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of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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Mercredi  
13 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

Wednesday 13 May 2026

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 13 mai 2026

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Good morning.  
Let us pray.  
*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING HOMES AND IMPROVING  
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE  
ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 POUR LA CONSTRUCTION  
DE LOGEMENTS ET L'AMÉLIORATION  
DE L'INFRASTRUCTURE DE TRANSPORT

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 12, 2026, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 98, An Act to enact the Fare Alignment and Seamless Transit Act, 2026 and to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 98, Loi édictant la Loi de 2026 sur l'harmonisation des tarifs et l'intégration des transports en commun et modifiant diverses lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I'm pleased to stand and start our lead on Bill 98, Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act. I'll be sharing my time with the member from Humber River–Black Creek and the member from Toronto–Danforth. Our member from Humber River–Black Creek will be talking about transit, which is a big part of this bill, and of course my friend from Toronto–Danforth will be talking a lot about green standards and about the issues we have with this bill around environmental concerns.

I want to start out by just talking about the committee purpose. We are happy in this session that the government has started using committee again. Committee is important. We heard from a lot of stakeholders at our committee last week. There are those who believe that opposition should just vote against everything, but I'm one of the people that actually thinks we should try and make the place work the way it's supposed to work.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Well, that's good. I hope you send everything to committee now, because it doesn't always happen, but I appreciate the applause.

And when it does go to committee, I think we should be making a best effort to improve the bill, and that's certainly what we did. I'll talk about a number of amendments that we put forth, but, unfortunately, none of the

amendments were accepted, even some very simple amendments that clarified things in the bill and things that improved it based on what our stakeholders said. That was disappointing.

The government will recall that we voted in favour of this bill at second reading because we wanted to go to committee and make improvements to it, and we did that in good faith.

The government says this bill is, in part, about housing, but it won't make housing affordable. It ignores real solutions, like building non-profit housing, bringing back rent control and legalizing missing-middle homes, leaving families stuck with high rents and fewer options, like many of the government's bills, and we've talked about these solutions we believe the government should be pursuing and hasn't.

Seamless transit is a great idea, and we supported that. It's a big reason why we supported the bill at second reading. But a minister-controlled fare hike with no accountability is not. We support fare integration—it's really important we make that clear—but this bill empowers the minister to impose fare models with no commitment to affordability. New Democrats are asking this government to restore provincial operational funding that would make transit affordable. We heard that as well from the ATU and their thousands of members.

Conservatives want to hand Metrolinx more unchecked power in this bill. This government has allowed Metrolinx to operate with little or no accountability, and now they'll be able to skirt around the building code while their endless roster of overpaid executives fails to deliver, and there's no change in that. You can't fix the housing crisis by relying on the same broken approach. The government is doubling down on the same old strategy, but the private market alone, we know, won't build homes people can actually afford. New Democrats are fighting for public investments and incentives that deliver the affordable homes that the market won't.

This government is undermining local voices and environmental standards, and my friend from Toronto–Danforth will talk more about that. Instead of working with municipalities, this bill continues a pattern of top-down decisions that weaken green building standards, limit local planning tools and put long-term sustainability at risk. We'll work to fix what's broken, but won't rubber stamp it.

We pushed in committee and proposed amendments to strengthen this bill to protect affordability, defend public services and ensure transit works for riders. We'll support what helps people, like One Fare, but we won't back a plan that makes life harder for Ontarians.

As I mentioned, the bill fails to deliver on top NDP priorities for housing affordability. It does not legalize more affordable missing-middle housing options as of right in all neighbourhoods. It continues to rely, as I've mentioned, solely on the for-profit private market for the delivery of all new housing, as if the collapse of housing starts in Ontario can finally be reversed and the government can more than double the rate of home construction in Ontario with just a few more regulatory tweaks and tax cuts.

By all means, let's reduce the cost of building homes. We voted in favour of some of those measures, and some of the measures in this bill will help, but let's not pretend that the private market alone can profitably deliver all the homes we need. No private developer can profitably build a home that is affordable for someone sleeping in a park or on the street. We need the government to play a role in building the affordable housing that the private market won't build, as the NDP has proposed in its Homes Ontario plan. As mentioned, the bill does not preserve affordability and security of tenure for existing tenants by restoring real rent control—vacancy control—on all rental homes.

The bill also fails to deliver on a top NDP priority for transit: restoring provincial funding to cover 50% of municipal transit net operational costs. While the NDP supports fare and service integration in principle, there are many ways the government could fail with the approach in this bill, driving up transit system costs and making service worse.

I want to talk about some of the amendments that were voted down in committee. Amendments the NDP proposed to schedule 4 attempted to do a number of things. This was mostly around transit. This is just an example of some of the simple things we asked for in the committee.

We wanted to add "make transit more affordable" and "increase transit ridership" to the purposes of the act. I'm not sure what problem the government would have with making transit more affordable and increasing ridership, but it was not supported.

We wanted to allow ministerial regulations only for routes that cross municipal boundaries, while clarifying that municipalities and transit agencies can continue to set fare and service policies for trips within their own primary service areas. That's an issue that was raised by the transit union, ATU.

#### 0910

We asked the minister to negotiate fare and service agreements in good faith, with affected municipalities and transit agencies before making a regulation. I'm not sure why the government would have a problem with doing that.

We wanted to clarify with the proposed amendment that no regulation shall require fare revenue to be shared with a non-municipal passenger transportation system so that the minister can't force the TTC to give public money to Uber, for example. That was not supported.

We wanted to ensure that no regulation requires service integration with a non-municipal passenger transportation system. There were concerns raised about privatization of transit.

We wanted no fare by distance within a municipal transit area.

We asked to remove the indemnity provisions in part III barring actions/remedies for government "misfeasance," "breach of trust" and "bad faith." This is another example of the government protecting itself in advance against lawsuits and accusations. We wanted to remove those provisions because we think that people should be free to complain about their service if something happens.

We wanted to ensure that section 395 of the City of Toronto Act, which gives the TTC the exclusive right to operate within Toronto, continues to apply, which would protect the TTC network from fragmentation. That's something that the TTC raised with us.

And we wanted to clarify that nothing in the act affects the operation or enforcement of a collective agreement, and that we protect workers through any changes. We heard very clearly, as anyone would expect, from ATU, who represents thousands of transit workers, that their collective agreement would be protected, and if there was any merging, that would happen under the proper government framework. I'm not sure why the government would have a problem with that. There is a framework in place. I've been part of it as a negotiator myself in the hospital sector, to merge collective agreements if there is a merger, like the one that might happen here. The union just wanted the government to let them know that they would respect the collective agreements, but, unfortunately, that didn't happen.

In other schedules, we wanted to preserve municipal green development standards, which my friend from Toronto-Danforth will talk about, and we wanted to clarify that the minister may only designate a water corporation with the consent of the councils of all the lower-tier municipalities. So aside from the issue that you'll hear many of our members talk about with respect to concerns about privatization of water, in any case, nothing should be forced upon a municipality that isn't asking for it.

We had a lot of presenters. It was a good list of presenters. Many of them raised concerns that we tried to capture in our amendments that we proposed. We heard from the Ontario home builders; the Toronto Transit Commission—my friend from Humber River-Black Creek and I were in committee—the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; ATU Local 113—I want to thank them on behalf of all of their members who work so hard in our transit system; Marvin Alfred, the president, came and spoke—the Atmospheric Fund; the Building Industry and Land Development Association; the TTCriders, which gave us their perspective; the Canadian Environmental Law Association; and the Toronto real estate board. The Canadian Union of Public Employees talked to us about their concerns regarding schedule 9, I believe it is, and the water, waste water corporations that the government is talking about setting up; also, the Ontario Public Transit Association on behalf of riders; the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario; and we wrapped up with Environmental Defence—Phil Pothen came and, as he does for many of our committees, shared his thoughts with us.

I want to go over some of those things to make sure they're in the record, Speaker. Environment Defence had a number of key concerns that I think are important to make sure are in the record moving forward.

They were concerned about the risk to affordability and fare increases. They said that harmonizing fares across the region may actually increase TTC fares, which are currently lower than surrounding systems, and could undermine policies like fare capping and low-income programs.

They talked about the loss of democratic accountability and concern that local oversight of transit decisions would be replaced by provincial control, reducing transparency and direct public input into decisions that affect daily riders.

They talked about the potential redistribution of local revenues and concern that TTC-generated fare revenue could be reallocated across the region with unclear implications for service levels in Toronto—and we heard that from the transit union as well.

There were concerns that there were no guarantees on service improvements, and there are no enforceable protections ensuring service levels, frequency or quality will improve under the new model. We don't really actually know much about the new model; much of this bill will be rolled out through regulation, and so it's kind of a "just trust us" bill. That's why the amendments that we proposed were so important.

Failure to address core funding gaps were raised. The bill does not provide new, stable operating funding for transit systems, widely identified as the primary issue affecting reliability and service quality.

Service quality depends on funding, not governance alone, and the concern was raised that transit systems like the TTC require predictable long-term operating funding to maintain and improve service. That's a theme we continue to hear in transportation and housing and from municipalities as well, the lack of stable, secure long-term funding.

There was concern that current gaps risk service cuts and overcrowding, that without new funding, changes to governance may occur alongside continued service pressures, and there were a lot of concerns raised about declining service.

With respect to opportunity for provincial leadership, they talked about restoring or expanding provincial operating support that would more directly improve transit reliability, affordability and ridership.

There were also, interestingly—and a lot of us are quite disappointed and confused by this, with EV charging stations and why the government would move in the direction they're moving, and some of the other climate implications in this bill.

Bill 98 includes changes that limit municipalities' ability to require EV-ready infrastructure in new developments, which is the future.

It restricts EV-ready building requirements. Municipalities would no longer be able to mandate EV-charging infrastructure in new residential developments, and we think that's a mistake.

It creates higher long-term costs. Retrofitting buildings for EV charging is significantly more expensive than installing infrastructure during construction, so it's kicking the can down the road and making this transition more expensive than it needs to be.

It limits access for renters and multi-unit residents. Without EV-ready requirements, residents of apartments and condos face barriers to adopting EVs.

It undermines municipal climate leadership. Municipal green development standards have been key tools for reducing emissions and supporting electrification.

And it was raised that there's a misalignment with decarbonization rules, and I'm going to leave a lot of that to my friend from Toronto—Danforth to talk about.

In the last few minutes that I have, I want to address water in Ontario. That was a theme that's been addressed, and there's this ongoing debate about the privatization of water. What's coming out through these discussions from the last couple of bills where we've talked about this is that there's a difference in interpretation of what privatization is. Government believes that as long as—the example, actually, was used in committee of owning a home. We own our home, but we owe the bank all the money for the home. If an investor comes in, invests money—and pension funds were mentioned; I think that's kind of on the government's radar, pension fund investment and water and waste water infrastructure—they would, of course, require a return on their investment. And the government is arguing, "Well, it stays under public ownership." But they're missing the point that CUPE and other folks are trying to raise, which is that return on investment that's required for an investment in water and waste water infrastructure, that's going to jack up rates. Somebody has got to pay that.

#### 0920

I spoke in committee about the fact that I believe all of this is about deflecting responsibility, because while people are arguing about privatization, what's actually happening here—and I've been a municipal councillor, and I've been on, actually, a hydro board; I know what municipal service corporations and these kinds of corporations that are being set up do. The fact of the matter is that it's someone else for the government to blame. Someone has to pay for that return on investment, so if a pension fund or anybody else invests in the infrastructure, they want a return. Who's going to pay for that? It's going to be the consumer, of course.

There are all kinds of expert opinions on Peel right now, which is going to be the test case. Most experts believe—if you read them and if you talk to AMO, who has also said this—that water rates will go up, because someone has got to pay for that return on an investment to whatever, if they happen to get someone to invest in the infrastructure.

This is going to jack up water rates—there's no question about it—notwithstanding the concerns about privatization. According to the union, and I would agree with them, this is a form of privatization. It may not be direct privatization, but it's giving outside investors an interest. It's financializing water and waste water, and it will lead

to higher water and waste water rates. And if anyone has been involved in municipal politics, you will know that there are very few more contentious issues than increases to water and waste water. And that's exactly what's going to happen in Ontario under this plan, because consumers will end up paying for the return on profits under this scheme.

Water in Ontario already faces a number of threats, including climate change, pollution and land use changes. This is another threat to our water and something that we need to pay attention to. We tried to talk about it in committee, but, as I mentioned, the government was not interested in entertaining any of our amendments.

With that, Speaker, I look forward to hearing my friend from Humber River–Black Creek talk more, especially about transit, and my friend from Toronto–Danforth, who is going to talk more about the environmental concerns with this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member from Humber River–Black Creek.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Good morning, everybody. It's good to be here and nice to see you all.

Every time I get up to debate a bill and every time I step forward into the House, I often have this thought, and the thought is, there are a lot of good people on the government side. You actually get out there and you meet them—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** You can give a clap for yourselves.

You meet them in the hallways. You run into them outside. They're nice people. You talk to them. They seem to care about their community.

Then you put them all in a caucus room. The door of the caucus room gets closed. They come out, and the weirdest things happen; the strangest things happen. Things nobody ever asked for come out of there. I don't know what the heck goes on in there, but when they come out and they put legislation down, you sit and you wonder, who asked for this? Right?

And this is a perfect example of one of these things. One of the things that this government loves doing is controlling absolutely everything. They want to be in charge of absolutely everything out there. We see this over and over: school boards being taken over, get rid of trustees, cut city councils in half—"In fact, let's take away elected mayors and regional chairs and put in our friends." It just never, ever ends.

And so why am I raising this? Well, this is exactly what is happening to transit as a result of this legislation. Why does it happen? Friends, it's pretty obvious. It's expensive to run campaigns. So what we see is a government that's really good at doing one thing, which is attracting the high-end donors. For high-end donors to come in and give something, they've got to get something in return, right?

One of the big things that was able, years back, in 2018, to get so many of these high rollers on board was the greenbelt, as an example. They said, "Hey guys, help us out. We want to win government."

"What's in it for us?"

"The greenbelt."

"Impossible. There are rules against it. It's so unpopular. It's your own seats."

"Don't worry. We've got this."

They talked about it in the campaign. It didn't work. They talked about it again in the 2018 campaign. Again, they got rebuked. And then, the rest is history. They tried; they reduced conservation authorities. They brought in legislation to make it happen, and then they had to rip it up.

What's happening is that all these people that have given them so much are saying, "Look, we want a return on our investment. We helped you, time to help us."

So how do you do it? I think they figured out that silver bullet: control things, control the infrastructure, control the assets, control the contracts, give money back. You can find a way to make these people happy, wealthier.

And so, enter transit. They're sitting around at some point, and they say, "Well, what should we take over now? How about transit authorities?"

"I don't know. They're autonomous. They make their own rules."

"I know, but think about it. Think about the tracks. Think about the land rights. Think about future expansion."

Well, I mean, they may end up building a new set of tracks that might go through a certain place. Give a call to a friend and say, "Hey, you know what? Guess what we're doing. Maybe you need to buy that up. We'll expropriate it from you. You'll get some money out of it."

This is the kind of stuff where the wheels are churning. I don't know if they debate that in caucus. There's a bunch of people that surround the government that make these shots, make these calls and tell them to do this, do that and everything else. Then these good people show up in a caucus room and are given their marching orders. They walk out, and they do all sorts of things that baffle and befuddle everybody.

Imagine selling this one: "Guys, let's take over transit agencies across the province of Ontario."

"How? What could we possibly use as justification?"

"Fare integration."

"Verbum sap; say no more. Fare integration: Everybody wants it. But isn't One Fare—there are arrangements out there. Municipalities are working together to make this work."

"I know, I know, but let's tell them we'll do more."

So they bring this legislation in front of us, and what does it amount to? It essentially is, "Trust us." Like, "Hey, give me your wallet."

"Why?"

"Don't worry about it. Just give me your wallet."

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Don't worry about it. We're the boss. We've got a majority government. You're going to have to give us the wallet anyway. We're probably going to clean it. We're going to clean the wallet."

"Are you sure?"

“Maybe”—well, actually no. They say, “For sure. This is what we’re going to do. We’re going to clean the wallet.” And what is it like? These guys bring legislation here where all of it goes into regulations now. So essentially, they say, “Hey everybody, we’re going to introduce an omnibus bill. It’s going to achieve fare integration. It’s in schedule 4.”

All right, where does it actually define fare integration in a way that makes it work? Nowhere. It just says, “We’re going to do fare integration,” and, “Trust us,” and, “Do you know how we’re going to do it? In the regulations.”

So imagine all these transit agencies operating, really, on shoestring budgets, trying to make it all work, put it together, and they wake up one morning and they’re told, “The government is going to impose a whole new bunch of rules on you. In fact, we don’t even have to impose them on you. We’re just going to take you over. We are going to have the ability now to set fares and affect not just cross-boundary trips, but trips within localities, within municipalities, within locations. We are going to take over all these individual routes. Hey, you know, city of Toronto, you’ve got a specialized fare for seniors? We’re going to control that now. Hey, you know what? Youth don’t pay—we’re going to control that now.”

What about specialized rides like Wheel-Trans? “All of this we now will have ultimate control over.” This is a government that nobody trusts anymore. I don’t think they even trust themselves.

We look at this and we say, “You know what? Let’s go to committee”—thankfully they’re bringing back committee—and let’s listen to the hearings, where experts come in.”

#### 0930

Who are the experts? We had transit agencies. We had unions like ATU and CUPE and others show up. We had transit riders, and all of them said the same thing: “We were not consulted whatsoever. We had no idea.” I mean, they were checking out the Jays score the next morning and then they find out, “Oh, my gosh, there is a transit bill. What now? What now?”

So they come down. They tell us, “These are what the problems are with the bills.” The bill is—“Leave us the ability to make independent decisions. Leave us the autonomy to make decisions over our own transit agencies.”

You want to tinker with fare integration? Look, here is how it works. If a person lives in Vaughan and crosses Steeles to get into Toronto, in the past they’re paying a double fare. Fare integration is something we all support. Make it affordable; make it cheaper, right? If it’s cheaper to take the bus and transit, the math eventually works out. Maybe I’m going to get out of the car. There is enough bus service, there are enough subways, there is enough everything that it’s going to convince me that it’s probably faster and cheaper for me to take transit. But what fare integration does, of course, is now the municipality is eating a ride that they got fare for.

How does it work? Governments have to come to the table with sustainable, reliable funding. But do you know what this government doesn’t want to do? Provide the

sustainable, reliable funding. Do you know why? Because every single time, these municipalities have to count and hope and say, “I really hope that the province of Ontario is going to help us out this year with the funding that we need.” Do you know what it is? It’s control. Again, the obsession of this government: control. It’s power.

And so, they all said, “Look, we want fare integration to work. We want it to work even better. But you’re going to have to give us reliable funding. And this bill? You should have consulted.” Most of them were pretty nice about saying that, but it was clear what they said: “You did not consult us.” And of course, many of the people that come to committee realize that, unfortunately, this government bullies everybody, and if people don’t listen to them, they just take them over. So of course, they come to committee and they say, “All right, you know, maybe we should do this.” “Do you know, sir?” “Look, maybe it would have been nicer if you did it this way.” And you know what they’re thinking in their heads: “How dare you? Why did you do this? This is stressful. You’re ruining everything for us.” But this is what this government does in spades. They love bullying municipalities and telling people what to do.

We listened here in the official opposition. We listened to what the people in the hearings said, and we came to committee with 20 amendments. What did these amendments do? They limited the scope of the bill to do exactly what they said that they were intending to do: bring in fare integration, and that’s it, in a way that’s better somehow. Okay? Let’s just limit it, respect collective agreements—and in fact, do you know what? I’m actually going to read to you many of what these amendments were. Because in committee, what did the government do? They showed up. They sat through the hours of debate. They drank some coffee. And what they did was—presumably, they were going to be singing in a concert that night, so they saved their voices. They didn’t speak much because—I want to give them the benefit of the doubt; there are some beautiful voices on that side of the House. Maybe at night they were going to perform in a concert or something. They did not want to spend time using their vocal cords in committee. So they said, “Do you know what? We’re not going to speak.”

We said, “Okay. Let’s try some easy stuff. Let’s introduce issues that are essentially motherhood.” We introduced language to bring the focus of this bill to increase transit ridership, because of course fare integration should do that. What did they do? They said nothing. But when it came time to vote—“All those in favour?” Their arms were down. “All those opposed?” Arms went up. I thought, “Okay. Maybe they weren’t listening.” I don’t know what. The Danishes were sweet that morning. I have no idea.

We say, “Okay. Let’s add affordability to the bill. Let’s say we are going to ensure that legislation enshrines the fact that transit needs to be affordable.” The vote comes; their arms are still down. Now, they’re watching—I noticed that they were looking. But they still voted against making transit affordable in language in a bill that’s supposed to improve transit: “No, let’s not support that.”

Okay. So we said, "This is about fare integration. We're going to introduce an amendment that says, 'Don't mess around with local routes.'" Why? Because if you're not adding money into a model that has fare integration, then you're not helping. Like I said, each of these transit agencies are going to be losing a little bit of fare box income from a ride that, essentially, a transit user is only paying for once. They're going to need some support from the provincial government. I mean, it makes sense. We used to have 50% operational support until the Harris government, in the late 1990s, got rid of that.

So we said, "Okay, let's limit the scope to only deal with cross-boundary trips." They said no. "What? A bill about fare integration? It's only supposed to be about that? No." All right.

Another amendment: Limit the scope so that you can impose a fare structure on local transit agencies unilaterally. And look at this; check this out: We said, "Put language in that all of your negotiations and all of your consultation and everything you do has to happen in good faith." Now surely, I thought, finally, here's an amendment that they can't say no to, because, heck, the opposite of good faith is—what, help me out—bad faith? They've got to vote for this—no. Now, it's not like, I don't know, their sleeves were stitched down so they couldn't move their arms, because they were voting no to everything. I thought maybe—I don't know what. What's going on here? No. They voted against negotiating in good faith. It makes absolutely no sense. It's unbelievable.

Then we said, "Okay, let's bring an amendment that clarifies that a transit agency can continue to set fare policies for routes that are entirely within their local transit area." We tried it again. They had voted against the amendment earlier. Maybe they didn't hear. I have no idea. Maybe there was cross-conversation. Maybe someone was on a phone. Maybe they just didn't hear. Give them the benefit of the doubt again. They voted no to that again. Tinkering within local routes: "Hey, let's give ourselves the power to do that."

Again, we introduced more stuff to say, "Negotiate in good faith." Nope. It goes on and on and on.

We said, "All right. You know what? There's been talk about fare by kilometre." There are parts of the city of Toronto—it's a huge city—like Scarborough, where some people were saying, "What if this government imposes fare by kilometre or creates these artificial zones and then you have to pay to get across?" Surely they would vote for this—if they're not going to do it. No, they voted against that.

We said, "Give the TTC the ability and the exclusive right to operate within their own jurisdiction"—no to that. All right.

Collective agreements: Again, this government wants to pat themselves on the backs for finally—I mean, Conservatives, you know how they've been with unions forever. "Hey, you know what? We're actually talking to unions now." So we said, "Okay, surely they don't want to get into this kind of a war. Let's clarify that the minister can't breach a collective agreement related to a transit

system or stop the enforcement of a collective agreement." What did they do? They voted against that.

Literally every union in the province of Ontario looks at something like this and expects, above all, that at least that this government would respect. But no, all the collective agreements are on the table, and of course, with this bill, like every other, they make themselves lawsuit-proof. So things like malfeasance can, I guess, potentially occur if you make yourself lawsuit-proof. In fact, we specified language to say we are not going to act in bad faith with amendments. No, they still want to do it.

Why are they doing this? Obviously, they want to take over transit systems or at least have the veto power to force them to do what they want. And do you know what they want? As always, privatization, for sure—they are obsessed with control and privatization. Why? Because the people out there that tell them what to do, because they pay their bills—and I don't mean the taxpayer; I mean the people that you don't know who they are, but they ultimately give the ultimate direction to this government—they want money. They need it like—it's like those old locomotives: coal getting shoved in and heated to push that train along. They want things and they keep saying to these guys, "We supported you. We go to bat for you. We fill the coffers. We buy those spaghetti dinners with ruby meatballs, all of that. But you gotta do what we say." And what they did in this case was they said, "Let's take over transit, and let's ultimately create a vague bill without consultation that nobody asked for to give us the ultimate veto power and to bring in privatization."

#### 0940

The track record is there, Speaker. I mean, look, you remember Ontario Place? Cutting down all those trees to bring in an international spa that had—literally, go look at the Auditor General's report. It's telling. Billions of dollars that they're putting into a site so that they can extract half of that money over 95 years as if the 407 never happened. This is a government that will go to bat for big money, just befuddle everybody else, and when things aren't looking good in the polls, start a culture war or something like that to get people to turn away from what they're doing.

So at first glance, a schedule in an omnibus bill that talks about fare integration looks like something people could get behind. But when you actually read the details and saw what this was, it was cynical, and what it amounted to was a takeover of transit agencies across the province, giving them the ability and the power to do everything, including ripping up collective agreements and opening the door to privatization.

In the end they say to everybody, "Don't worry about it. We're not specifying anything in this bill. Trust us." Just like, "Hey, trust us. The science centre roof is going to fall so we have got to get rid of this thing and sell it off to our friends." Guess what happens after the biggest snowfall in the history of this province? The roof didn't fall. You know what they're probably going to do up there in the middle of the night in spring? They're going to send one of their younger members up there with a sledge-

hammer to smash away at it because it's been a big embarrassment.

Look, the official opposition doesn't trust this government, and the people of Ontario are starting to clue in and wake up to this cynical agenda of control and privatization and helping their insider friends. It's got to stop.

As this moves forward, all of these transit agencies, unions and transit riders, just like they so expertly said in committee—they gave advice. They said that this is what it's going to take to make this work, and what it's going to take to improve transit is consistent operating funding. Give these agencies the autonomy they need because they have the expertise to make the decisions they need, and don't touch those collective agreements.

Thank you very much, Speaker. I'll be sharing my time with the member from Toronto–Danforth.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member for Toronto–Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thanks to my colleagues, who have set the case out very powerfully. I want to make some small additions to their comments. Most of my focus will be on the green building standards, but I want to touch on one or two other things as well.

Before I talk about the green building standards, I think first we need to understand the context of the new world that we're going into right now. I would say, for many people, this is something they've read about. They've heard the term "climate change," they've heard the term "global heating," and most of what they've seen so far, it's something that is accommodatable. But we are going into a period when the world is going to be changing very profoundly.

We are in a situation now where the rate at which the world is heating up is accelerating. Temperatures that were seen to be coming forward in the 2050s or 2060s are likely going to come forward in the 2030s. The era we've experienced of extreme weather with significant cost for people in Ontario and people around the world is going to become far more difficult in the years to come.

In fact, about 15 years ago, the British government had a study done of the impact of the heating that we're experiencing. Their conclusion was that at a sort of substantial change—which we're looking at within the next 20 years—you would be looking at damage and loss equivalent to the Great Depression or World War II. That has huge implications, not only for people's standard of living, which will not go up—it did not go up during World War II—but it will also have substantial implications for their health and, possibly, most likely, even their lives.

To have a government that has been systematically undermining and rolling back action on climate change is quite an extraordinary thing to see. With this particular initiative, they, I think, are trying to complete the full set. They haven't wiped out all action on climate yet, but they're well on their way. And to actually, now, after a few efforts, try to knock out the green building standards imposed in the city of Toronto—and, I think, in other municipalities in Ontario—is just an indication that for

them the kinds of risks that people in this province and people around the world are facing are of no consequence or of no concern.

Speaker, I'm going to go back a bit to those consequences because they will loom large in people's lives. As you get more extreme weather, you will find that insurance companies will either charge rates that people cannot afford or will withdraw the provision of insurance. In California, Louisiana, Florida, in many cases, insurance companies have redlined whole communities and said, "We're not insuring there." And when you can't get insurance, you can't get a mortgage. And if you can't get a mortgage, you can't build a house—very hard to sell a house.

The increase in temperature is a threat to our financial system, it's a threat to employment, and, frankly, it's a threat to people's life savings, because they put them into their houses. Here in Ontario, we've seen less of that in the south, but when I talk to my northern colleagues, insurance rates are rising substantially, and that's because of the impact of more and more flooding. That is part of our lives. Flooding is going to become much more common.

We are going to see more wildland fires and urban wildfires. I know when people think about this, it seems a very distant concept. But in New York City in the fall of 2024, in a two-week period, they had over 200 fires in that city that were in their city park system. An incredible effort on the part of the New York City Fire Department—they were able to control them. They didn't spread to the residential areas. But in Los Angeles in 2025, people will remember the impact of the wildfires that swept through large sections of Los Angeles. Some 200,000 people had to be evacuated. Hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars of housing value were wiped out. The costs were extraordinary.

You should know, Speaker, that the World Bank, in conjunction with a number of other institutions, has evaluated fire risk in cities around the world, and they rate Toronto as having the same fire risk as Los Angeles. The World Bank is not an organization that is generally considered a lightweight in terms of looking at risk. They publish these maps of cities that have fire risk because, Speaker, people invest in cities. Investors, and those who back them, need to know whether or not they're going to be able to recover the money they put into developments. So the city of Toronto has been identified as having the same fire risk as Los Angeles.

The city of Halifax was rated as having a lower fire risk. In 2023, wildfires outside Halifax made it into a suburban area; 165 homes were burned down. Luckily the fire service was able to stop the fire. But I had an opportunity to talk to one of the firefighters who was there who said that when they drove their trucks into that area, the heat was so intense that it caused glass to crack on the fire engines. I asked the firefighter who responded what they needed to deal with the problem in that city and he said, "What we needed were water bombers."

We are looking at a very different regime coming forward—and I'm setting aside Jasper, Alberta; I'm

setting aside Fort McMurray or Lytton, BC, which was razed to the ground. We are looking at far greater risks to our well-being in the years to come. And yet this government has consistently undermined or eliminated action on climate change, and now it is going forward with this attack on municipalities that cannot be justified. It simply cannot be justified.

We've had, I think, two efforts so far previously to wipe out Toronto's green building standard—not at all an intelligent move; in fact, a destructive move. And it looks like this time they may have found the formula that will make it impossible for Toronto or other municipalities to actually put in place the standards that will provide some protection for people from these new extreme weather events but also protect people from high and rising energy costs. I want to talk a bit about that because I've talked about the climate impacts of what this government is doing, the climate impacts of what we're facing.

**0950**

But the other part of it, Speaker, is that as the world changes, as economies change, those that cling to the old path are going to lose. If you invested heavily in horse-drawn carriages at the beginning of the 20th century, things didn't work out well for you by the 2020s. It was bad news.

I have an example in Ontario. It's an interesting one. Some friends of mine live in a small town called Yarker near Kingston. Yarker has a beautiful setting. It has rapids, a small waterfall and tremendous water power. In the late 1800s and early 20th century, it was a centre of wood-working. They did great furniture because they had all this free power which would allow them to run their tools, their machinery. They also were big manufacturers of wagon wheels—huge industry, big market.

Sometime in the second decade of the last century, Colonel Sam McLaughlin came to them and said, "Look, automobiles are going to be the market of the future. Do you want to make wheels for us in Oshawa? Because I've got a market that you cannot afford to stand by on." Unfortunately, the industrial leaders in Yarker thought that this automobile thing was a passing fad, that horses would be around forever, and they turned down the deal. The rest was history. Yarker is a very small town now, not what it had been in the past.

We're looking at a government that thinks that we can continue to rely heavily on fossil fuels in the future, that we can continue to build buildings as if nothing was going on in the world, a government that is going to lose out on huge economic development opportunities but also is going to be in a situation where people will face higher and higher electricity bills because the impact of extreme weather on electricity systems is one that drives up costs.

In California, the impact of wildfires on electricity systems and costs has been very substantial. Those who are most shielded from that are those who use the least energy in their home and have their own solar panels. To the extent that they can isolate themselves from the grid, they're in good shape.

To the extent that this government doesn't allow building standards that reduce energy consumption in the future, this government makes things far more difficult for this whole province in the years going forward.

At the same time, the government is attacking the electric vehicle industry. It's an odd, odd approach for a government that has in last few years said that it would put hundreds of millions or billions into building electric vehicles in Ontario. They are indeed the future; that is where the automotive sector is going to go.

In fact, the current and ongoing war against Iran and the scarcity of oil around the world is reinforcing to people that to the extent that they're dependent on the oil and gas industry for transportation, they're putting themselves at risk for even getting fuel, let alone being able to pay for it.

For this government to attack standards that require easy plug-in for those who buy electric vehicles means they're undermining the domestic market for the next generation of automotive technology. If you say that you're in favour of having an auto industry in Ontario—and you should be—undermining the products that we're going to need in the future, undermining the market here in Ontario is fundamentally, transparently counterproductive—in fact, damaging. This government is making a huge mistake in taking that position.

Canadian Environmental Law Association has talked about the fact that if you're going to have electric vehicles, the cheapest way to ensure that people can power up their vehicles, given the energy they will need for the day's driving, is to ensure that, in a new building, things are set up so that, automatically, you will have that plug-in ability. It's far more expensive to retrofit later—far more expensive. And this government is ignoring the market that it needs to develop, but also ignoring the ability of people, on a low-cost basis, to provide themselves with transportation energy in the years to come. That on its own is quite extraordinary and something that, in this bill, should never have been allowed to go forward.

I want to talk briefly about Metrolinx and it being exempt from the Ontario building code. My riding, Toronto–Danforth, is the site for a very large stretch of the Ontario Line, and we need that transit. When I canvass through my riding, people support the idea of building the transit. There's no getting around it; they want it done. They want to be able to get from East York to downtown quickly, and they see public transit as the key to making that happen.

But they've also had the experience of dealing with Metrolinx, which is exempt from following city of Toronto bylaws and rules. And so we have had situations where failure to control dust has left whole neighbourhoods caked in dust; has led to the clogging of catch basins and thus flooding on streets, flooding in people's basements. And I have to ask myself, if you cannot manage an excavation project so that you protect people from choking dust and from flooding, why on earth should we have confidence that you should be able to be exempt from the Ontario building code? I mean, if you want to have buildings that are safe, buildings that—what

could I say—will stay up in the long run, following a building code makes a lot of sense. And given Metrolinx's record, exempting them from the Ontario building code makes no sense whatsoever.

I need to distinguish here: I meet a lot of the Metrolinx staff at the grassroots level—very focused on transit, very focused on trying to make sure that things work. I don't have any doubt about their commitment to my community or to the larger project. But when it comes to Metrolinx management and systems that they have set up that, frankly, do not protect the communities through which construction is going on, I have no trust.

Exempting them from the Ontario building code makes no sense to me at all. I don't know for the life of me why on earth this is proposed. No developer in Ontario would say, "Hey, I'm building buildings. I'm not subject to the Ontario building code. Things will be fine." People don't trust that. They think that there should be a fundamental law in place that guides construction and demolition, so that health and safety are protected, and so the buildings that result are ones that you can count on for years to come.

And I want to talk about these private water corporations. I know there are some differences of opinion, but having been in this place now for a number of years, I saw the stages through which privatization of the hydro system proceeded. And when you set up a corporation from an entity that used to be directly controlled by government to one that's stand-alone—notwithstanding the fact that the shares in it are owned by the government of the day—you set up a process that allows for privatization much more rapidly at another day.

I was here for the whole Hydro One fight. I had an opportunity to question the Minister of Energy in estimates. I had an opportunity to watch the Minister of Energy being coached by the lawyer who had been assigned to keep him on the straight and narrow in estimates. And frankly, when the Liberals set up a system, a share corporation, for Hydro One that allowed the whole thing to be sold off, you invited the day when a government having financial difficulties would decide, "Yes, I have a wonderful vehicle here; I can get billions of dollars for it. I'll start to sell it off, and I will deal with my political problems," much like we saw with Mike Harris in the 1990s.

**1000**

It was Highway 407. There was an entity that was owned by the government. He had financial troubles going into an election and decided to sell that off. It became a private toll road, and everyone who lives in the suburban GTA knows exactly what that has meant for their daily lives in terms of cost, and everyone who's stuck on the 401, when they know that a few kilometres up there's a highway that's much faster, knows that they are being stuck with the huge burden of congestion while those private road users are in a much better position. It didn't help us in terms of transportation and congestion, and, frankly, in the long run, doesn't help us financially.

Going forward with the initiative the government has put on the table is one that I believe will prove incredibly

tempting for future municipal governments to dip into. Ones that are facing difficulty with property tax rates will realize, "Hey, I just have to sell off shares here. There's a friendly government. They don't want to give us money. I need money. Let's do this."

I have to say that one of the things in the legislation saying that the water corporations have to be owned by governments or by agents of governments just kicks the door wide open. Agents can do a variety of things. Agents can make deals with governments. Agents may give governments large amounts of money for the ability to run a corporation in their private interest and not in the interest of the public as a whole. Water, hydro, roads and fundamental infrastructure function best in society when they're provided as a service, not as a profit centre.

Ontario, way back when, used to be chock-full of private toll roads. Getting rid of private toll roads greatly accelerated trade within Ontario. It made it much cheaper for goods to be moved from one town to another. It improved the standard of living, and it was vital to Ontario becoming an advanced industrial society. Each piece of infrastructure you sell off, or you put in the position where it can be sold off, means you're undermining the economic future of this province.

The bill is a mistake. My colleagues have made their points on a variety of other elements of it. I hope—and maybe it is a faint hope, Speaker—that the Conservatives will have a eureka moment and decide it's not worth going forward with the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I want to thank the members opposite from Toronto Centre, I believe, and Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Toronto—Danforth.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Yes. Anyway, I'm so grateful to be here to ask this question. I listened intently about the issue of water and waste water. Our government continues to advance a plan for publicly owned municipal service corporations, and I want to be very clear that these are publicly owned corporations. They are public, not private, and they're a tool to help our municipalities finance and deliver critical infrastructure, which we desperately need. They support growth. They spread costs more fairly over time, and they avoid placing the full burden on new home buyers.

This is about the next generation we're working on. The municipal partners have been very clear that they need this new tool, and if they have encouraged this speedy and efficient establishment of municipally owned public service corporations, please, if you don't—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Response?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I'm not sure I heard the last part of the question, but what I tried to make clear in my speaking—and my friend from Toronto—Danforth did as well—is when you financialize the infrastructure, whoever is investing—and the government has suggested pension funds, but whoever it is—requires a return on their invest-

ment. Someone has to pay for that. Money doesn't just fall out of the sky.

So who's going to pay? It's going to be the consumer. It's going to be people getting water bills, residents getting water bills, and who are they going to go to? There's nobody to go to because the government will have divested themselves of the responsibility, and you can't call your local councillors in the same way you could before. What's going to happen is, there's no responsibility, but water bills are going to go up, and that's a problem for us.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**MPP Wayne Gates:** I'll go back to my colleague from Niagara South. I'm not that old. I remember Walkerton and what happened in Walkerton, where seven people died and hundreds and thousands of people got sick—hundreds are still sick—from privatization of water. Make no mistake about it, that's where this bill is going to go.

I'm going to ask my question: Does Bill 98 rule out privatization of water with a system that could lead to higher costs, less accountability and a corporation running it for nothing more than making a profit for the shareholders?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** To repeat the same thing I said to the last person that asked: It's a financialization of the infrastructure. What that means is whoever invests is going to require a return on their investment. There is less responsibility, less transparency. Consumers are going to find that their water rates go up and there's nobody to complain to because a corporate entity will be running it.

That's what my friend from Toronto—Danforth tried to explain when he was in the Legislature dealing with electricity rates and the privatization of hydro. That's where it's headed. I think we've been very clear about that, and we're not in favour of it. We think it should stay within direct government control.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you to my colleagues for their remarks this morning on Bill 98. My question is for the member from Niagara Centre. He mentioned in his remarks Environmental Defence and their presentation at committee. I was just wondering if the member from the NDP agrees with Environmental Defence that no Ontario family should own a single detached family home.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** That is not what they said. The member wasn't there in the committee. I was there for the entire thing. I heard their entire presentation. I have their presentation, actually. They did not say that nobody in Ontario should own a single detached home. That's, quite frankly, ridiculous.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** I appreciate the comments from all of my colleagues. Again, I'm going to reiterate: When we are talking about privatization of water and the oversight of water, I'm just going to remind the Conservative side about Walkerton, as my other colleague did, and

the outcome of Walkerton. Those are real people that died and are still very, very ill because of privatization schemes.

I'm going to ask any of my colleagues—we have a record number of people going to food banks under this government. We have a record number of people experiencing homelessness under this government. That's not my data; that's public data, outside agencies doing the data. We're also seeing—a report just came out—a record number of people defaulting on mortgages or becoming delinquent on their mortgages under this government: 35% overall in the province, 45% in Toronto, Barrie and Windsor.

Do any of my colleagues see anything in this bill that is actually going to bring down the cost of rent or the cost of housing for these people that are struggling to—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Response?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The first part of the response will be no. The second part is, in fact, that what I see is a machine for increasing costs for homeowners. My colleague was talking about water privatization. CUPE has pointed out that, in fact, this whole scheme is going to result in higher water costs for people, which is going to make it far harder for them to afford the daily expenses they are grappling with now.

We don't see in this bill anything that is actually going to make it easier for people to pay their energy bills, because it is undermining the energy efficiency that would reduce their operating costs in the long run. This bill is not one I have found that at any point will make things more affordable.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. John Jordan:** I can't stress how important communal water and sewage is to rural Ontario. This bill is the first stage in developing a framework for that to happen. It doesn't matter in Niagara Centre; it doesn't matter in Toronto—Danforth; it doesn't matter in Niagara Falls—it's very important to the people of rural and northern Ontario.

**1010**

Public corporations are the framework that will make it work. A good example is Verona, where, instead of putting 14 homes on a development, we're putting 100 homes with a communal water and sewage system.

Whichever member would like to answer, I'm just wondering: Coming up with a privatization scheme that doesn't exist will further delay the development of communal water and sewage across the province—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Response?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** The member is asking a question about a totally separate thing. In the bill, there is a section on communal water in rural settings, and we actually support that, and we supported the private member's bill from the member from Newmarket—Aurora who brought that forward.

So those are two completely separate issues, and we do support what he has raised.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** I'm going to delve back into the fact that a report has just come out about the number of people who are 90 days or more delinquent on their mortgages, the number of people who are being renocted or can't find affordable rentals because this government did away with rent controls in the province, the fact that we have over 8.7 million visits to food banks under this government—a record number—and the number of people who are currently experiencing homelessness. I'm talking about children going to food banks; I'm talking about seniors and people with disabilities going to food banks, and the fact that people in this province cannot afford a place to live. So while this government talks about building housing—and they are not even close to reaching their goal they had set for themselves. That's a stretch goal, I believe.

I'm just wondering, again, if there is anything in the bill that is going to address the fact that people cannot afford a place to live in the province. And just on one side note, it was this government that also started—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Response?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** There is absolutely nothing in the bill that will help renters or make housing more affordable. This is just one of their typical, "Trust us; we'll figure it out in the regulations" privatization scheme bills. I spoke to the transit elements of the bill, of course, but there are other elements there.

We know this government is great at waste—maybe not so much waste water, but certainly waste. So there is no help for renters or for people that are hoping for affordable housing from the government. It has been eight years and we're still waiting, and the people are still waiting across the province, especially here in Toronto.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

#### REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: a report entitled 2024-25 Interprovincial Budget Comparison, from the Office of the Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### LOIS FAIRLEY NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARD

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** The RNAO Lois Fairley Nurse of the Year Award recognizes nurses who go above and beyond for Windsor and Essex county. Today I rise to congratulate the 2026 recipient, Spenser Dionne. Spenser is a registered nurse in the clinical teaching unit at Windsor

Regional Hospital's Ouellette campus. This honour reflects both clinical excellence and extraordinary compassion.

Nominated by Ryan Peebles, Spenser was recognized for the profound difference she made after his mother suffered a severe stroke. In a moment filled with fear and uncertainty, Spenser provided far more than medical care, offering comfort through consistency and thoughtful gestures, and continuing to check in even after the transition to long-term care.

Spenser's dedication also extends beyond the bedside through her support for students and new nurses, helping to strengthen the next generation of health care professionals.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Spenser Dionne—an outstanding credit to her colleagues and to our community—and thanking nurses across Ontario for the exceptional care that they provide each and every day.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Speaker, Laura contacted my office, a mother who is struggling to find child care for a return to work in October. She signed up on the London daycare list shortly after finding out she was pregnant, but, sadly, signing up when she was pregnant was not enough. She said one place only has 10 infant spots, and she's number 293 on the wait-list.

Laura's story reflects the reality facing thousands of families in Ontario. The federal government provided provinces with the funding to build a universal, affordable child care system and reach a \$10-a-day target. Other provinces have succeeded. According to the Auditor General, the Ontario government has failed to meet nearly every major target for the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care program.

London families know this first-hand, as London was ranked the fifth worst out of 45 Canadian cities for accessing child care.

Nearly 70,000 families are still waiting for access spaces, 10,000 additional RCEs are needed, and the Auditor General warned of a nearly \$2-billion funding shortfall that could push fees up to an average of \$32 a day without additional public investment.

Despite knowing all these challenges, this government secured only a one-year extension of the agreement. I call on this Ontario government to protect the program, maintain the commitment to non-profit child care, properly fund the system and ensure every family has a fair chance to access affordable child care in this province.

#### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** May is Asian Heritage Month—a time to celebrate the generations of Asian Canadians whose hard work and sacrifice helped build our province and our country.

From pioneer generations from Canton who helped build the Canadian Pacific Railway, to small-business

owners who opened shops and restaurants along the way, Asian Canadians helped shape the Canada we know and we love.

Chinese Canadians in particular endured legalized racism, the Chinese Exclusion Act and the head tax, yet they held on to an unwavering belief in a better future for their children and a belief in Canada.

Today, Asian Canadians are leaders in every part of our society, like trailblazers such as Vivienne Poy, Bob Wong, Dr. David Suzuki and the Honourable Vim Kochhar. They have helped define Ontario's success.

The families who came here with little, worked long hours and built opportunities for the next generation: Their success should be a source of pride and deserves not only our gratitude but also the government's respect and support in return.

*Remarks in Cantonese and Mandarin.*

To every Asian Canadian who helped build this province and this country, we thank you.

#### RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Today I recognize the continued progress being made to strengthen primary care and improve access to health care across rural Ontario.

Recently, I had the honour, on behalf of the Minister of Health, to announce more than \$8.8 million for primary care expansion across Perth, Wellington and Huron counties through our government's primary care action plan. This investment will help connect more than 22,000 patients to a primary care provider in our local communities.

In budget 2026, our government made further investments of \$300 million in our primary care action plan, bringing the total funding to over \$3.4 billion. We are firmly on track to meeting our goal of attaching every Ontarian to a primary care provider by 2029. This is meaningful progress, Speaker.

For rural communities especially, access to primary care is essential to building a strong and sustainable health care system.

And while investments like these matter, it is the people on the ground who make this work possible. I want to thank the physicians, nurse practitioners, medical staff and front-line health care workers who continue to serve our rural communities with professionalism and compassion every single day. Because when people can access care closer to home, communities become healthier and stronger.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** The Conservative government has put the Toronto District School Board under undemocratic supervision, and now the drastic cuts to our schools have begun: staff in school cafeterias cut, staff that support school libraries cut, staff who support students in disadvantaged schools cut, two outdoor education centres closed, 150 lunchroom supervisors laid off, 25 clerical staff laid off, 40 vice-principals laid off, 69 child and

youth workers cut, 483 teaching positions surplus, 72 ESL teachers cut.

Now the government says that this is all about right-sizing, modernizing, just responding to declining enrolment. Well, I have two responses to that: These cuts are far bigger than declining enrolment, and these cuts are due to a budget shortfall that is entirely of the Conservative government's own making. Not a single parent believes for one second that this is not going to have an impact on our children.

This is also a message from parents to this government: Stop the cuts, invest in public schools and invest in our kids.

**1020**

#### NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

**MPP Silvia Gualtieri:** It is National Police Week, a time to recognize the extraordinary men and women across Ontario who protect our communities. To every member of the Peel Regional Police serving Mississauga East–Cooksville, I thank you. We are deeply grateful for all that you do.

On Monday, we marked police week by hosting a community safety town hall meeting attended by over 100 residents. Superintendent Joy Edwards from division 12 led the outstanding panel, along with Sergeant Claudia D'Amico, Constable Adam Cook, Constables Pierre Florensa-Bertrand and Gerard Maghanoy, Constable Haave Wright, Constables Matthew Pitula and Cory Guest, Detective Dan Masters, Constable Kasim Baluch and Constable Jason Comishen.

Residents asked direct questions on home invasions, distraction thefts and auto thefts, while officers shared prevention strategies and practical safety advice. A big shout-out to Royal Canadian Legion Branch 582 in Cooksville, where my office hosted this very important event.

Speaker, I am proud we are building strong community partnerships to keep Mississauga East–Cooksville safe.

#### SPRING IT FORWARD FOOD DRIVE

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I would like to take a moment to highlight the incredible generosity of members of my community in Niagara Centre. Over the weekend in Welland, the Seaway Mall Spring It Forward Food Drive helped combat food insecurity by collecting almost 6,000 kilograms of food from residents and raising \$19,000 in donations, including \$10,000 in a matching contribution from Elevate Living.

Since launching in 2023, the campaign has raised more than \$88,000 and collected more than 16,000 kilograms of food and hygiene items to help stock the shelves at the Hope Centre, Open Arms Mission and Holy Trinity. Together, these contributions represent the equivalent of more than 50,000 meals for families.

Another organization, Niagara Nutrition Partners, recently told us it costs up to \$6.50 per child per day to run

a student nutrition program. However, it receives funding from this government that equates to just 10 cents per student, the lowest per capita of all provinces.

At a time when the rising cost of gas, food and housing are placing enormous pressure on families, our community continues to step up where governments have failed.

Thank you to the Seaway Mall and everyone involved in Spring It Forward. You make our community proud.

#### GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

**Mr. John Jordan:** I was honoured to have the Premier, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the acting Minister of Infrastructure and our Minister of Long-Term Care visit my riding of Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston last week.

Together, we announced and celebrated two vital projects in the town of Smiths Falls: the water infrastructure work to go along with the new water tower and the new 128-bed Broadview Nursing Home.

Through the health and safety water stream, just over \$13 million in funding was used to upgrade the Smiths Falls trunk water main and sewer separation. The town will have access to safe and reliable water infrastructure that will give families peace of mind that their communities' essential systems are being upgraded. Investments like this will also support current and future growth.

The Minister of Long-Term Care was on hand to join the Premier to meet with residents and celebrate the new Broadview Nursing Home in the heart of Smiths Falls. The Smiths Falls residents enjoyed four resident home areas to create more familiar living spaces for up to 32 residents, with dining and activity areas, a secured courtyard for residents, visitors' lounges and bedrooms.

The increased access to long-term care in my riding is making a difference to wait times and ALC at our community hospitals. Mayors, reeves and municipal leaders continue to work to expand those services. It was a great day in Smiths Falls, Speaker.

#### DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS WEEK ACT

**Mr. Billy Pang:** I rise today to acknowledge a meaningful milestone in this Legislature. Yesterday marked the second-reading ballot stage for my private member's bill, the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week Act, 2026.

This proposed legislation seeks to formally recognize the last full week of May each year as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Week in Ontario. The intent of this bill is simple but important: to raise awareness, strengthen understanding and ensure that the voices and lived experiences of people with developmental disabilities and their families are recognized and valued across the province.

I want to sincerely thank the individuals, families, advocates and community organizations, including Community Living Toronto, Community Living Ontario, Com-

munity Living York South, Surrey Place, New Visions Toronto and Spirit of Life, as well as the individuals who attended in the chamber yesterday to witness this important legislative process. Your work continues to shape a more inclusive and compassionate province.

As we continue through this legislative process, I look forward to working with colleagues from all sides of the House to ensure this community is not forgotten.

#### RED TAPE REDUCTION

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** I'm pro-business. I want business to thrive and grow, and, like many, I want healthy businesses and a healthy natural environment. The Ministry of Red Tape Reduction has a job to do, though it is paradoxical a whole government ministry was created to get rid of some bureaucracy and red tape.

But Ontario's workers, entrepreneurs and job creators are asking for one simple thing: Get government out of the way so they can do what they do best. From auto dealers buried in paperwork, to tradespeople waiting on permits and certification, to farmers navigating layers of regulation, to tourism operators struggling with seasonal reporting requirements, the message during pre-budget consultations was loud and clear: Red tape costs time, red tape costs money, and, in today's economic environment, both are already in short supply.

This government should relentlessly focus on removing duplication, modernizing outdated processes and making it easier to do business in this province, while still protecting safety and accountability. When we reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, we create room for growth, investment, innovation and jobs.

Looking at the red tape report card numbers from the CFIB, I think it can be argued some progress has been made—credit where credit is due—though the CFIB still cites areas of concern, like the accessibility of regulatory documents and the total number of provincial regulatory requirements.

I'm hearing areas of concern from quite a few business owners in my riding of Haldimand–Norfolk, so I would suggest the government stay on course with red tape reduction but respond—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** We will move on to introduction of visitors.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to wish a warm welcome to Jamie and Sean Ireland, parents to page captain Kaleigh. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'd like to welcome Miriam Barna and her daughter Sylvie Galati-Barna to the House. It's a real pleasure to have you here. Thank you so much for coming.

**Hon. Stan Cho:** We've got a special group of visitors here, and they come here from every corner of the province. They are the young leaders of today; they're also

the leaders of tomorrow. I want to formally welcome to the House the 2026 PC internship class. Welcome to Queen's Park. I can't wait to see what you do.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I want to introduce a recent recipient of the Order of Ontario, former MP John Carmichael of Don Valley West, who was MP from 2011 to 2015. He's with the YPO Forum group: Tom Knowlton, Harold Lenfesty, Stuart Smith, John Bergsma, Jim Leech, Steve Overgaard and Peter Casson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I'd like to welcome the over 35 representatives of injured workers who are here today.

I would also like to welcome Virginia Burton and her service dog, Pockets.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

1030

**MPP Jamie West:** I want to introduce two friends of mine: David Lisi, the health and safety executive chair for Local 6500 and Vale, also co-chair of the Mining Legislative Review Committee, and Sean Staddon, WSIB rep and executive member for Local 6500. Welcome to your House, guys.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature the interns working in my office today. We've got Jason Holliday, Jujhar Grewal, Jiya Sidhu, Ahmed Hanafi and Tanjot Gill.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I have two sets of introductions. First, from the Ontario Chiropractic Association, I'd like to welcome Caroline Brereton, Catherine Melville and Dianna Pasic; and from the PC interns working in the Ministry of Health, welcome James, Paulina, Akshara, Ilesha, Cristian, Fola and Luca.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Good morning, everyone. Great to be here, as always, with you.

I'd like to welcome Zainab Siddiqui, who is a U of T intern, starting in my office—welcome—and Adam Gill and James Dann, who have done so much for Toronto parks and music, just to liven up our city.

Welcome to your House.

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I just want to give a shout-out to the Kitchener Rangers, who won the OHL championships yesterday. Go, Rangers!

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Order—I'm joking. Timiskaming—Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On behalf of everyone in the Legislature, I'd like to welcome the associated equipment dealers here today, and in particular, my local dealer, Brian Brownlee.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'd like to welcome Canadian Parents for French. That includes Elizabeth Gormley, Mary Cruden, Myron Karpiuk and Lynne LeBlanc.

I also would like to welcome a good friend of mine, Miriam Barna, and her beautiful daughter, Sylvie Galati-Barna. We used to work together. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** I'd like to welcome three summer interns from the Ministry of Emergency Preparedness and Response: Sophie Block, Owen Massey and Andrew Ciddio.

Welcome to Queen's Park, and I hope you enjoy your summer with us.

**Mr. Brian Saunderson:** It's my great pleasure to welcome Beth Vanstone and Alice Williams, the co-founders of the Ontario Rare Action Group. They hosted a breakfast this morning, and I'm going to mention in first name only a number of supporters that came out: Rosalind, Nicola, Erin, Emma, Shelly, Riham, Ruchi, Ashleigh, Angela, Susan, Homira, Mary, Kristen and Rebecca.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** I'd like to welcome Tien Leong Wong and Lilian Thung, the proud parents of Johanan Lucas Wong, the page from Mississauga—Malton.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** I'd like to welcome Tristynn, who just graduated from Western University and is an intern in my ministry this summer.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I'd like to recognize members from the Hamilton and District Injured Workers' Group, including Marvin Mulder and the president, Victoria Daniels.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Joseph Racinsky:** I'm happy to welcome, from the township of Centre Wellington, Councillors Lustgarten-Evov, Jefferson and MacDonald.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I'd like to welcome to the House, from the Associated Equipment Distributors, Mr. Dan Dent from Toromont, a proud member of the Thornhill community, and from Federal Signal, Michael Rugeroni.

Thank you very much for coming to the House.

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(h), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required, and therefore, the House shall commence at 9 a.m. on Monday, May 25, 2026, for the proceeding orders of the day.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** My question is for the Premier. Earlier this morning, Global News reported that government documents saved on Google Docs would no longer be subject to FOI requests. This would be unbelievable if it wasn't so on brand. This government is notorious for using personal Gmail and private cellphone records and conducting government business on all of those devices for their shady deals, and now they've gone and changed the law to make sure their records never get out.

Premier, what exactly is in those Google documents that you are so afraid of people seeing?

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

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** It's great to be here. I'm not going to comment on the member's question about on-

going investigations or individual FOI requests, but what I will say is that government records—government oversight is still under the purview of the Auditor General, of independent officers like the Integrity Commissioner. Nothing has changed with respect to oversight—overseeing all of the government records, and nothing has changed.

Ontario's rules now align with jurisdictions across Canada, be it Alberta, Saskatchewan—their NDP friends in British Columbia are pushing through legislation similar to what we're doing to align our jurisdictions into the Westminster tradition of cabinet confidentiality.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I'll tell you this: The people of Ontario, they play by the rules, right? And they expect their government to do the same. But this government simply changes the rules when they don't feel like playing by them. When the truth starts to catch up with them, they know the rule book and they throw it in the trash—probably the same dumpster that the jet receipts are in.

If there is nothing to hide, why did the government go to such lengths to hide things?

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** What the people of Ontario care about right now are the tariffs that have been imposed upon us by the United States and about growing an economy that we need to build for the future. What people care about is over 42,000 jobs being created in the province of Ontario in the month of April. That is 680% more jobs per capita than the United States, Speaker; over 8,000 manufacturing jobs.

When the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, was in power for 15 years, they gave up on manufacturing. They viewed manufacturing as a has-been industry. We're going to back manufacturing. We're getting more manufacturing jobs back to this province, back to this country, so we can be the economic engine of Canada. We're proud of that record, and that's what the people of Ontario care about.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It's a bit rich, coming from a government that has record unemployment rates.

But do these government members need to be reminded that they are under a criminal investigation for the green-belt carve-up? The evidence of that carve-up continues to live, by the way, in private Gmail, in personal cellphone records of the Premier and, yes, in Google Docs.

When records are about to come out, the government changes the law to bury them. When the Premier and the top staff in his office—when their court cases start heating up, they change the law to nullify those cases. You've got to ask yourself, Speaker, is this Queen's Park or the Kremlin?

Can the Premier tell us why he thinks he's so above the law?

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** Speaker, I can tell you, on this side of the House, we have a democratic process when we elect our leader, unlike the party opposite, who was

crowned as emperor of the NDP opposition. We elect our leader, and we support our leader wholeheartedly.

What we are doing with the FOI legislation, which has already been discussed, is bringing us in line with other provinces.

But what I want to talk about is the economic growth, the investments that are pouring into Ontario as a result of our team, of our Premier and our ministers going around the world, making sure that we have an environment for business to thrive here in the province. We are doing that. We've had \$45 billion of investments, in the last eight years we've been in power, by foreign companies investing in—why are they investing in Ontario, Speaker? Because they know they have a government that stands up for businesses small and large so we can create the economic opportunities for Ontarians for generations to come.

#### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, first let me say, yes, you bought him a private luxury jet; we know you support him.

Yesterday, unfortunately, the Auditor General's report told us what parents have been telling us for so many years: The government is failing our children, and especially children with special needs. Sending kids home because there's no support for them, unmanageable teacher-student ratios, ignoring education plans—that is the state of our classrooms under this government's watch.

So to the Premier: Does the Premier even care about students with special needs and that they are being left behind?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Obviously we do, and that is why we've increased funding to special education to record levels across the province of Ontario.

1040

But as I've said on a number of occasions and I will continue to say, I don't think parents care and I don't think teachers care that ministers get up here and say it's the highest level of funding or that the opposition says it's not enough. What they care about is, what are the outcomes for their students and for their children? That is what we are going to continue to focus on: outcomes.

As I said yesterday, I'm very concerned by a number of the things that I saw in the report. That is why the ministry needs to step up and show more leadership across the province of Ontario and stop downloading to school boards that are clearly incapable of dealing with some of the situations they have in front of them. For 50 years that leadership has not been shown. Two bills that we brought before this House over the last year have brought back that leadership to the Ministry of Education, and we will make sure that this job gets done for the students and teachers of the province of Ontario.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I find it a bit rich to hear the minister talk about this as if it's the first he's ever heard of this

because, I've got to tell you, we've been raising these issues in the House for years, and so have parents and teachers and so have, frankly, students, because there's horror story and horror story, one after the other, for so many years under this government. Teachers, education workers, are struggling. Our kids are struggling. Parents are struggling. And this minister is sitting in his ivory tower, gathering power and throwing, frankly, very callous comments out there and saying, "You know what? Too bad, no more funding for you. You're on your own." That's what we heard yesterday.

Why has this government so badly neglected special education and the students who need it?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I think what the Leader of the Opposition actually heard me say yesterday, and has been hearing me say for the last year, is that the Ministry of Education has not shown the leadership that is required to provide the best quality education for our students. It has constantly been downloaded for the last 50 years, and we are going to step up and show that leadership.

Now she says that we don't care about special education. She voted against every single increase to special education. It is the highest level of funding that this province has ever had. That started under the previous ministers of education. It has continued under us right now and in this last budget that she voted against.

But it doesn't matter that the minister says it's the highest level of funding; it doesn't matter that the Leader of the Opposition says it's not enough. What matters are the outcomes. Clearly the outcomes are not matching the funding levels, and that is what we're going to make sure of. You know how we're going to do it? By listening to educators who are constantly telling us that perhaps the inclusion model isn't working; perhaps the resources that they need aren't there. We're going to listen to them, we're going to provide the appropriate level of funding, and the ministry is going to step up and show leadership.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Very interesting comment that the minister just made—maybe inclusion isn't working. Does the minister even believe that children with special needs, like every other child in this province, have a right to an education? Because that's not what I'm hearing. They are being excluded. They are being sent home. The government has no data, no tracking, no guidelines.

The minister really needs to go back and read the Auditor General's report, because what the Auditor General said is that special education amendments and plans from the boards are collecting dust on his desk. That's what's going wrong. But he still thinks he should be the emperor of education. He still thinks that his downtown office knows what's best for local schools.

Back to the minister and to the Premier: How can the Premier have any confidence in his minister after the mess he has created in our schools?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Speaker, for 50 years governments of all stripes have downloaded responsibility for education to school boards. What we have seen is that they're incapable of dealing with what we have downloaded to them. What we're saying is that it's time for us to step up.

The report clearly highlights failings of the ministry—it clearly highlights that—failings that have come from the decentralization of education. So what we're going to do—the bills that we have before the House that have been passed are about the ministry stepping up and showing that leadership so that we can centralize and we can have a consistent level of education across the province.

What I care about for kids with special needs is that their special needs are accommodated in our schools. It's not one-size-fits-all. Every child matters, and that is why every child should have access to a special education system that works for them—not for the opposition, not for me, but for the child.

#### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Mr. John Fraser:** My question is for the Premier. I think I've asked this question 20 times, about who owns the Premier's luxury private jet, but the good news is I answered my question, Speaker. I answered my own question: The Premier owns the luxury private jet, because he will always own it.

I thought about it in relation to the Auditor General's report. We saw some pretty scary stats. Nine out of 10 teachers feel that they can't give children with exceptional needs the help they need, the help they deserve, the help that's in their plan.

So juxtaposition that to "the Premier can buy himself a luxury private jet." If there are no resources, no money for children with exceptional needs in this government, how is it we can afford to buy the Premier a luxury private jet?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** This, coming from a member whose party underfunded special education for 15 years—that is the reality of the previous Liberal government. This, coming from a member who has been afraid to ask about education—the only question they asked about education was, how come we can't go to graduation ceremonies, and can the minister help them get to a graduation ceremony?

Now he's coming and lecturing us about special education when previous ministers before me have increased funding for special education to the highest level that we have ever seen in the province. But you know, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if that level is the highest unless the outcomes match the funding, Madam Speaker. And the outcomes are clearly not matching the funding, and that is why we're going to make sure that we'd better listen to educators, we'd better listen to those who are providing assistance for our students, including our parents, and that every child has the opportunity to succeed in the province of Ontario.

It's not about Liberal ideology or NDP failings. It's about making sure our kids succeed, and you do that by listening to teachers and giving the—

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's about eight years—eight years the Minister of Education and the Minister of Energy have made a mess of kids' special education. We know from the Auditor General's report three years ago that they were shorting kids \$350 million. Now we know it's over \$800 million, so our kids are suffering. And we know that the supervisors now are cutting special education, totally opposed to what the minister is saying right now.

So if cabinet can line up and unanimously approve a luxury private jet for the Premier, who already has access to one, why do we have no money, no resources for kids with exceptional needs?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** The member clearly did not read any part of the report, because what the member is trying to do is actually defend his record when they were in office, a record of failure when it came to special education across the province.

What did the previous minister do? He guided us through a COVID challenge, a global health and economic pandemic—that kept our kids in school. That's what this government dealt with. And now we're dealing, of course, with a global tariff war.

But despite all of the challenges this government has faced, what are we doing? We've increased funding for education to the highest level in provincial history. We've increased funding for special education to the highest level in provincial history, Madam Speaker. But you know what? The results aren't matching the highest level of funding. We're hearing that from teachers, we're hearing that from parents and we're hearing that also from the Auditor General.

So what are we going to do? We're not going to double down and give more money to a system that is failing our kids. We're going to find out why it's not working, and we're going to provide the appropriate level of funding so that the achievement matches the funding better, and the ministry is going to step up and show leadership, something that they have been—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Leader of the third party.

**Mr. John Fraser:** The minister is failing them by just simply not giving the resources that are needed to help our kids. That's what's happening here.

The Auditor General confirmed for us what we already knew, that the wait-list for assessments in the schools are too long, so people are having to pay privately. So they pay through their taxes, and then they pay privately.

I told the story of Marigold, the six-year-old who lives in my riding, and how her parents had to pay for an assessment at four years old because they couldn't get one in schools. Two years later, she's still not getting services. Two years is a long time when you're a little kid. Think about it. When you're six years old, two years is a long time. But you know what? The Premier couldn't wait to

get his luxury private jet, right? Couldn't wait, had to get it—it was that important. But Marigold? She can languish.

So maybe the minister can answer why he signed off on the Premier's luxury private jet while Marigold sits stranded without services in her school.

**1050**

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Really, this member has the nerve to get up and talk about failings? This is a member who, in his own riding, refused to give money to the children's hospital—in his own riding—so that they could expand. Our government had to step up.

This is a member who voted against every single long-term-care expansion. He never actually built long-term care in his riding. This is a member who closed down 600 schools across the province of Ontario. This is a member who increased taxes for every single person in the province of Ontario. This is a member who spent billions upon billions and has nothing to show for it.

Fifteen long, dark, miserable, agonizing years of failure under the previous Liberal government, and, thankfully, in 2018, a Progressive Conservative government building schools, building hospitals, building long-term care, building roads, bringing jobs and economic prosperity back to the province of Ontario, ending the failures of the previous government and—

*Interjections.*

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

#### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Mr. John Fraser:** Speaker, back to the minister: At four years old, Marigold's parents, Kristin and Mason, knew she had exceptional needs. They couldn't wait more than a year to get her assessed, so they paid thousands and thousands of dollars to get her an assessment. Then she gets to school; two years later, no services.

Her parents work full-time, and they can't get time off work, so her aunt Karen supports her by taking her to appointments and helping the family with the cost of those appointments. They're paying for those appointments too. They're paying in their taxes, they're paying for assessments, and they're not getting anything from this minister. No matter how much he blows off steam here in the assembly, she's not getting what she needs.

So they pay taxes, they pay out of pocket, and do you know what? They paid for the Premier's plane too. How is it that this minister can sit there after signing off on the Premier's luxury jet and knowing that Marigold is not getting the services that she needs? And I called the supervisor, and no action.

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** He called the supervisor and no action, he said, in Ottawa—a supervisor who is putting more money back into the classrooms in Ottawa; a supervisor who has the vast, overwhelming support of parents in his community; a supervisor who ended fighting in his community.

These were trustees in his own community who he supported, who were spending more money fighting each other than they were investing new investments in special education.

Where was that member when he had the opportunity to do something? Sitting on his hands, as he always did. Where was that member when the Liberals were spending a billion dollars to save two ridings in the gas plant scandal? Sitting on his hands and doing absolutely nothing, because that's what Liberals do best.

This is a party, colleagues, who think they're ready to govern the province. The only thing he can say is, "Oh you're an emperor." That's the best they've got. "Oh, please, help me get to graduation ceremonies, Minister, because people in the schools like you better than they like the Liberal Party."

Do you know what, Madam Speaker? We're going to focus on what is important: jobs and economic growth. Do you know why we have to focus on that so bad? Because under 15 long, dark, miserable years of the Liberals, they chased away jobs, they bankrupted the province, and they made us the laughingstock of—

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** A supervisor, Minister—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Fraser:** Listen up—a supervisor who is cutting speech pathologists. And do you know what Marigold needs? Speech pathology.

All the yelling, all the blowing off steam, all the big talk, all of this bluster that you're giving, Minister, isn't getting Marigold and children like her—thousands of children in this province aren't getting what they need, and they don't need to hear the minister blowing off steam. They need to hear him say, "We're going to invest in special education. We're going to make sure that kids get what they need," and a minister who is going to say, "No, Premier, you can't get that luxury private jet right now, because I've got this other thing that we have to do for Marigold and thousands of kids like her."

And you may all be smiling there, but do you know what? You all approved a luxury private jet while people are in need in this province—

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** —and kids like Marigold.

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Well, then, by that logic this member holds responsibility for every single investment that we've made in 2018 that has gone against the people. He's voted against his hospital. He's voted against tax cuts. He's voted against the gas tax cut. He's voted against eliminating taxes for the most vulnerable in the province of Ontario. That means he's voted against long-term-care expansions in his riding. He's voted against improvements to transit and transportation in his riding. By that measure, he is responsible for every bad thing that has happened in the province of Ontario because he votes for it.

We are responsible for jobs. We are responsible for growth. We are responsible for prosperity. We are responsible for the billions of dollars of economic investment. I will take that responsibility.

He talks about the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. Yes, the supervisor eliminated some 300 positions there at head office. And do you know what he's doing with the millions of dollars that he has saved by reducing the executive corps? He's putting it right back into the classroom on top of the million dollars this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Leader of the third party.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Marigold needs a speech-language pathologist. The minister's supervisor is cutting them. It's that simple, Minister.

If you want to talk about executive offices, in this government, in 2018, they were \$34 million; they're now \$82 million. If you want to talk about the Premier's office, it was \$2 million in 2018; it's now \$8 million.

If you want to talk about something else, the Premier gets a luxury private jet, and all of you line up. All you co-pilots better be careful, because the captain and Teneycke are going to take you down.

You approved a luxury private jet when people need speech-language pathologists, when kids need help in school, and you're not delivering it. So how is it you can approve a luxury private jet when you know this, Minister?

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

I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Again, this is a member who just made light of the fact that we cut head office jobs—absolutely—executive positions at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, because we could save a million dollars that we could put back into the system. He disagrees with that.

We've ended trustees at that board fighting each other—over a million and a half dollars. We have stopped that, and we're putting it back into the classroom.

This is a member, of course, who fought tooth and nail to—we all remember the billion-dollar gas plant scandal to save two ridings. That's a billion dollars that didn't go into special education.

This is a member who, every single time he had the opportunity to vote in favour of increases in special education, voted against them. When the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services put record levels of funding for children, he voted against it.

What are we responsible for? Jobs and economic prosperity, the likes of which this province has never seen, and—

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

## SÉCURITÉ DU TRANSPORT ROUTIER

## TRUCKING SAFETY

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Ma question au ministre des Transports. Pendant des années, mes collègues et moi-même avons sonné l'alarme sur les problèmes dans l'industrie du camionnage et le ministre a fait la sourde oreille. Ça a pris le rapport de la vérificatrice générale pour mettre en lumière un système fragmenté où la surveillance est diluée entre ministère et les entrepreneurs privés.

Compte tenu de ces constats, le ministère reconnaît-il que le modèle actuel ne fonctionne pas et s'engage-t-il à rapatrier la pleine responsabilité de la surveillance et de la délivrance des permis des camionneurs au ministère des Transports?

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** We've accepted the recommendations that have been put forward by the Auditor General, but, over the past few years, we have been implementing many of those recommendations already before this report was tabled, Madam Speaker.

We have our teams at the Ministry of Transportation assisting our Minister of Colleges and Universities in ensuring that we have higher enforcement. In fact, over 26 of those that have been found to be outside of the scope of training have ceased operations. We have also ensured that we have more proactive inspections into anyone that is seen to be operating outside of the guidelines that have been put forward.

We have zero tolerance for any of these individuals. Where we have seen any of the activity that is not allowed, we have referred it to our Ontario Provincial Police, who have also investigated and have also laid charges on any of those who are operating outside of that scope.

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

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Monsieur le Ministre, pour les personnes qui ont perdu la vie sur les routes et les familles qui ont perdu des êtres chers, vos paroles sont vides.

1100

La privatisation et la dégradation ont contribué à de graves lacunes dans le système. La vérificatrice générale a constaté que 25 % des écoles de camionnage n'avaient jamais été inspectées, que les étudiants n'étaient pas formés correctement à des compétences essentielles comme reculer un camion ou d'autres manœuvres de base—même des cas de fraude.

Pourquoi est-ce que ça prend un rapport de la vérificatrice générale pour vous informer du désastre dans votre propre ministère?

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** We have put forward, in the last two years, supports to ensure our roads are safer. Over 200 transportation enforcement officers are now on the road in the past two years—54 of those, specifically, just for the north; a \$30-million investment in the Shuniah truck inspection station, Madam Speaker, to improve safety, which the Leader of the Opposition and the NDP have not supported.

Every single time that we have put forward support, more inspections, more enforcement in the north, those opposite have opposed them.

Last year, in 2025, we conducted 118,000 inspections on the road because of the investments that we made; a year prior, it was 68,000. That is the support that we are putting towards this, and that is the investment that we are putting towards this, Madam Speaker. The members opposite have not supported those investments, have not supported that extra enforcement that we have put onto our roads, but we—

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

## NURSES

**MPP Tyler Watt:** This week is nurses' appreciation week, but appreciation means more than photo ops and empty words.

This out-of-touch government has no idea what it's like to be a nurse in 2026. Speaker, does this government know what it feels like when this government claps for us during a pandemic when we're working the front lines, but then slaps us in the face with Bill 124 and caps our wages? Actions speak louder than words, and that was insulting. Do you know what it's like to miss your breaks, to be punched on and spit on, to be verbally abused, to care for patients in a hallway or a closet, because that's the norm under this government? Do you know what it feels like to be so burnt out that you contemplate leaving the profession altogether?

"Respect for nurses" is not a hashtag. It is safe patient ratios, safe workplaces and fair pay.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Health: What is this government doing to respect and retain nurses?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Minister of Health.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to once again congratulate all of our Ontario world-class nurses on nurses' week.

When I sit down with nurses, what I hear is the acknowledgement and appreciation for the investments that we are making, whether that is a first-in-province Learn and Stay under the leadership of colleges and universities, where we are covering tuition and books for new young people who are wanting to train in the nursing profession, or whether it is nurse preceptors who are now training with new nurses in our hospital system. When I sit down with nurses, what I hear is those programs are absolutely making a difference in retention, in recruitment.

I will completely support Ontario nurses as we continue to ensure that we provide world-class nursing in Ontario.

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

**MPP Tyler Watt:** The minister just proved my point. That was just a bunch of empty words. I specifically asked about retention and respect.

*Interjection.*

**MPP Tyler Watt:** You can laugh, Minister, but I asked about retention, and all you talked about was recruitment.

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

**MPP Tyler Watt:** Speaker, here's a real story from Peterborough Regional Health Centre. Multiple nurses have been punched in the face and head and had to visit the ER after their shift to treat bruising and broken bones.

For eight long years, nurses on the front lines are still experiencing burnout, chronic understaffing, workplace violence and impossible patient lists. I have no idea what that minister was talking about, saying nurses are sitting her down and that they're doing a great job.

Again, I ask the Minister of Health not what you're doing for recruitment, but what you're doing to show nurses respect and what you're doing to retain them in the field that we desperately need them in.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Allow me to quote Dr. Doris Grinspun—you may be familiar with Doris—"RNAO commends the government's intention to accelerate the integration of" internationally trained nurses "as one of the urgent actions required to address" nursing.

Jill Colin, who is the VP of patient care: "Supporting nurse education has a direct positive impact on quality of care and supports a high-functioning health care team by increasing morale, improving teamwork, reducing scheduling gaps and building a reputation of excellence that drives recruitment and retention."

I will say, again, we have seen a 15% increase in the number of nurses that are working in our publicly funded system. We'll continue to support nurses, we'll continue to train nurses, and we will absolutely continue to welcome nurses from across the world to Ontario.

## NUCLEAR ENERGY

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** My question is for the Minister of Energy and Mines. Over her time as Leader of the Opposition, the member opposite has not once asked a question about our nuclear energy build-out. Nuclear power in Ontario is the backbone of our grid, responsible for over 50% of our baseload power—uniquely uninterested in that, apparently, on that side of the House.

This power keeps the lights on day and night, 24/7, and is a clean, reliable and affordable solution, unlike the policies of the previous Liberal government. The Liberals wanted to close Pickering, while our government is taking a different approach and refurbishing Pickering's B units. This nation-building project will create 30,500 jobs to strengthen Ontario's nuclear workforce and contribute over \$41.6 billion to Canada's GDP. This is the kind of action the people of Ontario have come to expect from our government.

Through you, Speaker, could the minister share the impact of the newly announced Bruce C expansion and educate the opposition members on a subject that they could not be bothered to ask about?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Thank you to the member for that question. For the opposition members, about a third of Ontario's clean nuclear energy comes from Bruce Power alone. Bruce C's expansion is the province's first large-scale nuclear project in over 30 years. We've directed the IESO to enter a cost-sharing and recovery agreement to allow critical activities, including continued engagement with First Nations and local communities, workforce planning, preconstruction and site preparations.

This project will add up to 4,800 megawatts to the grid, enough to power 4.8 million homes. It will add \$238 billion to Canada's GDP, over 18,000 jobs during construction and 6,700 jobs when it comes online.

We're doubling down on made-in-Canada power with 95% of Bruce Power spending staying in Canada. The Bruce C expansion will create the world's largest nuclear generating facility. Speaker, that's how this project will engage Ontarians and create jobs right here in Canada.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Bay of Quinte.

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Thank you to the parliamentary assistant for the update, who is also an incredible energy champion for our government—great work in Mississauga–Lakeshore. Thank you so much. I hope the opposition was paying attention this time.

Speaker, we know that our Premier isn't stopping at one nation-building project alone. Not only are we acting to build the largest nuclear generating facility on the planet, but we are also bringing the Western world's first small modular reactor to the Darlington nuclear site. We completed the refurbishment of Darlington unit 1 five months ahead of schedule and unit 4 four months ahead of schedule and \$150 million under budget. Can you imagine energy products under budget? Not under the Liberal government, ladies and gentlemen.

Recently, the minister announced that our government reached a major construction milestone on the G7's first small modular reactor at Darlington. Could the parliamentary assistant provide an update to the House on the progress on the Darlington New Nuclear Project?

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I would be happy to provide an update on the Darlington SMR project. The basemat model, weighing over two million pounds, has been installed for the first SMR. This is the same as lifting over three Airbus A380 planes, the largest passenger plane ever built, and lowering them with incredible precision using one of the world's largest crawler cranes.

This is the first foundation for a new nuclear project in Ontario in over 30 years. Darlington's SMR will produce 1,200 megawatts of electricity, enough to power 1.2 million homes, while creating 18,000 good-paying jobs. Over 100 Canada-based businesses help build SMR components, adding over \$500 million to Ontario's economy. This project will add \$38.5 billion to Canada's GDP over the next 65 years. This is a major achievement as the world turns to Ontario for clean—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

1110

## INJURED WORKERS

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** My question is to the Minister of Labour. WSIB is cutting funding to injured workers groups across the province. In Hamilton, workers and community members are reeling from WSIB's decision to end its funding of the Hamilton and District Injured Workers' Group. The group's peer-based programs have been operating for 25 years and have helped over 1,500 injured workers in their recovery.

So please explain why this Premier is allowing WSIB to cut vital funding to a city and a program that has some of the highest rates of injured workers in the province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for York South–Weston.

**MPP Mohamed Firin:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Speaker, protecting injured workers is a must. It's something that our government takes seriously. Since we've come into office, five million workers have received benefits and services from WSIB. Workplace safety insurance covers approximately 75% of Ontarians; 60% of claimants have not lost any time at all, and of the 40% of those who missed work, actually 87% of them returned to work within three months.

Speaker, we've shown, with our investment of \$400 million in health and safety program for workers—we've expanded WSIB's mental health programming to partner with 11 public hospitals and their networks of community service providers. Over 2,600 people have received mental health support where they need it.

Fanshawe College is receiving \$20 million over four years to look at new tools and methods to train first responders in supporting workers. This is the record of our government, and this is what we're doing, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** Every time we turn around, the government is finding new ways to punch down on injured workers. Under Bill 105, workers with permanent injuries will be under lifelong threat of losing their benefits. By removing the 72-month compensation lock-in, workers with permanent, life-altering injuries will be under forever surveillance, leading to endless stress and financial instability.

Why is the government looking for excuses to claw back compensation for workers with permanent injuries?

**MPP Mohamed Firin:** We've recently announced that we've increased the wages for workers who are injured from 85% to 90%. Our government has shown time and time again that we're here to protect the workers of this province, Speaker.

Workplace Safety North received \$6.7 million from the WSIB to do research on and enhance monitoring opportunities to mitigate risk exposure. WSIB has expanded health care programs into 11 hospitals, as I mentioned. Almost nine out of ten people are back on the job with no wage loss within a year, Speaker. The WSIB offers skills

training—and that can include job search training and job placement—to people who cannot return to work.

Post-injury earnings are determined for less than half of a per cent for all claims a year. That is our record. That is what our government is doing and will continue to do.

## GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** Madam Speaker, when the Premier came into office in 2018, he changed the wording on Ontario's licence plates from "Yours to Discover" to "Open for Business."

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** Well, we all know how those dark blue licence plates turned out, and now we know how the business part turned out, too. In two consecutive reports—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I apologize to the member. You can start your question over again. Please allow the full time.

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** Thank you, Speaker. When the Premier came into office in 2018, he changed our licence plates to say, "Open for Business." But we know—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** Okay, fine. Okay.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The government side has been warned. I will throw somebody out if this happens again. I will allow the member—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Come to order. I will allow the member to begin again. Order. Order.

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** With their record, I wouldn't have stood for that, because we know how the business part turned out. In two consecutive reports from the Financial Accountability Office, we learned that Ontario has the third-slowest job growth, the largest increase in unemployment and has 45% of all unemployed workers in Canada.

And while this has been happening under the Premier's watch, he decided that now was the right time to go shopping on the taxpayer dime for a \$29.8-million luxury private jet.

So my question for the Premier is, at what point did "Open for Business" become "open for business class"?

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Madam Speaker, "Open for Business" is attracting the largest mining investment in Canadian history, which the President of the Treasury Board and I landed today: \$14 billion, 5,000 net new jobs—a signal of confidence that, yes, we are open for business. We are open for moving with speed and working in collaboration for the benefit of Canada, a sharp contrast from the 300,000 manufacturing jobs you chased out of this province by increasing taxes, increasing red tape, increasing the duplication that frustrates investment and moves capital out of this province.

We are leading the way on an SMR build that's creating 19,000 jobs. We're investing in the renewal of Pickering, an asset your party would have closed—

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** —3,000 jobs for the people of Ontario.

We're building big, we're building fast and, yes, we are attracting world capital to this province for the first time.

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

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** Well, just this morning, the Financial Accountability Office told us that that minister is completely wrong, because Ontario's per-person revenue, we now know, is the worst in Canada. Our per-person financial worth is the worst in Canada. Our per-person spending is the worst in Canada.

Meanwhile, small business confidence is the lowest in the country, and big businesses like Diageo, Algoma Steel, Honda and Stellantis are either floundering or they're leaving altogether. Amidst all of this, the Premier decided that his number one priority would be getting his hands on a \$29.8-million luxury private jet.

Back to the Premier: If "Open for Business" really just means "open for business class," when will he start delivering for the rest of us who are stuck in his economy?

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

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Madam Speaker, coming from the member opposite, I think I heard the other day, if you can't run a nomination meeting, how do you expect to run a province? Let's remember when that party opposite got into power 15 years ago. What's the first thing they did? They raised \$2 billion of taxes on the hard-working people of Ontario. They raised hydro rates, and, of course, they had the gas plant scandal, which cost them a billion dollars.

Madam Speaker, this party on this side, what did we do when we got in power? We cut personal income taxes. We cut the small business tax. We cut gas taxes. We cut the HST. We cut transportation fees. We indexed ODSP and seniors' payments to inflation for the first time ever. That's what we did, as opposed to them raising taxes.

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** My question is for the Premier. It should come as no surprise that by the end of next week, workers in developmental services, child treatment, mental health and addictions, youth corrections, community health and social services could be walking off the job in many parts of this province. These sectors have been sounding the alarm bells: long wait-lists, crushing caseloads, staff burnout and chronic underfunding.

This government has known for more than a year that labour escalation was a very real possibility, yet here we are, days away from disruptions by people relied upon by some of Ontario's most vulnerable people.

They also rely on consistency, Speaker. Workers have done their part. They showed up through crisis after crisis. The question is, has this government?

On the weekend, the Premier took a call from a lady by the name of Lisa Fewster, and he committed to moving things forward.

So Speaker, through you to the Premier: What action is being taken to prevent service disruptions that could leave thousands of children, families and vulnerable Ontarians without crucial supports?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** I thank the honourable member for the question. As the member would know because it was in the budget, this government increased investments in the developmental services sector to nearly \$4 billion this year, Madam Speaker. Why is that important? It's because we want to make sure the outcome is improved for every child, every youth, every adult in this province who needs those supports. Investments in the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services—thanks to the Premier, thanks to the Minister of Finance, thanks to the President of the Treasury Board—increased by a billion dollars this year.

**1120**

Now, these are independent organizations, so they make local decisions, but we make sure that supports are there for the people who depend on them by backing them, by record investments. Unfortunately, the members opposite have voted against every single measure that we've introduced, including supports for the sector that the member just named—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** With all due respect, I think the minister is missing the point. This is not a conversation about money—too little, too late—or unaccounted budget promises; this is a conversation about safety and stability. Supportive housing, treatment centres and even clients' homes are about to become the sites of labour action.

In 2011, your Deputy Premier brought forward Bill 23, Protecting Vulnerable People Against Picketing Act. It might be time to resurrect that legislation. I'm sure the members opposite are getting calls from those served by Children's Mental Health of Leeds and Grenville, Community Living Prince Edward, Community Living Renfrew County South, and Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Addictions and Mental Health. I'm getting calls from parents of children and adult children who are anxious what will happen in the coming days. This is not just about a labour dispute; it is a growing safety crisis.

Does the Premier believe it is acceptable for homes for vulnerable Ontarians to become sites for labour disruption? If not, what is he doing to end the labour escalation before it begins?

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** We're providing record investments to the sector that was starved by the previous government. The member who's asking the question unfortunately voted against the same things that she's asking

for—\$4 billion for the development services sector. The member knows these are independent organizations, locally governed. But you know what our government does? We go in there and make sure there are contingency plans so no one is left behind.

The best way to do this is to support them through record investment: \$186 million more for the Ontario Autism Program to better support children and youth in this province, \$220 million more to support people in the developmental services sector. These are record investments by this government. We're building children's treatment centres—modern, state of the art—so that every child, every youth in this province has access to the supports they need to improve outcomes. We will not stop; we will not—

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

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**MPP Billy Denault:** My question is for the Associate Minister of Small Business. In my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and across our province, small businesses are the backbone of local economies. They strengthen our neighbourhoods, create good-paying jobs and give back to their communities. In fact, more than 98% of businesses in Ontario are considered small, with less than 100 employees, and they collectively employ about 2.5 million people.

Whether it's a restaurant, retailer, manufacturer or anything in between, small businesses play a defining role in building a stronger Ontario; however, global trade pressures, tariff-related costs and economic uncertainty are hurting local businesses here at home.

Can the associate minister please speak to the supports available to help Ontario's small businesses grow in today's economy?

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** I want to thank the very hard-working member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for the question. I've seen first-hand his strong advocacy in his riding.

As the member highlighted, small businesses are the very foundation of Ontario's economy, and our government will always listen to them and always support them. That's why, through the 2026 Ontario budget, we're investing \$49 million over three years in our small business enterprise centre network in every single corner of our province. With this funding, local businesses across Ontario can receive the resources, one-on-one advice and programs they need to innovate, grow their businesses and create jobs.

Under our Premier, we are ensuring Ontario small businesses are well equipped to not just weather economic uncertainty today but build a stronger, more resilient economy for tomorrow.

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

**MPP Billy Denault:** Thank you to the associate minister for the response and for highlighting the crucial

role SBECs play in helping more businesses start and grow their operations.

At my local SBEC, Enterprise Renfrew County, small business owners, entrepreneurs and young people can access tools such as guidance on licences and permits, programming and networking opportunities. The Summer Company program as well as the Starter Company Plus program also provide crucial funding for those looking to explore entrepreneurship and establish careers in business.

The economic impacts of small business are felt far outside the jobs they create in the local communities that they serve; they form the basis of supply chains for all types of industries that call Ontario home.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on the impacts SBECs have had on Ontario's small businesses and share other measures our government is taking to support and protect our economy?

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** Thank you again to the member for the question. Speaker, over the past year, I've visited and consulted with our small business enterprise centres and heard from entrepreneurs who have grown their businesses through their support. Last year alone, SBECs helped start and expand over 10,000 businesses, creating more than 15,800 jobs and answering close to 178,000 inquiries, and we want to see those numbers grow even more. That's why, under this Premier, our government is providing the most provincial funding in history to Ontario's SBEC network, so experts on the ground can adequately guide and support small business owners, and more than ever before.

Whether it's cutting the small business tax rate by 31.25%, providing access to financing and mentorship for young entrepreneurs or giving our great local businesses the right tools they need, we will always support Ontario's hard-working small businesses.

#### CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Speaker, through you to the Premier: This government is moving ahead with their senseless plan to amalgamate and emasculate Ontario's conservation authorities. This decision will lead to contaminated water, costly flooding and species loss, setting Ontario on a destructive course.

Speaker, will this government listen to conservation experts and abandon this reckless plan?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I truly appreciate the question opposite. Our government is delivering on its commitment to empower Ontario's conservation authorities in delivering faster, more efficient and more cost-effective outcomes for the communities that we serve. Since the fall, there have been extensive public consultations on the consolidation of conservation authorities. We've heard from conservation authorities, municipalities, Indigenous communities and many local experts, and that feedback has been valuable in informing the next steps. That's why we've made a number of changes to the original proposal. To ensure consistent and streamlined services, we'll be

moving forward with nine new regional conservation authorities, which are going to take effect in early 2027.

Our government values local voices and the unique expertise available in our community experts. And to ensure that those voices remain heard, we will be including local watershed councils for each regional conservation authority, and to support the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency and its work during and after the transition, our government is investing \$3 million beginning in 2026.

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

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Speaker, experts are not in favour of this government's plan. Local voices are vital to conservation efforts. The people and the experts who live in these communities are the ones who should be guiding their approach to conservation. But this Premier thinks decisions about local conservation can be made from an office in downtown Toronto.

Through you, Speaker, when will this Premier stop meddling with municipalities and start funding the schools, hospitals and roads they rely on?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Ontario's conservation authorities truly play a vital role in watershed management, flood prevention, protecting people from natural hazards, drinking water source protection and supporting resilience, and they'll continue doing that. That is not changing. Every area of the province today that is covered by a conservation authority will continue to be covered by a conservation authority. The programs and services they offer, their mandate and their funding models are remaining exactly the same. The boards will also continue to be municipally appointed. There's no reduction in staffing levels. Local expertise remains central to conservation work.

The changes we're introducing will simply ensure that conservation authorities are better empowered to deliver on their mandate and provide services better than ever before. Under the new system, conservation authorities will be better able to focus resources on delivering front-line services. The OPCA will also ensure that conservation authorities have shared technologies, including mapping tools, levelling the playing field and efficiently delivering consistent, predictable and science-based decisions.

1130

#### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** The Auditor General's special education report confirms what parents and educators have experienced for years: This government's announcements are not reaching the classroom.

For example, in March 2023, the minister claimed their spending would ensure that special-needs students "have the supports, the resources and the staff in place to succeed."

The Auditor General found the opposite—educational assistant absences being unfilled, students with special needs being kept away and worse: 18% of EAs are absent

on any given day, primarily because of elevated stress and student-related physical injuries.

The Premier can find \$30 million for a luxury jet, but special-needs kids are being kept home and educators are being injured. Why are they able to spend carelessly on the Premier's priorities but not carefully on vulnerable students?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Look, Madam Speaker, this coming from a party that found a billion dollars to take out of education, to take out of health care, to try and save two members during a gas plant scandal. This is a party whose chief of staff went to jail and whose education adviser, I think, followed him soon after.

What we did and what he voted against was—when the previous minister increased funds for special education year after year, they voted against that. What we're saying now is that we want to ensure that the record level of funding matches achievement for students. They have been fighting that every step of the way. We brought two bills to this House that they voted against which will reassert the Ministry of Education's leadership to ensure that we have a consistent level of education, including special education, across the province of Ontario.

That does not mean that the unique problems that children in the system face will not be addressed; just the opposite, Madam Speaker, just the opposite. Because what we heard is this: that educators and parents want assurances that their child's needs are being met.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Voters in Kingston and the Islands last election made it pretty clear why it's important to vote against this government. In October 2024, the minister said, "violence is never acceptable.... That's why my ministry will continue to invest over \$220 million for student safety and well-being, including for special education."

Now, the Auditor General says that undocumented cases of special-needs students being kept away from school is common. In those cases, safety concerns were a reason 81% of the time, and lack of support and resources were a reason 64% of the time. Teachers have told me that special education teachers often don't do special education; they have to fill in for missing EAs.

So where has the money gone? How did this government, over eight years, let it get to the point where students, parents and educators have experienced this government's inadequacies every day for years? And the minister only now—only now—is saying he has to "step up and show ... leadership."

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I can appreciate that the people of Kingston said that they had to do one thing, but if he was just to look to his left, he will see the seat where his leader was supposed to be sitting, filled by a Conservative member of Parliament. And if he was to look one seat over, he will find another Progressive Conservative. If he was to look behind him, he will find two more Progressive

Conservatives. And if he looked over here, he will see a whole lot of Progressive Conservatives. You know why? Because the people of the province of Ontario, for the third straight time, sent a Progressive Conservative majority government to govern the province of Ontario.

You know why? You know why, Madam Speaker? Because for 15 long, dark, agonizing, miserable years of failure where they closed schools, they didn't build hospitals, where they fired nurses, where they raised taxes, where they put red tape on top of red tape, they devastated energy in this province—

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

#### SKILLED TRADES

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** My question is for the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. Ontario's skilled trades offer young people and job seekers a viable, rewarding and high-paying career path. While the previous Liberal government left behind a generational labour shortage, our government is taking action to expose more students to the trades earlier and help them see the opportunities available right here in Ontario.

Across our province, we hear from parents who want their children to have real opportunities, from students who are wondering what careers will give them security, from employers who need the next generation of skilled workers to help the economy move. Will the minister please share with the House what our government is doing to support young people and job seekers as they plan for their future?

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

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** I want to thank the member for the question. Young people across Ontario want the same thing: a chance to build a future, earn a paycheque and support a family.

At a time of global economic uncertainty, our government is not standing still. We recently announced another year of Level Up! career fairs, which provide students with hands-on exposure to rewarding careers and connect them directly with employers, unions, colleges and training partners. Last year alone, more than 50,000 young people attended these fairs, helping them to see that trades are not a backup plan; they are pathways to stable, respected and good-paying careers.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Members, joining us in the Speaker's gallery today we have the member for Ajax from the 43rd Parliament, Patrice Barnes. Welcome back.

There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1137 to 1300.*

## PETITIONS

### HEALTH CARE WORKERS

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This is a petition from the Ontario Nurses' Association. It is a petition calling for an end to the privatization of health care. It's something we've been seeing in the province for the last few years, especially when it comes to surgery delivery and, in some cases, primary care. Also, this petition is calling for safe staffing ratios, similar to what exists in British Columbia, where there is a set number of patients that one nurse is responsible for in different departments.

This is a petition that I support. I'll be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Devin.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I'm tabling this petition entitled raise social assistance rates, which was sent to my office by Dr. Sally Palmer.

ODSP and OW rates remain well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and falls short of adequately covering the rising cost of gas, rent and food. The average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Welland is well over \$1,500 and, in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls, it's over \$1,600.

I'd like to thank the residents of south St. Catharines, Thorold, Welland and Port Colborne who have signed this petition, which calls on the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for Ontario Works and ODSP.

I fully endorse this petition and will be adding my name and sending it to the Clerk.

### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I have a petition here from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation that's signed by over 80 Ontarians, and it's entitled, "End the Use of the Notwithstanding Clause in Labour Disputes."

This petition urges the Legislative Assembly to call on the government to respect workers' rights and freedoms by not using the "notwithstanding" clause in labour disputes. This government has done it before. We've seen it in labour disputes, including in education, and recent actions relating to school board governance suggest that they are gearing up to do it again.

I tabled a private member's bill last year to restrict the government's use of the "notwithstanding" clause. Unfortunately, it looks like it's still as needed as ever.

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Michaela to bring to the table.

### BILLY BISHOP AIRPORT

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** It's always an honour to rise in this House. Today, I'd like to present this petition. It's entitled, Stop Ford's Takeover of Billy Bishop, and it is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Whereas Premier Doug Ford has indicated his intention to take control of Billy Bishop airport from the city of Toronto. The Premier has declared the airport a special economic zone, following the undemocratic Bill 5 passage, which allows this government to bypass environmental safety and municipal laws. The land grab undermines the importance of municipal decision-making and public consultation with waterfront communities, and any expansion of Billy Bishop airport that will include jets will threaten affordable housing, including many projects in the Port Lands.

Therefore, the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call on the Premier to stop his takeover of Billy Bishop airport from the city of Toronto.

I'm proud to sign this petition and send it back to the table with page Onyioza.

#### BUDDHIST HERITAGE MONTH

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** I'm happy to rise in this House and present a petition on behalf of residents of Kanata–Carleton, who highlight that Buddhism is a growing faith in Canada. Buddhist Canadians contribute to national life through social services, education and mental health advocacy.

Vesak, celebrated in May, commemorates the birth, enlightenment and passing of the Buddha, the most sacred observance for nearly 500 million Buddhists worldwide. They are calling on the Ontario government to officially designate May as Buddhist heritage month in Ontario.

I am happy to support this petition and give it to page Devin to take to the table.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**MPP Catherine McKenney:** I'm tabling the following petition to protect student-run services. This petition raises serious concerns about the impact of chronic underfunding in Bill 33, which threatens essential student-run services that many students rely on every single day, including food banks, sexual assault centres, campus media, clubs, equity-based spaces and peer-support programs. Petitioners are calling on the Ontario government to withdraw Bill 33 and protect student unions and student-run services.

I'm proud to support this petition at a time when students are already facing rising tuition and housing costs, and I will send it back with page Onyioza.

#### ONLINE GAMBLING

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** I'm pleased to rise today to table a petition to stop harmful gambling advertising. This petition calls on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to prohibit electronic gaming sites from advertising or promoting anything made available on their sites.

Since the privatization of online gambling in 2022, calls to the mental health and addictions helpline have increased by 144%. We need to protect our youth, safeguard mental health and preserve the integrity of sports culture.

There will be a debate today in this Legislature at 6 p.m. and a vote tomorrow on this issue in the chamber.

Here are 80 original signatures, but there's an additional 1,465 online signatures for this petition from all across Ontario. I'm very happy to add my support to this petition, together with the Ontarians who have signed it, and I will give it to page Hitarth.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This petition is entitled "Stop the TDSB Takeover." The signatories of this petition are very concerned that the Conservative government has appointed unelected supervisors to run some of our largest school boards.

They're also very concerned that the government is not providing school boards with the funding they need to deliver the programs and services that they are legally required to deliver. That includes programs and services for kids who need special education.

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

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I do have a petition here entitled "Reduce Class Sizes in our Public Elementary Schools." That's a petition that has over 240 signatures.

The petition calls on the government to commit to making the necessary investments in education to reduce class sizes at the elementary level. This government has cut billions from education, with the consequences of increased violence and inadequate special education and inadequate special mental health supports for students. They are asking for the government to invest appropriate levels of funding to address those issues.

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature and send it with page Devin to the table.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I'm tabling this petition entitled "Reduce Class Sizes in our Public Elementary Schools," which was sent to my office by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

In Niagara, we see a growing backlog of repairs, with students trying to learn in increasingly large class sizes. In the most recent Ontario budget, there are planned cuts of \$900 million to education.

Recently, I met with Niagara OECTA's president and vice-president. They said this government should be focused on investing in smaller class sizes, safer schools and supports that students and families actually need, instead of power grabs and political interference.

I'd like to thank all the parents, students and teachers in south St. Catharines, Thorold, Welland and Port Colborne who signed this petition. I fully endorse it and will be adding my name as well.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I have a petition here from the Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers' Federation. They are requesting that we end the use of the "notwithstanding" clause in labour disputes.

We know we want to work collaboratively with our partners in true partnership. So when we are looking at employees' rights to a free and fair collective bargaining process, in order for it to be that way, we need to get rid of the "notwithstanding" clause and not invoke it in this case.

I'm happy to sign my name and send with page Kieran.

1310

## ENDOMETRIOSIS

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I'm pleased to rise to present this petition. It is entitled "Create an Ontario Endometriosis Action Plan." It is directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas following the passage of the Ontario NDP bill declaring March as Endometriosis Awareness Month, the province of Ontario has more work to do."

Raising awareness of endometriosis is a first step in helping people understand the condition and access the treatment that they deserve.

Endometriosis affects one in 10 girls and many two-spirit, trans and gender-diverse individuals of reproductive age. The disease can cause debilitating conditions, including chronic pelvic pain, fatigue and infertility. It can lead to the formation of lesions, cysts, nodules and other abnormal tissue growths.

The health challenges caused by endometriosis are substantial. There are many barriers that are causing diagnostic delays, and there are barriers to clinical as well as surgical care.

Therefore, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to do the following:

Establish and fund an endometriosis action plan for the province through public consultation that will:

- reflect the priorities and outcomes important to individuals who are living with endometriosis;
- address the painful backlog of surgeries with a system-wide infusion of funding;
- promote improved equitable and fast access to diagnosis, management and care through a centre-for-excellence model;
- increase awareness and education, as well as earlier education about menstruation and "what is a normal period" in our schools;

—support specific research on the causes and impacts of endometriosis, uterine fibroids and chronic pelvic pain, including that affecting the BIPOC communities.

I want to thank all those who have signed this petition and send this back to the centre table with page Owen.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** I would like to present this petition on behalf of residents of Ontario who are asking the government to end the use of the "notwithstanding" clause in labour disputes.

It calls on the Ontario government to not use the "notwithstanding" clause in order to permit egregious violations of workers' rights and freedoms, and commit that labour disputes should not be decided with the use of the "notwithstanding" clause because it violates employees' rights to a free and fair collective bargaining process. Moreover, the Ontario government should end the practice of introducing legislation that invokes section 33 of the charter to intervene in collective bargaining.

I am happy to support this petition and give it to page Azaad to take it to the table.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** In celebrating nurses' week, I want to support the ONA's petition to stop the privatization of our health care system. This is what it means to be Canadian. A public health care system is something I'm deeply proud of.

I also support their ask for better staffing ratios. We know that nurses across the province are feeling burnt out, and it's a moral injury—they can't do their jobs as they wish because of high staffing ratios. It compromises the quality of our care.

I support this petition, and I will pass it to Juliana with my signature.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**MPP Tyler Watt:** I proudly put this petition forward by my friends at OSSTF.

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario call on the government to not use the "notwithstanding" clause in order to permit egregious violations of workers' rights and freedoms. Labour disputes should not be decided with the use of the "notwithstanding" clause because it violates employees' rights to a free and fair collective bargaining process, which is entrenched in the Constitution. Moreover, the Ontario government should end the practice of introducing legislation that invokes section 33 of the charter to intervene in collective bargaining.

I fully support this. I will affix my name to it and give it to Tej to bring forward.

## BILLY BISHOP AIRPORT

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This petition is entitled "Stop the Conservatives' Takeover of Billy Bishop."

The signatories of this petition are very concerned about the Conservative government's move to take over Billy Bishop airport. The government is looking at making it a special economic zone, which means human rights

laws, worker laws, environmental laws no longer apply in that area.

They're also concerned that the land grab—it's a straight-up land grab. The government is looking at taking over Toronto Island as well. It undermines the importance of municipal decision-making. They're very concerned that the expansion of Billy Bishop airport will mean that the housing that is expected to be constructed near the docklands—about 30,000 housing units—a lot of those units are under threat, because you can't have jets going that close to condos. It's a safety issue.

I share the petitioners' concerns. I'll be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Alyson.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BUILDING HOMES AND IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE ACT, 2026

### LOI DE 2026 POUR LA CONSTRUCTION DE LOGEMENTS ET L'AMÉLIORATION DE L'INFRASTRUCTURE DE TRANSPORT

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 13, 2026, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 98, An Act to enact the Fare Alignment and Seamless Transit Act, 2026 and to amend various Acts / *Projet de loi 98, Loi édictant la Loi de 2026 sur l'harmonisation des tarifs et l'intégration des transports en commun et modifiant diverses lois.*

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

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** It is always my pleasure to rise in this beautiful chamber in this gorgeous Queen's Park building to speak on behalf of the wonderful residents of beautiful Beaches–East York. Fasten your seat belts, because I am going to be speaking to you for one hour and I know that you will be hanging on your desks in suspense and intrigue.

It's unfortunate the—well, I'm not going to say that because I'll be ruled out of order. But I am going to start with reading a beautiful love letter from the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, dated February 28, 2023. I know that this member loves when I read this letter.

But first off, I will tell you what I'm speaking about, of course. I'm rising and speaking on Bill 98.

“Re: Municipalities with an interest in green standards.

“Dear head of council and CAO:

“Ontario municipalities have been developing green standards that have introduced leading practices in North America for promoting energy efficiency, environmentally friendly landscaping, bird-friendly design and other important sustainable design measures.

“We have heard from municipalities, building owners and occupants, design professionals and the general public about the importance of these green standards. The

innovative approaches being implemented through the site plan control process will help move Ontario sooner to the goal of net-zero emission communities.”

Wow, that's music to my ears. Just let me repeat that line; it's so gorgeous. They “will help move Ontario sooner to the goal of net-zero emission communities.” Amazing.

“It was not the intention of the government through Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022, to prevent municipalities from using site plan control to promote green standards. One of the objectives was to focus site plan reviews on health and safety issues rather than architectural or decorative landscape details that increase costs and create unnecessary delays.

“Bill 23 was amended to maintain important Planning Act provisions related to sustainable design of landscape elements and to provide municipalities with the option to require site plan drawings to show municipal green building construction requirements that will be authorized by the building code and established by municipal bylaw.

“The government recognizes the important work being done by municipalities through green standards”—wow—“to encourage green-friendly development and is committed”—heartfully committed—“to supporting these efforts.

“While the building code already contains high standards for energy and water conservation, more needs to be done.” More needs to be done—that's just beautiful to hear.

“As a first step, the minister plans to commence discussions in the near term with municipalities, builders, designers, manufacturers, and building officials to develop a new and consistent province-wide approach for municipalities wanting to implement green building standards that are above the minimum requirements in the building code”—a consistent province-wide approach versus throwing them completely out.

### 1320

“We plan to work with interested municipalities and other stakeholders on transitioning certain green building standards related to building construction (which are currently being implemented through the site plan process) into the Ontario building code. This will be achieved through an interim building code amendment by the summer of 2023.”

Wow. What is it now? Hmm. It is spring 2026. Okay. It's a tad tardy, but I'm still hopeful.

“For municipalities interested in promoting leading practices, this approach would maintain consistent construction standards in Ontario that provide important benefits to building product manufacturers, designers and builders, while also continuing to demonstrate Ontario's commitment to enhancing green standards.

“In addition, Ontario has consulted on advancing harmonization of energy efficiency requirements in buildings by aligning Ontario's building code with selected national code tiers as minimum energy efficiency requirements in the next edition of the code in 2024.

“In future editions of the building code, Ontario will work with the national code development system to pro-

mote further alignment of national, provincial and municipal requirements for energy efficiency and other relevant green building standards.”

Isn't it so glorious when we all work together, across party lines and across levels of government? That's the dream.

“I also wish to clarify that aspects of green standards that are not brought into Ontario's building code because they do not involve building construction (including green infrastructure, cool paving, biodiversity, tree plantings etc.) will continue to be optional standards that can be required through municipal bylaw and implemented through site plan control. To ensure these matters are understood, the ministry plans to update its online site plan guidance to reflect green building standards early in 2023.

“During the transition period, until the green standards are authorized in the building code, we would anticipate that municipalities will continue to use the site plan control to address green standards to the extent possible.

“I have asked Mansoor Mahmood, director of the building and development branch, to connect with municipal officials on the proposed green standards to be included in the Ontario building code. He can be reached at....

“Sincerely,” the then Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the current House leader.

I actually want to turn that into wallpaper and plaster it around my office, everyone's office and Queen's Park just for you to remember that those were your words for Bill 98.

So here we are. Bill 98, as most legislation from this government, is an omnibus bill with nine schedules. It proposes major changes to everything from green standards, public reporting, MZOs, municipal government, transit and waste water. We will refer back to that glorious love letter from the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing later, as many times as we can.

First, we'll talk about schedule 1, which amends the Building Code Act. It stipulates that the Building Code Act's ability to supersede all municipal bylaws regarding construction or demolition does apply to bylaws for the protection or conservation of the environment. Additionally, it repeals the parts of the City of Toronto Act, 2006, and the Municipal Act, 2001, which bestow the city the power to set environmental standards for the construction of buildings. It removes the ability of the minister to set regulations regarding municipal environmental standards, consequently to the revocation of that municipal power.

Schedule 2: This schedule specifically addresses the City of Toronto Act. It revokes the authority of the city to regulate the minimum area of a parcel of land and to regulate the minimum and maximum density and the minimum and maximum height of development. It removes sustainable design as a criteria which site plan control can impact highways under the city's control. It prohibits the city from requiring that landowners provide electric vehicle supply equipment in off-street parking facilities as a condition for plan approval.

I'm just trying to get my head wrapped around that because this government has only ever talked about electric vehicles as a way to address climate change, which is, of course, never mentioned by this government. You have the vehicle, but you don't have the charging system. I'm just really not sure how that's going to work.

Additionally, this section gives the minister regulatory power over banning other issues from planned approval requirements.

Schedule 3 amends the Development Charges Act. Specifically, the provision exempts non-profit retirement homes from development charges. Okay, I'll throw you a wee bone; that's a good one. You get a point—one little point.

Schedule 4 introduces the new Fare Alignment and Seamless Transit Act. It establishes a new act entitled the Fare Alignment and Seamless Transit Act, 2026. Municipalities or municipal agencies prescribed by the act must ensure that their transit systems are compliant. The prescribed systems are any within the following municipal transit areas: city of Toronto, city of Hamilton, the regional municipality of Durham, the regional municipality of Halton, the regional municipality of Peel, the regional municipality of York and any other region prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

It gives the minister regulatory power over setting fare prices, defining fare categories, types and eligibility requirements, establishing fare discount policies, establishing transfer policies for travel between a prescribed transit system and any other systems. It mandates that when the minister sets a time frame, all the prescribed systems will be part of a unified fare payment system. The minister has the power to set certain zones where fares may differ. It gives the minister power to designate priority routes which can have frequency service standard requirements and certain integration requirements between transit systems.

It gives the minister—to set a requirement that specialized transit systems, services for transporting passengers with disabilities, transport a person a prescribed distance outside their primary service area upon request. It gives the minister the power to require reports regarding a service's compliance with the act.

Schedule 5 amends the Metrolinx Act. It allows Metrolinx to notify municipal officials of plans to construct or demolish a building associated with a provincial transit project, whether they own the building or land, who must then assist in providing a report on how the plan complies with the Building Code Act, 1992.

Schedule 6: The Municipal Act is amended in that it allows the Lieutenant Governor in Council to prescribe certain conditions where a municipality must provide consent for a non-municipally run water and sewage public utility to be constructed.

Schedule 7 addresses the Planning Act. It sets the specific content requirements of a municipal official plan and must follow directives from the minister if deemed non-compliant. The plans must be laid out in the exact configuration prescribed. The bill adds a new schedule to the Planning Act that details every heading that a municipal

planning act must include. Major municipalities must make the change by January 1, 2028, and all others by 2029.

It removes the requirement that official plans contain to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and change climate. Okay, I'm going to remove that point that I gave you now over that one.

**1330**

It shifts the lower-tier municipalities that the county of Simcoe has planning responsibility over, depending on an order of the Lieutenant Governor.

It clarifies how the minister can order that a lower-tier municipality's approval be recognized instead of an upper-tier municipality. Regulations can prescribe certain lower-tier municipalities who prevail when official plans conflict with upper-tier municipalities.

As in schedule 2, it revokes municipal authority to regulate the minimum area of the parcel of land, and to regulate the minimum and maximum density, and the minimum and maximum height, of development. It removes sustainable design as a criteria which site plan control can impact highways under the city's control. It prohibits the city from requiring that landowners provide electric vehicle supply equipment in off-street parking facilities as a condition for plan approval.

Currently, municipalities are permitted to require that developers give the city a proportion of the land proposed for development, usually 5%, for the construction of parks—because who doesn't want some green space? A new statute would allow the developer to give the city land with certain diminishing conditions, or an easement of land, instead of transferring ownership if the developer transfers a larger portion of land.

It removes the requirement that the minister give notice if they amend or revoke a ministerial zoning order, MZO.

In schedule 8, the bill addresses the Safe Drinking Water Act. It adds definitions to accommodate the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2025—I'm going to take a drink of some delicious Toronto tap water while I speak about safe drinking water.

If a municipality is compelled to accept a non-municipal drinking water system under schedule 6, it is deemed as municipal consent for the purposes of the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002. Limitations placed by the municipality to ensure water safety are maintained.

Schedule 9 concerns the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act. It mandates that the shares of any corporation designated under the act to provide water and waste water service to a municipality be held only by a municipality, the province of Ontario, the government of Canada or an agent of any of them; limits the sale of water service assets after the board of the corporation has passed a resolution declaring the assets are no longer needed for service provision; clarifies how municipalities must comply with an order to permit a corporation to provide services, including how infrastructure and personnel are to be passed seamlessly to the new corporation; clarifies that a municipality may not pass debt down with the infrastructure and personnel they are required to invest in the new corporation.

If you were confused or lost track of the content of the bill at any point in time, that is this government's intention. These omnibus bills are meant to overload us with information and prevent comprehensive debate, questions and consultation on any one thing. That is how this government continues to skirt accountability.

With that being said, it is only possible to address a few schedules today during my time, in a one-hour time slot. I'll be focusing on schedules 1, 2, 4 and 7, just for your information.

Schedule 1 and 2 analysis—and wow, where to start with these? Just pulling on the words that experts in the field have used: “This takes a flamethrower to green development.” “Indefensible.” These provisions “lock in future vulnerability.”

The green standards: Reading this bill has given me horrible flashbacks to Bill 17. Bill 17, like Bill 98, was an omnibus bill, if you recall it, touching transit, the building code, Metrolinx, the Planning Act and City of Toronto Act. Bill 17 was a dress rehearsal for this current horror show of Bill 98. Edgar Allan Poe would have something to say about Bill 98. It de-incentivized developers from using innovative materials that would usher in cost and energy savings, shifted power around municipal official plans to the minister, and prescribed which studies municipalities were permitted to request for buildings in their own jurisdictions.

This is the thing: Many of you were elected officials in your own municipalities. You would have a very tough time with the province just coming in and taking over your municipalities. The government is doing this all under the guise of hitting housing targets and not clashing with the building code. That is all these statements are—it's a guise.

Research shows the green standards do not delay housing starts. I've spoken to you at length about that, using Toronto as the example. As a former Toronto city councillor for two terms, because I ran on term limits—you might remember that—the Toronto green standards have not slowed down housing. In fact, Toronto exceeded its housing targets in 2023 by 51%. What other municipality has done that? We had more shovels in the ground than the top four or five US cities combined. Again, I've been asking this government at length to actually give me a concrete example of green development standards slowing down housing, and nothing has come forward because nothing has.

Based on the legislation this government proposes, it does not seem that they actually understand green standards or what is truly causing red tape in this province. It does certainly confirm that they are beholden to a few companies that have a specific narrative that they would like to advance.

Let's review what green standards actually are. Green standards do not involve building construction. They are optional standards that guide and complement various desired outcomes, with flexible methods of implementation.

Notably, green standards build climate-resilient structures; that is, structures that are protected against extreme storms, wind and floods. Because we haven't had any extreme storms, winds or flooding of late, right? There were no declared emergencies for flooding emergencies in northern Ontario this past spring, right?

They improve our air quality. They improve the quality of water that flows into our watersheds and that we can drink and wash our hands with. They reduce landfill waste, which should be a priority, with our landfills running out of space, which I've spoken to, again, at length. We do not need a landfill site in Dresden at all because with strong waste-diversion measures, we can mitigate that.

We need to work on that. Extended producer responsibility is part of that. We need to go further: a bottle deposit return system, which was my private member's bill, if you recall—things like that, because the Toronto landfill site, Green Lane landfill, is running out. It's going to be at capacity in 2034, which is not long from 2026, not long away. It should be a priority, as I mentioned. We're running out of space and there are no actual plans in place.

They reduce energy use and therefore costs for consumers. So there you go: You're reducing costs for the taxpayer. Also, they're living in comfort, with an energy-efficient home. For example, homes built with energy-efficient appliances can reduce energy use by 25% and water use by 33%. Roofs built with energy-efficiency standards in mind can save consumers 10% to 50% on heating bills. Home heating systems in line with energy-efficiency standards use 70% less energy.

Why wouldn't we want to reduce energy use? Why wouldn't we want Ontarians to live in comfort, save them money, reduce energy use, reduce greenhouse gases, create good green jobs, grow the green economy, be an environmental leader like Ontario used to be before this government took control? That alone is enough facts for you.

**1340**

This government only focuses on how much energy efficiency buildings will cost developers. It is a 2% to 4% markup. However, these costs will continue to fall as technology progresses, and we've seen with renewable energy—wind, solar, geothermal—how the costs are going down.

Innovative materials and practices are standardized for a lifetime of tens of thousands of savings for consumers. People want energy-efficient homes and people want affordability—that is a fact.

Reflect back on every energy-efficiency retrofit program: Almost immediately, it was oversubscribed because there is such an appetite. Now think of what would happen if, instead of the government having to shell out money to subsidize these programs and homeowners needing to front their costs later in life, it was standard for homes to be built to withstand flood, extreme heat, emit fewer greenhouse gases and demand less energy. Why wouldn't we want to build it right the first time? It's a lot more costly to retrofit a building to be energy-efficient than to build it right the first time.

Last month, the Minister of the Environment said that when housing starts are delayed, people pay. The minister is certainly right. Let's talk about what's causing these delays.

Just one month ago, commercial water-taking permits had to be paused after the region of Waterloo hit a capacity limit so grave that new development had to be halted. I recall that housing had to be halted in Collingwood, my hometown, at one point when they were looking at building a new facility. When we think long-term about the environment and plan sustainably, we avoid delays just like this.

Let's talk about the government's failure to protect Ontario. I'm beyond tired of this government claiming that their changes are to benefit Ontarians, particularly young Ontarians transitioning into home rental and eventually home ownership. Who are they kidding? Transparency in development charges are essential, yes, but this alone will not make home ownership a reality. This government is so far removed from what Ontarians experience.

People come to my office every day to discuss how they cannot find a job. So what does this government do? They vote against the Liberals' motion to address youth unemployment back in 2025, and again when the official opposition proposed the same motion this week.

People come into my office and tell me they cannot access school supports for special education. They are encountering barrier after barrier navigating school administration at the post-secondary level. What does this government do? They slash OSAP grants, so students who are already struggling to find a job are now saddled with debt. Then they fire education workers and the administration that keeps schools running so students cannot access already-limited support to succeed in school, while education workers are burnt out.

People come into my office. They are being evicted. They cannot afford rent or to buy a home, and what does this government do? They pause the requirements to build affordable housing near transit hubs. They sell off lands to developers who build million-dollar homes. They propose an airport expansion that will disrupt residential development plans and already existing communities, and they attempt to end rent control.

So remember, when this government says they are getting shovels in the ground to build homes in Ontario, they do not mean homes you can afford. When the housing crisis that we all know exists and persists, that we can all see, know that this government does not endeavour to ameliorate it for all Ontarians, just the ones who know the right people and who have the right wallets.

It is important to understand the magnitude of the consequences when it comes to stripping municipalities of their ability to enforce. Look at Lytton, BC. In June 2021, Lytton experienced record-breaking temperatures reaching up to 49.6 degrees. On the same day that Environment Canada sent out a notice on the extreme heat, a 74-year-old Lytton resident's home burst into flames in literally seconds. The RCMP station in Lytton exploded in flames. Homes, barns, observatories, workshops and animals were

ravaged by flames. Soon enough, the entire village was engulfed in flames.

In total, the Lytton fires destroyed 124 structures, 45 structures in the adjacent Lytton First Nation and 34 neighbouring rural properties. This amounted to 90% of local buildings taken by the fires, including Lytton's village hall, official records, two grocery stores, the farmers' market, pharmacy, bank, medical centre, coffee shop and outdoor benches, along with two civilian lives.

Can you imagine the terror? That is truly horrific what happened. Everything as you know it—gone in a flash.

But they are rebuilding. Unfortunately, the process is a long and difficult one. While the mayor and municipal leaders aspire to build a net-zero municipality, knowing that if they skirt around established fire-smart communities employing climate-resilient infrastructure, the same situation could happen in just a few years' time. So they want to do it right and build climate-resilient infrastructure this time around. But it is much harder to be in a situation where you must completely rebuild the right way because rebuilding takes time and is in tension with people dwelling in temporary shelters.

This is a lesson. This is a canary in the coal mine. It is much easier, safer and less costly to implement preventative measures through climate-adaptive infrastructure than to rebuild from scratch retroactively. Not building climate-resilient infrastructure, however, is not an option. In the absence of strong climate action, the climate crisis will worsen and with it will bring a mob of natural disasters. Climate adaptation embedded in green development standards is integral to the government living up to their own promise to protect Ontario.

New Orleans—you remember that. If you have access to the news, you are well aware of the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina. New Orleans was one of the many regions impacted that are still rebuilding today.

Hurricane Katrina was one of the most intense and costly hurricanes in the United States. By the time Katrina made landfall in 2005, flooding was already starting in New Orleans. Katrina caused flooding in about 75% of New Orleans' metropolitan area, and it took approximately 2,000 lives and resulted in about \$80 billion in damage. I think we all saw those haunting photos and videos of houses buried under water, families afloat in what used to be their neighbourhoods. This is damage that persists today.

New Orleans has employed a reforestation plan. All parishes are working to manage stormwater more efficiently. Non-profits and municipalities have installed bioswales and rain gardens. And schools are making an intentional effort to train community members in green infrastructure. Think about that. They learned the hard way, and we have those examples out there.

What it also brought to light is that the climate crisis disproportionately disenfranchises racialized people. More than half of those who died in Katrina were Black, so many Black people were left behind, unable to evacuate. They resorted to climbing on their roofs, making makeshift beacons of help as they could not escape the rising swells.

There is also a socio-economic dynamic to climate change, and this government's inaction further burdens already marginalized communities.

Now, the role of government in fostering the good: It is unacceptable—and it is why I am simultaneously heartbroken and enraged—when this government blindly reduces green development standards as a voluntary tool. “Voluntary”—I mentioned that the other day. If this government is really interested and believes that making things voluntary will have people adopt those policies and ideas, then why wouldn't you make seat belts voluntary, or speed limits? It just doesn't make sense.

### 1350

It is not simply a matter of offering developers a choice to employ green development standards and waiting for good to prevail. At the end of the day, green development standards add a fraction more of the cost of development but add significant savings for homeowners over the long term, and safety to communities that you cannot put a price on. It's the prudent and it's the smart thing to do. Unfortunately, that incremental cost means many developers will not pursue these standards.

As this government's crusade to weaken climate action progresses, the most recent entry in their fight is Bill 98, and it becomes more and more apparent that they cannot do their job. This government's job is to protect Ontario, as they put it. It is to achieve the most good for the most amount of people, even when it's not easy. So why wouldn't you want to protect Ontarians from climate change?

This government has stripped good, supportive, equitable housing, community building and transit down to its bare bones. They have created an environment where doing good is an option—merely a calculation in the cost-benefit analysis. But that is not a government's job. Their job is to author a society where doing good is the default. Green development standards are an undeniable good. And we remember the Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario has told us many times—many, many times—about the high cost of inaction.

With regard to floods, one major consideration in green standards is climate-resilient infrastructure; for example, buildings that are protected against floods, heat and storms. Flooding is the most common and most costly natural disaster in Canada—it's the number one public emergency. Floods cost Canadian homes an annual total of \$2.9 billion in total and approximately about \$43,000 for any one individual home to repair and restore a basement flood.

I remember speaking to many of you for my private member's bill—that the government killed twice—on flooding awareness emergency preparedness. Many of you knew your constituents who had experienced the horrors of a basement flood, and some of you had even had your own basements flood. So you have lived experience—you know. Why would you inflict that knowingly on other people?

Want to talk about hidden costs when buying a home? Insurers raise premiums and reduce coverage in high-risk

areas due to vulnerability to natural disasters. In fact, currently, 10% of Canada's and Ontario's housing markets are uninsurable for flood risks.

All throughout April, Ontario has been impacted by the flooding caused by heavy rains. A recent flood in Toronto saw two vehicles collide due to pooling on Highway 401. Flooding reported on various roads, causing several transit detours; the Canada versus Tunisia game delayed; subways could not stop at Museum station due to flooding—this all took place over just a couple of hours. People's safety was seriously impacted, and these are all things that can be addressed through green development standards: for example, green roofs. Why is this government willing to risk flooding that we know is set to increase and intensify because of the worsening climate emergency and, consequently, risk the lives and livelihoods of Ontarians?

Green development standards protect basements from floods, loss of irreplaceable family heirlooms and memories, and a stripping of families' sense of safety and security. They prevent our roads from flooding and, consequently, they prevent transit disruptions and fatal road conditions.

With the increased flooding and precipitation due to climate change in addition to climate growth, many municipal waste water systems are overwhelmed. We have heard as much in the chamber, in committee, and most recently, I spoke with municipal leaders at the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative annual conference. They stressed the same point.

When these systems overflow, various scenarios may ensue, and all are worrisome. Municipalities may experience increased flooding, and untreated or partially treated water may flow into our water sources. Additionally, our watersheds may experience harmful algae blooms due to excessive phosphorus from soil and nutrient runoff during increasingly frequent and powerful storms.

Beyond the dire need to update existing waste water systems and build new networks—key infrastructure that requires provincial funding to accomplish—green and low-impact building can significantly limit these negative effects. Low-impact development practices would strategically build stormwater management near where rain usually falls and snow often melts to mimic the natural water cycle and collect water where and when it falls, reducing runoff and overflow.

Green innovation like rain gardens, green roofs, trees, permeable pavement and rainwater harvesting and reuse systems similarly emulate natural processes in urban environments. Green roofs capture over half a billion litres of stormwater annually. Did you hear that? Green roofs capture over half a billion litres of stormwater annually—amazing—diverting the water from our already overburdened system and redeploying it for beneficial uses like maintaining green spaces, irrigation, flushing toilets and more.

Importantly, these are evidence-backed solutions. In fact, the now Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development agreed when he was the Minister

of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. In a 2022 report, he discussed the severity of climate change and the critical role of implementing green infrastructure in development to address these extreme weather events. He notes, “Updating our rules and policies and enabling new and innovative approaches including improved climate change adaptation practices and ways to address cumulative effects of multiple discharges will make it easier for Ontario communities to improve how waste water and stormwater is managed and make better use of taxpayer dollars through better overall financing.”

Shockingly, the minister utters something extremely rare for this government: He utters the words “climate change.” Wow, that was great. So you've had two—two—of your colleagues who are supportive—were supportive, and I think still are.

Perhaps even more surprising, the minister admits that climate adaptation practices, which is the foundation that green development standards are built upon, are cost-effective and good for the taxpayer. And who doesn't care about the taxpayer?

The minister underscores the severity of extreme weather events, particularly flooding, as a result of climate change and the dire need to address it when he elaborates on the insurance industry's perspective, saying, “Water damage is the key factor behind growing insurance costs associated with extreme weather events. These losses across Canada averaged \$405 million per year between 1983 and 2008, and \$1.8 billion between 2009 and 2017.” This number has gone up to about \$2.8 billion.

The minister then confirms the value of green infrastructure: “Managing stormwater where rain falls, such as through green stormwater infrastructure/low-impact development, in combination with conventional stormwater management, would yield benefits, including enabling greater adaptation and resilience to the impacts of extreme weather, disaster mitigation, and improving community liveability/public health, including a reduction in flooding risk.”

#### 1400

I cannot tell you how many times I shouted this from this side of the House. I only wish the minister would join me in my calls for green development standards in line with his views laid out in this paper, as well as the views of the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and now the current House leader.

Next up are fire and extreme heat. This government's refusal to take climate action, as demonstrated by their removal of the requirement to create a climate change plan and report on it, and now their rejection of green standards that would bolster climate resiliency, amongst other things, leaves Ontario vulnerable to extreme heat and fires.

A heat dome refers to oppressive, high-pressure atmospheric systems that cause hot air to rise—wow, that just reminds me; maybe we've had some heat domes in this chamber—and rest for a prolonged period of time. This results in extreme heat, which resulted in 900 associated deaths between 2000 and 2020; wildfires that burnt

597,654 hectares in 2025; and drought impacting our growing ability, which will worsen the affordability crisis.

Green roofs and tree planting offer vital areas of shade, providing reprieve from the oppressive heat. They ensure homes are built with efficient insulation that keeps the cooling that you pay to have on in your home—does not escape outside and is not wasted. These standards permit homes to be built with fire-resistant materials, so no one experiences losing all they know in an instant.

Importantly, they also build neighbourhoods that are not kindling for these fires. Employing fire-smart landscaping details the types of plants grown and their height, creating natural buffers to fire like driveways and gravel paths.

First responders and emergency preparedness: We all know that the best emergencies—fires, floods, storms—are the ones that never happen. In a province where the government is allergic to climate action—stripping the province of the mandate to measure greenhouse gas emissions and stripping the province of the requirement to create a climate action plan accordingly—things like green development standards are more necessary now more than ever to attend to the impact of the climate emergency that this government refuses to treat at the source.

Moreover, addressing climate change at its source and creating an environment where these extreme climate events pose the least likelihood of damage is imperative in a government that prioritizes the well-being and safety of their first responders.

Many of us spoke with the fire chiefs last week and we learned that in addition to improved road safety, more consistent and long-term funding for health screenings and equipment that protect and promote health, they, like many other first responders, have an eye on climate change. So I hope people in this chamber met with the fire chiefs and heard how much they talked about climate change and how worried they are about it.

Climate change directly impacts how they do their job, the severity of danger they are in and how often they encounter this danger. When we first and foremost establish a comprehensive long-term plan to curb these extreme weather events and, secondly, employ evidence-backed methods of addressing these events when they do occur, we show that our actions align with the words of praise for these first responders—because we all respect our first responders; I know that. But really, action speaks louder than words.

We all know from the COVID-19 pandemic that, while sweet, a heart in the window is a symbol, but what nurses, firefighters, police officers, paramedics and other first responders need is tangible support.

Transit: You cannot speak about building sustainable communities without transit.

Public consultation on priority routes: The government claims that they will designate priority routes of varying frequency and service standard requirements. That sounds amazing. The issue is that this government has a long track record of failing to consult the public. Those who take transit will be most impacted by the changes. They rushed

so many bills through in the last session, bypassing committee, and despite posting for public comments, the Auditor General reports that comments were not considered, because they closed after the legislation was passed. How many times did we see that?

Municipal consultation, working with municipalities on fares: Similarly, we see the minister receiving regulatory power over setting fare prices, defining fare categories, establishing fare discounts and more. These are initiatives that affect everyday life and can make a real difference in the lives of Ontarians. Again, I urge this government to consult—truly, truly, truly consult—those who are most directly impacted.

Specialized transit systems—a constituent story. Legislation that bolsters specialized transit systems is long overdue. When I am in beautiful Beaches–East York, I often speak with constituents who express to me the intersecting barriers to accessing care and maintaining employment. One of those barriers is mobility, getting around in a safe and reliable manner. Specialized transit systems are already costly, and the criteria for covered travel is often strict, operating in limited boundaries for a prearranged trip, leaving no room for flexibility. Life is not always planned. People deserve the option to get groceries as they need, go to an extra doctor's appointment a month, see their loved ones, and maintain their emotional and mental sanity and support.

Again, I feel hopeful about this provision, but urge this government to engage in consultation—R-E-A-L, real consultation—with those who will be impacted most, to ensure the effect is as needed.

Transitioning from cars to commuter transit: Transit is undeniably a key feature in any world-class city, province or nation. I think I've spoken to you about living in Japan 36 years ago. I could just keel over thinking of their transit systems 36 years ago, compared to ours. I'm absolutely floored that this government feels that they can lay claim to the title of "world-class province" as a result of these actions. The innovation that makes Ontario world-class often happens as a result of this government's inaction, with funding to support it often coming late and not enough.

This government prioritizes drivers—I drive; nothing against drivers, but everyone has the right, the prerogative to choose their mode of transportation—and, in doing so, perpetuates a culture where driving is the primary and, at times, the only method of transportation, leading to congestion, of course.

I'm just noticing my time, and I have so much more to say to you. I wish I had two hours to talk to you, so I'm going to speed up a bit. Let's see what I'm going to cut out here.

Transit: Yes, we know it's good for the environment, good for people, good for cities. Shifting from cars to commuter transit can also result in an 80% to 90% reduction in carbon footprint, for about a 48,000-pound reduction annually in carbon emissions for every person that transitions to transit. It facilitates better air quality and, of course, stronger ties to your community.

I would add cycling in here, but I'm just not going to get into that with you right now.

Transit is good for the economy: transit jobs with good benefits, good pay, security and job satisfaction. The federal government reports that companies with Canadian roots satisfy nearly 70% of the North American urban transit bus market, not to mention Canadian transit suppliers exporting hundreds of millions in goods, strengthening our economy. Transit and green infrastructure generally is at the cutting edge of technology always.

There's the bike lanes. I'm not actually going to even mention cycling, except that it's a fantastic way to travel, and I would encourage you to do it. Also, just do it in fully protected, physically separated bike lanes.

**1410**

For years the government has heard and ignored the pleas from colleagues, municipal associations, truck drivers and residents of northern Ontario. We're talking about roads in northern Ontario, which the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane always talks about. I love hearing that member speak so passionately about his community and residents, but I'm very alarmed by the state of the roads when he talks about them, when he says that his community members are 10 times more likely to die on a highway as a result of a fatal collision. That is horrific.

These highways are key pieces of nation building and economic drivers in our province and country. They support access to military infrastructure. They are essential routes for the secure transport of nuclear reactor materials, of which the province has boasted as an energy priority. These highways are critical in wildfire evacuations and emergency response—this government claims to value first responders more than any other government—and they serve as key points of transport for critical mineral access.

The industry that these highways enable generates the money to show for it. Highway 11 and 17, from Thunder Bay to Nipigon, connecting to the Trans-Canada Highway corridor, moves goods valued at more than \$45.3 billion each year—that is just one connection—and produces tens of billions.

I am sure that this government will say that they invested already, but in 2018, the government diverted millions of dollars from northern roads to the south and prioritized projects that were not even recommended by experts. To that, I say this government's words are just that, and with every passing day the words mean less and less.

We talked about electric vehicles and how this government talks about electric vehicles all the time, basically using that as the only little piece of climate action that I see. But they're forgetting the charging system. How can you possibly get behind promoting electric vehicles if you're not thinking of every component to actually using them?

We're not going to talk about Vision Zero or speed cameras. We'll just get to my conclusion in three minutes.

We've all witnessed the danger of not planning communities sustainably and safely. Floods wash away our

home foundations, our life savings and our livelihoods. Fires ravage community centres and air quality worsens. Extreme heat is an oppressive weight over vulnerable populations.

Oftentimes, the government reduces my feedback to a matter of favouring green space over development. It is not that. I have a very strong track record of being pro-development in beautiful Beaches–East York and beyond. I'm not being an alarmist; that is what the future has in store if this government permits the climate emergency to fester. These are cautionary tales all over the world, the ones I've mentioned to you and ones we've seen, probably in your ridings, this spring.

It is not enough to build homes, long-term-care facilities, airports, transit—whole communities—if you do not build them to last and build them right the first time. That is what I'm getting at. We know that for every dollar invested in climate adaptation, there is over \$10 in benefits returned. And we know that for every dollar invested, it's basically a savings of about \$8 in cost avoidance.

These are dollars that can in turn fund the construction of homes, transit, hospitals, roads and schools down the line and, importantly, infrastructure and institutions that are sustainable. This is the government's obligation. Failure to invest in climate adaptation measures now means lasting taxpayer dollars down the line, and it represents a flippant signing-away of the future of our youth.

But it's not too late. This government may have abandoned our 30 by 30 goals, but there is no reason why we cannot get back on track. All around the world, there are examples of nations with firm net zero goals by 2030 and 2050—Norway, Finland, France, the UK. Right here in Canada, beautiful British Columbia—don't make me move there—is taking bold action to bring about net zero.

I approach every time I rise in this House as a way, of course, to hold this government accountable, but also to provide critical feedback that is meant to spur dialogue. You know me to be a collaborator. I work across party lines—I try to. So let's see what we can do together. Let's work this out and change this bill completely, or scrap it, and let's build a safer Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Questions?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to thank the member from Beaches–East York for her remarks. Well done. It was 60 minutes.

She's speaking my language in so, so many ways, because I can speak with direct experience—that low-impact development can not just be the best design method, but it can also be the only design method that can achieve the goals of the project.

One pushback that I certainly have witnessed in my career, in designing these initiatives, is that when you're forced into a regulatory environment that you're not familiar with, you're going to pick the easiest and least ambitious approach to low-impact development. So I see there are a lot of tools in the tool box, and sometimes the sales job does speak for itself.

My question to the member from Beaches–East York is, based on her experience, how can industry and even practitioners be convinced of the superiority of low-impact development where it makes sense?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thank you very much to—you all know—my favourite member of this House on the other side.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** On the other side.

You have great developers that are credible and respected, and they are already doing the right thing—Tribute, Minto, EllisDon. They get sustainable building, and they understand that you build it right the first time. So they're modelling the behaviour.

Yes, you can standardize the system across Ontario; just don't throw it out. Your own former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing wanted to standardize it.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Questions?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I want to congratulate the member. It's not easy to get up here and speak for an hour straight. You kept it interesting, and you talked about a lot of different things. Congratulations.

I want to say that after reviewing this omnibus bill, this government is certainly good at waste—waste water, maybe not so much.

My question is about transit.

One of the things that this bill does is really override the authority and the autonomy of our public transit agencies.

You were a councillor at the city of Toronto. Could you tell government members why sustainable operational funding is so important for a well-running transit network and why we should leave the decisions of transit, especially local routes, to the actual public transit agencies themselves?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thank you very much to the member, who used to be at Toronto city hall with me. Those were good times—tumultuous times. I took the TTC to city hall, as I take the TTC to Queen's Park, when I'm not on my bike. So I know first-hand what the transit is like.

What was a big surprise to me at committee for this bill was that the TTC was not consulted at all. Oh, my gosh. It just blows my mind. How can you not consult with the TTC?

We know the effects of the subway being down.

Last time I checked, we're not transit experts—we might ride it, but I don't think any of us are transit engineers and we know the system as well as the TTC. So let them do their bloody job.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Questions?

**MPP Tyler Watt:** Thank you to my colleague. I know that must not have been easy to debate for a full hour, so as someone who may have had to do that myself, I thank you very much for that.

1420

It was interesting. You had a lot of really great points in there, and something that I wanted to hit on for you was,

why do you think that the government has chosen to fully revoke municipal authority to set environmental building standards despite evidence that such standards have actually not slowed down housing construction?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thank you very much to the fine member from Nepean for that question. And yes, it's good to do a one-hour speech, but I'm so glad the chiropractors are in the House tonight for my back.

I don't know why this government keeps meddling in municipalities. We've got enough to do at the provincial level. But what I would say is, there seems to be one developer or agency, called RESCON, that seems to be chirping in the ears of this government. And last time I checked, they're not the de facto chief planner for Ontario. But I would say that RESCON did support the Toronto green standards for the parking minimums. But also, the Premier of Ontario supported the Toronto green standards when he was a city councillor in Toronto.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Brian Riddell:** To the member across the aisle: Getting people where they need to go is essential for a strong economy and strong communities. That means investing in highways, public transit and transportation corridors across the province.

Could the opposition across the aisle explain why they continue to oppose transportation infrastructure that supports jobs, trade and economic growth?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thank you to the member opposite. My party supports jobs and the economy—especially me. I've talked to you about this before. If we want to grow jobs, why wouldn't you support both the official oppositions and our opposition day motion to provide grants so we can tackle the youth unemployment? Why don't we invest in our schools? That's good jobs. Why don't we improve our hospitals, especially Michael Garron, that, we've talked about, was waiting? And I hear the Ottawa Hospital is just a big hole in the ground waiting for their new build. Those are good jobs, yes. And also, with transit, we need to invest more in transit. But what happened with Metrolinx? The Eglinton Crosstown took 15 years.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you to the member from Beaches–East York for your one-hour presentation of Bill 98.

I've got some concerns about this bill when it comes to the government giving themselves the authority to set fares at the municipal level. Also, they're giving themselves the authority to take money from one transit agency and move it to another transit agency. I fear this could mean a whole lot of things for the TTC. It could mean fare by distance, which we know the board of trade has advocated for for some time. It could mean that we will subsidize other municipalities' transit systems even more than what we're already doing. And it could mean fare hikes at a time when things are really expensive.

Why do you think the government gave themselves the power to meddle with municipal transit systems?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thank you very much to my colleague. I don't know. I am not in their heads. But what I would say is, this government seems to love control, control over things. We already have a mandate provincially to deal with housing, health care, transit, but why do they specifically meddle in the TTC?

Let the TTC do its own thing. They know what they're doing. We are not transit experts. We need to be focusing on dealing with hallway medicine. We need to be focusing on dealing with the backlog of disrepair with our school system and dealing with the backlog of the autism wait-list. There are so many other things we need to be dealing with at the provincial level instead of meddling in things that we are not the experts on.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**MPP George Darouze:** I want to thank the member for talking a little bit about Bill 98.

Speaker, our government has been clear that it takes too long and it costs too much to build homes in Ontario, which is why we are cutting red tape and speeding up approvals, so more homes could be built faster.

Can the opposition explain why they continue to support policies and processes that contribute to delay and higher housing costs for Ontarians? We know and we understand that every time every builder builds a home, however much expense you tack on them, they're going to be transferred to the homebuyer. Can you please explain that?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thank you for that softball. I certainly can explain it.

I'll tell you what the delays are: focusing on an expansion of Billy Bishop airport, which will kill the heights of all the development that has been proposed in the Port Lands. You are absolutely destroying all the housing potential in the Port Lands by expanding Billy Bishop airport.

You also imposed the strong-mayor power when your mayor of Markham used the strong-mayor powers to kill fourplexes in Markham. You just lost a ton of housing there.

You are not looking at provincial lands. We could look in our own backyard—

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

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** I am pleased to rise today in support of Bill 98, the Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026.

I want to begin by thanking the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for his leadership, his focus and his determination to take on one of the most important issues facing Ontario families today: the need to build more homes faster and at a price that people can afford.

Speaker, our government has been clear from the beginning: It takes too long and it costs too much to build in Ontario, and we are fixing that. That is the challenge before us. It is the challenge facing young people trying to

get into the housing market. It is the challenge facing families looking for more space. It is the challenge facing seniors who want to downsize and stay in the communities that they helped to build. It is the challenge facing workers who want to live closer to where they work. And it is the challenge facing communities across Ontario, including in Bay of Quinte, that are growing quickly and need the tools to plan for that growth responsibly.

Housing affordability is not an abstract policy issue. It is about whether a young couple can buy their first home. It is about whether a renter can imagine a path towards home ownership. It is about whether a senior has options that fit their needs. It is about whether our communities can welcome new families, new workers and new opportunities. And it is about whether the next generation will have the same chance that previous generations had to work hard, to save and to find a place to call home.

For too many people, that dream has become harder to reach—not because people are not working hard, not because communities do not want to grow, but because the system has become too slow, too complicated and too expensive.

That is why Bill 98 is of such critical importance. It builds on the work our government has already done through Bill 17, the Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, and Bill 60, the Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act. It builds on our broader work to reduce costs, to cut red tape, invest in housing-enabling infrastructure and give municipalities and builders the tools that they need to get shovels in the ground faster.

But, Speaker, this bill also recognizes something very important: Building homes is not just about approving lots on a map; homes need infrastructure. They need water. They need waste water servicing. They need communities that are planned properly and can grow sustainably.

If we do not solve the infrastructure challenge, we will not solve the housing challenge. And that is why Bill 98 takes practical, forward-looking action. One of the most important parts of this legislation is our work to advance publicly owned municipal service corporations for water and waste water infrastructure.

Speaker, I want to be very clear on this point: This is not privatization. These corporations would be publicly owned. They would remain publicly accountable. They would exist to serve the public interest. And, most importantly, they would give municipalities a new tool to finance, to build, to maintain and to expand the critical infrastructure that makes housing possible.

**1430**

Water and waste water services are essential public services. People depend on them every single day in this province. Families depend on them. Businesses depend on them. Municipalities depend on them and communities cannot grow without them.

But the reality is that water and waste water infrastructure is expensive. These are major capital investments in pipes, treatment capacity, pumping stations, storage, maintenance and expansions. All of it costs money and,

too often, those costs end up being pushed upfront onto new housing through development charges.

This has a real and profound impact. When the cost of infrastructure is front-loaded on to a new home, that cost is built into the price that is ultimately paid by the buyer. It affects the mortgage. It affects the down payment. It affects whether a family can afford to buy. It affects whether a project is viable in the first place. In some cases, it means that homes do not get built at all.

Speaker, that is a problem that we are trying to solve. A publicly owned municipal service corporation can help spread infrastructure costs over time in a way that better reflects the life of the asset. Water and waste water infrastructure is not used for one year or five years; it can serve a community for decades. So it makes sense to explore tools that allow those costs to be financed over the long term rather than loading them all upfront onto the next generation of homebuyers.

Our municipal partners have been clear: Communities need new tools. They need ways to finance infrastructure that keeps pace with the demand for growth. They need approaches that protect taxpayers, support service reliability and reduce the pressures on new homebuyers. The municipal service corporation model is about providing that option. It is about helping municipalities plan for growth, giving them more flexibility and ensuring infrastructure can be built when and indeed where communities need it.

And it is about keeping these essential services public. There have been claims made in this House and outside of it that this is somehow about privatizing water. That is simply not the case. The minister has been clear. The government has been clear. These would be publicly owned municipal service corporations. They would support public infrastructure, they would be accountable to the public, and they would help municipalities deliver the servicing needed for more homes. In fact, this approach gives municipalities a dedicated, professional, publicly owned vehicle to plan and manage long-term infrastructure needs.

If we want to build more homes—and on this side of the House, we do—we have to be honest about what is holding our communities back. In many places, the barrier is not a lack of land. It is not a lack of demand. It is not even always a lack of willingness. It is the challenges of water and waste water servicing. Bill 98 helps address that challenge.

This matters, especially in fast-growing regions like Simcoe. Simcoe county and its municipalities are experiencing tremendous growth pressures. More people are choosing to live in our communities. Families are moving north. Workers are looking for more attainable housing. Seniors want to remain close to the places they know. Communities are growing, and they need planning systems that are clear, that are modern and that are responsive to the challenges they face. That is why the Simcoe planning measures in this bill matter.

Our government is empowering certain municipalities in Simcoe region to better plan for their own futures while

continuing to support those that require provincial partnership. That is a balanced approach. It recognizes that some local municipalities have the capacity, experience and growth pressures that require a more direct planning role. It also recognizes that planning must remain coordinated and responsible. It is about ensuring that the planning system reflects the growth that is already happening. It is about giving communities the tools to plan for housing, infrastructure, employment and services in a more efficient way. It is about making sure that our region is not held back by outdated structures or unnecessary duplication, because when planning responsibilities are unclear, we know that projects slow down. When approval processes are duplicated, costs go up. When infrastructure planning is disconnected from housing planning, communities continue to fall behind. Bill 98 helps move us towards a more streamlined and a more practical approach.

Speaker, this is also why official plan standardization matters so much. Official plans should be clear road maps for growth. They should show where housing will go, where infrastructure is needed, where employment lands should be protected and how communities will develop over time. But too often official plans have become overly long, overly complex and inconsistent from one municipality to the next. That creates confusion for residents, uncertainty for builders and delays for municipalities.

Our government has one clear message: It is time to simplify, to streamline and to standardize official plans. This is not about removing local planning. This bill makes local planning clearer and makes official plans easier to read, easier to compare and easier to update. It is about making sure these documents are focused on their core purpose: planning for growth and helping build the communities, the homes and the infrastructure they require.

Speaker, that is especially important in growing regions like Simcoe, where municipalities are planning for significant population and employment growth. We need clear planning documents. We need predictable approval processes. We need a system that helps communities move forward instead of tying them up in delay.

Bill 98 also takes action on site plan reform. The site plan process is supposed to deal with practical matters: how a site functions, how people access it, how servicing works, how stormwater is managed and how health and safety are protected. Those things matter, and nothing in this bill changes that.

Madam Speaker, in too many cases site plan control has expanded beyond its intended purposes. It has become a place where municipalities can impose development standards that add cost, delay and uncertainty, without improving building safety. Our government has been clear that the days of mandatory Cadillac-design standards must come to an end.

Costs associated with site plan delays have been estimated at \$3.5 billion per year by the Ontario Association of Architects. That is \$3.5 billion in costs and delays that make housing less affordable. Bill 98 takes action by prohibiting mandatory, unnecessary, enhanced standards

and by consulting with experts on broader reforms to modernize site plan control.

**1440**

Again, Speaker, this is not about weakening health and safety. It is not about removing stormwater management. It is not about ignoring environmental responsibility. It is about focusing the process on what matters and removing requirements that add costs without adding value.

Bill 98 also looks at another practical solution for housing growth: communal water and waste water systems. This is an especially important tool for rural, remote and smaller communities like mine. Not every community can be serviced by a large municipal water and waste water system right away. In many parts of Ontario, traditional municipal servicing is not available. At the same time, individual wells and septic systems may not support the type of housing growth that a particular community needs.

That leaves communities stuck that have the land and have the demand. They have families who want to live there and local employers who need workers, but without servicing, homes cannot move forward.

Communal water and waste water systems can help solve that problem. They can provide a middle ground between large municipal systems and individual private systems. They can allow new communities to be built in rural or remote areas where traditional servicing is not yet available. They have been used successfully in other jurisdictions, and they can be initiated as a tool needed to facilitate development.

Speaker, this is exactly the type of practical, innovative thinking that Ontario needs, because building more homes cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach. What works in downtown Toronto may not work in rural Simcoe. What works in a large urban municipality may not work in a smaller township. What works in a fully serviced subdivision may not work in a remote community that has been waiting for infrastructure for years. Bill 98 recognizes that different communities need different tools, and communal water and waste water systems are one of those tools.

I also want to emphasize safety and accountability. Communal systems must be safe. They must be regulated. They must be financially sustainable. They must be properly operated and well-maintained, and there must be appropriate safeguards and provincial backstops to ensure that residents are protected over the long term. Our government understands that. That is why the framework is designed to ensure these systems are highly regulated, safe and effective.

This is not about cutting corners; it is about opening doors and allowing smaller and rural communities to grow while maintaining proper oversight.

Speaker, when we talk about housing, we often focus on the largest cities. Of course, those cities face major housing pressures, but the housing challenge exists across the province. Communities big and small, rural and urban, all feel those pressures.

That is why Bill 98 is so important. It looks at the entire system. It looks at how we get more homes built faster and at lower cost for the whole housing continuum.

Another important part of the bill is the extension of development charge exemptions to non-profit retirement homes. Our government understands that a healthy housing system must serve people at every stage of life. Seniors' housing is part of that system. Through Bill 17, we exempted long-term-care homes from development charges. Bill 98 builds on that work by extending the exemption to not-for-profit seniors' housing. That helps reduce the cost of building more seniors' housing. It gives older Ontarians more options to downsize. When seniors are able to move into housing that better meets their needs, existing homes can become available for families, for first-time buyers and other residents. More seniors' housing can help free up family homes.

Bill 98 also advances greater transparency around development charges. Homebuyers deserve to know what they are paying for. When someone purchases a new home, they are making one of the largest financial decisions of their life, yet many people do not fully see the government-imposed costs embedded in the final price that they pay.

Development charges can add significant cost to a new home. In some cases, they can add more than \$150,000.

Bill 98 would support consultation on disclosing development charges and other hidden costs in agreements of purchase and sale. This is about making sure buyers understand where their money is going, it is about strengthening consumer protection and it is about ensuring all levels of government are honest about the cost being added to housing. If we want housing to be more affordable, we have to be willing to talk about the costs built into the system. Our government is willing to have that conversation.

When we look at Bill 98 as a whole, the housing message is clear. We are simplifying planning, streamlining approvals, reducing unnecessary costs, supporting seniors' housing, improving development charge transparency and giving municipalities new, publicly owned tools to finance the infrastructure needed for growth. We are also supporting communal water and waste water systems to unlock housing in rural and remote communities while helping growing regions, like Simcoe and Bay of Quinte, plan for their future. For those reasons, I am proud to support Bill 98.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Congratulations to the member for his speech. I did listen to it, and I know he spoke a lot about waste water and other elements of the bill, but of course there's transit in this bill as well.

Having had the privilege to sit in committee and listen to the hearings, what we heard from transit agencies, including the Toronto Transit Commission, is that there was no consultation with regard to these huge, sweeping changes to give the government ultimate power over transit agencies across the province. Why would this government not consult transit agencies, considering the amount of control they are set to give themselves, should this bill pass, over these transit agencies? Do you think this

is a good way of planning bills and unleashing them upon the province?

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Thank you to the member from Humber River–Black Creek for that question.

We know that transit is absolutely critical for our communities. It connects people to the places that they work, to the services that they need. It makes sure that they can access the food that their families need to eat, and it brings communities together. That's why our government has been proud to put forward the largest expansion of public transit anywhere in North America: over \$70 billion in funding to make sure that we can efficiently move goods, people and services throughout the province of Ontario.

In rural regions, it's not about subways; it's about those connections between municipalities. When I was a city councillor in Belleville, Ontario, I championed creating more regional connectivity, making sure that residents in Belleville can reach their jobs in Prince Edward county, or people who live in Prince Edward county can get to work in Quinte West. It is absolutely critical that we continue to invest in that transit, and I'm very proud that we are doing it through this bill and through other—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Speaker, through you, because I saw you were listening to the remarks: I want to share that our government understands that building housing and building transit must go hand in hand. As communities grow, people need reliable, affordable and integrated transportation options to get to work, school and home. That's why this government introduced the One Fare program.

I want to share with you that my daughter, when she was in the first year of university, used to come to Toronto. She would take a bus from Mississauga to the GO station, then a GO train, then take TTC to come here, but only paying once. This is the way this government is supporting our people, our Ontarians.

Through you again, Speaker, I want to know, as I understand more work needs to be done to integrate transit systems, ensure people can move seamlessly through the GTHA: Through this Legislature, can the member share with the rest of Ontarians what we are doing, why we're doing it and what will be the benefit to the people of Ontario?

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Thank you to the incredible member from Mississauga–Malton for being a tireless advocate not only for home building but for more interconnectivity in our transit. The member referenced the One Fare program, which I believe was spearheaded by the great member from Scarborough–Rouge Park, who is a tireless transit advocate.

We know that this program, by eliminating the fees at those connection points, can save commuters up to \$1,600 a year, which is significant money. That's money that they can put towards improving the places where they live, in terms of buying better-quality food for their families, in terms of saving for a retirement in the future or the

education of their children. And \$1,600 makes a huge difference. That's why we're continuing to push forward, expanding public transit, making more money available for municipalities to create that connectivity and reducing costs for those that need transit to get to their work.

**1450**

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

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Schedule 1 of this bill modifies the Building Code Act. It completely revokes the ability of municipalities to set environmental standards.

I remember, in my riding, I knew somebody who was building a passive house, and they had some red tape to deal with. I was wondering if the member knows whether such a passive house would be easier to build or harder to build after the passage of this bill.

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** The perspective of this government is that the code needs to be king. When you have different municipalities imposing different standards unnecessarily onto home builders, it makes it very difficult for those home builders to be able to build with certainty in different communities.

I listened very intently to the member from Beaches–East York, who talked about the additional costs because of some of those green standards that Toronto had implemented. She had indicated that those costs could be in that 4% range. I looked at a starter home in Beaches–East York. It's about \$1.1 million—so, apparently, housing affordability is not alive and well in that community—but where I'm from, in rural Ontario, a starter home starts at about \$500,000 now, which means that additional 4% cost works out to about \$20,000, which is a lot of money for young people who are looking to get into their first home. It's a lot of money for seniors who are looking to downsize and need those profits to be able to fund their retirement and make sure that they can live well into their years.

So I appreciate the question and certainly I believe the code should be king, and we should reduce costs for homebuyers.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**MPP Catherine McKenney:** Thank you to the member across the way for that explanation of Bill 98 and why he supports it.

In the Globe and Mail—I believe it was just yesterday—it was reported that a real estate developer, Jesta, now plans to buy \$500 million worth of unsold Toronto condo stock and take advantage of the HST exemption. I just wonder if you believe this is part of the plan to add housing stock, or is it a bailout, or is this what your government meant in the HST rebate of \$130,000?

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Thank you very much for that question, and unfortunately, I hadn't read that article, so it's something I will look into to make sure I'm up to date on that information.

But ultimately, whenever a cost is added to a product, to a good, to a service and indeed to housing, it is ultimately paid by the consumer. So whether or not someone is

buying the home and using the HST rebate in order to then rent the home out, the cost that is additional for the HST is then passed on to the renter. So there is no free lunch in Ontario. If you raise the cost of housing at any point, it ultimately affects the end consumer. It means that they end up paying more, whether that's as part of their mortgage or as part of their rent and makes housing less attainable.

By reducing the cost of housing for everybody through this HST rebate, we're making sure that whether it's owned housing or whether it's companies that are buying housing and then renting it out, ultimately, it will be less expensive for the end user, the person who's going to be living in that unit.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**MPP George Darouze:** I want to thank the member from Bay of Quinte. Your answers are amazing, and I totally agree with how your answers have been delegated.

When I was a municipal councillor at the city of Ottawa, especially representing a rural area, it was difficult to allow smart development because of the lack of municipal services in the area. And a lot of the development would leave our rural area in Ottawa to neighbouring municipalities to have those services.

Can the member talk a bit about what the proposed framework for the communal water and stormwater system will mean for rural communities, especially like mine and yours, to ensure that there can be smart and sustainable development and make sure that our rural areas do not stagnate?

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Thank you the member for Carleton, who is a tireless advocate for not only housing but also for reducing costs on the people of Ontario, because we know affordability is such a struggle.

I really appreciate that you referenced the needs in rural communities, because they are significantly different from urban communities, where servicing is abundant and connections are easily made. In more rural communities, it can be that a communal water system is what eventually allows a project to move forward, instead of having to wait for 10 or 15 or 20 years for that servicing to be extended by the municipality.

I think that the communal water systems, when partnered with that municipal service corporation for water, really gives powerful tools to our rural communities. I can tell you that in Prince Edward county, at the south end of my riding, they require hundreds of millions of dollars of water and waste water infrastructure. They have a massive amount of land and significant demand, but only 25,000 people to bear out those costs. Something like the municipal servicing corporations would give them the ability to get that infrastructure in the ground, to build those homes that are so in demand and to deliver them at prices that people can afford.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the government House leader.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I'd just like to advise the members of the House that the night sitting scheduled for this evening has been cancelled.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It's such a honour for me to rise, as always, to represent the great people of London North Centre. As I rise today to speak on Bill 98, the Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, I want to begin this debate where it has to begin for me, which is not with technical language, not with schedules or regulatory details, but with what I'm seeing in my own riding and across Ontario every single day. This is no longer an abstract policy discussion. It is happening right now, in real time, to real people in my community and across the province, and it is getting worse.

While this government debates policy frameworks and future regulations, people are living the consequences of the housing crisis every single day. It was a housing crisis that this government poured gasoline all over.

In my riding of London North Centre and across Ontario, homelessness is no longer hidden. It's visible in our parks, in our downtowns and in our emergency systems. Seniors who built this nation and worked their entire lives are being pushed out of their homes because rents continue to rise faster than their fixed incomes. People who are working full-time are still unable to afford rent, and more and more families, including those on disability supports, are one unexpected expense away from losing their housing entirely.

At the same time, we're seeing an alarming rise in food insecurity across the province. Millions of people, including children, people living with a disability and seniors, are now relying on food banks just to get through the month.

In my riding, many organizations and other community and faith-based groups are doing everything that they can, but they are not doing it because the system is working; they're doing it because if they do not step in people will go without food and shelter. That is not how a stable system is supposed to function.

This is precisely where Bill 98 falls short, because this bill continues to rely on the idea that the private market alone will solve a crisis that is fundamentally about affordability and deeply affordable housing supply, but we already know that the private market does not build housing for people experiencing homelessness or people on the verge of homelessness. That is not its purpose and that is not how it operates.

I would suggest that this government speak with private developers, who are very keen to say they do not want to solve the housing crisis alone. Their mandate is to deliver shareholder value, to have that return on investment. This is why the government must play a stronger role, return to its historic responsibility, and this bill does not do that in any way anyone would call meaningful whatsoever.

Instead, we're being asked to approve a framework built around future regulations, cost adjustments and planning changes that are not yet fully defined. So much of

what will actually matter in this bill is not in front of us today. It's being left to regulations that have not yet been written.

Speaker, when we consider this government—even just their most recent track record, with this \$30-million plane that they refuse to provide the receipts for, they refuse to say where it is, what state it is in, how many modifications were made to it, they refuse to show any of the receipts, and now this government is saying, “Just trust us.” Well, I can tell you right now that people across Ontario, including card-carrying Conservatives, do not trust you in the slightest.

I think people in my riding and across Ontario can't afford to simply trust this government and trust that these future details will fix what is missing now. Who can trust this government with a blank-cheque type of approach? Time and time again, this government has shown a glaring lack of accountability and transparency—scandal after scandal and decisions being made without meaningful consultation. Now we're being asked to accept legislation without the details that actually determine its impact? I don't think so.

#### 1500

We also need to be honest about what this bill does on costs. Changes to development charges are being presented as a way to improve affordability, but without stable replacement funding, these costs do not disappear. They get shifted onto municipalities and, ultimately, onto property taxpayers and local services. That is not real affordability; that's cost shifting.

In my riding of London North Centre, we have seen municipal taxes increase in a dramatic fashion, and that is a direct consequence of this government and their downloading. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario called out this government for the \$6 billion that they were being shortchanged as a result of development charges not being administered.

Speaker, municipalities like London are already under enormous pressure. They are being asked to deal with housing instability, infrastructure needs and growing social challenges without the fiscal tools to keep up. This bill does not fix that imbalance, it adds yet more to it.

There are also concerns about direction and accountability in this legislation. We're seeing more authority concentrated at the provincial level and in agencies that operate with limited transparency. In particular, there are real questions about oversight when it comes to transit decision-making and infrastructure planning, including how much local input will actually remain in place.

On transit: People in my riding rely on it every single day to get to work, to school and to get to medical appointments. Everyone agrees we need better integration across transit systems, but this bill gives the minister significant control over fare structures without clear guarantees that affordability will be protected. Transit should not become less accessible for the very people who depend on it the most.

We also cannot ignore environmental and planning concerns in this legislation. There are changes that weaken

or override municipal green development standards and limit local planning tools. These decisions matter because municipalities know their communities best, and removing their ability to set stronger standards risks long-term sustainability and livability.

At its core, this bill reflects the same approach we have seen before: reduce regulatory barriers, adjust costs at the margins and assume the private market will deliver the rest. But we already know that is not enough. No private developer is building housing for someone who's sleeping on the streets tonight. No market is solving deeply affordable housing on its own. No regulatory change replaces the need for real investment in non-market housing.

In my riding, some builders and developers have stepped up and contributed by offering discounted work or other supports, and we're incredibly fortunate and grateful for their generosity. But in most cases across Ontario, very few private builders do this, and relying on the goodwill of a few cannot solve the housing crisis for the thousands who need homes today.

That's why we need the government to step in, and step in more directly, not step back further. We need investment in non-profit and co-operative housing, we need protections for renters, we need municipalities to be properly funded, and we need a housing strategy that reflects the reality people are living in today, not just projections that might happen in future. Instead, what we're left with is a bill that depends heavily on future regulations, shifts costs without solving the underlying problem and does not provide the scale of response that this crisis requires.

In my community, I see the gap between policy and reality every single day. I see it in food bank lineups, I see it in shelters that are stretched beyond capacity, I see it in seniors who are being forced out of their homes, and I see it in families who are doing everything right but are still falling behind. This is the reality this bill has to answer to, and it does not meet that standard.

Recently, I had the opportunity, along with the MPP from London West and the MPP from London-Fanshawe, to visit Ark Aid Street Mission in my riding. What was most disturbing, what was most jarring, was that the people who they serve, the people who they are providing shelter for on a regular basis—that the senior population is being dramatically overrepresented in their daily shelter intake. That's deeply, deeply concerning. It speaks to a society that has let down our senior population, that has ignored their needs, that has not helped people on a fixed income.

The fact that people are forced to sometimes live in their cars—this government has really let down regular people to the benefit of large multinational corporations and real estate investment trusts.

We as the official opposition are proud to support, happy to support their change to the non-resident speculation tax. But the loopholes that this government left, you could drive a transport truck through.

Exempting the NRST from buildings that have more than five units—think about the revenue that this govern-

ment lost and think about how they're supporting absentee corporate landlords who are making enormous profit. You see, the problem with those corporate landlords is they don't look at tenants as people. They don't look at tenants as human beings. They don't think about their story. They don't think about their history. They don't think about the struggles that they face every single day.

What they do, Speaker, is they look at people not as people, but as numbers on a ledger sheet. And when they see that someone has been renting a unit for decades, they see that as a loss. They don't see them as providing that stability, that safe haven, that support. These corporate landlords see that as a liability, one that they hope to get rid of so that they can jack up the rent to whatever the market can withstand.

There was a problem when the previous government poked holes in rental regulations, allowing for vacancy decontrol, allowing that the landlord could charge whatever the market can withstand as soon as a unit became vacant. That was a massive, massive misstep, because while it might sound logical to some on paper, what it does provide for is an unwritten incentive for unethical landlords to kick good tenants out or to try to find a way to chase those tenants away from their housing so that they can charge whatever they like.

It's really quite funny how many times this government has had bills that are titled about building homes, and yet that is something that they fail spectacularly at and have done so ever since they first took office. We're seeing numbers that are around 1950s numbers for the actual construction of housing.

Much of this bill is going to rely on the promise that the regulations are going to be sorted out, and there might still yet be so many things that are deal-breakers within this.

This bill does not achieve things that the official opposition NDP has been fighting for for quite some time. It does not legalize more affordable missing-middle housing options as of right in all neighbourhoods. It continues to rely solely on the for-profit market for the delivery of all new housing. As I said, I would urge this government to speak to private developers who have been very candid in indicating that they do not wish to solve the housing crisis on their own. That is not their mandate.

We also need to make sure that we are looking towards additional models. We don't see enough not-for-profit; we don't see co-ops being mentioned. These are the places where people actually want to live. These are the places that are like neighbourhoods, where people look after one another, where there is a sense of community and a sense of common purpose.

The government could double the rate of construction in Ontario by working with municipalities, by working with non-profits and by funding the system properly. Yet they seem to just want to shift, shift, shift the blame and shift all of their responsibility to others.

It is no surprise that we are encountering a cost-of-living crisis like nothing else, because this government, in their really misguided views, decided to remove rent

control for buildings first occupied after November 2019. That was a step that really eroded tenants' rights.

We saw people who would sign on to a lease, and they were not told that there was this new change. They were not told that the rent control that they could count upon was suddenly gone. So it was not until after they finished their entire year lease that they received a rental increase—a rental increase that was far above the yearly guideline. But at that point, they've spent a year in that location. They've spent money and they've spent time securing that and moving in, and that all costs money. And then to have to go and find yet another place—many people were stuck.

**1510**

But how long can you be stuck in housing that is going to go up without any sort of barriers, without any sort of controls, without any sort of predictability? You cannot run a household, you cannot run a business without knowing what your costs are and what the inputs are. This change that the government made allowed landlords to have so much more power over tenants.

What this bill also fails to deliver on is one of the official opposition's key priorities, which is restoring provincial funding to cover 50% of municipal transit net operational costs. This is something that's fundamental, because great cities have great transit, and yet this government is happy to take money from municipalities, is happy to remove revenue from municipalities, but never really seems to want to replace it with anything.

This government keeps having this attitude of, "Just trust us; everything will be fine. We'll sort all of the issues out in regulation." Yet we see so much happening in backrooms that this government wants to hide. As I mentioned, there are the receipts for the plane that they will not produce. There is a budget bill that they refuse to consult upon, that they passed in the middle of the night.

What is also a glaring attack on transparency and accountability is what happened within that budget bill, which was the changes to FOI legislation. If you have nothing to hide, then why would you make those changes? Why would you need to remove the public and the media's access to information about how the province is spending its money?

I think back to an FOI that discovered that the Premier was going to Texas to meet with executives from 7-Eleven. That was prior to the roughly \$250-million change to allow alcohol in convenience stores, the changes to the master framework agreement with the Beer Store. It was only found through FOI because this was not put onto the Premier's public-facing calendar. So it's no wonder that we see a government that is desperate to hide in the shadows, that is desperate to hide all their machinations, that is desperate to hide where the money is actually going, because, clearly, they have so very, very much to hide.

They say this bill is about housing. We have yet again another ironically titled housing bill, but it's not going to make life more affordable. It ignores the real solutions that have been discussed today and that we've brought up year after year after year. These are: non-profit housing, bringing back rent control, legalizing missing-middle homes

and ensuring that people have the stability and predictability with their rent.

This government has also talked about transit. But I will say that, meeting with smaller municipalities, one of the things that they have been desperate for this government to show an ounce of leadership on is a regional rural transit model to ensure that people can get to those good jobs that are available, those entry-level positions that are available in agricultural communities and in smaller municipalities across the province. It should not be a burden that is placed upon the owners of businesses to provide transit for their employees alone. They require the province to show some responsibility, some backbone, some understanding of the struggles that they are already facing. Yet this government refuses to invest in regional transit. They refuse to listen to the voices of rural Ontario. You see, there are great jobs, good-paying jobs, but expecting people to have a vehicle and to be able to pay for insurance, to be able to pay for gas in an entry-level position, that's just not something that happens in this day and age anymore.

We see a government that rules for the elites. They rule for the privileged classes. They rule for the entitled people. These Conservatives want to hand Metrolinx more unchecked power. How many vice-presidents does one organization need? There are as many vice-presidents in Metrolinx as there are members of provincial Parliament in this chamber. Last I checked, there were 124, and yet we see transit projects that are delayed without explanation. We see transit projects that have not yet had shovels in the ground, with no reason. But for some reason, this government is content to allow Metrolinx to have 124 highly paid vice-presidents.

It's also really the definition of madness that this government keeps thinking that their same approach is going to work when there's clear evidence that it is not. They're banging their heads against the wall, thinking that this is going to work when they know full well it is not.

Speaker, if that weren't bad enough, in addition to not doing the right thing and not employing the tested and proven approaches that are available, this government is also undermining local voices and environmental standards.

For these reasons, I cannot support Bill 98 as it stands. I'll be voting against it at third reading, because I was elected to represent the voices of the people of London North Centre, to stand up for their needs, and this bill just makes their struggles worse.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Steve Pinsonneault:** In my riding, Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, we've announced two extensions onto our transit at both ends of my riding, and we understand regional transit.

Ontario is growing quickly, and that growth comes with need for more homes, more roads and more transit. Our plan is focused on building complete communities where people can live, work and move efficiently. Does the opposition have a plan to build the infrastructure needed to support new housing, or is their plan simply to just

oppose everything that we are trying to do in new development?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the member for the question.

The one thing I can tell you clearly and unequivocally, to the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, is that one thing that we deeply opposed right from the beginning was the Dresden landfill. We saw this government bulldoze ahead, placing a landfill in a wonderful agricultural community, one that is at tremendous risk of polluting so many different areas—to a company that has a proven track record of misdeeds. And yet this government bulldozed ahead with it. There is a wonderful county fair that happens there every single year, and I wonder what will happen to it as a result. I really would have hoped that there would have been more rural members on the Conservative side that would have opposed the Dresden landfill rather than allowing this government to do whatever their corporate masters told them to do.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I want to thank the member for London North Centre for his comments today on this bill but also for his continued advocacy and being a watchdog over this government and the waste of our tax dollars.

You mentioned in your speech 124 vice-presidents at Metrolinx. And then, this week, it was just revealed that Metrolinx settled a lawsuit with Carmine Nigro, who is a friend of the Premier's and multiple government appointees. He sued the government for \$500 million for air rights over the Ontario Line, which at the time he didn't actually own. And the government refuses to say how many of our tax dollars went to Carmine Nigro, the friend of the Premier.

So to the member from London North Centre: Why do you think this government continues to shovel our tax dollars over to their friends rather than putting it into schools, colleges, universities and hospitals, where they belong?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I think it's time that we dispel the myth that Conservatives are somehow wise fiscal stewards. Instead, what they're trying to do is, they're trying to treat the taxation base, the public purse, as a revenue stream. They're trying to find ways to enrich their insider friends, their little cabal of already wealthy people.

I mean, when you take a look at the Therme deal, there has never been something more ridiculous that could be seen, where \$400 per Ontario household was being taken to fill the coffers of a financially questionable Austrian spa. Also, the move from the Ontario Science Centre: If you take a look at who owns land around that and who is going to benefit from that—oh, guess what? More Ford insiders. The fact that Moriyama architects was going to fix that roof for free—another bad business deal.

They were going to get something for free, but yet no. They were finding a way to move public money into their insider pockets—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

1520

**Ms. Laura Smith:** The member from London North Centre talked about something that rang true for me: transparency, which is something I value and I know everyone in this House values. We know that municipal development charges can add significant costs to the price of a new home and many homebuyers are not even fully aware of these costs when they sign these agreements of purchase and sale. Our government has been focused on improving transparency to ensure that homebuyers have a clear information path so that they know the cost they're paying, and this is important. A new home could be the largest expense that that young buyer is making, and transparency is important.

Will the member opposite support transparency and support this bill?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Thank you to the member from Thornhill for an interesting question. I always find it strangely ironic that this government uses words like "transparency," and yet they gut FOI laws at the exact same time.

They removed development charges, but they did so without any guardrails whatsoever. Again, they say, "Just trust us. Everything will work out fine." Unless there is a system in place to ensure that that savings is being passed on to the consumer, then unfortunately, it's not worth the paper it's printed on. But yet this government should not need to hide decisions, it shouldn't need to change FOI laws if it really does understand and wants to actually exhibit the idea of transparency and accountability.

From this government, so much happens in backrooms, so much happens under the cloak of night, including trying to pass a budget while everyone else is sleeping.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** In schedule 8 and schedule 9 of the bill, the Safe Drinking Water Act, it says that "a corporation designated as a water and wastewater public corporation," and then it talks about "the shareholders of a water and wastewater public corporation can only sell ... the shares of the corporation" etc. I'm reading from the bill.

What good could come from privatizing the water supply and the waste water treatment plants that exist to keep Ontarians safe? We all need to drink water; we all need water. This bill allows for the privatization of our water system. What good could that do, or are we looking at harm?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I would like to thank my friend from Nickel Belt for an excellent question. It seems this government were not very apt students of history because they ought to know that the removal of standards and regulations led to the Walkerton crisis that involved many people losing their lives and some people being poisoned for years to come.

To the member from Nickel Belt, I will say that this government looks at every single asset that we have in this

province and is trying to find ways in which to turn it into a revenue stream for their insider friends, for the cherished elites they answer to, for the ones who pull the strings of power. They're trying to take every single thing that is in this province and find a way to shift that wealth into the hands of a few.

This is a ridiculously bad idea, privatization of something that is as essential as water is foolhardy. It's going to end in disaster. This government ought to know better, but clearly, they have yet to learn.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**MPP George Darouze:** Thank you to the member from London North Centre for his comments this afternoon. Ironically, we need to bring you back to Bill 98 to talk about the benefits. Every time we talk to you, you talk about something else.

But one thing we hear from the member's party is that our government should take steps to invest in affordable housing, and our great Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the associate minister have been taking meaningful steps to do so. Bill 98 proposes the exemption of non-profit retirement homes from development charges. Given that the member's party rarely votes for affordability measures, I was wondering if they will vote for this initiative to support our seniors instead of talking about Bill 97.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Thank you to the member from Carleton for the question. The NDP and the official opposition will always vote for affordability measures that actually deliver—not ones that claim to but that actually find ways to enrich the pockets of the few.

This government has failed so many times. I think about the establishment of a HART hub within my riding. The money was promised to flow on April 1. The 60 beds were available. The staff had been hired; they were ready to work. But this government—all they had were excuses as to why that funding didn't flow. In fact, it did not flow until late September to October—nearly six months after it had been promised.

You think about all the lives that could have been helped—this government would peddle this idea that people should be in recovery beds. That would be fine, but there aren't enough recovery beds in the province. Why this government let those 60 beds sit absolutely vacant and empty for that length of time is beyond me. They've removed harm reduction in our communities, because they have words but they don't follow them through with actions. They don't, actually—seemingly—want to help people.

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

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon on behalf of the residents of Orléans to speak to Bill 98, the so-called Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act.

I want to begin, Madam Speaker, with where I left off during second reading debate, because after reviewing the legislation more closely and after hearing from people

back in Ottawa and Orléans, one thing has become increasingly clear: This bill asks a lot of Ottawa residents, but like most things under this Conservative government, it offers nothing in return.

The government calls this a housing and infrastructure bill, but if you live in Ottawa, particularly in suburban communities like Orléans, Barrhaven, Kanata and Stittsville, or in growing rural communities such as Manotick, Greely and Metcalfe, it's hard to point to anything in this legislation that will meaningfully improve your day-to-day life.

It does not fix Ottawa transit. It does not address affordability. It does not provide Ottawa with the long-term tools that it needs to build infrastructure that lasts. And certainly, it does not reflect the reality facing many families in Ottawa today, because while this government loves talking about building homes, the truth is that homes don't exist in isolation.

A home is not affordable if you cannot afford to get to work. A home is not livable if the roads are gridlocked and the transit system is failing. A home is not part of a healthy community if schools are overcrowded, if services are stretched thin and if infrastructure is crumbling. Yet this government continues to treat housing as though it exists separate from everything else. Nowhere is that incredible disconnect more obvious than in Ottawa, and nowhere is it more obvious than when it comes to transit.

During second reading, I spoke specifically about schedule 4, which outlines the government's so-called fare alignment and seamless transit measures. I said then and I'll repeat it again today: I don't oppose One Fare. If someone transfers between transit systems in the GTA, they should not be punished with multiple fares. It's reasonable. That is smart transit policy. That is how you encourage increased ridership. But, Speaker, what is unreasonable is asking Ottawa taxpayers to subsidize transit affordability somewhere else while transit users in Ottawa continue to pay more and more for deteriorating levels of service—and that's exactly what this government is doing.

Ottawa residents contribute billions of hard-earned tax dollars to the province every year in income tax, in sales tax, in gas tax. Ottawa tax dollars help fund provincial priorities. Ottawa tax dollars help fund transit investments across Ontario. Yet when Ottawa asks for some relief, this government tells them, "Slow down; just wait. We'll get to you shortly."

Suddenly, Madam Speaker, there's no money. Suddenly, Ottawa is expected to fend for itself. This government will spend hundreds of millions of dollars—billions of dollars, potentially—reducing transit fares in the GTA. Meanwhile, in Ottawa, fares continue to go up, service continues to go down, reliability is collapsing, and riders—who this government hopes might vote for them someday—are expected simply to tolerate it.

**1530**

So let's talk honestly about what transit in Ottawa looks like right now, Madam Speaker. People who actually use it every day know the reality. They know the uncertainty. They know the delays. They know about cancellations.

They know about overcrowded platforms. They know about massive, absolutely crushing fare increases, and they know what it feels like to stand waiting for a train that might not arrive. That's not a minor inconvenience. That is a system that people depend on to get to work, to get to school, to get to medical appointments, to get to child care, and it's a system that has become more and more unreliable. It's a system that you cannot trust.

This year alone, Madam Speaker, the city has had to remove most of the Line 1 fleet from service because of ongoing reliability issues. At one point, 61 out of 81 trains were sidelined—think about that: 61 of 81 trains unusable—and the majority of the fleet unavailable.

What was the solution? The solution from the city and from this government was to tell riders to wait, tell riders to squeeze on to packed platforms, tell riders to take alternative bus options, tell riders to leave home earlier, tell riders to be patient. After all that—after all of that telling them to be patient—they also told them, "Oh, by the way, your fares are going to go up and up and up." Then, Madam Speaker, those patient riders who are paying more for less hear that the province is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to reduce transit fares in Toronto and the GTA.

Families in Ottawa are already stretched thin, like families across the province. Mortgage costs are up, rent is up, groceries are up, insurance is up, hydro is up and now transit costs are going up too. Life has become more and more expensive and, under this government, public services have become less reliable. That is the everyday reality families in Ottawa are living, and this bill does absolutely nothing meaningful to address it for residents of Ottawa.

Madam Speaker, transit is supposed to be an alternative to congestion, except that in Ottawa, that alternative no longer works reliably. That has serious consequences. When transit becomes unreliable, more people drive. When more people drive, roads become more congested. When roads become more congested, commute times increase.

Transportation policy should not be this difficult. If you want fewer cars on the road, you need a transit system that people can trust, not transit that people are forced to gamble on every single morning, not knowing what the outcome will be.

This matters even more because this government, this Premier, along with the mayor of Ottawa, continue demanding that public servants return to work downtown. Every week, we hear more rhetoric about getting workers back to downtown offices. We hear about reviving office towers. We hear about helping downtown businesses. We hear about restoring activity to the core. But there's a fundamental contradiction: The government wants workers to return downtown, but it refuses to ensure that the transit system can actually reliably get them there.

People in Orléans are told to return to their desks, but no one can guarantee that the train will actually run. People in Barrhaven are told that downtown businesses desperately need their support, but they're expected to sit on crowded buses and delayed trains in order to comply,

and they're expected to continue to do this, Madam Speaker, at the behest of the Premier and the mayor. People in Kanata are told to spend more time commuting, but the system they're paying for continues to fail them.

You cannot demand reliability from workers and tolerate unreliability from the transit system. You cannot insist that people be in the office for 8:30 while refusing to guarantee that their bus will be there to pick them up at 7:30, and yet that's exactly what's happening in Ottawa, Madam Speaker.

The Premier wants the political headlines around return to office. The mayor wants the economic benefits of downtown foot traffic, ignoring completely the benefits to suburban businesses in Kanata, in Barrhaven, Stittsville, in Manotick, in Orléans, in Riverside South and elsewhere. But neither of them seems interested in accepting responsibility for the transportation reliability that ordinary people are dealing with. Not everyone has a chauffeured car and driver with a petit drapeau sur le hood. Not everyone gets a private plane to commute back and forth to their work. Again, Madam Speaker, this bill does nothing to change that reality for the residents of Ottawa.

For me, one of the most frustrating things about this government is how often Ottawa is treated as an afterthought. Ottawa contributes enormously to Ontario's economy. It's the nation's capital. It's the home to world-class universities and research. It has major employers. It's one of the fastest-growing regions of the province. And yet, when provincial priorities are discussed, Ottawa too often gets whatever is left over. It gets the crumbs.

Transit funding announcements overwhelmingly focus on Toronto. Infrastructure conversations overwhelmingly focus on Toronto. Housing discussions overwhelmingly focus on Toronto. Ottawa doesn't even have a minister around the decision-making table—the second-largest city in the province, with over a million people, and not a minister around the table. Meanwhile, Ottawa residents are expected to keep paying more and receiving less and less.

If the Premier and his government think that the residents of Ottawa don't notice, they are wrong. They notice when billions are announced for projects elsewhere while their own transit system deteriorates. They notice when fare integration is treated as essential in Toronto, but transit affordability in Ottawa is ignored. They notice when their taxes fund services everywhere else while their own city struggles and their own city is raising taxes, cutting services and raising fares at the same time. Increasingly, Madam Speaker, we hear, over and over again, the residents of Ottawa feel ignored.

The government will respond by saying Ottawa already gets provincial services. They'll talk about the new deal for Ottawa, and of course, those things were announced, but Ottawa taxpayers deserve provincial investment. The question is whether the level of support from this government reflects the level of need in Ottawa and whether it reflects and is appropriate based on our population size. As an example, the new deal for Ottawa compared to the new deal for Toronto provides 48 cents on the dollar on a

per capita basis. So this government is saying a resident of Ottawa is only worth 48 cents compared to a resident of the city of Toronto.

Madam Speaker, the government also continues presenting housing targets as though municipalities alone are responsible for solving the housing crisis. Municipalities can't build homes without infrastructure. They can't support growth without roads, water systems, transit capacities, schools, recreation facilities and emergency services.

Let's talk about road capacity. This government is very proud of its investments in highways, like the 413 and the Bradford Bypass and probably a whole bunch of others. They've made absolutely no progress on improving Highway 174 through Orléans or 17 out to Rockland. They've made no progress on looking at the Ring Road through south Ottawa, which is part of their eastern Ontario transportation priorities.

People in Ottawa know when they drive on the 417, every weekend, it's reduced lanes; it's reduced availability on the 417. Are there workers present? No. Is there anything going on? No. But somehow, magically, the lanes are closed, and people are backed up for miles and miles and miles, spending time in their cars instead of spending time with their families or doing something productive.

Many municipalities, Madam Speaker, including Ottawa, are already struggling under enormous financial pressures. Transit deficits are growing. Infrastructure backlogs are expanding. Construction costs continue to rise. Municipalities under this government are somehow expected to absorb all of this while simultaneously building faster than ever before. That's not really a serious partnership, Madam Speaker; that's a download. The government is downloading their responsibilities onto cities.

#### 1540

Communities like Orléans continue to grow. Families are moving farther from the urban core of Ottawa because housing costs are forcing them to, but the infrastructure is not keeping pace. Road congestion worsens. Transit remains and becomes ever more unreliable. Schools are becoming overcrowded. Health care access becomes more strained. And municipalities are left trying to stretch the limit of their resources further and further.

We know that this government likes to announce housing numbers. But people don't live in announcements; they live in communities, and communities require functioning infrastructure. That includes reliable transit. That includes reliable roads. That includes reliable services. This legislation does nothing to seriously confront that reality for the residents of Ottawa.

Finally, I would like to talk about fairness, because fairness should matter in provincial policy, and right now, residents in Ottawa don't feel like they're being treated fairly by this Conservative government.

When this government introduced One Fare, it was framed as a matter of affordability. It argued that transit users should not be penalized when transferring between systems. Again, of course, I agree with that principle. But

surely to God the government will recognize that affordability matters outside of the GTA too.

Ottawa residents struggling with rising transit fares are no less deserving of support, and yet this government has announced absolutely nothing to make transit in Ottawa more affordable, more reliable, or to encourage residents of Ottawa to actually use OC Transpo. A student at the University of Ottawa is no less deserving. A senior in Barrhaven is no less deserving. A federal worker in Orléans is no less deserving. A family in Greely or Manotick is no less deserving. Yet this government acts as though transit affordability suddenly doesn't matter outside of Toronto.

The government cannot think about fairness and affordability only when it's politically convenient. The government can't think about fairness and affordability only when it concerns the Premier's hometown. If the government truly believes that transit affordability is important, then the principle needs to apply everywhere.

Madam Speaker, Ottawa deserves its fair share and it's not getting it from this Conservative government.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** To the member from Orléans: When we talk about the Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act—I'm from northwestern Ontario, the most northerly—before I became a member of provincial Parliament, I worked for this First Nation organization that represented 49 First Nations. I remember, at the time, we were short—to be able to catch up to housing, we needed 4,500 homes, which had a price tag of about \$6 billion to be able to do that infrastructure. You have to remember, too, when we talk about transportation, 49 of these First Nations, 29 of them have airports—no access to roads.

Within this budget, is there anything in this bill that will help the people of Kiiwetinoong, the First Nations that live in the north?

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Well, I know that Kiiwetinoong is well known for its sophisticated integrated transit system, so they will definitely benefit from the One Fare program.

Of course, I jest, Madam Speaker; the residents of Kiiwetinoong won't benefit from that at all. And yet any time they pay the government money, they will be paying to support a more reliable and more convenient and cheaper public transit for residents here in the GTA and Toronto.

So no, I don't see a lot of benefit in this bill for Kiiwetinoong. My friend and colleague would, of course, be the expert on that, and I will take his advice on that matter, but for me, I don't see a lot of benefit for his community.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** To my honourable colleague: The Financial Accountability Office of Ontario reported that the Toronto region receives a subsidy of \$196.49 per resident, compared to Ottawa, which receives a subsidy of \$31.91 per resident. Can you somehow explain that discrepancy?

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Well, clearly the provincial government doesn't give two hoots about Ottawa. We saw it with the new deal for Ottawa: 48 cents on the dollar. We see, with this FAO report, that that's going to be about one sixth of the value of the subsidy for the residents of Toronto. But it's not a surprise. Ottawa doesn't have a cabinet minister around the decision-making table. It has been 1,419 days since Ottawa has had a cabinet minister.

The government doesn't have a lot of members in Ottawa, but they've got a couple. One of them was elected a year ago. They have him running ragged with photo ops around Ottawa all weekend. It's time to take the training wheels off and it's time to put one of those Ottawa members in cabinet so we have an Ottawa voice around the cabinet table.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** Do you think municipalities should have any say in how they plan for their communities?

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Municipalities should have the ultimate say in how they plan for their communities. Certainly, I think it's important to have some broad-stroke guidance so that the rules in Ottawa are the same as Toronto and the GTA and Timmins and Sudbury etc. But all those communities are different. There are all little local intricacies that you can't plan for from the ivory towers in downtown Toronto.

The government is getting more and more toward centralization. They want to make all those planning decisions from downtown Toronto. I don't think that's wise. They are hearing it from residents of Ottawa, certainly, and I think they'll start to hear it from residents of other parts of Ontario if they're not, and I think it will come back to bite them.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**MPP George Darouze:** I also want to thank the member from Orléans for his comments this afternoon. I know during our time at city council, he and I, so many times we talked about how housing applications have been long debated over things like frontage or lot depth, potentially holding up on reducing the impact of housing proposals that would increase supply.

Bill 98 proposed amendments that would allow regulations related to minimum standards of lot size in urban areas, which would create an opportunity to help increase infill. I'd like the member for Orléans to comment on that.

My second question would be, you talked a little bit about the ring road. If the city of Ottawa council, in their transportation master plan, realize that it's not important for them, what is your comment on that? I'd really appreciate it.

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Well, yes, certainly the city did not include a ring road in the transportation plan, nor did they include the widening or expansion of Highways 174 and 17. I think those are both problematic, not least because Highways 174 and 17 aren't included in the eastern Ontario transportation priorities from this government.

As it relates to growth in Ottawa, my friend will know that communities like Greely and Manotick, etc., are facing enormous growth. The city is currently looking at including those communities in the urban transit levy, which will increase their property taxes by about \$600 or \$700 a year; currently, they pay the rural rate. And so, if the residents of Greely and Manotick don't want to have a \$700 increase in their property taxes, they really need to encourage their member of provincial Parliament to have this government support Ottawa transit much greater than it is today.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I wanted to ask the member; there was an opinion piece in the Toronto Star this morning entitled "Did Ontario Learn Nothing from the Walkerton Tainted Water Disaster?" That opinion piece refers to schedule 9 of this bill, the requirement that water and waste water public corporations be established under this new legislation.

The writers of that opinion piece raised concerns that this is actually opening the door to privatized water in Ontario and all of the concerns related to that, which we are very familiar with because of Walkerton. Does the member share those concerns about schedule 9 of Bill 98?  
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**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Well, being a proud resident of Ottawa, I read the Ottawa Citizen in the morning and not the Toronto Star, so I'm not part of their record-breaking circulation. But what I can tell you is that Ottawa is continuously underfunded by this province. We don't get the same level of support, financially, from this government. We don't have a representative around the decision-making table in cabinet.

If this government wants to demonstrate to the residents of Ottawa that they truly care about our nation's capital, they will ensure that that is reflected in the amount of money they invest in transit, in local infrastructure priorities, in recreation, and they will end this silly adventure they're on trying to get the defence bank to downtown Toronto when it quite rightly deserves to belong in downtown Ottawa and our nation's capital.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Thank you to the members opposite. I'm going to change the dial and ask the member about official plan standardization.

Right now, official plans are different all over this province. One size does not fit all. We talked about the code being king and we've talked about how that can really slow things down when it comes to any project, whether that's housing infrastructure or transportation.

Our government has been clear: We need to simplify the planning process so that we can get more builds done faster while ensuring responsible growth is happening and strengthen our communities.

Will the member support this bill so that we can standardize processes across this province, including Ottawa, where he lives?

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** One size doesn't fit all. Ottawa is not the same as downtown Toronto. It's not the same as Timmins. It's not the same as Sudbury. It's not the same as Waterloo or Vaughn or anywhere else. There is a benefit to having some degree of commonality, of course, but a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach to a province as large as Ontario simply won't work.

What has slowed down the process, if you talk to municipalities, is the semi-annual changes to housing legislation from this government over the last eight years. The bureaucrats, the lawyers, the planners can't keep up with all the changes. Because by the time they just learn one set of changes, the government is then changing them again and again and again. That, in fact, has actually slowed down housing approvals in many municipalities across the province.

If the government is actually concerned about building housing faster, they should talk to the people in municipalities who are part of the program of approving housing in the first place.

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

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I'm so proud again to rise and represent the people of Kitchener Centre in this House today.

I do want to thank the government. There are parts of this bill that I think are really helpful when it comes to taking a step towards saving people costs in their transit. I appreciate the effort on creating consistency across the province when it comes to building codes and official plans, etc.

I think many builders have come to me to say they want consistency, that every municipality does things differently and we need some standardization. My concern is that we're racing to the bottom instead of racing to the top. That consistency could be achieved by modelling our building code and our official plans off of the gold standard instead of the bare minimum.

I'm here to talk about what I think we should be working towards in this place. I want our homes to be cheap and built quickly, but I also want them to be cheap to operate. Just like we ask for the mileage on a car when we're going to buy something and we can make choices based on mileage, I want us to be able to have houses that have bills that are reasonable and reliable. Bills have gone through the roof because of gas and that's because there's very little reliability when it comes to the price of gas these days.

We want to have less on insurance as well, right? Insurance is going through the roof. Some 40 years ago, there were 19 dangerous weather events. In this past decade, 133 dangerous weather events. Whether we talk about climate change in this place or not, it's happening and it's affecting people where they live and it impacts their housing. Flooded basements are becoming very common and we're going to see more and more people not being covered by insurance for a flooded basement. That will end up either being paid for by the government or by major losses to

people who own their homes and will experience this danger.

I want to be able to go home at night to my kids and say I've fought for a livable planet. This dangerous weather is affecting them. I worry about the trauma that they'll experience, the costs that this will have on our ability to grow food and for them to own a home and have that stability in their houses.

We can't just come to save the day after a fire. We should be talking about the root cause of the increase of the intensity and frequency of wildfires, increased cost and intensity of flooding. This is real and it's happening now. We could be doing something to prevent it, but this legislation actually takes us further away and increases the likelihood that we will have this dangerous weather.

I want my kids to have hope. I want to have hope, for God's sake. I cried last week. My husband looked at me, and he said, "How are you doing?" And I broke down, because I don't have hope sometimes when I go to work because I see, day after day after day, we keep eroding any protection of reduced emissions.

I know the general public doesn't want to talk about emissions. I'm not talking about it with them. But all of us in this place should have the wherewithal, the intelligence, the critical thinking and the courage to talk about emissions, because how it works—maybe I'll give you a little Coles Notes—is we have a bubble. It's like a bank account, and we're in debt right now. We are in debt. We have emitted more, we have taken off more in our credit cards than we can pay back, and so now we are borrowing off the future of our kids. Every airplane ride we take, every bad, leaky building we build, is putting our kids further in debt because we are in carbon debt and we're seeing ecological collapse.

I know the member from Cambridge likes icebergs. We are seeing the protection, the air conditioning of our planet—

**Mr. Brian Riddell:** Glaciers.

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** Glaciers, yes. The bergs are actually the problem, right? If they were still in place, we wouldn't see rising sea. We wouldn't see warmer summers. We would have our air conditioning that we need to make sure that our climate is livable. We're very sensitive creatures, and we need to live in a livable planet.

I want to have reliable ground water. Where I live right now, because of sprawl development—this bill creates encouragement towards sprawl by getting rid of protections on official plans. You've already blown up the countryside line where we stopped paving over recharge. We are paving over the water recharge in Waterloo region, because this government didn't respect our municipal action to protect the water recharge.

So now we are building homes. That is an economic bomb that has gone off in my region, because we did not protect our groundwater, and we are actively sabotaging it with this bill by getting rid of our ability to protect our own groundwater. Sprawl development—if you look on a rainy day, look at your street. All that water is not going into the ground. We're paving over it and it's washing away.

When we build this kind of sprawl development, it affects our ability to access safe drinking water for generations. It takes a really long time for that groundwater to go in the ground. You know what protects groundwater? Gentle density within the countryside line. We have a line where we say, "We're going to protect our farmlands so we can eat. We're going to protect the Waterloo moraine so we can have healthy drinking water." This bill sabotages that, and the actions that have happened in the last few years to blow apart our official plan has sabotaged that.

And it's not cheaper. We know that the cheapest form of housing is gentle density, low-rise, the four-storey stuff we used to build in the 1970s. It's made with wood. It doesn't have elevators. And if you ask people about their bills, they're spending about \$40 on their bills instead of \$200 tall-and-sprawl.

If we cut the red tape and legalize gentle density—more competition, which is capitalism; we love that when it's done properly. Right now, we're prohibiting gentle density, so those people who build stacked towns, low-rise buildings—it's too hard and too expensive. They can either build 50 storeys or massive subdivisions. So let's move beyond tall-and-sprawl and let's legalize gentle density, because it is the cheapest.

I'm here because of the PC agenda to keep us hooked on gas. The green standards actually provide us with a pathway forward, so that we can have tight buildings. Even now, with our building code, we're not going back and making sure it doesn't leak. We're trying to make not-so-leaky buildings.

Literally, we heat the outdoors. Every single one of us in this place, especially in the north—for the member from Kiiwetinoong, what we should be doing is having good building standards, so that when we build a building and we heat it on the inside, we're not just letting that heat go outside and heating the outdoors. That leads to affordable bills. We should be building all of our buildings that way, to make sure we're not just heating the outdoors.

**1600**

And it's keeping us hooked on gas, because that's what people are reliant on. And when we are relying on gas, guess what? Our gas comes from the United States. How's that going for us? Not so good.

And even though we build new nuclear, guess where our enriched uranium comes from? The United States.

If we rely on batteries, which we can make with the minerals that we have in this province—wind and solar—we would rely on ourselves. It's the difference between owning a home and renting. Right now, we're renting. We could put up gas infrastructure, we'll put up new nuclear, but then we will pay those fuel charges in perpetuity to the United States. If we build our batteries, if we build our wind and solar, we own that, and we are not beholden to somebody else for the cost of our builds. Right now, we are vulnerable because we will be paying fuel costs to the United States for decades to come, for dirty gas that puts us into jeopardy.

I begrudge the fact that there is a lot of meddling in the municipal sector. I hear from our planners that when we change the rules again and again and again every six months, it disrupts the apple cart and it actually prevents people from doing their jobs, because they're trying to adjust to the new legislation that comes out at a breakneck pace.

I wish this government would really appreciate that you represent all Ontarians. I know that 43% voted for the PCs, but that means that 57% did not. So that's where our local decision-making matters. Yes, the province is making a lot of decisions with 100% of the power because of our flawed electoral system, but we need local decision-making to represent our uniqueness.

Kitchener Centre—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Questions?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Thank you to the member opposite. I appreciate her comments.

She talked about density, which is something that is important. One of the challenges that we have heard about is inconsistent minimum lot size requirements across municipalities, which can really limit housing supply. We've toured facilities together in Waterloo, and we know that those types of limitations make it harder to build. And when you have to focus on finding ways to increase housing supply, we have to have a wider range of housing options for Ontarians—we know that; we've discovered that together.

Through this legislation, the government is proposing new authorities related to minimum lot sizes so that we can change the density. Would the member opposite support this, which could create more attainable housing options across Ontario?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I do appreciate that; I really do.

I think when we can build more townhomes, for example, it means that we're creating more affordable housing.

I would encourage the member to get rid of exclusionary zoning, though. Really, 70% of the province is zoned for single-family dwellings and triplexes. We haven't moved beyond the triplex. I live in a neighbourhood with four-storey buildings, and we're still going strong. If you look at all the older neighbourhoods, four-storey is the quickest, cheapest, fastest way—and it doesn't cost us anything, as a government, to create more affordable housing by getting more gentle density zones across the province. We need the Premier to stop being allergic to fourplexes and get rid of some of the red tape, which is zoning. Everybody in the whole province said that this is the best way forward to creating more housing as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Questions?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I want to thank the member for Kitchener Centre for sharing with this House your sense of despair. Believe me, we feel it here; the people in the province of Ontario feel it here.

Let me share a really brief story. I have a lot of grandkids. One of my grandkids was visiting and reading in the other room, and I heard him cry out. I thought something had happened to him, so I asked, "What's wrong?" He came to me, honestly, with tears in his eyes and said, "Nan, will there be nature when I grow up?" Unbelievable. Like a good grandmother, I said, "Of course there will," but I have to tell you, I wasn't that sure that there would be.

It's hard to watch this terrible government that's selling out the future of our young people to whomever.

Does it puzzle you why these PC MPPs, who must have children and must have grandchildren, don't have the courage to stand up for a future that protects our young people in the province of Ontario?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** You're right. We are experiencing a massive collapse of biodiversity. I think it's ecological collapse. So when it comes to the glaciers that are melting, when it comes to biodiversity collapse, ecosystems, the warming of our oceans etc., we're not leaving our kids a good—we're leaving them a mess to clean up, and I don't know if they'll be able to clean it up.

These are irreversible tipping points. There are things called tipping points that are happening right now. And while I've heard developers talk about, "Why should I not do something because of a salamander?", it tells me they don't understand what a salamander means. A salamander isn't that cute, maybe—I think they're kind of cute. But it means that there's a healthy ecosystem.

And you know what? Those wetlands are not something to be paved over. They actually clean our water for us. They sequester carbon so that we have cooler, cleaner air.

So thank you for raising that. I think we need to look at nature in a more complicated way if we want—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Quick question?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I thank the member from Kitchener Centre for her comments. I know she previously served on city council and undoubtedly ran into those that opposed developments of all kinds. So I wonder if the member opposite could quickly share some of her experiences in getting some of those projects over the finish line in spite of opposition.

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** You know, I appreciate that it's a messy business. We negotiate for things. We got rid of bonusing, so I actually think we've stripped a lot of power from city councillors to kind of stand up for their constituents.

I think what's happening in the OLT made my job very difficult because it was almost impossible to challenge a developer who might build something that's inappropriate for the community. But I believe that we need families in our backyard and we need to work together to find that.

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

**Mr. John Jordan:** I'm pleased to rise today in support of this bill, the Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act.

Speaker, when we talk about housing in this chamber, the conversation seems to always drift toward the skylines of our largest urban centres. We can talk about high-rise towers and subway extensions, but I want to spend my time today speaking about a different Ontario. I want to speak for the people in our rural townships, our small villages and our northern communities.

In the past, the provincial housing conversation has been a one-size-fits-all model designed for the GTHA and applied, often unsuccessfully, to the rest of the province. But for the people in rural and smaller communities, the housing crisis is just as real, though the symptoms look different.

In our small towns, the crisis isn't just about the price of a condo; it's about the fact that the next generation is being forced to leave their hometowns because there simply isn't anything being built. It's about local employers who can't find workers because there's nowhere for those workers to live. It's about seniors who have lived in the same township for 60 years, who want to downsize, but find themselves trapped in a large family home because there is nowhere else to go.

Bill 98 is a distinct departure from the status quo. It recognizes that if we want to solve the housing crisis, we have to unlock the potential of all of Ontario, not just the big cities.

Speaker, in a large city, if you want to build a house, you assume the water will flow when you turn on the tap. But in rural Ontario, infrastructure is a barrier. Many of our smaller municipalities have the land. They have the appetite for growth. They have the home builders ready to go, but they are stuck. They are stuck because a traditional, massive municipal waste water system can cost tens of millions of dollars—a price tag that a small township with a modest tax base simply cannot carry.

Up until now, the choice has been all or nothing: Either you spend 40 years and \$50 million to build a massive municipal pipe, or you build on individual wells and septic systems that require large lots, which drives up the price of the home and prevents any kind of density.

Speaker, Bill 98 changes the game by focusing on communal water and waste water systems. These systems are important to my riding. Our warden of Lanark county wrote: "Beckwith township has a population of under 10,000—bordering the city of Ottawa's west end. A small communal water and waste water system will allow us to develop denser housing and strengthen the long-term planning for the township. Smaller lots will allow the opportunity to provide housing for first-time homeowners and retirees looking to downsize." Streamlining access to communal water and waste water systems would enable Beckwith township to be better equipped to meet the province's planned housing goals along with those of our residents.

#### 1610

These systems are the missing key of infrastructure. They serve a cluster of homes—typically between 20 and 200 units—providing a safe, centralized and highly regulated utility that doesn't require the massive footprint

of a city-wide system. Verona in South Frontenac is a good example in my riding where they're developing a development of 100 homes on traditional water and sewage that would only be 14 homes on the same tract of land.

Louise Fragnito, CAO of the South Frontenac township, wrote, "The ability to provide communal water and waste water systems in a rural community is an innovative, economical, and sustainable method to provide critical infrastructure to our communities. The use of communal water and waste water systems provides the ability to support growth, increase density and support diverse development within our communities in an affordable manner, while ensuring that public and environmental safety remains top of mind as these systems must meet MECP and source water requirements. Further, the use of communal servicing reduces environmental impacts by reducing the number of individual well and septic installations by using a centralized well/lake intake and septic through systems that can service multiple housing units at once."

Speaker, another critical part of this bill is the advancement of publicly owned municipal service corporations that enable these systems. I know in smaller communities there is often a healthy skepticism whenever we talk about new corporate structures, but let's be absolutely clear: These are publicly owned tools. They are about protecting the small-town taxpayer.

In many small municipalities, growth-enabling infrastructure is currently funded through front-end development charges. This means a developer, and ultimately the homebuyer, has to pay the full cost of a pipe before the first shovel hits the dirt. In a small town, this upfront cost can kill a project before it starts.

By allowing for municipal service corporations, we are giving smaller municipalities a more sophisticated way to finance growth. This model provides the fiscal flexibility required to support the essential infrastructure projects that our municipalities need to grow. By allowing the utility to borrow against its own assets, we keep that debt off the municipality's general ledger, effectively shielding the property tax rate from the high cost of expansion.

Smaller townships, which often operate on lean budgets, may not always have the immediate capital to commit to multi-million-dollar projects upfront. This framework allows the cost of infrastructure to be spread over the 30 years or 40 years that the pipes and plants will actually be used, and the communal system is a cost-effective solution.

Instead of a prohibitive lump sum that stalls development, we are moving to a smaller, utility-based funding model. This ensures that every community, regardless of its current size or cash reserves, has a sustainable pathway to modernize its infrastructure and welcome new families.

This is about giving our rural councils the same financial tools that big cities have used for decades. It's about ensuring that a town's growth doesn't come at the expense of its long-term financial stability.

Bill 98 also focuses on standardizing official plans. Speaker, if you walk into a planning office in a small rural

municipality, you will often find a dedicated but small team. They don't have the large teams that a big city has, yet the provincial planning rules they have to follow are often just as complex. Bill 98's focus on standardizing official plans is a huge win for small-town Ontario. It makes complex documents simpler to navigate and speeds up processes.

Currently, every municipality has its own way of formatting its official plan. For a builder or a resident trying to understand what can be built is a nightmare. By creating a consistent, province-wide format, we are removing the complexity tax. In a rural community, this means:

- faster approvals: Local staff spend less time navigating inconsistent formats and more time actually reviewing applications;

- lower costs: Builders don't have to hire specialized lawyers just to translate the local planning language;

- public clarity: A farmer or a small business owner can actually read their township's official plan and understand how it affects their property without needing to spend hours understanding.

This is about professionalizing the system while simplifying the experience. It's about making sure that good planning doesn't have to mean slow planning.

Speaker, we must also address the drift of site plan control. In small towns, we pride ourselves on the character of our main streets, but we've also seen site plan requirements grow into a list of nice-to-haves that add significant costs. When a municipality mandates specific high-end stone finishes or ornamental landscaping that isn't native to our climate, they are driving up the price of that home.

Bill 98 refocuses site plan control on functionality and safety. Does the fire truck have access? Is the stormwater managed so it doesn't flood the neighbours? Is the entrance safe? Those are the things that matter. In rural Ontario, where margins on building can be tighter because of higher transport costs for materials, we cannot afford to mandate Cadillac design standards on leaner budgets. We need to get back to the basics of building safe, functional and durable homes.

Speaker, at its core, this bill is about protecting the dream of home ownership. In rural Ontario, that dream looks like a young couple being able to buy their first starter home in the same township where their parents live. It looks like a tradesperson being able to build a modest home on a lot that isn't artificially inflated by outdated minimum lot size rules.

Bill 98's reform on minimum lot sizes is a key part of this. For too long, we've mandated lots that are far larger than they need to be. This forces builders to build massive, expensive homes because the land cost is so high. By allowing for more flexible, smaller lot sizes, we're inviting the return of the starter home to rural Ontario.

We're also building on transparency for the buyer. When the young couple finally goes to buy that home, they deserve to know what they are paying. Bill 98's move toward development charge transparency is about basic fairness. When you buy a truck in a small town, you see

the breakdown of the price; when you buy a home, you should see the same. If \$50,000 of your mortgage is going to government fees, you should know that. Transparency creates accountability, and accountability leads to better government at every level.

Speaker, I want to highlight the impact of this bill on our rural seniors. In many small towns, there is a logjam in the housing market. Seniors are staying in large family homes not because they want to but because there is nowhere else to go.

By exempting non-profit retirement homes from development charges, Bill 98 provides a direct incentive to build the housing our seniors need. It allows them to stay in the community they built. It keeps them close to their family and their local doctor, and most importantly, when they move into a new retirement suite, that three-bedroom family home becomes available for a new family to enjoy. This is how we create a fluid market in small towns. One new seniors' development can unlock 20 existing family homes. This is the kind of practical, common-sense math that rural Ontarians understand.

Speaker, while much of the transportation talk in Bill 98 is about the GTHA, the focus on standardizing road construction is quite a victory for rural Ontario. Our townships manage thousands of kilometres of roads. By harmonizing road-building standards across the province, we are making it easier for local contractors to bid on projects across municipal lines. It means lower costs for our property taxpayers and more bang for the buck when we repair our concessions and our side roads.

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Speaker, the easy path for any government is to focus on the loudest voices in the biggest cities, but this government is different. We recognize that Ontario is only as strong as its smallest township.

Bill 98 is a piece of legislation that supports rural Ontario but at first glance is just a housing bill. It says that rural communities deserve the tools to grow. It says that communal water systems are a safe, smart way to unlock housing. It says that small-town councils deserve modern financial tools for infrastructure. It says that seniors in our villages deserve options to stay in their communities.

We're not just building houses; we are building the future of rural Ontario. We are making it possible for the next generation of farmers, tradespeople and small business owners to live, work and raise their families in the places they love. This bill is about fairness. It's about transparency. It's about common sense. And above all, it's about making sure that the dream of home ownership is alive and well, from the shores of Lake Erie to the forests of the north.

Speaker, I'm proud to support Bill 98. I encourage all the members, especially those who represent the vast and beautiful rural stretch of this province, to do the same.

I want to take a minute and talk about rideshare. Bill 98 expands rideshare services along the Northlander corridor to support first mile/last mile. This legislation complements and initiates work to bring rideshare to our rural and northern communities. Last Thursday, I presented a motion

in this House that had unanimous support. This motion asked the House to affirm that the government of Ontario should continue its work to modernize transportation by creating a streamlined, standard provincial regulatory framework for rideshare programs while strengthening first-mile/last-mile access across the province.

Speaker, this motion and this bill fit squarely within the priorities of this government—supporting economic growth, improving safety, reducing red tape and ensuring rural and northern communities are not left behind. From day one, our government has rejected the idea that Ontario begins and ends at city limits. We govern for small towns, rural communities, northern regions and fast-growing areas that do not fit neatly into traditional policy boxes. Nowhere is that more evident than in transportation policy.

Public transit solutions that work well in dense urban centres often do not work or are simply not viable in rural and northern Ontario. That is why this government has focused on flexible, practical and locally responsive transportation solutions rather than imposing one-size-fits-all systems.

Ontario currently operates under a patchwork of municipal rideshare bylaws. Some municipalities regulate ride-share services, some are considering it, and many, particularly in rural Ontario, have no framework at all. The work to provide transportation to the Northlander will set some guidelines and help to design a provincial framework across this province.

The patchwork that currently exists creates uncertainty for municipalities, drivers, riders and companies seeking to operate safely and legally across regions. As the government, it is our responsibility to provide clarity, consistency and modern standards. A provincial framework would ensure baseline standards for safety, insurance, driver screening and vehicle requirements while respecting local decision-making. That balanced provincial leadership, combined with municipal flexibility, is what this government does best.

Municipal leaders have been clear in their support. The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, representing more than 100 rural and small urban municipalities, has formally called on the province to adopt an Ontario-wide rideshare licensing framework, and they will be watching our work to connect the Northlander.

Economic growth depends on workforce mobility. As our government attracts investment in manufacturing, construction, agriculture and the skilled trades, people must be able to access those jobs. Rideshare services help fill critical transportation gaps, offering flexible mobility for workers and income opportunities for local drivers.

Safety is also central to this discussion. In many rural communities, transportation options late at night are extremely limited.

Speaker, Bill 98 is the beginning of a transportation solution for rural Ontario. It's the beginning of getting new homes built in rural Ontario, and I fully support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I appreciate the member opposite for his comments.

I heard you say that transparency leads to accountability, and accountability leads to better government. There are two pieces of transparency we'd like from the government. One is the government apparently settled the lawsuit from Carmine Nigro over air rights that he didn't actually own, and the lawsuit was for \$500 million. The government hasn't yet told us how many of our tax dollars went to the Premier's friend.

The other question that we have on transparency is, a couple of weeks ago, the Premier said that he had returned his private jet. And then he said, "Well, it's sort of in limbo," and refusing to release the receipts.

Just in terms of transparency that will lead to better accountability, how many of our tax dollars went to Carmine Nigro? And is that jet still in the government's possession?

**Mr. John Jordan:** There's a lot of things addressed in this bill relative to transparency. One is, as I mentioned, the young purchasers of their home, to know what the bottom line on that cost is. And that's the development charges; they need to be upfront. They need to know what they are upfront.

The other is for builders. I have 12 municipalities in my riding. When builders go from one municipality to the other municipality—and some of those are not very far apart, so a builder travels every day through multiple municipalities—they need to be dealing with one set of standards for site plans, for building codes so that that information is upfront and transparent and they aren't continually going back and being refuted by municipal leaders.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to thank the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston for his remarks.

He touched upon road construction standards. I guess, in layman's terms for people watching, every municipality has a choice of following provincial standards as they exist on a voluntary basis or creating their own. When you procure pipes, when you procure asphalt or concrete materials, aggregate, they have different standards depending on what municipality you're in. It makes purchasing in bulk and realizing the economies of scale incredibly difficult.

I'm hoping the member can explain how harmonizing road construction standards actually helps reduce costs, improve efficiency and supports our goals of building housing and infrastructure all throughout the province.

**Mr. John Jordan:** Thanks very much—great question. You alluded to it a little bit. Certainly, for procurement of inputs for that aggregate for road building, it's important to have one standard. The contractor knows what they're dealing with.

Some of these are large companies, like Cavanagh construction in my riding. For them to know what the rules are—they know what they need for the year, they can estimate what they need for the year and do bulk purchases.

ing—is certainly one. The other one is labour force and equipment, and to have that labour force and equipment trained on the standards for the area that they're going to be serving.

Again, in my area, there are twelve municipalities. Cavanagh, for example, is also a big contractor for Kanata and Ottawa area. Those standards need to be harmonized so they can reduce costs through procurement, through training and through equipment.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I must say that I'm a bit worried about schedule 8 of the act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and schedule 9 of the act, the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act.

In schedule 8 of the act, they basically create that “drinking water system owned by a corporation designated as a water and waste water public corporation.” And then, in schedule 9, the shareholders of those corporations can “sell or transfer the shares.”

Is the member worried that privatization of our drinking water, privatization of our waste water could lead to severe health problems?

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We all remember what happened in Walkerton. We don't want this to happen again. Is the member worried?

**Mr. John Jordan:** No, I'm quite excited, actually. It's a great system.

What I would be more worried about would be a number of septic systems and wells in the same vicinity. Nobody is checking those on a daily basis, as opposed to these communal systems, which are monitored continually. So the public municipal corporations, I think, is a good way forward not only for that management but also for a revenue source to put those systems in place. I think coming together with those two things—it's a good plan, and it will allow those communal water and sewage systems to go forward.

They're very important for your riding and for my riding, for those small places like Lanark Village, in my case, that can't afford that big system. Their taxpayers couldn't possibly afford it. They can afford this system.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** The policies that have taken place in the last while are encouraging sprawl development. We know that sprawl development costs municipalities twice as much as infill and that when we build large homes it's more labour and more materials that could be utilized for more homes.

Can you explain why, if you want to get more homes built faster and you want sustainable municipalities, you're encouraging sprawl development?

**Mr. John Jordan:** I'm going to go back to the communal water and sewage system, which is the exact opposite to what you're suggesting. I gave the example of Verona, where a development would only be able to handle 14 homes with the traditional well and septic systems. That development can now handle 100 homes. So

it's the exact opposite of sprawl, and this bill enables that to start happening.

I think it's a great move forward. I'm really excited for rural ridings like mine, that they can go forward.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Through you, Speaker: The member talked about—and thank you for his remarks. He talked about creating a uniform system, especially in rural areas. We've heard from builders and municipalities and industry experts that have talked about it taking so much time, and often intended consequences include items that go beyond health and safety considerations. They simply take too much time because they get bogged down.

Can you talk about the site plan reform and how that will change things with Bill 98?

**Mr. John Jordan:** I think the key word with the site plan reform is “standardization and familiarity.” It will also allow transfer of staff, sharing of expertise among municipalities.

Again, I have 12 municipalities. They're a small staff base, but as far as sharing building inspectors, sharing skill sets within each municipality is another win for this but also for our builders to know what those standards are. They can plan, they can be comfortable and confident going forward and putting projects in place, knowing what they're dealing with upfront. I know, right now, there's a lot of back and forth when we get into site plan development among municipalities because there's a lack of clarity on those builds.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**MPP George Darouze:** Thank you to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston for his presentation this afternoon. I know the member constantly advocates for affordability measures in their riding, and I have constantly been advocating for affordability measures in my riding also.

One way of doing that is supporting affordable development for seniors. Through Bill 17, our government expanded long-term-care homes for development charges, and now Bill 98 proposes to remove development charges from non-profit retirement homes to expand affordable housing options for seniors.

Can the member talk about what this will mean for Ontarians, especially for small, rural Ontario communities like us?

**Mr. John Jordan:** I've got a high senior population in my riding, and there's a high demand for those retirement homes for those downsizing. But for retirement homes, the removal of the development charge is quite simply a reduction in the cost, which will ultimately land at the consumer, for those seniors wanting to move in. It will lower rents and lower purchase prices for those for those builds. Those development charges are directly impacting the cost and therefore increasing the availability of that type of housing.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** What a pleasure it is to join the House on a Wednesday afternoon. It's pretty damn gloomy out there but look at the sunshine in this place—#sarcasm.

**Mr. Brian Riddell:** You're a ray of sunshine.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I am. I got my full sleep, so my cheery demeanour will be joining the debate today as a third person.

I do want to say Bill 98—building homes, improving transportation—I mean, why put a title on a bill like this if you have no intention of doing those two things? Listen, I've always said whoever is working in your offices, they really know how to give a bill a really powerful title. There's no doubt about that.

However, at this stage in the game, eight years in: the lowest housing starts in the province of Ontario since 1955. There's a serious, systemic underfunding of municipalities, which you have continued to play with as if you were a cat and they are mice, just slapping them around here and there, changing the funding models, changing the municipal responsibilities, putting your big paws into their pockets, swilling around the tax base, playing with the development charges, creating chaos when we need stability, especially in an economic crisis as the one that we face today.

Let me just give you some facts on where we are right now as a province. Actually, just take a step back. We should be in an election right now. I don't know if you know this, Madam Speaker, but this is when the election was supposed to be happening. You remember that? Boy, I don't know. Methinks there may have been a different outcome had the election been called in these days.

Record unemployment: 7.7%, highest since pre the pandemic. Youth unemployment: a whole generation that is losing hope in the face of this government's complete and utter incompetence—17.8% for youth unemployment.

We now have more people being treated in hallways than even when the Liberals were in power. In fact, it's twice as many people being treated in non-traditional spaces in hospitals—acute care, Madam Speaker. This includes broom closets and janitors' rooms. There was one washroom that had been carved off so that people could actually have a bed in a hospital. This is the reality for health care.

Education: a huge backsliding of our democratic rights to reach our potential with this government's change to OSAP grants, making it now 85% loans, really just carving off a whole portion of today's youth and generation to prevent them from reaching their potential.

You know what I always say because, of course, I hail from Waterloo? Waterloo has Wilfrid Laurier. Waterloo has University of Waterloo and Conestoga College—which is a whole other story right now, and it's not a good story. It's not a good story for the province. It's not a good story for our community. It certainly isn't a good story for the students that want to reach their potential. But when students are prevented from reaching their potential, the province will not reach our potential. The correlation here is so very clear.

It's also very clear who this government is working for. It isn't the people that elected this government, I can tell you that.

Just watching this Premier sometimes just stroll into this place as if it's his sticker business, chatting, gossiping and refusing to even acknowledge the role that the Premier has—to be in cabinet is to be a member of the crown. You have a responsibility to be accountable to the people that sent us here. He has no decency to answer the questions from the leader of the official opposition, who poses very insightful and grounded questions based on the lived experience of the people in province of Ontario. I have to tell you, those questions irk him; they get under his skin. He's very bothered by this little thing called democracy. His disdain for the democratic processes here in this House is profound. I've never seen anything like it.

**1640**

I remember winning a by-election here in 2012 and, you know, the first person who answered my question when I got to ask it—I was up in the corner there—was Dalton McGuinty. The Premier had respect at that time for at least going through the motions of parliamentary respect. Not this Premier—in fact, he's looking to escape, I would say, and perhaps that's why he did buy himself a private luxury jet. You know, it's Bennie and the Jets; he's leaving on a jet plane, just cannot wait to get out of here, right? He barely shows up, can't show up to answer good questions as a true Premier of the province would do.

And then we have a piece of legislation like Bill 98—so many areas of concern. I guess I can thank the government of the day for actually crafting legislation and moving in directions that cause the people of this province such concern that they now are truly getting engaged in the process.

I'm going to start with schedule 9 of Bill 98. Schedule 9 is the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act. To summarize this very concerning schedule of Bill 98, it will allow that private corporations can be designated as an agent, can own shares and control water and waste water companies. Oh, yes, we're open for business on public services, Madam Speaker. And you know, we've learned these lessons before.

Schedule 8, the so-called Safe Drinking Water Act, also is problematic because it will, intentionally or not, undermine municipal water systems. I would like to quote—I mean this is just from today—Joel Bakan and Jim Stanford, who wrote, “Did Ontario Learn Nothing from the Walkerton Tainted Water Disaster?” Did you? Is it so convenient to forget our history? What is that quote, Sandy? If you—

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** If you forget history, you're doomed to repeat it.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** If you forget history, you're doomed to repeat it. This time, you have no excuses, though. You have no excuses for going down this road again. Everything should not be for sale, okay?

The Premier, this time last year, was saying, “I'm going to protect Ontario.” You know what he's just doing? He's just selling Ontario now. I mean, that would not have been

a very good campaign slogan, I'll give you that. But essentially, what do we have now to address the health care crisis? We've got commercials telling us that you're really healthy and you just need to go to your pharmacist. On the education crisis, we've got the emperor of education here saying, "You know what? It's true; the past Ministers of Education of our government didn't do such a good job. But I'm going to be so much better." Given his track record on long-term care and municipalities, forgive me for having some question as to whether the competency is actually there, Madam Speaker.

Regarding schedule 8, though, I'm just going to read a few parts from this article from today, "Did Ontario Learn Nothing from the Walkerton Tainted Water Disaster?" by, once again, Joel Bakon and, of course, Jim Stanford, who's the director of the Centre for Future Work. They go on to say, "Safe drinking water is an essential element of public infrastructure." I'm sure somebody is paying attention. "Communities cannot survive and thrive without it. Providing water services has therefore become core to what municipal and regional governments do. Which is why we should be concerned about Ontario's new legislation, the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act."

It goes on to say that this government insists that the "legislation does not privatize water and waste water services." And forgive us if we don't trust you. Forgive us for not trusting what you say because, actually, this government has even accelerated moving so many of these decisions and policy changes to regulations. They've even far passed the Liberals, who started it in a very aggressive way. I do remember my colleagues across the way, when they were in the opposition, they bemoaned the regulatory changes and just leaving it out of the law so that they could just do whatever they want, and what have these guys done? They've doubled down on this very practice.

They go on to say that "the new water corporations act is a privatization in effect if not in name. It risks inflicting on Ontario communities the same kinds of harm and neglect that water privatization has become notorious for in Canada and around the world."

It goes on to say, "During the heyday of privatization in the 1980s and 1990s, many countries sold off public water systems to private investors. Strong public opposition followed as, in many cases, water quality deteriorated, operations failed, corporate price-gouging resulted in fee increases, and public health and environmental disasters mounted."

We haven't figured out doing water right almost anywhere in Ontario right now. My colleague here from Kiiwetinoong can speak at length about the lack of clean drinking water in his communities and across this province.

Waterloo region, for instance, right now, took up the cause and the call from the government to build good places to grow, to build up and to intensify our growth, and yet the province did not provide the corresponding infrastructure to ensure that we would have enough waste water management systems in order to grow. Where is Waterloo region right now? In a complete and full stop—

no new housing is happening in Waterloo region. The current permits are continuing along, but no new permits are being issued.

Waterloo region has had to come cap in hand and ask for some dedicated infrastructure funding to upgrade the Mannheim water treatment centre. We've now, finally, somehow just figured out that we were over-pumping in some of the rural areas. Those poor families in Wilmot township and the Kitchener-Conestoga riding are finding themselves running dry.

Water management matters. Water is everything. There are people in this House who understand that. The people who wrote this bill, Bill 98, do not understand that, Madam Speaker, without question.

To their credit, Stanford and Bakan go on to say, "Ontario had its own painful experience—the Walkerton tainted water disaster in 2000, a consequence of a previous Conservative provincial government's experiment with privatization of water inspections.

"Mass protests and advocacy campaigns led to"—this is a new word—"remunicipalization' of privatized water"—so municipalities had to take back those privatized and corporate water systems to protect the very people they're elected to serve—"and water privatization was increasingly viewed as a failed experiment."

Now, you would think a government that is so scandal ridden—honestly, we live and work in this place for long hours of the day. Even we are losing track of the scandals of this government and the lost court cases of this government. But you really are overachieving on many of those fronts—

**Mr. Chris Glover:** They are record-setting.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Yes.

The fact that most of the world has acknowledged that water privatization is a failed experimentation, what does this government do? This government includes schedule 9, the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, and schedule 8, the Safe Drinking Water Act, leaving the door wide open.

Is that what you meant when you said Ontario is open for business? It means everything is for sale, including our water, and as we've just learned with the latest Metrolinx case, even the air can be bought, Madam Speaker, for \$500 million. It's really interesting, though, because that whole deal started in 2010. Somebody under the former Liberal government certainly knew that there was going to be some building on either side of Union Station and they bought the air rights, and then this fellow—what's his name? Carmine Nigro. I don't know, everyone sounds like they should be in jail, but he likely knew that this building was going to happen. He knew that there were future plans to go up and around Toronto Union Station, and he just parked it right there. All he had to do was get a few more appointments from the Ford government, cushy little jobs where you can—these are the kind of people that you fail up, right? Failing up has—again, you're doing so well at it, but you can stop any time, because there's a lot of damage happening right now in Ontario. Anyway, Carmine scored a \$500-million deal.

1650

The Minister of Transportation has the gall, in this place, to say, “That’s an agency. It’s hands-off.” The Liberals created this hands-off agency so that they didn’t have to answer politically—my PC colleagues, at the time, called it for what it was. Metrolinx became a scapegoat for the government so that they didn’t have to own what was actually happening.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Exactly. It was a screen, right?

Now we have the Minister of Transportation saying, “Oh, Metrolinx is a third party. They’re separate from the government.” But do you know what? People need to understand, we’re paying for it. The people of Ontario are paying for that kind of incompetence. And now we have, I don’t know, 117 vice-presidents at Metrolinx.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** It’s 124—one for every MPP.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Wow. Equal.

Anyway, it’s—

**Hon. Steve Clark:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** Speaker, through you: Bill 98 is really important to the government, and I’d appreciate if the member would go back from her question period talking points and go back on her Bill 98 points.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Please continue the debate.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Schedule 5 is Metrolinx. You may not want to talk about it. You may not want to hear about it. But, hey, I’ve still got three minutes, and I’m going to have my time.

I’m going to talk about water, because if you were paying attention—what’s happening in Waterloo region is going to happen in other communities. In fact, it has happened in other Indigenous communities for a number of years now. And it’s not good for the economy. It’s not good for the housing market. It’s not good for confidence or trust in any level of government. And the fact that this road from Waterloo region leads right here to this place is inconvenient for the government.

As I was saying, though, schedule 9, the Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, which absolutely leaves the door open for private corporations that can be designated as an agent—and they can own shares and control water and waste water companies. That is in the bill. The minister promised that it was not in the bill. But now that we have done the legal analysis of this bill—that door is wide open. You should be very, very concerned, as people who, I assume, care about your communities, care about your children, care about your growth potential, care about the ability to actually build housing in Ontario and keep people healthy. This is a very serious issue.

If any of you did try to pull these schedules, we would support it. That’s how serious it is.

It goes on to say here, “Even by its own rationale—that it would create” so-called “efficiencies—water privatization was a flop, with inefficiencies resulting from managers emphasizing financial and marketing schemes at the

expense of core supply priorities, higher borrowing costs for private owners, and a drive to pay out profits and dividends to investors.”

When you privatize a natural resource like water and you give that power to a company whose sole business is to make money, then you are inherently, knowingly and intentionally undermining the public trust and the public good. That is happening here in Bill 98. And we should know better in 2026.

This is an indefensible schedule in Bill 98. It will not be good for the province of Ontario. It will be a further undermining of municipalities and the important work that they have been doing across the province.

It goes on to say, “Privatization did not just fail to benefit local communities. It actively caused them harm”—actively caused them harm. “Private operators, bound by corporate mandates to boost returns, cut operating costs, quality and safety protections, and workplace safeguards and compensation.” This “limited access to quality, safe, equitable, and affordable water” supplies.

If you vote for Bill 98, you are opening the door to privatization of our water in the province of Ontario, and shame on all of you for even putting it in this bill and calling this bill a good bill.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Thank you to the member opposite.

This legislation is proposing to exempt not-for-profit retirement homes from development charges, building on the success of similar exemptions for long-term-care homes. This is deeply important to me; I do care. I think everybody in this House cares.

By reducing construction costs for not-for-profit seniors’ housing, we are increasing housing. This is positive for not only the people, but the most vulnerable people in our community. So I’m going to ask the member if she will support this bill to support seniors’ housing, which is such an important part of this continuum.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I will not support this bill. None of us are going to support this bill. This bill will undermine the health and well-being of the people of the province of Ontario—

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I’ll say it again: This bill will undermine the health and well-being of the people of this province. This is not a bill that can be supported.

It goes on to say: “Privatization’s inglorious history helps explain why the Ontario government now insists it’s not privatizing water and waste water services. The problem, however, is that, in effect, it is.”

You’re leaving the door open. Nobody trusts you to do the right thing. This bill should be pulled from this House right now.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I, for one, enjoyed your cheerful mood this afternoon. Thank you very much.

I want to bring you back to Metrolinx. I mean, there are so many reasons to distrust this government. The fact that they used Metrolinx as a cover to hide behind, and threw up their hands like, “We have nothing to do with Metrolinx”—when, as you said, this is taxpayers’ money that’s going to Metrolinx.

This schedule gives more power to Metrolinx, including exempting them from part of the building code. Why in heaven’s name would this government give more power to a Metrolinx that has a culture of secrecy—the undisclosed costs; a near-miss high-speed derailment in Hamilton; we had people trapped in a tunnel for hours and hours and hours; air rights being sold to the friend of the Premier, Carmine Nigro?

Can you explain why, in heaven’s name, when there are 124 VPs—one for every MPP here in this House—that this government would give this agency more power and more money?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you to the member for that good question.

I don’t even understand why the government still tries to hide behind Metrolinx, because they clearly don’t care what you say, what you do. They have gone rogue a long, long time ago.

But we are going to find out the true cost to taxpayers and the citizens of this province. There’s a question on the order paper. The Auditor General is going to have a little review of it. We need to shine a light, Madam Speaker, on what’s happening here.

But it’s interesting, because neither Metrolinx nor the government have given the public any reason to be confident in any scheme that would allow the secretive and unaccountable Metrolinx to bypass the building code on construction and demolition projects. Why in the world would you take the leash off? This makes no sense whatsoever. Some of you should at least ask whoever wrote this bill what the hell they’re doing.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Thank you to my friend from Waterloo for adding her comments about the privatization of water.

I was hoping that the member could—in a very succinct way and hopefully in a way this government will understand—please explain to this government why the privatization of water costs more, delivers less, is unsafe, unsanitary and results in price gouging?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It’s such a good question. What we’ve seen in other jurisdictions—and I think the UK is actually one of those really good examples—is that once you open the door, and then third parties take ownership of the corporations and then take power and control over those corporations, there is no duty to provide clean drinking water for those communities. Their only responsibility then, as shareholders, becomes to generate revenue. So profit and making more money for more shareholders becomes their number-one job. And because the water corporations act allows an agent of any of them to own shares in a water and waste water company, a private

entity can own shares if it is designated an agent by a municipal, provincial or federal government.

**1700**

There’s no excuse for you not to know what you’re doing. You’re doing it in legislation, and now most of that will go to regulation and will take our eyes off it, as lawmakers.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I want to ask the member from Waterloo—I see, in this bill, that developers had a lot of play in it. Nothing against housing developers, but there are actually some land speculators that I think stand to benefit by exploding urban boundaries and not allowing municipalities to have their own plan. Our regional official plan was blown out, and now it standardizes official plans and takes that out of the hands of municipalities.

Can you talk a little bit about the impact of land speculation in the Waterloo region and the effect on farming communities’ ability to buy farmland?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thanks very much to my friend from Kitchener Centre for the question.

Listen, almost all of the legislation here in this House since the greenbelt bill, Bill 23, as well, is about land speculation. It’s basically the government has turned into a major real estate corporation to figure out how to get land to developers, to their friends, to their donors by way of official plan adjustments. Municipalities are onto this. I mean, I could even point to the education changes where Peel District School Board has been taken over. This government is already looking at land to expropriate from that school board.

Basically, this is a real estate agency, otherwise known as the Ford government, just operating out in plain sight. Someone has to call you out for it.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Further question?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I really appreciate the comments today. The member was talking about how this government is claiming that Bill 98 isn’t about the privatization of water, and you are saying that maybe we shouldn’t trust this government because of their record.

I was just thinking about some of the things that the Premier has said in the past. He said, “I will not touch the greenbelt.” He said, “I’m the only Premier in history that doesn’t use the Premier’s plane,” but he bought his own private jet. He said he was going to stop the gravy train and then he bought a gravy plane. Then this week, the big thing that he’s saying is that—last week, he said, “I’ve returned the gravy plane,” but this week, he’s not so sure.

When this government says that Bill 98 is not about privatizing water, should we believe them?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** That’s a nice softball question, which I appreciate on a Wednesday afternoon.

I just want to say, this is the key piece about schedule 8 and schedule 9: Managers of water and waste water companies will face key decisions about who gets water, who gets waste water service, what kind of service they get, how much they pay for it, what infrastructure is built,

how that infrastructure is maintained, and whether and to what extent workers and environmental interests are protected. And in every case, in every single case, it will be determined by profit. Profit will determine the goals of water in Ontario.

This is so serious. Some of you have to have read the legislation, have looked at the impacts, and know that this is not in the best interests of the people that we're elected to serve. Pull these schedules from this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Next question?

**MPP George Darouze:** My question to the member from Waterloo: All that we've heard this afternoon are slogans and talking about anything else but the bill. But I want to ask a question back on Bill 98.

Our government believes Ontario should be a place where young people can afford to buy a home and families can live closer to where they work. That requires building more homes and building more services. I want to know why they always vote against—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Quick response.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'll be voting against this bill because it's not in the interests of the people of this province.

Also, I've been speaking about schedule 8. Maybe you might like to read the bill yourself, because schedule 8 and schedule 9 will undermine the health and well-being of the people of this province.

Privatizing water should never be part of the conversation in 2026. You should know better, because we know better.

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

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I really appreciate the opportunity to address Bill 98 at this stage. What I would like to do, because a lot of people have expressed opinions about this bill, is to give a little Kingston flavour to this debate. So I want to address some things from a Kingston point of view.

Before I got into provincial politics, the mayor of Kingston asked me to co-chair the mayor's task force on housing. That was back in 2019. I have to say that in this admittedly smaller city, there was a lot of cross-party co-operation when it comes to housing.

Housing doesn't have to be a partisan affair, and I think in smaller communities, people can work together. Municipalities are not the enemy of housing. Municipal governments don't have to be the enemy of housing. I think this government is afraid of that, but really, they should be working with municipalities and incentivizing them.

I think, in Kingston, we achieved something important. We really changed the attitudes towards housing in the city. In the 2018 municipal election, housing was the number one issue, and the mayor made a promise to set up a task force to study housing in Kingston and to provide recommendations. Mayor Paterson ran for the federal Conservatives in the last election. And then we had two co-chairs. One of the co-chairs was Mary Rita Holland,

who's a past president of the Ontario NDP, and the other co-chair was me, currently the Ontario Liberal MPP for Kingston and the Islands. We worked together. There wasn't any sense of fighting each other. We worked together and put together a report with a lot of good recommendations, local recommendations, for how to improve housing in Kingston.

I think the message for this Conservative government is, you don't need to control everything from Queen's Park to get good housing policy. In fact, you'll miss out on some of the local nuances that a proactive local community can find.

Before I really get into some comments I want to make on the bill, I want to compliment the Minister of Housing, because in schedule 7 of this bill, official plans are standardized across the province. The city of Kingston has just finally, after amalgamation in the late 1990s, closed the book on the legacy of the Mike Harris government amalgamations, and it has finally come up with one clean official plan for the city of Kingston. Unfortunately, it doesn't conform to the standardized format in schedule 7.

I have to thank the Minister of Housing. I helped to set up a meeting with the mayor and the CAO of Kingston and the Minister of Housing, and I have to credit the minister for saying, "Don't worry. You can just adjust the format next time around. You don't have to worry about fitting the standard format right now because you've just done a lot of long work to create a brand new, single, clean official plan."

I want to talk about another thing where this bill misses the mark on housing. This is another local opportunity to build housing that I have been trying to put in front of the Minister of Housing, the Minister of Finance and anybody else in the government who will listen to this good idea.

**1710**

In Kingston, there's an old place with a new name called Providence Village. It's the legacy of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul. There's this area called Providence Village, which contains their mother house, but there's a lot of extra land, and they've donated a lot of land to the community.

Providence Village and Kingston Cohousing have a plan to build affordable housing. The business plan for this affordable housing requires a long lease, a 99-year lease. With a long lease, if you're a developer, you don't have to try to get your costs back in a short amount of time. Unfortunately, when you have a long lease like that, according to the current rules, that triggers a land transfer tax, and the amount of this land transfer tax is something like a million dollars.

Now, the finance ministry doesn't like to make exceptions to the land transfer tax—I understand that; it makes things more complicated—but the government could agree to refund this land transfer tax to this affordable housing project. That's the sort of thing they could have done in this bill, refund land transfer taxes when land is used to build affordable housing.

This is potentially a very efficient way to use money to build housing. First of all, it comes from a tax that you

collected. You're just refunding it, so it's not going to have an impact on the treasury. But the second thing is, once you've done all of the preliminary work and you've got the infrastructure and you've got the first few storeys of some building, if you say, "Oh, I have an extra million dollars," the marginal cost of adding extra housing is potentially very, very low. So this refunding the land transfer tax would be a really easy way for this government to build more affordable housing than would be built otherwise.

This Bill 98 doesn't contain that, but it's something that was discussed in the last Ontario Liberal election platform. The minister, I think, wants to build more housing, and I hope that the minister and other concerned ministers will get together and realize that this is a good way to build housing for less than it would normally cost.

The next point I want to make is that this bill tries to strip away environmental standards, and stripping away environmental standards is the wrong trade-off to make. When I was co-chair of the Kingston Mayor's Task Force on Housing, I spent about the better part of a year talking to all sorts of stakeholders in the housing sector. I talked to a lot of builders, and they told me that there were a lot of things that prevented them from building housing or increased the cost of housing. Environmental standards wasn't one of them. The biggest one was delays. The delays were costing a lot of money. Kingston also has some issues with land assembly, but environmental standards was not one of them.

I think it's been argued elsewhere in the Toronto context, in the context of the Toronto green standard, that environmental standards are not preventing housing from being built. In Kingston, this is something that the builders, the people who actually are going to build the housing we need—they never brought it up.

In fact, one of the builders in Kingston, he put in an apartment building, his first time—in the middle of downtown Kingston, he built an apartment building with geothermal heat pumps. He did it because there are pension funds that want to invest in that kind of building. They want green investments in long-term infrastructure.

Municipalities can innovate. I don't think that environmental standards are something that is top of mind for builders—certainly the ones that I talk to in Kingston. The evidence that scrapping these standards will make housing more affordable really isn't there.

You can even think about the following thing: Sometimes you increase the cost in the near term a little bit and you save a lot of money down the road. For example, by analogy with solar energy, when you build an apartment building which comes with some underground parking, you could imagine roughing in—not actually installing the whole infrastructure—infrastructure for electric vehicle charging.

If you build a new building, that parking lot is going to be there for at least 50 years, maybe longer. Right now, it's very expensive to retrofit parking for electric vehicle charging, but if you rough it in, you leave a little space for some wires, plugs and so on in the future, it costs very little

now, but it will save you a lot of money in the future. That's smart planning. That's a way to save money is smart planning.

The final thing I want to say about this bill when it comes to special things that are relevant to Kingston is the part of the bill which gives the provincial government control over transit pricing.

Admittedly, Kingston is far away and is probably not going to be subject to this control any time soon, but I want to make the point that municipalities can and do innovate in transit. In fact, Kingston has led the province in innovation in our transit system.

Back before the pandemic Kingston decided it would put in some express routes, and they carefully looked at which express routes would be used by certain groups of workers. One of the groups they looked at was front-line retail workers: Where do they work? Where do they live? How can we make it easy and inexpensive for them get to work and back home every day?

They put in these express routes, and then they did another thing. They tried to change the culture of taking the bus in Kingston. They took buses to all the schools and showed students how to take the bus—if they had a bike, you know, how you stick your bike on the bike rack. But a lot of kids just weren't used to taking the bus. They didn't know how to take the bus. They made transit free for kids, they showed them how to take transit and showed them the freedom that it gave them from needing to wait to get a ride from their parents or somebody else.

This was enormously successful. How do we know it's successful? Because they track ridership, and for about six years in a row the ridership in Kingston increased exponentially. I may get the figure wrong, but I believe that the ridership on Kingston Transit increased 15% a year every year until the pandemic came along. The point is that municipalities can innovate, and we shouldn't be doing things, trying to control everything from Queen's Park that would discourage municipalities from innovating.

Now, if there's something we can do to coordinate municipalities, sure, let's do that. But I just want to warn this government: Don't extinguish the ability of municipalities to innovate when it comes to transit or when it comes to protecting the environment, making buildings less expensive and less polluting.

Speaker, I know I haven't covered the whole bill, but I did want to have the chance, and I do appreciate the chance, of putting on the record some of the things that my hometown of Kingston has done and to say to this government, don't throw away a lot of talent, initiative and creativity in municipalities by trying to take control of everything. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I studied business, and I know that there are capital expenses and operating expenses. When you build an efficient home, can you explain to the government how spending a little bit more in capital actually saves people a lot of money in operating and how

we apply this to things like cars and other things so we could do better by building properly the first time?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I'll give my honourable colleague from Kitchener an even better example: a whole high school. I have a friend who was on the board of trustees when they were designing the high school. He had this problem—because it was a brand new high school, a brand new field. He wanted to put in some geothermal when this high school was built, because it would save a lot of money in operating costs, but there would be an upfront capital cost. And because there was no flexibility to say, “Hey, if we spend a little bit of money now in capital costs, we'll have a lot of energy savings for the lifetime of this high school,” he couldn't get that done. He couldn't put in geothermal for this brand new high school.

1720

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I share the concern from many in this House, including the member from Waterloo, that privatizing water in this day and age is insane. We have the cautionary tale of Walkerton, but I would like to share with you also that there was a cautionary tale in Hamilton. Hamilton privatized their water services in 1994 for 10 years. It resulted in cost overruns, sewage spills. It resulted in homes being flooded, secretive operations. In fact, Sheila Copps's mother, Geraldine Copps, who was a councillor at the time, had to storm into the operations to see what was going on.

So my question to you is, given these two recent extremely poor experiences with privatizing water, what do you think is really in it for this government to privatize water? It's got to be a money thing for these guys.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** My honourable colleague from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas knows a little bit about Kingston. I'm going to get this right—her father used to be the CAO of Kingston—

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** That's right.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:**—so she certainly knows what she's talking about when she talks about Kingston.

I unfortunately am not so familiar with Hamilton, but I will admit that the city of Kingston has been looking at setting up a municipal services corporation for water and sewer, because they're limited by the Municipal Act and they want to borrow some money to expand water and sewage and to invest in water and sewage in Kingston, and then pay for that by setting the rates for the future and funding the payments needed to service that debt.

In Kingston there's already a municipal services corporation in Kingston Hydro. It owns all the electricity assets, and I have to say, from the Kingston point of view, it has never come up, the privatization. The CAO of Kingston doesn't seem to think it's an issue. So I'm willing to look at other cities, but in Kingston it doesn't seem to be a worry.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for his remarks. It's a beautiful

part of the province with a lot of access to water. I know Wolfe Island comes to mind.

I'm hoping the member can elaborate a bit on his take about communal waste water systems and water systems. They're present in British Columbia, for example, where that's what the communities rely upon, but it's certainly hard to develop here in the province. Bill 98 helps us to clear up the ability to get those enacted, so that we have proper water treatment and waste water treatment in hard-to-get places.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** The county of Frontenac, of which Kingston is a part, has been a leader in communal services. There's a pilot in the town of Verona where there are a bunch of houses and, instead of everybody digging their own well and having their own septic tank, they share these services.

When I talked to the CAO of Frontenac county, they're looking at getting the whole rest of the province to take advantage of this new way of doing things, starting with other parts of Frontenac county. And, indeed, one of the things that they're looking at doing—because these communal services will be in different municipalities in Frontenac county, different places—is to set up a municipal services corporation to handle the debt that is involved in setting up these systems. So I'm very interested in following that and seeing if that will help build denser, less expensive housing in rural areas.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** As the member for London, I was very concerned earlier this month when some new data came out about a surge in powers of sale across the province. The top three cities in Ontario with the highest numbers of powers of sale are Toronto, Brampton and London, and of course this is when struggling homeowners get behind on their mortgages, can't keep up and have to default to the bank.

So my question for the member is, is there anything in this bill that will address the affordability pressures that so many homeowners in Ontario are facing and would enable people to keep their homes in this province?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I'm going to just make sure that I understand what the question is about. I know that across Canada the debt—personal debt—is pretty high. A lot of that comes from mortgages.

For a long, long time, years ago, we used to say to each other, “Look, if interest rates ever go up, people who are paying a variable interest rate are going to be in a lot of trouble because they hold a lot of personal debt.” This is separate from government debt, separate from corporate debt. I think this is what happened.

Now, no, I don't think there's anything in this bill about that. I may be wrong because I haven't read the whole bill; I've read the parts that I wanted to speak about today.

But it is a slightly different question. I think it's more of a finance minister question than a housing question and maybe it's even a federal government question, because we've known for a long time that a lot of people have

bought houses, gotten a variable rate, and they're not able to handle rising interest rates.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** The main impact of climate change has to do with water, because when we have more carbon in the atmosphere, it's like a sponge and it can suck up more water. It means we're either drier or wetter depending on if it's raining or not.

Can you speak about how, by us not addressing climate change, we will definitely run into a water crisis? I think 70% of Canada was in drought conditions. Can you elaborate on how this—not adjusting climate change and now with changes to our water—will affect our access to clean water?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Well, flooding is one of the ways that climate change will affect us. One of the reasons why there can be more flooding or more droughts is that—one of the things that can happen with climate change is that weather patterns will move more slowly and they get stuck. So you might get one area that gets a lot of rain for a long time and another area that doesn't get any rain for a long time, and that will cause a problem.

Now, you can stand here and argue about how big that is. I think the best way to know how much of the problem this is is to ask the insurance companies, "How much do you want to charge to insure a house against flooding? How much do you need to charge to take on that risk?" Insurance companies have to be realistic because they can't lose money. We know, just looking around the world, that the cost of insurance against the damage of climate change is going up and up and up. That's a clear, solid, numerical quantitative marker about the cost of—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Just a follow-up to the member opposite: I heard earlier about Walkerton and the belief that the Koebel brothers worked for a private company, when they worked for the Walkerton Public Utilities Commission.

I'm curious as to your thoughts as to whether municipal employees at a public utilities commission would be considered private sector employees.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Well, Speaker, one of my friends has been very involved in source water protection in the Kingston area and the Cataraqui conservation area. Whatever corporate structures we set up, it's not going to protect us unless we have good governance. I listened to the speech from my honourable colleague from Waterloo, and if we don't have good governance at all levels of government, yes, the things that she's worried about could possibly happen. If we do have good governance—

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the government House leader.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to join in the debate on Bill 98. I've spoken on this subject many times in the House.

I am going to speak briefly about communal water systems because it's something that I've worked on the entire

time I've been in this place and also prior to, when I was a CAO of a municipality, and also working with my predecessor Bob Runciman.

Bill 98: I know that members of the government side have spoken about this. Really, what we're trying to do is build upon our success, to reduce delays and to build homes faster. We all know that it takes too long and it costs too much for housing. We need to ensure that we reduce the duplication, the unnecessary cost escalation.

**1730**

There are items in this bill about waste water corporations. As a former mayor, I was on a public utilities commission and learned a tremendous amount about a public corporation that deals with electrical distribution and transmission and also water distribution in a municipal corporation—very important.

I am very passionate about the site plan reform. When I was a mayor back in the 1980s, site plan was a lot different than it is today. The municipality dealt with their due diligence at rezoning. There were a lot of conversations within the community as part of the public process. Site plan just wasn't this process that it is today, where it spirals into months—in some cases, years—to get development online.

And then communal water systems—I make no apologies. I've got a fantastic company in my riding, Newterra, that I've literally brought Minister of the Environment after Minister of the Environment from the previous government and from our government—I've brought parliamentary assistants, I've brought mayors, I've brought colleagues from the Legislature, trying to convince people that these systems serve multiple homes, environmentally safe; the standard that they operate on is far greater than many jurisdictions.

Municipalities today run them, and they want them. We just somehow got off the rails when it comes to approving the systems. These systems are brought forward around the world—in the United States, in other jurisdictions in Canada. In fact, when this company first opened in my riding in Brockville, there were some within their industry that recommended that they go to any other province or territory in Canada other than Ontario because they would have a far better opportunity. They have municipalities that are wanting them. The environmental standard—there's no one that can argue that the environmental standard meets or tremendously exceeds what is there available, and they operate all around our country.

I'm glad that we're having this conversation. I think it builds upon some of the success this government has. I think Bill 98 is at the point, Speaker, that we can now move on to the next opportunity, and I move that the question now be put.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** The government House leader has moved that the question be now put. I'm satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House.

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

All those in favour of the motion that the question be now put, please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion that the question be now put, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*Vote deferred.*

## KEEPING CRIMINALS BEHIND BARS ACT, 2026

### LOI DE 2026 VISANT À MAINTENIR LES CRIMINELS DERRIÈRE LES BARREAUX

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 12, 2026, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

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

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Continuing with debate, I recognize the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

**MPP Silvia Gualtieri:** It is an honour to rise in support of Bill 75, the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act. Speaker, this government was elected on a promise, a promise we made to the people of this province. We promised to protect Ontario, and this bill is yet another example of how, under the leadership of Premier Ford and Solicitor General Michael Kerzner, we are delivering on that very promise.

This bill builds on a legacy that our government has built with the support of members of this House. It builds on tireless work, day after day, by ministers, staff and officials that takes into account what all of us hear from the constituents we represent. I hear in my riding, as I am sure members do across Ontario, that people want to have safe streets, to feel safe walking to the park with our kids, to know that Ontario is still the best and safest place in the world.

It requires a lot of hard work to keep people safe. Our first responders do that work, day and night, even at the risk to themselves: the police who protect us from violent crime; the firefighters who save our communities, our homes, our lives when a fire breaks out; the paramedics who answer the call when we are injured or critically ill. They’re heroes. They deserve our support, and we work every day to do our part.

That’s why Bill 75 builds on a proud legacy. It builds on the Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, 2023, which included measures to address the shortage of police officers, strengthening protection of animals and addresses backlog in the courts. It builds on the Enhancing Access to Justice Act, 2024, which included a number of measures to strengthen our bail system. And it builds on

the Protect Ontario Through Safer Streets and Stronger Communities Act, 2025, which addresses child safety and human trafficking.

Members of the House, particularly those here since 2018, may recall even more key justice bills that are helping to keep the people of this province safe. And of course, while Bill 75 is the next step, it isn’t the last one. We will always work to protect the people of Ontario. Indeed, the Solicitor General has already announced that the government intends to introduce legislation to help tackle the production of illegal drugs and to keep transit riders and staff safe.

These are critical issues in my community, as they are across the province. Everyone deserves to be able to travel on transit in safety, without inhaling fumes of illegal drugs, without being threatened by people affected by consuming those drugs. We shouldn’t accept anything less, and this government won’t accept less.

Speaker, that brings me to the new and important measures in Bill 75, the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act. I’ll start with Andrew’s Law. It was named after the tragic case of Andrew Cristillo, a husband, a father and a brother who was killed in a collision that involved a driver who was already facing charges for dangerous driving and stunt driving. No family should ever lose someone like that. It’s heartbreaking, and Mr. Cristillo’s family called for increased penalties to dangerous driving in line with the risk and damage it causes others.

In fact, we heard the brother of Andrew Cristillo speak about it as a witness to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. There, he reconfirmed the necessity of stronger consequences which would allow police to immediately suspend licences and impound vehicles when dangerous driving is reasonably believed.

Speaker, I am proud that government listened and that we’re acting on that request. If the House passes this bill, we’ll have tougher penalties and immediate roadside enforcement. Police would be able to issue immediate 90-day roadside suspensions and impound dangerous drivers’ vehicles. The penalties for careless driving and driving with a suspended licence would be increased and there would also be tougher penalties for dangerous operation of a commercial vehicle. These are important measures—measures that might deter the next tragedy. It’s important that this House back them.

And more: Our government is also exploring options on how to require that impaired drivers pay ongoing child support if they kill a child’s parent or guardian.

**1740**

Speaker, the next component of our bill addresses ways to prevent other tragedies. It was another Conservative government in Ontario, led by Premier Harris, that responded to one such tragedy by passing Christopher’s Law and creating the first provincial sex offender registry. Our government strengthened that registry, which is now known as the Ontario sex offender and trafficker registry. It’s an effective and important tool for law enforcement.

But the next step is to find a way to share some information with the public about high-risk offenders so

people can better protect themselves and their families. Currently, only police services in Ontario have access to the 24-hour database for monitoring and investigations of sex crimes. We want to explore options to make some of the information contained in the Ontario sex offender and trafficker registry publicly available. I want to highlight that our government will be consulting with key stakeholders, including legal and law enforcement, with a view to ensuring the registry remains an effective investigative tool.

That's not the only way we're working to ensure dangerous offenders can't do any more damage. Our government—and, in particular, my colleagues the Solicitor General and the Associate Solicitor General for Auto Theft and Bail Reform, as well as the Attorney General and Associate Attorney General—is working hard on bail. They advocate for reforms to the federal system and strengthening every aspect of the justice system under provincial control.

Our government has invested \$112 million to strengthen enforcement efforts and ensure repeat high-risk offenders comply with their bail conditions.

Bill 75 takes the next steps in ensuring we can collect bail debts and hold those who break their conditions accountable. Whether that means garnisheeing wages, seizing and selling property, mandatory cash deposits, or simply ensuring law enforcement has access to the latest technology, we are leaving no stone unturned in ensuring that the bail system is as strong as it can be, and that repeat offenders face real consequences for breaking the conditions of their bail. This change will strengthen bail compliance, making bail more real and consequential for the accused and their surety, aiming to prevent repeat offences while promoting public safety. The change will also make it easier for the province to recover bail debts.

Speaker, bail must mean something. There are too many instances where a repeat violent offender gets out on bail and reoffends the very next day.

I want to remind this House that after advocacy from our government and collaborative efforts with other provinces, the federal government introduced proposed reforms to the Criminal Code to strengthen the bail system in October 2025. We must not grow complacent now. As elected officials, we must continue our work to change the bail system.

This builds on everything else we're doing—like the Provincial Bail Compliance Dashboard, already proving yet another invaluable tool for law enforcement, or like our investment into the Bail Compliance and Warrant Apprehension Grant.

We've provided \$24 million over three years to help the Ontario Provincial Police, 17 municipal services and four First Nations police services establish dedicated bail-compliance and warrant apprehension teams to monitor high-risk individuals. These teams assist prosecutors with gathering evidence and assessing public safety risks during the bail hearing stage.

Speaker, while I talk about public safety investments of this government, I must also mention the OPP offender

parole enforcement, or ROPE squads. We invested \$48 million to double the size of the squad from five to 10 teams. The ROPE squad will continue to focus on apprehending high-risk criminals who have broken their bail conditions in the province of Ontario. This enhancement enables the ROPE squad to assist every police service who requests the service to investigate, locate and apprehend anyone who is wanted. All these efforts, together with the new provisions in the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act, will reduce the number of high-risk individuals alleged to have violated bail conditions. But best of all, in many cases, is keeping dangerous offenders behind bars where they belong.

But even behind bars, sometimes they pose a threat to the correctional personnel. Speaker, correctional personnel, correction officers, nurses, support workers—everyone working in our correctional institutions plays an absolutely vital role in protecting public safety. That role often goes unnoticed and without thanks, and it can be dangerous, but we will do everything we can to reduce that danger and protect the people who keep the rest of us safe. That's why we would expand the canine detection program to prevent dangerous and illegal substances from infiltrating our institutions.

Again, Bill 75 builds on everything else our government is doing, like the massive investments we're making in correctional capacity, including the additional beds the Solicitor General has announced. While the previous government closed jails, we are reopening the Bradford jail they closed. We are building new facilities, and we are expanding the facilities we already have: new modular builds in Kenora and Thunder Bay, a brand new complex in Thunder Bay and the expansion of the Quinte Detention Centre. We implemented these and many other projects to make sure there's enough space for both the inmates and staff to stay safe. As the Solicitor General mentioned in this House, these improvements are part of our \$3-billion investment to build more jails and expand capacity to keep Ontario safe from criminals and alleged criminals.

But we're not just adding correctional spaces. Speaker, we have updated training for staff, established a code of conduct. We created a correctional health care division, and we strengthened our regulations concerning inmate searches. No government in the history of Ontario has done more for the correctional sector. We are ensuring we have the room, the resources, and the dedicated and professional staff to safely keep offenders locked up.

Beyond our corrections initiatives, I am pleased to note that Bill 75 already contains provisions to broaden access to the Ontario Immediate Family Wellness Program. In particular, we are proposing measures to strengthen the Constable Joe Macdonald Public Safety Officers' Survivors Scholarship Fund. This unique fund supports the spouses and children of police officers, firefighters and other public safety personnel who have died in the line of duty by helping cover post-secondary education costs. As this House already knows, the program was created in 1997 to honour Joe Macdonald, a police officer who was tragically killed during a routine traffic stop in October

1993. His death deeply affected the province and helped galvanize efforts to enhance officer safety while also supporting the families of fallen public safety personnel.

**1750**

We've heard from the Police Association of Ontario, as well as the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, about the importance of expanding eligibility criteria. That is why the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act would give the government authority to update regulations allowing for expanded eligibility and revised criteria for the scholarship program.

Speaker, this bill is a testament to the work of this government, under the leadership of our Premier. It has practical measures to make our streets and communities safer.

I call on every member of this House to support this bill, to stand with this government on passing Andrew's Law, strengthening Christopher's Law and strengthening our bail system. Let's vote to protect Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Thank you to the member opposite. I really appreciate what she brought to this House.

As many of you know, and I hate to keep harping on this, but I was there when we modified Christopher's Law so that offenders who had committed heinous acts against our most vulnerable could not—I stopped them from basically changing their name, making application to change their name, which is what they were doing, sadly. The Solicitor General included that in Safer Streets, which got royal assent not too long ago.

Anyway, getting back to my point, being, how do you think this transparency, especially having to do with Christopher's Law—that registry—how do you think that transparency given in Bill 75 will make a difference for the most vulnerable people, the families and the children of Ontario?

**MPP Silvia Gualtieri:** Thank you to the member for that question. Christopher's Law, as we know, is a proposed act that would give enough authority to set and adjust scholarship eligibility through regulations. There's no need to include detailed rules in the law itself, as that would limit its flexibility.

Using regulations allows changes over time based on experience and available funding. This means that through regulations, we will be able to expand the eligibility criteria more nimbly. Keeping the law broad also helps manage finances, operations and the program more effectively as the needs change.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** I listened intently, and also in this bill it talks about the Highway Traffic Act in section 5. We've also seen that the Auditor General brought a pretty bad report on your government when it comes to large commercial truck drivers. We've been sounding the alarm on our side of the House about your government failing to make sure that we have qualified truck drivers. We know there's fraudulent licences out there, fraudulent

schools that weren't even—you know, some of these schools weren't even registered.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** I recognize the member on a point of order from Thornhill.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Point of order: We are talking about Bill 75, and we should keep and direct the speech to matters of that matter, of Bill 75.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Can the member continue the question?

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** They really don't want to hear about what their failings were for this, about trucking and all that, but I'm going to continue.

There's even some of these schools that were giving licences that weren't even registered. And the government, not even—you know, they don't even speak to the other. The Ministry of Colleges and Universities, by the way, is also in this. You failed miserably, and we had people who lost their lives on the highways with trucking accidents.

So I ask you: How come you didn't put that in there when you knew—because we've been talking about this for years—about these highways? Why don't we see that in your bill on the Highway Traffic Act?

**MPP Silvia Gualtieri:** Thank you for that question, for the comment.

We've done everything we could during the creation of this bill to protect the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's ironic that we're debating Bill 75, and we know that this government can't keep criminals behind bars. They lost 150 criminals, and they're talking about bail. There's still five on the lam somewhere. The Solicitor General hasn't reported to us. We were debating this bill; I just wanted to point that out.

There may be good news for the other side: Apparently, the Premier sold the luxury private jet, but he's going to continue to wear it forever.

So my question is very simple: How can you be debating this bill about bail reform when the Solicitor General can't answer simple questions about the government's inability to keep criminals behind bars?

**MPP Silvia Gualtieri:** Thank you for that question.

Our government is taking action and delivering on our promises to fix the broken bail system—that's what we're talking about here—by making bail more real and consequential for people accused of serious crimes.

Our proposed changes would strengthen bail compliance by enhancing processes for debt collection—as I mentioned in my speech—imposing mandatory cash security deposits and improving tracking of violent and repeated offenders. We are introducing mandatory full cash security deposits for accused persons or sureties in the amount ordered by our courts.

We have listened to our police partners who stress that bail must mean something.

**The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell):** Question?

**MPP George Darouze:** Thank you to the member for this afternoon's presentation on Bill 75.

Reckless driving has claimed too many lives in Ontario, including the tragic death of Andrew Cristillo. The Cristillo family has demanded action, and our government is responding. Bill 75 introduces immediate roadside penalties for dangerous drivers, including licence suspension and vehicle impoundment, along with tougher penalties for careless and distracted driving.

Can the member explain how these measures will make Ontario's roads safer and send a clear message that dangerous driving will not be tolerated?

**MPP Silvia Gualtieri:** Thank you for that question, honourable member.

No family should have to endure the loss of a loved one because of reckless driving. Through Bill 75, our govern-

ment is responding to the calls for action reflected in Andrew's Law by introducing stronger roadside enforcement measures, including immediate 90-day licence suspensions and seven-day vehicle impoundments for dangerous driving offences.

The legislation also proposes tougher penalties for careless driving, driving while suspended and distracted driving. These reforms are intended to strengthen deterrence, improve accountability and make it clear that dangerous driving behaviour will not be accepted in the province of Ontario.

Our government is committed to standing with victims and families while taking meaningful actions to improve safety on Ontario roads.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

*Report continues in volume B.*







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Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Cooper, Michelle (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
<b>Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises et de l'Approvisionnement
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Darouze, George (PC)	Carleton	
Denault, Billy (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence
Fairclough, Lee (LIB)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce

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

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

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