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of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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Mardi  
12 mai 2026

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Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly  
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly  
Greffier : Trevor Day

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 12 May 2026

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 12 mai 2026

*Report continued from volume A.*

1800

PRIVATE MEMBERS'  
PUBLIC BUSINESS

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2026  
LOI DE 2026 SUR LA SEMAINE  
DE SENSIBILISATION À LA DÉFICIENCE  
INTELLECTUELLE

Mr. Pang moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 106, An Act to proclaim Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week / Projet de loi 106, Loi proclamant la Semaine de sensibilisation à la déficience intellectuelle.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for their presentation.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak to my private member's bill, the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week Act.

Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to warmly welcome the many stakeholders, community leaders, families and individuals who have joined us today at Queen's Park. To Community Living Ontario, Community Living Toronto, Community Living York South, Karis Disability Services, New Visions Toronto, Surrey Place, and Spirit of Life, as well as self-advocates, caregivers and community partners: Thank you for being here today. I had the opportunity to visit some of these dedicated organizations over the past few months. Thank you for your support of this proposed bill and for the opportunity to learn from you and bring forward this important initiative in support of the developmental disabilities community.

And to the individuals with lived experience who have joined us in the chamber today: Your presence is deeply meaningful. This bill is, in many ways, about you, your voices, your journeys and your contributions to our communities.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Minister Parsa, and the entire team for their support throughout the process.

Speaker, this bill proposes to designate the last full week of May each year as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week in Ontario. It's a simple step, but one with meaningful impact.

For me, this issue is deeply personal. My very first volunteer experience was supporting children with developmental disabilities in a hospital setting. I was a teenager at the time, but I witnessed first-hand the challenges faced by so many families, as well as the dedication of front-line caregivers and support staff. I remember feeling it deeply, even when I didn't yet have the words to fully express it. There was a very quiet sadness in many of those moments—an emotion that has stayed with me over the decades. That experience has remained with me ever since, shaping how I understand the importance of awareness, inclusion and compassion today. Through that experience, I built meaningful human connections. I saw the strength and resilience of individuals, the unwavering dedication and sacrifices of caregivers, and the vital role of community support. That experience shaped my perspective, and it continues to guide my work today.

Across Ontario, individuals with developmental disabilities contribute to our communities every single day. They are students, employees, volunteers, neighbours and friends. Yet, despite these contributions, significant barriers, stigma and misunderstandings still persist. Developmental disabilities are often described as invisible disabilities—not because they are not there, but because they are not always fully understood. This is why awareness matters, and this is why a week, not just a day, matters.

Some may ask why an awareness week is important. It is important because it creates visibility, education and connection. It reminds us that inclusion is not just a policy goal; it's a shared responsibility. It allows for deeper understanding and more meaningful conversations.

Speaker, this legislation is symbolic and declaratory. It does not create new requirements. It does not impose costs. Indeed, it creates an opportunity for communities across Ontario to come together voluntarily to promote inclusion, dignity and respect.

This bill has been shaped by real voices and real experience; let me share a few.

A mother named Vera was navigating her son's developmental needs while adjusting to significant life changes. Her son was experiencing challenges in daycare, and she was unsure where to turn for support. She described that period as overwhelming. Through Community Living Toronto, she was able to connect with the right support and services. She said, "It gave me hope. I finally felt understood." Today, her son is thriving, with supports built around who he is and what he needs. Her story reminds us that what makes the difference is not just expertise, but compassion.

Speaker, another story is about Jonathan. He began his journey in a group living setting, where he found community and support. Over time, with the right guidance, he developed the confidence and skills to live more independently. Today, he lives in his own apartment, cooks for himself, and builds his life on his own terms. Even more importantly, he remains connected to a community of friends nearby. His story reminds us that independence can be achieved and that it can go hand in hand with the right support.

From Community Living York South, who are doing great work in my riding of Markham–Unionville, we heard from a young individual who described the challenges and frustration they faced when trying to enter the workforce. Too often, doors feel closed. Opportunities can feel out of reach. Through a community-based employment and skills training program, they were able to gain meaningful work experience, build confidence and begin to recognize their own strengths and abilities. That sense of confidence is life-changing.

Speaker, we also heard from a young person and their family who faced challenges navigating support and services while living with developmental disabilities. Navigating systems and accessing the right supports can always feel overwhelming and isolating. Through culturally responsive, community-based support and coordinated services, they were able to better understand available resources, build meaningful connections and find a stronger sense of belonging. Their story reminds us that inclusion must also be accessible, culturally responsive and community-based.

These stories are different, but they share a common message: When people are supported, when they are understood and when they are included, they thrive. They all emphasize a common message: that awareness matters. Awareness helps reduce stigma, promotes understanding and builds more inclusive communities.

I'm grateful for their insight and for their strong support of this proposal.

By recognizing Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week, we send a clear message that inclusion matters, dignity matters, and every Ontarian deserves to be valued and respected.

Speaker, this legislation also complements Ontario's broader commitments. It aligns with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act. It strengthens—rather than replaces—existing efforts.

Awareness is where change begins, because awareness leads to understanding, understanding leads to inclusion, inclusion leads to opportunity, and opportunity leads to hope and success.

This week is also about celebration—celebrating achievements, talents, resilience and contributions. It's about recognizing individuals not for their limitations, but for their strength and potential.

Speaker, this is a non-partisan initiative. Inclusion, dignity and respect are values shared by all Ontarians.

If passed, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week will take place during the last full week of May. This timing allows for greater community participation, alignment with existing initiatives and more opportunity for engagement across Ontario.

Before I conclude, I want to once again acknowledge all those who are here today. Your advocacy, your work and your stories are what make this bill meaningful. This legislation may be simple, but its message is powerful: that Ontario sees you, that Ontario values you, and that Ontario is committed to building a more inclusive future.

**1810**

Speaker, I ask all members of this House to support this bill. Together, we can take an important step towards a more inclusive, understanding and compassionate Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I want to thank the member for bringing this bill forward and thank all of the guests who have joined us today. You are my heart. I'm happy to see you. Thank you for being here.

Speaker, when we talk about developmental disabilities, we talk about intellectual disability, we talk about people with Down's syndrome, we talk about people with fragile X syndrome, Tourette's syndrome, epilepsy, fetal alcohol syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, cerebral palsy—the list goes on.

Developmental disabilities are rooted in the development of the nervous system. You realize someone has a developmental disability when they appear as delayed in reaching certain milestones as they grow up. Most developmental disabilities are from birth, but we consider—anything diagnosed before the age of 22 can be diagnosed as a developmental disability. They can often be physical—like in cerebral palsy—but it can be intellectual, or a bit of both.

I want to share a story of a man in Sudbury everybody knows: Ryan Benoit. Ryan Benoit is a Nickel Belt entrepreneur. He is an extremely kind leader and the founder of the Positive Inception, a local clothing brand built on positivity, perseverance and self-confidence. Ryan has severe cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. He has challenges in communicating. He has become widely recognized not only for his successful business, but also for the inspiring message behind his brand and his dedication to giving back to the community.

As I said, Ryan was born with cerebral palsy. He faced physical challenges from a very young age, but he never allowed those obstacles to define his future. Instead, he used his experience to develop resilience, determination and a positive outlook on life.

While attending Laurentian University in 2014, he launched the Positive Inception with the goal of inspiring others to believe in themselves and to chase their dreams. What began as selling shirts out of his backpack on campus quickly grew through word-of-mouth support and community encouragement.

The brand's message focuses on positivity, growth and perseverance. The company logo, which looks like a seed, symbolizes new beginnings and personal growth. Through his clothing line, Ryan encourages people to maintain a positive mindset even during difficult times. Over the years, he has made a huge impact. Many customers have shared how his products and message helped them through their own personal struggles. This is something that Ryan considers one of his biggest accomplishments.

In 2017, Ryan achieved a major milestone by opening the first stand-alone Positive Inception storefront, after previously operating as a kiosk in the New Sudbury Centre, a big mall in Sudbury. Since then, the business has continued to grow into one of Sudbury's most recognizable local brands.

You can't go anywhere in Sudbury where you won't see somebody wearing Positive Inception—a jacket, a sweatshirt, a T-shirt, you name it. I think I have most of it—mainly in orange; I don't know why, but that's just the way it rolled out.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Not blue.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Not blue. No.

Beyond business, Ryan Benoit is deeply involved in community support and charitable initiatives. He has contributed to organizations and causes, including the Northern Cancer Foundation; ALS, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, research; mine rescue initiatives—actually, he also sells a lot of clothing for mine rescue in his store—and other local charities.

His commitment to community leadership and positivity has earned him several prestigious honours.

Among his many accomplishments, Ryan Benoit was recognized as one of Sudbury's 40 Under 40 community leaders in 2017.

In 2019, he received the young entrepreneur award from the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce.

Last year, I awarded him the King Charles III Coronation Medal, recognizing him as an individual making a profound impact in our community. The people who came to the awards were just—his bus driver was there. He lives in my riding, but his store is in Sudbury. He uses the GOVA, which is the adaptive bus, to go, and it's mainly the same driver who drives him every day. She came. The teachers he had, through primary school to secondary school through university, were there. The people he went to school with—people he went to school with when he was six years old and in a wheelchair and could barely speak, who made friends with him—came to the ceremony. And one of the messages that I got from most of the people who came was, "Ryan was able to teach us empathy." And those teachings had an impact on each and every one of them. It was a very moving ceremony. He was so, so deserving. He has a severe handicap. He does not let that define him at all.

Most recently, he was honoured with a Paul Harris Fellow recognition from Rotary for his outstanding service and positive impact within our community.

Today, Ryan Benoit continues to inspire people across northern Ontario through entrepreneurship, motivational speaking and community involvement.

He started his own podcast called Keeping It Positive. I encourage you to Google it, Speaker. I guarantee you: If you listen for two or three minutes, you will be hooked; you will start listening to his podcast. I call him a kid, but he's not a kid. This young man is really, really endearing to listen to. He shares uplifting stories of resilience and community with others.

His story is one of strength, hard work and optimism, proving that challenges can become opportunities and that positivity truly has the power to change lives.

I wanted to share this story in line with what the MPP said—that if we give people with developmental disabilities encouragement, if we give them the opportunity to reach their full potential, they will lead us in levels and directions that we never knew possible. They are able to teach empathy. They are able to teach patience. They are able to teach us a lot of things that change us for the better; that change our communities, our families for the better. We have a lot to learn from them, but this learning can only take place if they are able to be with us, if they are able to be supported, if they are able to access the buildings, and if they are able—all of the laws that support accessibility need to be enforced. We need to have access to them. We need to get to know them, to touch them, to hold their hands, to be there for them, because they will be there for us, to make our community better.

**1820**

I thank the member for bringing this act to proclaim Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week. It is a really, really good idea. I hope everybody will vote in favour.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Further debate?

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** I just want to say thank you to everyone who is here, listening to the Bill 106 debate. I hope you enjoy the visit to Queen's Park.

Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill 106, the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week Act, 2026. This bill proposes to designate the last full week of May each year as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week in Ontario, which is a positive first step. Its goal is to promote awareness, inclusion and community participation for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The real question before us is whether awareness alone is enough in the face of a system that is already under extreme strain, including in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood, where demand is high, services are stretched thin, and families are being asked to carry far more than their share.

In Ontario today, more than 53,000 adults with developmental disabilities are on wait-lists for services through Developmental Services Ontario. These are not minor services; they include essential housing supports, community programs, respite care, and daily living assistance. Many of these individuals wait for years—years on top of years; often five, 10, or even more—for the support that they need to live safely and to live an

independent life. This is not a short-term backlog. This is a structural failure that has built up over time and continues to deepen. In Toronto and especially in Scarborough, this pressure becomes even more visible. Families are navigating some of the longest wait times in the province for community-based developmental supports.

Over 88,000 children are registered in the Ontario Autism Program today; it means over 68,000 children are also on a wait-list. There's a short window between the ages of zero and six for improving communication skills and independence. When children are forced to wait five years or more for support, many of them age out of that crucial window. And we see that far too often.

Scarborough is one of the most diverse and fastest-growing communities in this province; it is also one of the most service-dependent.

At the same time, funding has not kept pace with demand or inflation. Service providers have been clear: They're being asked to do more with less.

Housing is another critical gap. Across Ontario, supportive housing options for individuals with developmental disabilities are extremely limited. The wait-lists are long, and they continue to grow. In many cases, individuals remain in the family home well into adulthood, not because it is their choice, but because there is nowhere else for them to go. In Scarborough, where housing pressures are already in crisis, this only compounds the intergenerational stress on families who are trying to plan for the future with no clear path forward.

Bill 106 proposes an annual awareness week, and it's a great first step. But it does not reduce a single wait-list. It does not create a single new housing unit. It does not expand workforce capacity. It does not increase funding for community agencies. It does not improve access to respite services. And it does not shorten the years-long wait that families in Scarborough are currently facing.

Families are waiting five, 10 or more years for support. Awareness alone does not change their circumstances. It does not create a support worker where none exists. It does not open a residential bed where capacity has not been built.

Speaker, inclusion is very important for every individual with developmental disabilities, because they are always left behind.

In my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood, inclusion is the young adult who can transition out of their family home because housing is available; it is the caregiver who can plan for the future with certainty because the system has a clear path forward.

For Bill 106, we will support raising awareness. We will support inclusion. We will support the recognition of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

I want to make it clear that awareness must never be the finish line. Ontarians with developmental disabilities, including those in Scarborough, deserve more than recognition. They deserve timely access to services. They deserve stable and supportive housing options. They

deserve a properly funded system that does not force families into crisis before support arrives.

Speaker, inclusion is not achieved through awareness weeks alone. It is achieved through sustained investment, structural reform, and the political will to close the gap between what is promised and what families are actually experiencing on the ground.

To the member across: I am happy to support Bill 106, but I want to make it clear that this is just a start, and it's just to raise awareness of the disabilities that are faced by the people who are experiencing disabilities across Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Further debate?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I am pleased to join debate tonight on Bill 106, the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week Act, 2026. If passed, it would designate the last week in the month of May each year as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week; in doing so, we hope to recognize individuals with developmental disabilities, as well as their families, who we will always support. This non-partisan initiative will advance public understanding of developmental disabilities and address key gaps in awareness across our communities. It's about recognition, respect and, yes, ensuring every resident feels seen and valued, as they should.

Our government's investment in developmental services, now totalling nearly \$4 billion, represents an increase of \$1.6 billion since 2018.

At times like this, it's absolutely critical that public policy—especially public spending—works in the interest of hard-working families and their communities, like Whitby and the other parts of the region of Durham.

This bill will strengthen alignment with existing provincial initiatives, including Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008; the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005; as well as the current Developmental Services Ontario framework.

**1830**

Speaker, when we increase understanding of developmental disabilities, we reduce stigma and we build stronger communities.

We also aim to highlight, through the proposed legislation, the important and ongoing role of families, caregivers and service organizations. These individuals deserve our recognition for the amazing work they do every day supporting and caring for those with developmental disabilities.

One such service organization is the Sunrise Developmental Support Services group that operates in Whitby. Through grants provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, they are now able to double their capacity and help even more young men and women with varying abilities build independence and confidence as they navigate life.

Across Ontario, people with developmental disabilities are raising families, participating in the workforce and living fulfilling lives. These individuals make meaningful contributions to society every day, and the region of Durham and Ontario are better because of it.

Melly's Market and Cafe in Whitby is a non-profit business that employs individuals with developmental disabilities. They empower their staff and create an inclusive and supportive workplace for them to thrive in their careers.

It's our collective duty to continue to support all Ontarians to reach their full potential, regardless of abilities, creating a province for everyone to succeed and prosper.

I encourage all members of the legislative chamber to support designating the last week in May each year as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** On behalf of the residents of Newmarket–Aurora, I am truly honoured to rise this evening to speak to Bill 106, the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week Act, tabled by my colleague the member for Markham–Unionville. This bill is to establish the last full week of May as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week, and I couldn't be more honoured to speak in its favour. Public awareness and the understanding of developmental disabilities allow people to better appreciate the special abilities of our neighbours. Public awareness and understanding are so critical. Respect, inclusion and acceptance are core principles that are near and dear to my heart, and this bill represents these principles. At its very essence, this bill is a symbol of opportunity—an opportunity to ensure that every Ontarian feels seen and valued.

By establishing a week of awareness, we have witnessed how a cause can have such life, how it can have such great light shine upon it and all around it. By proclaiming this commemorative week, having voluntary participation to shine light on this cause, communities can become more aware, community initiatives will rise up, and we could see how supported people with developmental disabilities can, will and should be.

Speaker, families and caregivers face daily, often-invisible challenges—emotional, physical, and financial demands. Recognizing the work that caregivers provide is essential.

That is what warms my heart about this bill—behind every individual with special abilities is a network of families, of caregivers whose dedication deserves our utmost support and recognition.

When we increase understanding, we reduce stigma. And when we reduce that stigma, we build stronger, more decent communities. Decency matters—decency towards our fellow neighbour; decency towards our fellow residents.

I am touched by the inspiration behind this bill, and I would like to thank my colleague for taking the initiative to table this bill. I know it will inspire our communities to step up, to see beyond a label—whatever that label or diagnosis is.

Speaker, this bill, if passed, emphasizes the importance of supportive, inclusive governance.

I stand in support of this bill today, to send a message to all the people of Ontario: Regardless of your needs, you are loved and you are cherished.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Further debate?

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** I'm honoured to rise today to speak in proud support of the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week Act.

First, I want to extend a sincere thank you to my colleague and my friend the member for Markham–Unionville for his leadership in sponsoring this important legislation.

Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to this act, which is very near and dear to my heart and also to the disability community.

When I had the privilege to serve as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, Mr. Michael Parsa, we worked to support many individuals with developmental disabilities across our province. Through that experience, I gained a deeper understanding of the challenges they face each and every day.

I frequently visit and support great organizations in my riding of Markham–Thornhill and beyond, such as Cherish Integrated Services, Gifted People Services, the Canadian Tamil disability organization, and many more. It is through collaborative efforts like this that we truly serve the people of Ontario.

Speaker, this bill is about recognition, respect and ensuring every Ontarian feels seen and valued. We are here today to acknowledge the vibrant lives, the diverse talents and the inherent dignity of the hundreds of thousands of individuals living with developmental disabilities across the province.

The Development Disability Awareness Week Act is straightforward, yet its impact is profound. It formally designates the last full week of May as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week in Ontario.

I want to be clear for the record: This is a declaratory and non-partisan bill. It carries no fiscal or regulatory burden. It doesn't impose mandates on businesses or municipalities. It is a simple call to action for communities to lead the way in teaching others and celebrating everyone's unique value. It provides a platform for families, advocates and organizations to amplify their voices under a unified provincial banner.

Speaker, we often talk about inclusion as an abstract concept, but inclusion is a practice. It begins with understanding. When we increase understanding, we reduce stigma. When we reduce stigma, we build stronger communities. For too long, barriers, both physical and mental, have kept individuals with developmental disabilities on the margins.

By dedicating this week, we are sending a clear signal that a person's intellectual challenge doesn't define their worth or their potential to contribute to our neighbourhoods, our province and our country. This bill ensures that we as a Legislature pause to recognize that contribution.

As we often say, inclusive communities are built when awareness leads to understanding, and understanding leads to action.

Speaker, this week is also about the circle of care. We are honouring the incredible caregivers, families and support workers who are the backbone of our developmentally disabled communities. Their dedication is often quiet and behind the scenes, but it is the fuel that drives inclusion forward.

1840

Speaker, in conclusion, let this awareness week serve as a reminder that inclusion is a shared responsibility every day of the year.

I encourage all members of this House to support the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week Act.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Further debate? Further debate?

I return to the member from Markham–Unionville for two minutes of reply.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Speaker, I want to sincerely thank the members for Whitby, Newmarket–Aurora, Markham–Thornhill, Nickel Belt and Scarborough–Guildwood, who spoke on the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week Act.

Today marks an important step forward. While simple in structure, this bill carries a meaningful purpose. It ensures that each year, during the last full week of May, Ontarians have a dedicated opportunity to raise awareness, promote inclusion and celebrate the contributions of people with developmental disabilities.

To the individuals and families who joined us today: Your voices, your stories and your lived experiences are what brought this bill to the House. This moment belongs to you.

I also want to acknowledge the many community organizations, front-line workers and advocates who continue to advance inclusion every day. Your work is what turns awareness into real change.

Together, we have taken an important step towards building a more compassionate and inclusive Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Mr. Pang has moved second reading of Bill 106, An Act to proclaim Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Pursuant to standing order 100(h), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Speaker, I'd like the bill to be sent to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Is the majority in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy? Agreed. The bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

All matters relating to private members' public business being completed, we will move to the late show.

## ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Before we do, I beg to inform the House that in the name of His Majesty the King, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in her office.

**The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim):** The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the Retail Sales Tax Act to enable credits and payments to be made respecting certain tax paid or payable in respect of residential property and to provide for other related matters / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail pour permettre l'octroi de crédits et le versement de paiements relativement à la taxe payée ou payable à l'égard de biens résidentiels et pour traiter d'autres questions connexes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** Pursuant to standing order 36, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** The member for Sudbury has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

I recognize the member from Sudbury.

**MPP Jamie West:** The member from York South–Weston, the parliamentary assistant, and I spoke earlier.

I'm not going to use the whole five minutes, but I think there are things that are important to clarify in this.

Last week, I asked a question during question period about Ron Rousseau. Ron is a miner in Sudbury who has stage 4 cancer. He's got a lump about this big—a mandarin-size lump on his lung—and it's work-related, so he's on WSIB. But the way WSIB is set up, Ron's coverage is going to end on his birthday, in June.

The problem that's faced is that Ron isn't retiring or planning to retire in June. If he didn't have cancer that was caused from his workplace, he would continue to mine. And what he's looking at right now, because of his cut-off period, is, "Do I return to work while fighting cancer so I can try to support my family, or do I just fall into poverty?" It's not a choice that we should have the people of Ontario making, especially knowing that critical minerals are so incredibly important.

Two things on the response to that question that I had: The first one was that the parliamentary assistant said that we had voted against Bill 105 or we didn't vote for Bill 105. It wasn't an accurate statement. Actually, we supported it at second reading, and it's going to committee

tomorrow, so it hasn't even had a final vote yet. That's not as important as the other part. The response on this one and the second question talked about the amount of money that the employer is getting back from WSIB. It ignores the issue that we have with people who are suffering from occupational disease, with WSIB. The amount of money that is being returned to the employers because we have this surplus is created because people like Ron aren't getting the funding that they need.

I'll speak specifically about occupational disease and miners here. But I want to say, in general, people who are off due to workplace-related injuries, occupational disease or physical injuries are having to fight tooth and nail for any sort of coverage. And there's a variety of ways for WSIB to discount the amount of money they're entitled to or to cut them off entirely.

To claim success for employers is not an effective way of dealing with what's going on here. It's not fair to the people of Ontario—especially a government that has branded themselves as protecting Ontario. Let's protect Ontario's workers.

The second question I asked about—I said that 87% of mining fatalities are from occupational disease. That is a huge number in any workplace, but in mining specifically. We are all aligned here, I think, from every party—I know the Conservatives and NDP are aligned about the importance of mining critical minerals. But if there was 87% of fatalities in any workplace—we would focus on how we reduce that.

How do we make things better for these workers? We know two things: We know that diesel is higher than it is allowed in many places in Europe and in Australia, and we know that silica, which is, basically, sand or fine particles, is four times higher than the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists—so experts are saying that the levels are too high in Ontario. We need to reduce those. We need to protect those.

I want to be clear. I care about mining. I love mining. I come from a mining town. I worked in mining. My stepfather worked in mining. My dad worked in mining. My great-grandfather was a hardrock miner in Scotland. This is important to me. I am surrounded by miners, and I have been my entire life. If we want to attract people into mining, we cannot have generational miners—grandfathers, fathers, and now mothers who are getting more involved in mining—telling their kids, "Don't get into this field. It's going to kill you." That's what's happening in my city. Generational miners are telling their kids, "Don't do this."

I want to attract people into mining. It's an exciting career. It pays well. It's profitable for the company, for the community. We need to be successful at this. But we cannot have 87% of people dying from occupational disease and not take action to protect the workers.

Critical minerals are important, but the most important things to come out of a mine are the workers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** I recognize the member from York South–Weston.

**MPP Mohamed Firin:** Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today in this House to speak to the notice of dissatisfaction brought forward by the member opposite, my colleague from Sudbury.

First, I want to acknowledge the story that was shared about Ron Rousseau and his family. Any worker facing serious occupational illness deserves compassion, dignity and support. No worker should ever feel alone while navigating a life-altering diagnosis.

Every workplace illness is a reminder of why the work we do on occupational health and safety matters—because behind every statistic is a worker, a family, a community and a future that has been impacted.

That is why our government remains firmly committed to strengthening workplace safety, improving prevention and ensuring Ontario's workers have the protections and supports they deserve.

Under Premier Ford's leadership, no government in Ontario's history has done more to support injured workers, improve workplace safety and strengthen the workers' compensation system.

Through our proposed POWER Act, which we introduced last month, we're increasing Workplace Safety and Insurance Board loss-of-earnings benefits from 85% to 90%—the first increase in nearly 30 years. That is something that the previous governments ignored. But that changes with this government. It now means injured workers and their families can receive greater financial support when they need it most.

Speaker, we're also proposing legislation to expand loss-of-earnings benefits beyond the age of 65 in circumstances where a worker would likely continue working. A workplace-related injury should not suddenly stop being supported because someone had a birthday. It's not our place to tell a worker that their injury matters less because of their age. If someone intended to keep on working, they deserve the same protections as anyone else. That is an important step forward, and it reflects today's workplace realities.

At the same time, we know compensation alone is not enough, because every worker deserves to come home safe at the end of the day. On job sites across the province—whether it's a construction site, a factory floor, or down in a mine—safety is non-negotiable. But even when the best safety measures are still in place, accidents can still happen.

That is why our government has taken a prevention-first approach to workplace health and safety across Ontario.

Training and prevention are not only about immediate hazards; they're about protecting workers' long-term health. That is especially important in industries where occupational illnesses may take years or even decades to emerge.

That is why Ontario has launched Canada's first Occupational Exposure Registry. This secure, digital registry allows workers to voluntarily record and track exposures to hazardous substances throughout their careers. This is a significant advancement in occupational disease prevention. The registry empowers workers by giving them access to their exposure history. It supports medical pro-

professionals in making more informed diagnoses. And it improves our collective understanding of occupational illnesses and long-term workplace risks.

Our government recognizes that occupational disease remains one of the most serious workplace health challenges facing Ontario workers. We're continuing to strengthen prevention and awareness and ensure workers have access to the best supports and protections, because every worker deserves to know that their long-term health matters and that their government has their backs.

Occupational health and safety are evolving. Rapid technological changes are transforming workplaces across Ontario. Automation, artificial intelligence, connected equipment and data-driven systems are changing how work is organized, monitored and managed. And these technologies create real opportunities. They can improve hazard protection. They can strengthen training. They can provide predictive safety insights and support faster emergency response. But they also introduce new and evolving risks, including human-machine interaction, algorithm-driven decision-making and overreliance on automated systems.

That is why technology alone does not keep workers safe. Technology must be implemented thoughtfully, responsibly and with a clear understanding of its impact on workers and workplace culture.

That is why Ontario is investing in research and innovation that connects policy, training and real-world conditions.

Speaker, one example is WSIB's investment in mobile research labs developed with the Canadian Institute for Safety, Wellness, and Performance. These labs bring cutting-edge science directly to work sites. They collect real-world data on how work is being performed and how workers interact with equipment, environments and protective systems. That evidence helps improve PPE design, strengthen training and refine prevention strategies.

And these are not theoretical discussions—these investments have real impacts on real workers. They help reduce injuries. They help improve safety outcomes. And they support healthier workplaces across Ontario.

These investments are about ensuring first responders have the skills, tools and training they need when seconds matter most. And they reflect our government's belief that protecting workers and Ontario's economy must go hand in hand.

They deserve to know that their government is always fighting and protecting them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee):** There being no further matters to debate, pursuant to standing order 36(c), I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1854.*

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

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

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

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Firin, Mohamed (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
<b>Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Leader, Third Party / Chef du troisième parti
<b>French, Jennifer K. (NDP)</b>	Oshawa	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gilmour, Alexa (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Gualtieri, Silvia (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
<b>Hamid, Hon. / L'hon. Zee (PC)</b>	Milton	Associate Solicitor General for Auto Theft and Bail Reform / Solliciteur général associé responsable de la Lutte contre le vol d'automobiles et de la Réforme relative aux mises en liberté sous caution
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
<b>Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)</b>	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Hazell, Andrea (LIB)</b>	Scarborough—Guildwood	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)</b>	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé des Forêts et des Produits forestiers
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
<b>Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)</b>	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
<b>Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)</b>	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines
Lennox, Robin (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiwiitinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
<b>McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)</b>	Durham	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	
<b>McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)</b>	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
McKenney, Catherine (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	

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

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Attorney General / Procureur général associé
<b>Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)</b>	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Tsao, Jonathan (LIB)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Vickers, Paul (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Watt, Tyler (LIB)	Nepean	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Vacant	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	