishing up those seats on the plane, and you can't get it, and you're not going to have any time, because you're really busy and it's the one free day you have—you get there, you're mad, you're not happy, it's not open, and then you say, "Oh, shucks. To heck with Family Day. Let's open the stores. Let's go shopping. Let's make it shopping day."

Victoria Day is the same way too. I think we have to respect retail workers. There are a lot of them. And people say, "Well, other people have to work on Family Day." Well, yes, but sometimes in some of those other businesses, they work Monday to Friday. In health care, a lot of people work Monday to Friday. Hours and conditions are different. I know there are nurses working on weekends. My mom was a nurse; she worked on weekends. But retail, now, especially in the grocery business, is precarious employment, even when you're represented. You never know what's going to happen, because the stores have the power. That's just the way it works. It's just what happened in that business.

So respectfully to those folks, I think we could say, "Let's just put this day aside. Let's let Family Day be Family Day." And what's the thing that we learned from the pandemic, right? Family is super-important. It's a thing that we have to pay attention to, because we realize life is short. It's really short. We don't always know how short it is. Not to be morbid, but it's true, right? It's true.

So, Speaker, in my remaining 14 minutes, I'd like to keep talking about the jet.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Talk about it.

Mr. John Fraser: Talk about the jet, yes. Well, I know who would get the first ride on that jet, Speaker. I know who would be right there, in first class, because we do know that all the cabinet said, "Yes, Premier, you deserve a private jet. You've been so good to us, we would like to make sure that you get a private jet. Billy can't get the help he needs in school—he can't get that extra help that he needs, because he's got an exceptionality—but, Premier, you can get a private jet. My mom doesn't have a family

doctor—she’s been looking for five years—but, Premier, you get a luxury jet.”

So what else? Speaker, we’re half a trillion dollars in debt, right? We’re half a trillion dollars in debt, but there’s enough room on the card that we can get a luxury private jet.

2150

That’s what that taxi driver I was talking about is talking about. He said, “Is he the guy who bought a luxury jet?” He didn’t say that because—he wasn’t thinking: “I’m sitting here driving a cab. I’m trying to put my kids through school. They’re telling me I’m going to have to take on more debt, and this guy is buying a luxury jet. Give me a break.” That’s what the taxi driver is thinking. What do you think he’s saying every time somebody gets in a cab and engages in a conversation? He’s talking about the luxury private jet that the Premier bought.

Speaker, never having been in a luxury private jet, I can’t understand the temptation. I have noted that Premiers for 30 or 40 years have managed to go charter and get into regular commercial, not first-class, flights—not business class; they fly commercial, like the rest of us. It’s not a hardship. As a matter of fact, a lot of the Premiers—because I know the claim was made. The Premier said, “Every Premier”—they have three planes in Quebec, but they weren’t actually for the Premier. They were for medical transport for people, and they could land in the north, unlike the luxury jet the Premier wanted to buy. Most of the other Premiers were saying, “Well, no, we fly commercial and we go economy and we sometimes do charter planes. No, we don’t have any planes.” But the Premier was like, “Poor me. Everybody else has a plane and I don’t.” But everybody else didn’t have a plane.

It’s just totally disconnected from the reality of people’s everyday lives, the struggles that they have just paying the bills, putting food on the table, buying clothes for the kids, trying to put them in sports, trying to help them get through college or university—those are people’s struggles. They’re not thinking about luxury private jets; they’re just thinking about getting by.

When you’ve got a whole bunch of people who are just trying to get by and somebody goes out and does something like that, you know what it says to them? “You don’t see me. You don’t know I’m here. You don’t know I’m just trying to get by, because I elected you to help me, to help me and my family. I don’t want a lot; I don’t need a lot. I just need a bit of help. I don’t need a luxury private jet. I need my son or daughter to get what they need in school. I need them to be able to get a degree or a diploma or a trade that won’t put them into lifelong debt. I need to get a family doctor; I need a surgery; I need a take-home cancer drug”—which we don’t do and we haven’t done, 10 years later.

With record unemployment, the threat of tariffs and the need to look out for each other, support each other, look out for the people who are vulnerable, pull together, it’s not the time to buy a luxury private jet. Well, never is the time, but especially right now when families are hurting.

You can talk a good game. The Premier can talk a good game about protecting Ontario and being a man of the people and, “Aw, shucks, folks. The cheese slid off the cracker, and I hit the roof when I heard that and that 800-pound gorilla is going to go through the roof.” But the reality is, all those things, all those cute little sayings, all those little folksy things that go on, it’s not working anymore. It’s gone. They got on the luxury private jet and they’re gone—the luxury private jet the Premier is going to own for the rest of his time in office. He won’t forget. He’ll never forget when he bought a luxury private jet and that he owns the decision to buy that jet, whether the jet is in a hanger at Pearson, or back at Bombardier or sold to some billionaire somewhere else in the world. He’s going to own it, and I know he’s going to own it. I know he’s going to own it because of that taxi driver who talked to the gentleman who was in my office today and asked him, when he was coming to Queen’s Park, “Are you the guy that bought the luxury jet?”

Speaker, I know you’re from Scarborough. Scarborough is a great place. I know you’re passionate about Scarborough. I’m two rows down when you ask a question. You’re there for your community. The people in Scarborough would look, and they’re going to say, “There’s lots of stuff going on. We have a challenge with crime. Our community is hurting. It’s not good.” And they look at the luxury private jet, and they go, “What? What is that all about? Don’t you see me? I’m here. I need help. We need your help.” It’s hard to see from 40,000 feet.

Speaker, just to wrap up, because I’m sure that my colleagues would like me to—

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: Oh, I’m not giving up; don’t worry. I’ve just got to get my breath. It is late. I have been up for 16 hours because I got up at 4 o’clock this morning—not that I’m complaining. I know everybody else is in the same boat. So just give me a second to collect my thoughts. I’m not as alert as you.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Collect them. Do you want a point of order?

Mr. John Fraser: No, I don’t want a point of order. I don’t think we need to help each other, Minister. We’ll just leave it as it is, right? We’ll just leave—

Hon. Paul Calandra: Well, I’m here for you.

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, I’m here for you too. You know that, right? And I miss you.

So Speaker—

Hon. Paul Calandra: Come on.

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, maybe not, but we’ll see. Thanks for helping me fill the clock. You are helping me. Maybe there’s a sliver of hope there; maybe it won’t be forever.

But anyhow, I could talk about the private jet. I could talk about FOIs. I am 16 hours into this, like most of you, but what I really want to emphasize here is—

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: Oh, I know what I want to talk about. Thanks very much. That was very good. Thank you, whoever yelled that back up there.

We're in a game of legislative chicken here, which is, how do we make sure who gets the floor, at what time, so that you guys can get this done tomorrow by lunchtime? That's it. But for people outside, that's not a good thing, because you're trying to rush something through. You've blown past committee. You haven't even done committee. Your plan for government, the whole plan—I can't bring it out; it's a prop—the budget, is this thick—a 45-minute speech, no committee, nothing, nada, squat, zero. Guys, do you think you got everything perfect in there? Do you think maybe there's something you might want to check in your homework? You think—

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Yes, like justice sector—

Mr. John Fraser: What's that?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Justice sector spending is flat.

Mr. John Fraser: Oh yes, that's true. My colleague reminded me. I'm so lucky to have the member from Don Valley West. She keeps me in line. She looks at every line. And what she said is, "Justice spending is flat." It's flat. But we know crime is up, right? And we know from an FOI that 150 criminals got out mistakenly from this government. We also knew from an FOI that in 2024, 30 of them got out, but in the first nine months of 2025, 39 got out. More got out in the first nine months of 2025 than in 2024, so the problem is worse.

But we found that out through an FOI, and that's the information that we have. Now that we have this information, we can't even get the basic information when we tell the minister the information in the FOI—which he should know. But we can't get basic, simple answers like, since September 2025, how many of them have gotten out? How many of them got out?

We found out the other day because the Premier—it didn't happen in here—let it slide in a press conference that there are six on the lam right now. We have no details. We don't know what's going on. So I just wonder what's going on over there.

2200

Maybe we do need to up the budget there, because obviously there's a mess over there because we can't get any answers—simple answers. How many have been released since September 2025 to now? As a result of the FOI, we learned that, well, what happens? We know that the police are notified immediately. But guess who else is notified? The Deputy Solicitor General's office, the minister's office—both are notified. Every time it happens, the Solicitor General's office knows, and we can't get a straight answer to a question.

When you flatline a budget like that, I don't know if that's having an effect on the inability of the government to respond, of the Solicitor General to respond, of the Premier to respond, for some simple answers about how this happened.

From the tough-on-crime folks, they're having a hard time keeping people behind bars and an even harder time giving simple answers to simple questions. But it's okay to blow through committee. "Don't talk about the"—how much is it? About \$260 billion, give or take a few billion—

"\$260-billion budget, because, you know, we're half a trillion dollars in debt. So a billion here, a billion there obviously doesn't matter."

It's wrong not to go to committee. It's wrong to do these FOI changes inside this bill. And the only reason that we're doing these FOI changes is because of the Premier's cellphone and what's on the Premier's cellphone. He obviously doesn't want us to see it. He lost in court. In court, they said, "No, you've got to tell them." And they go, "What are we going to do? We're going to take it to the Supreme Court, but what if we lose? It looks like we might lose. What can we do?"

"What can we do? Here's what we're going to do. We're going to change FOI laws and we're going to make them"—wait for it—"retroactive. We're going to change the law to say, going backward, looking in the rearview mirror, we are going to make sure that the Premier's cellphone is protected." It's not "protect Ontario," it's "protect the Premier's cellphone."

This is why we're here. This is why we're here, under the cover of darkness, covering up the cover-up. That's why we are going to keep debating this, we're going to keep talking to people about this. We can't stop—

Interjection: We're not debating.

Mr. John Fraser: Well, it takes two sides to debate and when you say that a change—I heard somebody say there we're not debating. I don't know what we're doing here, but I guess it takes two sides—which, if you're making a change and you say, "We're making a change, but it's not a change. We're changing it, but it's not really a change. It's not a change," maybe they're right, maybe we are not debating. Maybe I'm just talking to a wall.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: Well, that's good. Keep reading up. Keep reading up, buddy. Check out the Skills Development Fund and the strip club owner. Just check it out. Make sure you check it out. Check out the dentist as well.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Speak through the Chair.

Mr. John Fraser: Speaker, I'm sorry, I'll look directly at you. I apologize, Speaker. It's late.

Nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one. You're all relieved. Have a good night.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Ms. Laura Smith: Through you, Speaker: I want to thank the member for the last 60 minutes. But more importantly, I want to talk about things that are important to all of our communities, which is building long-term-care homes and housing and community infrastructure.

One of the things that the budget provides is an innovative model that allows Ontario companies to partner with Canadian institutional investors to deliver the projects that we need. The silver wave is upon us, and I think that this structure, the vehicle, this innovative model will allow Ontario to leverage its strong balance sheet and credit rating to build and not stall the projects that the people are waiting for.

I was wondering if the member opposite or anyone across the way will consider supporting this budget in supporting our long-term care and housing situation.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you for the question. What the member forgot to mention was that this government is taking us to half a trillion dollars in debt. Some 60% or 70% of that is infrastructure, but 30% or 40% is from operating deficits because they can't balance the books.

We've got a government who is spending billions, wasting billions, giving away billions to a foreign-owned spa with a questionable history, while Ontario businesses are suffering and looking for their next contract.

It's pretty hard to support a budget bill that has FOI changes like this, that are destroying FOI, that the finance minister who tabled this bill didn't even take the time to talk about.

Speaker, it's kind of a funny question: Why would the opposition support a bill like this with a disastrous Doug Ford Conservative government taking us to half a trillion in debt?

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Ted Hsu: The member for Ottawa South talked a lot about jets, and he really couldn't help himself because, as he mentioned, everybody is talking about jets—the taxi driver, even, who thought he was the guy who bought the jet.

But the caucus members who are not in the cabinet are going home to face their constituents next week—my question is, are they going to be able to use the Premier's explanation, the Premier's reply that he just didn't explain it well enough? Is that going to go over well with people at home?

Mr. John Fraser: Probably not. I'll say it again: The Premier owns a private jet. It may be back at Bombardier, but he owns the decision. He made the decision when he shouldn't have done it. Now, he's not contrite; he's just sorry for the way he told us.

What Ontarians really would have expected was, "No, I don't think I should have private jet. It was a bad decision. I don't know what I was thinking. But it's a bad idea. It will never happen. I won't ever do it again," not, "I told you the wrong way, and really, here are the reasons I should have a private jet"—because that's what he's saying. I just can't buy it anymore. I can't buy this act of contrition that's not an act of contrition.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I have a question for the member from Don Valley West.

She is very articulate, she understands a balance sheet, and I know that and I appreciate that. When we look at our budget and the investments that we're making so that we leave a legacy of infrastructure, we leave a legacy to another generation, we leave a legacy that Ontarians will own something—and we know that because of the investments that we've made in transit, that we've made in schools, that we've made in hospitals.

I want to ask the member opposite: Does she value the fact that we have approached our balance sheet by investing and leaving an asset on that balance sheet?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I thank the Solicitor General for his kind words and for his question. Look, investing in infrastructure is always important, but it's not just the what; it's the how. I think we have to look at how this government makes decisions.

Speaker, we've got a government that makes decisions by getting brown envelopes from people, from their friends. We have a government that—

Interjection.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Well, the Auditor General said so. So why don't you listen to her?

We've got a government that—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I will need to caution the member on the language.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you, Speaker.

We've got a government that's giving a foreign-owned spa a \$2.2-billion project. That's not helping Ontario businesses.

Absolutely, we need to invest in infrastructure, but it's the how that I have a problem with.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to read this from a news article: "The audit found that nearly half of businesses that received grants got more money than they actually lost in revenue, to a total difference of about \$714 million."

2210

Does that sound familiar? Because that was in an Auditor General report in 2021 when the government gave support during COVID, support grants for businesses. And then, in 2025, we had the same problem under the Skills Development Fund, where they weren't vetting people properly. And now in this budget, in 2026, the province has announced a \$5-billion Protect Ontario account in the budget and the province will hire a private investment manager.

How can we trust that they'll have the proper eligibility and criteria to give the funding to the businesses that deserve it?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I thank the member for the question. She certainly kind of answered the question herself. We cannot trust this government to give money to the people who need it. We heard this week that the TTC applied for their workers to get training through the Skills Development Fund. They didn't get the money. Who did get money? The owner of a strip club and the Ford family dentist. I don't think that's a coincidence. I find it hard to believe that's a coincidence.

So, I think it's a very valid question: What will this government do and how will they spend that \$4 billion? Basically, Speaker, it's an admission that they couldn't get the job done themselves. Under this government, our economy is losing jobs. We've got a higher unemployment rate than they had when they took office. And so they're turning outside now to look for help, and we certainly can't trust them to do it right.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Ted Hsu: Speaker, I'd like to ask the member for Don Valley West, since this government took power, how much extra does each person in Ontario owe? How much more do we owe because this government has brought up Ontario's debt to almost half a trillion dollars?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I thank the honourable member from Kingston and the Islands for the question. You know, the debt has gone up tens of thousands of dollars per Ontarian. We've got a government that came to office saying they were going to lower the debt. Speaker, they've done the exact opposite. They've raised it by, I think, \$140 billion. That's not chump change. We have a government that said they would lower the debt. In the current budget, they delayed the path to balance once again. Five or six times now, they've done this. And even the FAO, the Financial Accountability Office, says that their path to balance is not reasonable if they want to keep spending on services at the levels that they are.

So, I expect that the debt that we have per capita in Ontario will continue to rise under this government.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I was wondering if the leader of the third party could elucidate on the plane that was almost purchased by the then Liberal Premier, Dalton McGuinty. I know that the specs were put in place. I know that an offer was made on a plane, a jet. I wonder if he could elucidate on the decision-making that went behind that potential purchase and why ultimately, at the last minute, they decided not to purchase that jet.

Mr. John Fraser: The minister answered his own question—almost.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

MPP Jamie West: I have a very short amount of time. A friend texted in. She said, "Can you ask the third-party leader if Ontario would have known about the gas plant scandal, or would any of the Liberal leadership have gone to jail without FOIs?"

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

Interjections.

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

Ms. Khanjin has moved third reading of Bill 97, An Act to implement Budget measures, to enact, amend or repeal various statutes and to revoke various regulations.

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

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Third reading vote deferred.

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

Interjections.

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

Hon. Steve Clark: No further business, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): There will be no further business. This House stands recessed until tomorrow, Thursday, at 9.

This House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 2216.

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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	