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Lundi
1^{er} juin 2026

Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 1 June 2026

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 1^{er} juin 2026

The House met at 1015.

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

Prayers.

WEARING OF PINS

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Madam Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for members to wear pins in the House in recognition of ALS.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Essex is seeking unanimous consent to wear pins in recognition of ALS. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the associate minister.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Good morning, Madam Speaker. If you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for members to wear pins in the House in recognition of Italian Heritage Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The associate minister for the Attorney General is seeking unanimous consent to wear pins to commemorate Italian Heritage Month. Agreed? Agreed.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LOIS JAMES

Mr. John Jordan: My riding of Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston is rich with family-run farms that have shaped its landscapes, supported local economies and created strong, rural connections. One amazing woman who not only made farming an industry in Lanark county but a cornerstone of daily life was Lois James who, along with her husband, Mack, established Spring Valley Farms, a 100-head purebred Hereford cattle operation near Carleton Place, Ontario.

Some of her accolades included representing Canada at the 1980 World Hereford Conference in Uruguay. In 2001, she and Mack received the Canadian Hereford Association Honour Roll—the highest recognition of the breed in Canada. Lois was a 4-H leader and was acknowledged by Minister of Agriculture Bill Goodfellow in 1957 when he thanked Lois for the contributions she had made in furthering the development of programs of interest to the girls and women of rural Ontario. Lois was a proven beef breeder, a leader within the Women's Institute and a mentor to youth through 4-H.

Before Lois passed away in December she was inducted into the 2025 agricultural hall of fame. Lois is clearly

missed by her family, friends, her colleagues and peers within Beef Farmers of Ontario and the entire agricultural community.

My sincere condolence to her daughter, Sheila, an award-winning beef farmer herself, who has joined us here today along with friends and family.

1020

PRIDE MONTH

EVENTS IN HAMILTON WEST— ANCASTER—DUNDAS

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Today is the first day of Pride Month, and I'm really excited to speak proudly about some of the great events happening in my riding and across Ontario. As you will know, Pride Hamilton and other Pride groups across Ontario are facing financial difficulties. Pride organizers reached out to the province to help support this important cultural tradition, which also brings revenue to local businesses and local tourism. I certainly hope the province will step up and support these inclusive and vibrant celebrations.

In Hamilton, we celebrate our Pride festival a little late, and that means that you don't have to choose. I encourage everyone across Ontario to attend their local Pride celebrations, and then come to visit us in Hamilton.

It's also rumoured that August is when season 2 of *Heated Rivalry* is supposed to start filming in Hamilton. Consider this an official invitation to the cast, crew, producers and everyone else involved: Please come celebrate with us.

Speaker, lots of great things are happening in Hamilton this summer:

- Dundas Live and Local on June 6;
- Ancaster Heritage Days, June 13;
- FrancoFEST, du 19 au 21 juin;
- Beer fest, which you can't miss, July 10 and 11;
- Route 905 Country Festival, July 24 and 25; and
- the infamous Festival of Friends, celebrating over 50 years of providing great music in Hamilton.

Come on, visit us in the Hammer and see why Hamilton is the best city in Ontario.

SENIORS MONTH

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I rise to recognize June as Seniors Month in Ontario and to celebrate the remarkable contributions of seniors in Don Valley North and across our province. Last Friday, May 29, I was pleased to host our first annual seniors' tea at Pleasantview Community

Centre, which welcomed approximately 300 seniors. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who made the time and effort to join us and to all our incredible volunteers and community partners who helped make the tea a resounding success.

The tremendous turnout exceeded expectations and reflected something deeply encouraging: Our seniors are vibrant, engaged and eager to connect. Events like these are more than just gatherings, Speaker. They are strengthening belonging, wellness and community. The demand we saw reflects not only the growth of our senior population but also the vitality and enthusiasm that seniors continue to bring to Don Valley North and the need for government to do more for seniors.

Let us thank our seniors for their wisdom, leadership and service, and let this Seniors Month be more than a celebration. It should be a renewed commitment to honour the seniors who built our communities by ensuring they can age with dignity, respect, opportunity and the supports they have earned through a lifetime of hard work.

To every senior in Ontario, know that you are valued, you are respected and you are appreciated. Happy Seniors Month.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Protecting our farmland is incredibly important to my community. Through Protecting Ontario's Food Independence Act, our government is proposing to stop or limit foreign ownership of Ontario farmland. Our farmland should be used to produce world-class food, not just be an asset for a foreign company.

Something else that is a priority for the people in my community is pushing back against the rapid increase in illegal truck parking lots. Through the Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act, our government has been delivering additional tools to municipalities to go after these rule breakers.

This government was elected on a mandate to protect Ontario from the hostile actions of an erratic President south of the border. The way we do that is by building roads, long-term-care homes and schools, all of which is happening in my riding. We protect Ontario by stopping the illegal use of illegal drugs in our communities. We protect Ontario by going after carjacking and retail theft. We protect Ontario by building nuclear energy, pipelines and mines.

Speaker, the way we protect Ontario is by unleashing the incredible and unmatched economic potential of this province and its people. By God's grace, I am privileged to be able to play a role in this important project.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION SESSION LÉGISLATIVE

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: As we conclude the spring session at Queen's Park, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the important work undertaken over the past weeks. This has been a productive session for Ontario,

highlighted by a budget that delivers real, tangible measures to support families, workers and communities across the province.

I'm particularly pleased to see positive steps on housing affordability, including the expansion of the HST rebate for new housing. These measures will make home ownership more accessible and support continued housing development at a time when it is urgently needed.

Le budget de l'Ontario comprend également d'importants investissements dans les infrastructures, les soins de santé et la croissance économique, contribuant à faire en sorte que les communautés comme Glengarry–Prescott–Russell continuent de bénéficier d'une économie provinciale forte et durable.

Alors que l'Assemblée législative s'ajourne pour l'été, la période estivale offre une excellente occasion de renouer avec les citoyens, les entreprises locales, les municipalités et les organismes communautaires. Ces échanges sont essentiels pour bien comprendre les priorités locales et veiller à ce qu'elles soient représentées ici à Queen's Park.

I look forward to attending local events, community celebrations and announcements throughout Glengarry–Prescott–Russell in the weeks ahead. Our region is strong, active and full of dedicated people, and it's always a privilege to be present in the community. Even while the Legislature is adjourned, the work continues in our community every day, and I remain committed to serving the people of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

SENIORS MONTH

BRAIN INJURY AND ALS AWARENESS MONTH

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I rise today to recognize a jam-packed June, a time when we commemorate Seniors Month, Brain Injury Awareness Month and ALS Awareness Month in Ontario. These observances remind us of not only of the challenges many people and families face, but also the strength, the resilience and the contributions of older adults in our communities.

As the MPP for St. Catharines, the riding with one of the largest senior populations in the province, I see every day the importance of ensuring that older adults can age with dignity, independence and the support they deserve.

Brain injuries, ALS, Alzheimer's disease and other age-related health challenges have profound impacts on individuals and their loved ones. That is why I want to recognize a few of the incredible organizations working tirelessly across Niagara to support residents—groups such as the Brain Injury Association of Niagara, ALS Canada, Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region, Age-Friendly Niagara, our local older adult centre, Happy in my Home Community Support Services of Niagara and many, many others that provide essential services, advocacy, education, respite and compassion to those who need it the most. Their work helps people remain connected, supported and empowered, while giving families the resources they need to navigate difficult situations.

This month, I encourage all members of this House to join me in thanking the staff, volunteers, caregivers and advocates who dedicate themselves to improving the lives of others—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Simcoe–Grey.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Brian Saunderson: It's a privilege to rise in the House this morning to speak about some very exciting health care news for the residents of Simcoe–Grey. This past March 9, the Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston broke ground on a critical and long-awaited redevelopment supported by a provincial investment of more than \$174 million, to make it one of the 17 capital builds under way across this great province.

It was an honour to welcome Premier Ford and Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Sylvia Jones to Simcoe–Grey to mark this important milestone. This redevelopment will build a state-of-the-art facility that is twice the size of the existing hospital, expand in-patient capacity and surgical services and deliver a new emergency department that would triple its current size to meet the health care needs for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, moments like this only happen when people work together over many years with a shared vision for their community, and I want to recognize the dedication of the current and past hospital leadership, physicians and staff, volunteers, foundation supporters and the many donors and community members who made this happen.

While we celebrate this important milestone for Stevenson Memorial Hospital, I know the residents of South Georgian Bay are anxiously watching the progress of the redevelopment of the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital, the other community hospital in my riding. That redevelopment journey began over 10 years ago, and I'm very proud to say that our government has committed over \$110 million in planning grants and approved the move to a new 32-acre brownfield site generously donated by Mr. John Di Poce and his family in support of this important project.

The work continues, Madam Speaker, so stay tuned.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: As you are well aware, the world is getting hotter and it's getting hotter faster, and this government is regularly contributing to that heating.

In 2003, in the provincial election, all parties pledged to shut down coal-fired electricity to fight local air pollution and climate change. That was done, completed by 2016. But since 2018, the government has been ramping up gas-fired generation and has wiped out two thirds of that pollution cut.

1030

A hotter world means higher food prices, higher insurance costs, more illness and greater risk of wildfires in our

forests and our city. The Premier been fundamentally irresponsible, and we will all pay for it.

OWEN SOUND SALMON SPECTACULAR

MPP Paul Vickers: Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of the great traditions in my riding, the annual Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular. Each year, this incredible event brings together anglers, families, volunteers, local businesses and visitors from across Ontario to celebrate our region's proud fishing heritage and the natural beauty of the Georgian Bay shoreline.

The salmon spectacular is about far more than fishing. It's a great example of community spirit. It supports local tourism, showcases our small businesses and brings in close to \$3 million that is reinvested back into our community. It's a testament to what can be accomplished when volunteers come together with passion and dedication.

I also want to recognize the support shown by members of the House, including the minister of MNR, Mr. Harris, who joined us last year and even managed to catch a fish of his own. His visit highlighted the significance of this event not only to our local community but to Ontario as a whole.

I want to thank the organizers, the volunteers, the sponsors and the participants, whose hard work makes the salmon spectacular such a tremendous success year after year.

Speaker, I invite you and all the members of this House to experience this outstanding Ontario tradition this year, from August 21 to September 6, and to see first-hand the pride, hospitality and community spirit.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members, joining us in the Speaker's gallery this morning we have the former member for Kitchener–Conestoga in the 40th and 41st Parliaments, Michael Harris.

Also in the Speaker's gallery is a person who we describe as the hardest-working artist in the city of Hamilton. Tom Wilson is a Juno Award-winning musician. He is an author, a playwright, an artist. He is an Order of Canada recipient. He's a very long-, long-, long-time friend of mine, but most importantly, he is the grandfather to page Levon Dore.

Welcome, Tom and Madeline.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I would like to welcome my son, Robert Murphy, to the chamber today—the very first time.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I would like to welcome Dr. Ajay Mishra and the delegation from India visiting here, together with the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce, Prashant Srivastava and the Indo-American business chamber, here to have business-to-business meetings, increasing trade with India, US and Canada.

Welcome to your House.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Speaker, if you will indulge me, I have several introductions, including intro-

ducing Ruben Le Pichon, who is the page from Toronto Centre. He was also our page captain last week. His mother, Lisette Kozikila, and his father, Sylvain Le Pichon, as well as his siblings, Elias and Jonah, were here. Thank you so much.

We have also today University–Rosedale page captain, Finn Mowder. His mom, Noreen Flaherty; father, Jeff Mowder; his aunt, Ginette Harquail; and Maureen Harquail, his cousin, are all here today.

And then finally, Speaker—the very last one, I promise—I want to say a big thank you to my high school placement student. They come from Etobicoke and they attend the school Father John Redmond Catholic Secondary School. Give it up for Artemis Dalakouras.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I am happy to welcome Rumjhum Gupta. She’s a global sustainability expert and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a certified chief sustainability officer. She’s a co-founder of UHealT Solutions, which is a Canadian health e-education start-up. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Today, on the second official anniversary of Injured Workers’ Day, we’re honoured to be joined by representatives of the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Ontario Compensation Employees’ Union, CUPE, the Ontario workers’ compensation legal clinic, and other unions and injured worker support groups. We will always stand with you in the fight for justice and dignity for all workers.

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I’d like to welcome the grandparents of page captain Norah Quinn, Frank and Karen Quinn—also my parents. Welcome to the House today.

Hon. Graydon Smith: I want to welcome representatives of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, here today advocating for the unique needs of northern Ontario, and especially Mayor Lynda Carleton from Machar township in my riding.

Mr. Matthew Rae: On behalf of the Minister of Education, I’d like to introduce Nadia and Stefan Lewkowicz, the parents of Justine, who works in his office. It’s great to see you here today.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I’d like to supplement the introduction of the member for Toronto Centre: page Finn Flaherty Mowder, one of our four captains today, along with his family members Noreen Flaherty, Jeff Mowder, Ginette Harquail and Maureen Harquail, are members of the extended family of the late Honourable Jim Flaherty.

Mr. Guy Bourgoin: We are joined today by land defenders who are standing up for their treaty rights for First Nations in Treaty 9 territory. Welcome to Jeronimo Kataquapit, founder of the Here We Stand movement; Ramon Kataquapit, founder of the Okiniwak youth-led movement; and Kerrie Blaise, founder of Legal Advocates for Nature’s Defence.

Also, I acknowledge John Cutfeet, who is here in the Indigenous language interpretation booth to translate from Anishiniimowin to English. Meegwetch to all of you for being here today.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I’m glad to welcome, from the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, Maggie

Horsfield, first VP; Lynn Watson, mayor of Echo Bay and second VP; and Danny Whalen, deputy mayor of Temiskaming Shores and past president.

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I’d like to introduce for her first visit Colleen Van Brugge, who is an intern in my Woodstock office for the summer. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Ms. Jess Dixon: In addition to welcoming former member Michael Harris, I’m also delighted to welcome his son, our page Lincoln Harris, as well as his mom, Sarah Harris; his brother Murphy Harris, joining us again from being a page before; his sister Rosy Harris; and friends Nolan Knaap, Nate Briscoe and Avneet Verma. Thank you so much for coming.

Hon. Zee Hamid: I’d like to introduce to you my remarkable constit office staff from Milton: Maya Pervaiz, Linda Al-Kishawi and Lisa Fernandes. Welcome.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Welcome to Abbott Diabetes Care Canada.

Mr. Jeff Burch: I’d like to welcome the Gervais family. I look forward to lunch with page Ian and his family.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I’m going to add an extra minute just because we’ve got a lot of introductions.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I want to introduce Alexandra Milner, Lana Barkan and Katharine Chabot. Welcome.

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: I’d like to welcome my constit staff, Sandi, Karen and Ashton, as well my three summer interns, Emily, Jackson and Miguel.

Ms. Laura Smith: I’d like to introduce and welcome Alan Simpson to the House.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I want to welcome to the House this morning three interns from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks: Simon Da Silva, Thomas Zuber and Amelia Markson.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I’d like to welcome marvellous McKenna Lumley, a dynamic young woman who is shadowing me today, and sensational Siobhan O’Flynn, one of U of T’s best professors. Welcome to your House.

Hon. George Pirie: Members, I would like to welcome Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities president David Ploudre, mayor of Kapuskasing; past president Danny Whalen of Temiskaming Shores; and Timmins councillor Lorne Feldman. Welcome.

Hon. Doug Downey: I would like to welcome Peter Wardle, the president of the Law Society of Ontario, accompanied by Taryn Bratz of my office.

Hon. David Piccini: I’d like to give a warm welcome to Martin Sonne and Justin de Groot, who are here visiting Queen’s Park today. I’d also like to welcome interns with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development: Julie, Madi, Nicholas and Andrea, welcome to your House. Thank you—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Okay, we are out of time. A reminder and an apology to our guests if you haven’t been mentioned—I try to stick to a hard and fast

rule, but there is a time to introduce guests again at 1 o'clock this afternoon.

1040

This morning, in the members' gallery, we are joined by Joanna Majoko, a vocalist, composer and bandleader from the riding of University–Rosedale, who will perform O Canada and God Save the King. Please stand and join her in the singing of our national and royal anthems.

Singing of the national anthem / Chant de l'hymne national.

Singing of the royal anthem / Chant de l'hymne royal.

REMARKABLE WOMEN AT QUEEN'S PARK

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Colleagues, the Remarkable Women in the Workplace initiative is a monthly recognition program celebrating the outstanding women who work for the Office of the Assembly. This initiative is a small but meaningful way to recognize individuals who exemplify dedication, professionalism and leadership in their roles, and who contribute daily to the work of the Legislature.

Today, I'm pleased to announce our newest honouree: Cavelle Barnes, training and development specialist with the human resources branch. Ms. Barnes's creativity, leadership and commitment to professional development have transformed training and onboarding across the assembly. Through the implementation of the assembly's learning management system and mentorship initiatives, she has created meaningful opportunities for staff growth, collaboration and connection. Her innovative approach, professionalism and dedication to supporting colleagues exemplify the assembly's values and make her highly deserving of this recognition.

On behalf of all members and staff, I extend our heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to Cavelle. Thank you for your remarkable service to Ontario's Parliament.

Applause.

DEBORAH TENG
SANDRA CRAIG

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Colleagues, I am pleased to draw your attention to the Speaker's gallery to recognize two valued employees of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario who are retiring after many years of dedicated service: Deborah Teng, senior systems analyst and developer from the information services branch; and Sandra Craig, supervisor for metadata services from the legislative library branch.

Deborah retired on May 22, following 24 years of service. Throughout her career, she made significant contributions through her expertise, dedication and deep institutional knowledge, strengthening key systems that continue to serve members and staff right across the assembly. She was widely respected for her professionalism, her reliability and her collaborative spirit.

Sandra will retire June 19, following an exceptional 40-year career. She played a key role in preserving and improving access to legislative and government information through her work with the legislative library and metadata services. She is equally recognized for her leadership, knowledge, professionalism and commitment to public service.

On behalf of all members and staff of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Deborah and Sandra for their many, many years of service and wish them every happiness in retirement.

Please join me in congratulating them and wishing them all the very best.

Applause.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I believe we have a number of people who are going to rise on a point of order.

I recognize the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm seeking unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), two minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to speak on the ministerial statement on Seniors Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): MPP Schreiner is seeking unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), two minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to speak on the ministerial statement on Seniors Month. Agreed? Agreed.

LOCAL FOOD WEEK

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

Hon. Trevor Jones: Good morning, colleagues. Today marks the beginning of Local Food Week. To help celebrate, my team at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, also known as "farming, food and fun," have assembled some nutritious treats and promotional Foodland materials for everyone to enjoy. So please pick up your packages—customized—in the east and west lobbies, directly after question period.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent of the House for the member for Kiiwetinoong to make a five-minute statement about Indigenous history month.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane is seeking unanimous consent of the House for the member for Kiiwetinoong to give a five-

minute statement about Indigenous history month. Agreed?
Agreed.

1050

I recognize the member for Kiiwetinoong.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: *Remarks in Anishiniimowin. This report will be republished to add the transcribed remarks once available.*

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Before I start, Speaker, I just want to thank the member from Kiiwetinoong for that extraordinary statement in Anishiniimowin and for giving us an opportunity to all reflect, to honour and to recognize the contributions of Indigenous people of today and always.

Speaker, this is a question to the Premier. After spending millions of tax dollars on “Protect Ontario” ads and selling himself as Captain Canada, it turns out the only thing the Premier is protecting is the bottom line for American financial interests. Last week, the Toronto Star exposed that his latest vanity project of landing luxury jets on Toronto’s waterfront is actually being driven, yes, by American companies including JPMorgan Chase. Yes, Speaker, Captain Canada is selling our province’s assets to the highest American bidder.

I want to ask the Premier: Has this been a scheme to enrich American bankers all along?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: The ridiculousness of that question—Premier Ford has been at the forefront of fighting for Canadian interests, Ontario interests, whether it’s the auto sector or whether it’s building transformational projects like the Billy Bishop airport.

Leaders across this country are talking about nation-building projects. How do we make ourselves more competitive in the face of US tariffs and the challenges that we have, that we are being faced with because of those challenging circumstances? We are putting forward projects like the Billy Bishop airport that are going to transform the way we compete against the world.

Look at any jurisdiction, Madam Speaker, whether it’s New York, it’s Houston, other jurisdictions across North America. Toronto is one of the largest financial capital centres in the entire world. Billy Bishop will help support that and continue to improve our competitiveness across the world.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, this is shameful, really. It is a massive betrayal of the people’s trust. On camera, sure, the Premier wears his “Canada is not for sale” hat, right? But behind closed doors, he’s busy selling out our province to American investment bankers. That’s the truth.

In fact, it turns out that absolutely everything is up for sale under this Premier. He is supposed to be running our province, but he can’t help himself when the billionaires come a-knocking.

So I want the Premier to stand up and admit he has betrayed the people of Ontario.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Madam Speaker, what is shameful is the NDP’s record on Canadian jobs. When you look at a project like the Ontario Line—a project that they have voted against—4,300 jobs were supported by that project. When you look at a project like

Highway 413, over 3,000 jobs supported by that project, which the members opposite refused to support. When you look at the Scarborough subway extension, 3,000 jobs supported by that subway extension; the members opposite opposed that.

Now, Billy Bishop: 4,000 people rely on Billy Bishop for a paycheque. If it was up to the opposition, they would shut it down and turn it into a park. That's why they will never be government, Madam Speaker. We got elected on a mandate to build this province for the future, a mandate to make Ontario more competitive against the world. And that is exactly what we are delivering on: more jobs, better opportunity for Ontarians and making sure that we're more resilient as a province.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: This government, this Premier, changed the laws of the province of Ontario so that a big American corporation could make more billions. That's the truth of it.

Nobody here in Ontario—nobody—asked for these changes to that airport. It was closed-door meetings with big American corporations, big American bankers, that influenced this government's decision. He is just interested, always, in helping American billionaires land private luxury jets in Toronto's downtown, and I bet you that Ross Perot Jr. is at the top of the list; no surprise there.

Speaker, who is the Premier of this province working for? Is it the people of Ontario, or is it the billionaire bankers of America?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: The Premier is working for the people every single day, despite the opposition, whether it's making sure that we put forward programs, like One Fare, which is going to save commuters over \$1,600 every single year; whether it's making sure that we reduce gas tax by over 10 cents; or whether it's about making sure that we take licence plate sticker fees off vehicles forever. Those are the types of results that we are delivering for the people of this province, Madam Speaker, and making sure that we are creating the conditions with thousands of new jobs and thousands of companies to invest in Ontario.

Billy Bishop is a key part of that, something that is going to be financed by the private sector, because we have created the conditions to support investment and growth. It is the vision that the Premier and our government have put forward to ensure that we remain more competitive. Billy Bishop supports over 4,900 people—paycheques for 4,900 people—every single day. We're going to continue to make sure it's a world-class transportation asset.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Marit Stiles: Back to the Premier: I'll tell you, the people of Ontario are not buying this, because they are paying more for absolutely everything under this government's watch, including health care.

Private, for-profit clinics taken in under this Premier, they are raking it in. The people are paying more for

surgeries through their tax dollars. More money is going into those private clinics than is going into our public hospitals. These clinics are then turning around and they are upselling patients every single day, and if you can pay more, you're going to get treated faster.

1100

Public health care is the cornerstone of our Canadian identity. Why is the Premier privatizing health care in the province of Ontario?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Only the NDP would think that a \$1.1-billion increase annually for the last four years to our publicly funded hospitals is in any way anything other than an investment that Premier Ford has made and our government has made since we took government.

Philosophically, the NDP are opposed to any type of innovation—even innovation, Speaker, that means people could have access in their communities, that people could have a choice so that they can make that decision: whether their local community hospital is best able to provide their diagnostic imaging or, in fact, a community centre that could be closer to where they live and work.

We have done this in Ontario for decades. We'll continue to make sure that through your OHIP card, you will get access. But we absolutely will drive forward to make sure that people can get access—

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, the truth is that under this Minister of Health and that Premier, Ontario is creating two classes of patients: those who can pay and those who cannot.

They are Americanizing our health care system, 100%. Instead of showing your OHIP card, yes, indeed, you have to bring your credit card now with you when you show up for care. Eighty-dollar fees for one-off visits, \$400 membership fees—can you believe that? I mean, I have got to tell you: a membership fee for health care in Ontario—is this Planet Fitness or is this our hospital system, right?

They are turning our health care system into a members-only club, and the American, for-profit health care corporations are making billions off it already. So when people cannot even afford groceries, I would like the Premier to explain why he is charging them for health care that they have already paid for.

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I think it would be helpful to get some facts on the table. The facts are that since Premier Ford took government, we have actually expanded by 50 MRIs across Ontario, in Ontario hospitals, many of those in communities that have never had an MRI before. What does that mean? It means that we have more access. It means that patients are not having to move from hospital to hospital to get those MRIs and critical diagnostic surgeries. It means that treatment can come faster.

In fact, with radiation therapy, Ontario has the shortest wait time nationally. With MRI and CT, in 2025, Ontario performed 2.9 million MRIs and CT scans, the most ever and a 7% increase. That's what a publicly funded system

gets you in the province of Ontario: world-class conditions, world-class capital, world-class staff who are doing this important work.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: The Minister of Health needs to get out there and listen to regular people, okay?

The people in their hospitals are fundraising to buy those MRIs. I don't know what planet she's on. This is a government that claims to be investing in health care but is only investing in health care for those who can afford it, and that is the truth.

We are seeing it everywhere: upselling, the Americanization of our health care system, the pay-to-play schemes. They are leaving everyday people behind and meanwhile, we have a Premier who always ensures that his wealthy insider friends get the care when they need it while nobody else gets the care when they need it, like the rest of us.

Will the Premier crack down on these pay-to-play clinics and ensure that all patients get the care they need when and where they need it?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I will never downgrade the important work that our donors do across Ontario. Absolutely, they are the foundation of these new MRIs. But, of course, there are annual operating dollars that come from the Ministry of Health.

I'm going to tell the member opposite a story, because when I made an announcement about a new MRI in a hospital that never had one before, the emergency room physician pulled me aside and said, "Sylvia, I need you to know what this means. This means I'm not going to spend hours trying to find an MRI for my patient. Sylvia, I'm not going to then have to spend hours trying to find a paramedic and an ambulance that is available at that particular time to transport that patient. It means that that patient's family is not stressing about where that patient is going to be." Those are the real-world impacts when we invest in diagnostic, in people, in hospitals.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: Isn't it funny how things always happen in threes? This session, we've had airplanes, airports and now we have the air rights scandal. Finally, the Premier's getting straight As—in scandal, waste and mismanagement.

How is it that the Premier's close friend and associate Carmine Nigro can sue the government for \$500 million—that's right, \$500 million—and then the taxpayers are on the hook for a secret settlement? Speaker, will the Premier release the amount of money that Carmine Nigro's company was paid in this air rights scandal?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: As that member knows and as I've answered many times before, we don't get involved in that process, nor do I, nor does the Premier. Metrolinx has a legal process that they independently run.

But what I can talk about is our historic transportation expansion plan, Madam Speaker. We haven't seen anything like this, not just in the province of Ontario and all of Canada, but all of North America. We've got shovels in the ground on projects like the Yonge North subway extension, the Scarborough subway extension—a place that the previous Liberal government abandoned for 15 years. They robbed the people of Scarborough of rapid transit, refused to build in that part of the city because they forgot about it. That's why, when we were elected, one of the first projects we moved forward on was the Scarborough subway extension. Over 100,000 people will move on that line every single day once it is open. We're going to continue to deliver on our mandate to build public transit.

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

Mr. John Fraser: All the money that Metrolinx comes has come from the taxpayer, either through taxes or through their transit fares. The minister knows the number and he's not saying.

The Premier treats taxpayers' money as if it was his personal piggy bank—a piggy bank that he uses to buy ultra-rich friends. While most Ontarians are struggling to pay for groceries, for gas, the rent, kids' clothes, the Premier is doling out millions to his friends. I just double-checked—he is a billionaire, right?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Yes.

Mr. John Fraser: Okay, we've got that. So how is it that the Premier can allow for a secret payout to his close, personal friend Carmine Nigro's company? How does he justify doing that?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Once again, Madam Speaker, the Premier nor anyone in this government has any involvement in that process. But what is a shame is the record of 15 years the previous Liberal government had to build anything in this province. They did absolutely nothing.

Interjection.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: As my colleague just pointed out, their record was upside-down bridges.

We're moving forward on historic investments like the Bradford Bypass, the 413—projects that they have opposed. We're moving forward on the Hurontario LRT that is going to run through Mississauga and Brampton, the Hamilton LRT that is going to bring so many people and connect so many people from work to transit to housing, Madam Speaker. Our plan continues to build on the progress that we've made since we were elected in 2018: \$70 billion of investment into public transit, something that the previous Liberal government, in 15 years, did absolutely nothing to improve.

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

Mr. John Fraser: Metrolinx has more VPs than we have members in this House. They're like a shadow government, okay?

We know that Carmine Nigro's company turned down \$78 million. He turned it down—\$78 million for some-

thing that he didn't actually ever own and couldn't build on; \$78 million for air that you couldn't build on because there's nothing to anchor it to on either side. But he got money anyway—\$78 million—and he wanted more. He probably got more but we'll never, ever know, not with this minister and not with this Premier. It really pays to have a Premier who really wants you to be his friend.

1110

So I'll ask the minister one more time: Will the Premier release the amount of money paid to Carmine Nigro's company today?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Madam Speaker, the member can ask that question a thousand more times, the answer will be the exact same. We do not get involved in that process—not the Premier, not anyone in this government.

What we can talk about is what we're doing to continue to build transit and make it more affordable. That is why we put forward the One Fare program, a program that saves transit users \$1,600 every single year.

I can remind this House that, when that program was put forward, the Liberals and the NDP voted against that—a program that is going to support thousands of people as they get to work, get their kids to work; as they continue to move around the city, doing what they love to do. Someone coming in from Mississauga, going on the GO Transit, taking the TTC, does not have to pay two fares anymore.

Those are the transformational changes we are making to transit across this province to make it more affordable, to ensure that more people can take public transit. Those are the investments we'll keep making, and we'll continue to expand upon our plan to build transit—

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

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: This all just stinks. It smells like a rotting fish, and like I said last week, we can smell it here; maybe you guys have been sitting in it too long over there.

Let's go over Mr. Nigro's qualifications: He's a billionaire. He's the chair of the LCBO. He was the Premier's appointee as chair of Ontario Place. He was appointed to the board of Invest Ontario. He's a big fundraiser for the Premier and the PC Party. And you know what? He sat at the family table at the family wedding. So these are all the qualifications, Ontario, you need to get a secret payout from this Premier.

So, Speaker, how does the Premier justify giving out millions of dollars, doling it out to his friend, while families in Ontario are just struggling to pay the bills, to buy groceries, to pay their rent?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Madam Speaker, the Premier nor anyone in this government gets involved in that process. That member knows it, and the answer won't change, because we don't get involved in those processes.

The member is not familiar with the expropriation process because, once again, for 15 years, they built absolutely nothing. Whether it's Scarborough, whether it's places like Brampton, Mississauga, Durham region, they have nothing to show for 15 years in government. All they can show is 300,000 jobs leaving this province because of their disastrous policies that drove away thousands of jobs and opportunities from this province.

We have been focused on making Ontario more competitive. We have been focused on building this province, whether it's the 413, the Bradford Bypass or our subway lines, the Ontario Line, a project that will move 400,000 people every single day.

Madam Speaker, we're going to continue to deliver on our third historic majority mandate, and that is to build Ontario.

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

Mr. John Fraser: Last time I checked, I don't think we've ever expropriated something from somebody who doesn't own it. Come one, guys. He didn't own it. He hadn't closed a deal. And he turned down \$78 million. I don't know how you justify it over there.

As I said earlier, the Premier has got straight As in scandal, waste and mismanagement, and today he got a D minus in poverty from Canada's food banks. One in four Ontarians who use a food bank have a full-time job, yet the Premier has millions of dollars for his close, personal, ultra-rich friend. The people who need to use food banks who have full-time jobs have almost doubled since this Premier has come to office.

This Premier has lost his way. He doesn't know where he is. He is allowing families to struggle, and he's hiding a secret payout to his close, personal friend. How can he justify that?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Madam Speaker, this coming from a party that, over 15 years, imposed carbon taxes, cap-and-trade policies, that made food more expensive for people across this province, that employed the highest energy prices that residents across this province saw, policies that drove out over 300,000 manufacturing jobs and a party that saw absolutely nothing built in Ontario. From highways to transit, they neglected their duty to build for this province.

That is why, for a third time, this government and this Premier was elected on a majority mandate to continue building on our progress. What is that progress? Getting shovels in the ground on the Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass; getting shovels in the ground on the Ontario Line, the Scarborough subway extension, the Eglinton West extension; and getting lines like the Finch West and the Crosstown open so millions of people can use them every single year.

We're going to continue to focus on building this province, and we're continuing to make it more competitive.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

MPP Lisa Gretzky: To the Premier: Locked-out workers at Titan Tool and Die in Windsor saw their good-

paying manufacturing jobs disappear to the US while the Premier cosplays as a realtor for the American elite with Toronto's waterfront. Families in Windsor-Essex are losing their jobs, young people can't find work, and more workers are relying on food banks. Yet, the Premier is focused on billionaire insiders, American developers and bankers and giving away Toronto's waterfront. Every lost factory job is met with another backroom deal to benefit the Premier's wealthy, well-connected friends.

Can the Premier explain why he is more interested in giving away Ontario to wealthy foreign insiders than he is in fighting for Ontario workers and their jobs?

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

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, we've spoken with workers at Titan Tool and Die and we hope to reach a deal that can support a closure agreement, because those workers deserve that and we understand.

The majority of deals in this province are landed at the table.

We support workers through training. We support injured workers. And we are working to expand supports for workers in every corner of this province.

But what is best for workers is when our economy thrives. That's why we're making record investments into public transit. That's why we've created the conditions for economic growth that are seeing a complete resurgence of the energy sector in this province—so much more in public transit, hospitals, roads and bridges. When we build these things, workers benefit, and we'll work hard each and every day to make sure they're supported.

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

MPP Lisa Gretzky: To the minister: You should have been there before all the equipment was taken out of that plant.

The Premier's legacy is scandals, strip clubs, luxury spas, his own private jet, and an RCMP criminal investigation hanging over his Conservative government.

While the Premier is focused on fantasy islands and multi-billion-dollar Toronto waterfront schemes, workers in Windsor, Amherstburg and across Essex county are watching their jobs disappear to the US.

Workers at Diageo gave decades to that company, and the Premier didn't fight for their jobs or their pensions. He wouldn't even meet with them.

When will the Premier stop acting like a full-time luxury real estate broker for American developers, luxury spa owners and billionaire insiders, and focus on fighting for our workers and their jobs?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, the Premier does fight for our workers and their jobs.

If those members had it—they would be clinging to a tree instead of building the Ontario Line.

We're building the Ontario Line, which is putting single parents to work each and every day, taking 400,000 workers to a job faster.

They have no plan.

You build a school; you might have to build a new road, God forbid.

That's what they would do—they would stop everything. That's why we built nothing when they held the balance of power.

Speaker, critical minerals, mining in the north—no. They'd rather we be dependent on dictators on the other side of the world.

This Premier recognizes that when our economy flourishes, so too do the lives of workers, who collect a bigger paycheque each and every time they go to work. That's why we're working with Indigenous partners in the north to unlock the Ring of Fire. That's why we're working with unionized workers in our world-class energy sector to build new nuclear, instead of giving them pink slips, which is what they would have done, shuttering the entire nuclear sector.

We'll take no lessons from that member on workers.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Mr. Stephen Blais: My question is for the Premier.

Madam Speaker, what do these three things have in common: the Premier's luxury private jet, the secret Metrolinx air rights deal and the government's attempt to hide records from freedom-of-information requests? Well, I'll tell you. In every case, the public is being told to stop asking questions. So my question is, what exactly is this government so afraid Ontarians will discover?

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

Hon. Stephen Crawford: We brought changes to Ontario's privacy and access-to-information laws to bring them in line with jurisdictions across Canada. We've talked about that here for quite a few months in the Legislature. But what I'm hearing people want to talk about, Speaker, is about building an economy that works for generations to come. That's what we are squarely focused on. We're focused on bringing jobs to the province of Ontario. We're focused on bringing investment to the province of Ontario, and we are seeing that in multiple sectors.

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While the opposition talks down our great province, we're talking it up. We're out there meeting people, meeting companies, talking about the investments, talking to different industries, Speaker, and we're seeing record investments. In fact, since 2018, \$222 billion in the private sector has been invested in this province to keep Ontario strong and keep growing. We're proud of that record, Speaker.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: Back to the Premier: Taxpayers paid for the jet. Taxpayers paid for the Carmine Nigro settlement. Taxpayers paid for this government's record debt. Madam Speaker, why does the Premier think taxpayers deserve the bill but not the information?

Hon. Stephen Crawford: Again, Speaker, I want to reiterate what Ontarians are focused on. They want to

ensure, in the threat of tariffs—we've got CUSMA coming up for negotiation on July 1. People are worried. They're worried about their jobs. They're worried about the economy. We understand that.

That's why we're focused on building these strong tenets to our economy, Speaker. We're doing it in the energy sector, with the Minister of Energy, with the largest nuclear build in the province's history, the first small modular reactor in the G7. We're proud of that, and we thank Minister Lecce and his team for putting this at the forefront of the people of Ontario.

Secondly, we're building a resilient tech sector. We know AI is changing the world. We are the second-largest tech cluster in North America, Speaker. We're seeing record investments into this space in the province. We're proud of that.

Third, Speaker, we're seeing record investments in manufacturing. In fact, in the month of April, 8,200 manufacturing jobs were created in the province of Ontario, 44,000 in aggregate. While Canada lost jobs, Ontario's growing.

We're going to continue focusing on what the people care about, and that's creating a healthy economy and getting jobs for the people.

MINING INDUSTRY

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Deepak Anand: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Mines. As we all know, under the Liberals, Ontario was lagging in the world when it came to opening mines. It was this Premier, this government who relentlessly pursued changes and took action to get it done.

We reduced red tape, reduced permitting timelines by half, announced a plan to build the roads to the Ring of Fire starting this month of June. We are building new transmission to the mines in Red Lake, Greenstone, from Sudbury to Sault Ste. Marie, creating thousands of jobs along the way. This is the plan that is working for the people of Ontario.

Speaker, could the minister outline for the people of Ontario, business leaders from Indo-American business chamber and other job creators, where we stand today and the direction in which we are headed to ensure Ontario is not just the number one destination for mining in Canada but number one in the world.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Scarborough Centre.

Mr. David Smith: I thank the member from Mississauga–Malton for the question. I'm happy to break down our plan of growth. Our plan is to cut permit timelines in half.

Ontario emerged as the number one jurisdiction in Canada and number two in the world for mining investment. While that is a tremendous achievement, we are not stopping there. Our plan to protect Ontario workers, business and community is delivering results by making our province a more competitive place to invest, create jobs

and build new projects. After years of red tape and delay under the previous Liberal government, we introduced One Project, One Process to speed up the approval while maintaining high standards. We have already fast-tracked three projects that will create 5,000 jobs and add \$75 billion to Canada's economy.

We are also investing the infrastructure to unlock the Ring of Fire years ahead of schedule. Mining projects in this region could add \$22 billion in economic activity and 70,000 jobs—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Mississauga–Malton.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Through you, Madam Speaker, thank you to the parliamentary assistant for that important update.

As we all know, only a decade ago, Liberal policies led to 71% higher energy rates from 2008 to 2016—talk about a decade of darkness. In the words of the former executive director of the Consumer Policy Institute, the Liberals knew that those careless, ideologically driven policies “were going to be costly, ineffective and inefficient.” Clearly, we can't go back.

That is why, under our government, we are leading the world's largest nuclear build, and we are making progress on the first small modular reactor in the G7. We have leaders like Pamela Bielak at Queen's Park from Crafting for a Cure, serving the kids in hospitals and other members of Ontario.

Speaker, can the parliamentary assistant outline the plan to get people working and keep Ontario's energy reliable and affordable as we keep building and expanding Ontario's nuclear advantage?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: The previous Liberal government promised lower costs and a stronger energy future. Instead, they recklessly hiked hydro rates by 400%, making families pay \$9.2 billion in higher electricity bills.

Under Premier Ford, we are building the first SMR in the G7, and we're investing in the world's largest nuclear generation facility at Wesleyville, with over 90% of the large-scale nuclear spend staying here in the province of Ontario. We have partnered with Bruce Power to support Canada's first large-scale nuclear build in more than 30 years, backed by 95% Canadian suppliers. These are generational opportunities, projects that will provide good-paying jobs for local communities and clean, reliable power for decades, reinforcing our position as a global nuclear leader.

Ontario's nuclear sector already supports roughly 80,000 jobs across more than 200 companies, with over 90% of the project spend staying right here in Canada. Together, we're unlocking the critical minerals in the Ring of Fire. This approach is helping secure Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Ottawa Centre.

TENANT PROTECTION

MPP Catherine McKenney: This summer, renters across Ontario will experience heat in their homes that

could reach 30, 35, even 40 degrees. In Ontario, the law says a landlord must heat your home in the winter. But in a deadly heat wave, there is no protection. Every year, people die from extreme heat in their homes. They are often elderly people, people with disabilities, people living alone in hot apartments with nowhere to go.

Last week, I tabled the Hot Days, Cool Homes Act to make cooling an essential service. My question is to the Premier: Will your government support this bill and protect renters from deadly heat?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Graydon Smith: I appreciate the question from the member from Ottawa Centre. I always appreciate the opportunity we have to have conversations about those that require support and help in our province.

When we look at the opportunity to do just that and supportive housing projects that we have, including all those things that make living comfortable—we have a number of projects across Ontario, including in Ottawa, that we're very, very proud of and more projects to come, Madam Speaker, including new housing for projects in Belleville and Dutton; more affordable housing units in Woodstock, as well as operational funding at Dunn House here in Parkdale; support for affordable housing projects in Newmarket, Oakville, Hamilton, Peel region and Guelph.

Speaker, we continue to work on behalf of renters and people throughout Ontario to ensure that they have what they need to have a roof over their head here in our great province.

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

MPP Catherine McKenney: Speaker, this government just had a chance to stand up and say, "Yes, renters deserve to be safe in their own homes," and they didn't. This government has had years of warnings from public health officials, and they have failed.

Heating your home in the winter is protected by law. Dying of heat in your apartment in August—well, apparently, that is your problem.

So I'll ask it plainly: Does this government believe that renters deserve the same protection from deadly summer heat as they get from winter cold? Yes or no?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: We are standing up for renters at every turn, Madam Speaker. Here's the opposition asking us to do things to help renters when they vote against the 45 new full-time members of the Landlord and Tenant Board. We are now up to over 90 full-time members—we started at 40—to make sure that renters have the chance to have their matters heard on a timely basis just like everybody else.

Madam Speaker, we have made so many changes over the last several years to make sure the system is functioning both for renters and for landlords. The opposition has supported absolutely none of it. We welcome any new

ideas, but we know they won't support them even if we do put them forward.

1130

CONDITIONS IN SCARBOROUGH

MPP Andrea Hazell: Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Scarborough is home to stunning parks and vibrant communities, but this government has made it almost impossible for families to enjoy them.

This government's transit failure in Scarborough has turned our roads into parking lots—a nightmare of gridlock where parents lose precious hours with their children—and turned our communities into islands, plagued by horrible connectivity that isolates families and kills opportunities for local businesses. This forces our young people to dig deeper in their pockets just to get to a job interview, a training program or to their schools. They're forced to use an Uber or Lyft to get to their destinations on time.

Through you, Speaker, to the Premier: After eight years of broken promises, what do you say to the thousands of Scarborough commuters who have lost faith in your ability to fix this crisis?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

Mr. Aris Babikian: The people of Scarborough know that, for too long, our community was left behind by the Liberals. For over 15 years, they refused to build, allowing our hospitals and transit to crumble.

I am proud to stand in this House today and say that, under this Premier, Scarborough is no longer to be a forgotten part of the city of Toronto.

We were quick to announce, after 30 years of inaction, that we would finally expand the subway into Scarborough, and tunnelling continues as we speak.

We announced the first-ever medical school in Scarborough, which is opening this year, training doctors from Scarborough, for Scarborough. We are welcoming the first batch of students this fall.

Last but certainly—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Speaker, to the member, he has no recollection of his riding, because his riding is populated with immigrants, who have the highest—the highest—slowdown in ridership in his community.

Let me try again: This is about the daily congestion, the delayed or the overcrowded buses and the impossible connectivity issues that Scarborough residents face every single day. It's about the mother in my riding who told me she has to take two buses, wasting hours of her day, just to get her groceries for her family. It's about the students who told me they have to choose between bus fare and a meal. It's about the workers taking three to four buses to get to their final destinations. You have failed them.

Through you, Speaker, I ask the Premier, will he commit to urgently fixing Scarborough's gridlock?

Mr. Aris Babikian: The opposite member is grand-standing. I think I know my riding better than her after three elections and eight years of service.

In my riding, we are building the Birchmount Hospital, with an over \$1-billion budget allocated. We are building the Bridletowne neighbourhood community centre. We are building a dialysis centre in Scarborough with 50 beds. We built the Northpine diagnostic centre in Scarborough.

I think these projects, under the leadership of Premier Ford, answer the question—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order. Order. The government side will come to order. The opposition side will come to order.

I recognize the member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Aris Babikian: My question is for the Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security.

In the face of growing global economic uncertainty and rapidly changing employer demand, it has never been more important to ensure Ontario students are receiving the relevant education and training they need to succeed in an ever-evolving workforce.

We know that our colleges, universities and Indigenous institutions play a critical role in preparing the next generation of workers.

That is why our government is continuing to make historic investments in post-secondary education, including a recent announcement to expand space in high-demand programs across Ontario.

Speaker, can the minister explain how this targeted investment will help prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow while protecting Ontario's long-term economic competitiveness?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Thank you to the member for that important question and thank you for those amazing answers as well. Our government knows there is one thing our students want—that is, a good-paying, in-demand job after graduation. And our government is proud to be making the investments to ensure our students get the hands-on skills they need to thrive in their future careers.

Just last week, we announced an investment of \$1.7 billion to fund 70,000 more seats in key, economy-driving programs at colleges and universities across the province.

This investment is part of our government's new long-term funding model that will bring \$6.4 billion into the post-secondary sector—the largest investment in the history of both Ontario and Canada.

Since announcing the funding model in February, we funded an additional 30,000 more seats and, last Wednesday, announced a call for proposals to fund 40,000 brand new seats in STEM, health care, teaching and the skilled trades.

This investment means more mechanical engineers for North Bay, more teachers for Windsor, more welders for Ottawa and more nurses for Toronto, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

Mr. Aris Babikian: I thank the minister for his response. It is great to hear about the actions our government is taking to strengthen Ontario's workforce, protect our economy and create new, rewarding opportunities for students across our province.

Speaker, Ontario's colleges, universities and Indigenous institutions are essential to building the skilled workforce of our province which we need to remain competitive.

But we know that if we want Ontario to truly prosper, we must ensure that communities across Ontario have the skilled talents they need to thrive.

Can the minister explain how this investment now in new student seats will build a strong workforce throughout our province?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: We know that protecting Ontario's economy starts with strengthening our communities, and our colleges and universities play a critical role in ensuring every part of Ontario has access to a highly skilled talent pipeline.

That's why our \$1.7-billion investment requires our institutions to work with their local communities, the businesses and students to identify the workforce that their region needs. Once they've done this important work, they will submit a proposal to our government to fund brand new seats to meet that need.

While the NDP and Liberals demand blind investments of taxpayer dollars, it is this government who has ushered in an era of strategic, responsible growth at our colleges and universities that is laser-focused on Ontario's economic prosperity.

Our colleges and universities are the windows into Ontario's future, and with this investment, we're safeguarding that future to ensure that it is one where our communities are prosperous, our industries are thriving and our economy is self-reliant.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm going to go back to the Premier. I hope he will answer this question.

Speaker, what we've learned in the last few days is that there has been a massive betrayal of the people's trust.

The Premier likes to put on his "Canada is not for sale" hat, but then when he's behind closed doors, what he's doing is hatching deals with big American corporations, American billionaires like J.P. Morgan.

1140

We've learned over the last week that that is actually who is behind and who is going to benefit from the expansion of Billy Bishop airport, something that no Ontarian, no Torontonians has asked for ever—and this Premier is selling it off. He has even gone so far as to change the laws

of the province of Ontario so that he could railroad over the people of this province.

I want to know: Will the Premier admit that he has betrayed the people of Ontario?

Hon. Doug Ford: Only the NDP and Liberals would say, “We don’t want any foreign investment. We don’t want you to invest in Ontario.” And by the way, I’ve never talked to J.P. Morgan in my life.

But you know something? I welcome investment from all over the world—over \$222 billion of investment right here in Ontario. I welcome American investment; I welcome Korean investment that I just met with, and German investment. I welcome all the investors, and that’s why there are a million more people working today than there was when they were in power. If you looked at the job numbers, as a whole country—lost jobs, only one place stood out in North America. We led North America with 42,400 jobs in April alone.

Again, in North America—we kick the Americans’ butt by 641% per capita. We’re going to kick their butts next month, next month and next month.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: To the Premier: News flash, 700,000 Ontarians right now cannot find work in this province. We have the highest youth unemployment rate in the country. That is nothing to be proud of.

And guess what? Another news flash: We don’t work for Americans; we work for the people of Ontario. This Premier is going to give away \$5 billion—Ontario taxpayer dollars—to a big American corporation. That’s what this is.

This Premier is off to the States to hobnob again with billionaires like Ross Perot Jr. who are going to benefit from this sale, but yet, what do we get? We get jets over downtown Toronto. We get nothing. The people of Ontario end up having to foot a \$5-billion bill for his latest vanity project. So I would say, who is the Premier working for? Is it for the people of Ontario, or is it for the billionaire bankers of America?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order. I’ll ask the Minister of Colleges and Universities to withdraw.

Minister of Energy.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I have asked the opposition to come to order. I will start warning people.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Madam Speaker, the ultimate abdication of responsibilities is when the Leader of the Opposition mocks the Premier for attracting job-creating investment to the province. That is the core function of the Premier’s job: to get out there and to defend the interests of Ontario, to attract investment, to create jobs. That will be a radical departure from the NDP and the Liberals, who have created barriers to investment.

The Leader of the Opposition, the Liberals seem to be searching for a jobs plan that’s made in Canada. And yet, in all these days of this session, neither of you have uttered the word “nuclear” in this House. We have a 150,000 jobs

plan, an \$800-billion gain to the Canadian economy, and the Liberal party and NDP are missing in action. They don’t have a clue how to create jobs in this sector.

We’ve refurbished Darlington ahead of schedule and under budget. We’re committing to renewing the Pickering asset, which Liberals would have closed, turning their backs on 30,000 jobs. This Premier and this government are creating the conditions for growth and, yes, attracting investments. It’s going to give jobs to our kids for another 80 years.

COST OF LIVING

MPP Tyler Watt: Speaker, through you to the Premier: This session, the Premier has been spending more time managing scandals, crashing out in front of the media and howling at coyotes than actually addressing the cost-of-living crisis that is haunting Ontarians. Let’s recap:

—\$30 million for a luxury private jet toy for the Premier;

—a potential \$500-million settlement over an air rights lawsuit;

—the greenbelt scandal, \$8.3 billion in land for PC insiders;

—a \$500-million taxpayer-funded parking lot next to a private spa;

—hiding the Premier’s cell phone records and changing the law to do so; and

—\$10 million to strip clubs through the Skills Development Fund.

All of this while this government is trying to figure out how to protect this Premier, themselves and PC insiders, while Ontarians are struggling with cost of living.

So, Speaker, through you to the Premier: How can you say that you are fighting for Ontarians when the people cashing in are your friends and Conservative insiders, while people can’t afford to put food on their table?

Hon. Doug Ford: You know, Madam Speaker, I’ve got to teach that rookie a few lessons, first of all, about cutting taxes for people that you don’t believe in.

You voted against the HST. You voted against getting rid of development charges, saving families over \$200,000. They voted against the tax cut that we did—10.7 cents a litre. They voted against the sticker licence renewal that we got rid of, saving over \$1 billion. They voted against getting rid of the tolls that they created on the 412, 418 and 407.

There is no government that has cut \$12 billion off the backs of the people and businesses that create more opportunities, more jobs. We have been tilling the soil. That’s why we’re leading North America in economic development. We are a—

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

MPP Tyler Watt: By the way, Premier, I voted for the HST. It’s amazing to me how we can just say whatever we want here, but I actually can’t call it out—a lie.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Facts matter.

MPP Tyler Watt: Facts matter, Premier.

Speaker, for the past eight years, this government has repeated the same talking points, but the reality facing families tells a completely different story. Every week, I hear from constituents in Nepean who are exhausted by this government's failure to address the cost-of-living crisis.

One constituent wrote to me, saying, "The pressure just to survive is taking a severe toll on our physical and mental well-being. Choosing between paying rent or buying groceries has created constant stress, anxiety, exhaustion and sleepless nights"—something that this Premier clearly doesn't care about because he doesn't actually listen to the people of Ontario anymore. It's all about him. It's all about getting him his jet, his friends money. It's totally out of control.

So, Speaker, through you to the Premier: When Ontarians are struggling to make ends meet, why does this government continue to prioritize the interests of Conservative insiders and the Premier's friends over—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Associate Minister of Small Business.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I want to thank the member opposite for the question.

But let's talk about some numbers that they keep asking for: 600—the number of schools that the Liberals closed when they were in government; 1,600—the number of nurses that they fired when they were in government, including in my hospital; \$620,000—the cost to install a wind turbine at Lisgar GO station in my riding. It's supposed to produce 80% of needed electricity for that, and you know what? Nine per cent is all it did; \$400,000 it cost to take it down.

In contrast, Speaker: 31.25%—the reduction in corporate income taxes for our small business; 375,000—the number of small businesses that will realize those savings; \$222 billion of investment brought into Canada by this Premier and this government—2018, 2022—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question? I recognize the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): When your time is over, your mike is killed, so please.

I recognize the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

FOREST INDUSTRY

MPP Billy Denault: My question is for the Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products.

Ontario's forest sector continues to face enormous pressure from President Trump's unfair duties and tariffs, rising global uncertainty and years of underinvestment from the previous Liberal government. But despite those challenges, we continue to move forward with strategic investments that strengthen competitiveness, modernize operations and support long-term growth across the sector.

Just last week in Sault Ste. Marie, the associate minister announced a major investment to modernize Ontario's Forest Resources Inventory system, a critical tool that

supports sustainable forest management and planning across the province.

Speaker, can the associate minister explain how this investment will strengthen Ontario's forest sector and support forestry workers, businesses and communities like those in the Ottawa Valley and across our province?

1150

Hon. Kevin Holland: Thank you to the member for that question and for all the great work he's doing in his riding to support the forestry sector.

Speaker, our government understands that protecting Ontario's forest sector means investing in modern tools and technology needed to keep the industry competitive for decades to come. That is why we are investing more than \$14 million to modernize Ontario's Forest Resources Inventory system using advanced data collection, digital mapping and cutting-edge information technology. The system manages more than 3,700 terabytes of forestry data—more than what the Hubble Space Telescope has collected—and it plays a critical role in helping forestry operators make faster, smarter and more efficient decisions.

Speaker, this investment will help improve forest planning, support responsible resource management and strengthen the long-term competitiveness of Ontario's forest sector.

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

MPP Billy Denault: Thank you to the associate minister for that response. While the opposition continues to focus on rhetoric, our government continues delivering real investments and a long-term plan to protect and grow Ontario's forest sector.

In April, our government launched Ontario's forestry road map—defend, adapt, grow—a comprehensive strategy focused on protecting jobs, strengthening competitiveness and positioning the sector for long-term success. Since then, we've already seen a series of major announcements and investments across our province that demonstrate this road map is being put into action.

Speaker, can the associate minister provide an update on how Ontario's forestry road map is already supporting the sector and what forestry workers and communities like those in my riding can expect moving forward?

Hon. Kevin Holland: Thanks again to the member for that question.

Speaker, our government launched the forestry road map because we know Ontario's forest sector needs a clear long-term plan to respond to tariffs, defend jobs and adapt the industry for future growth.

Since launching the road map just a few weeks ago, our government has already announced nearly \$30 million in strategic forestry investment across Ontario, including support for Greenwater Technology in Thunder Bay, Georgia-Pacific in Englehart and the Forest Resources Inventory modernization project announced last week in Sault Ste. Marie.

Speaker, these announcements are only the beginning, and I look forward to sharing more about how our govern-

ment will continue to defend, adapt and grow Ontario's forest sector in the weeks and months ahead.

LAND USE PLANNING

MPP Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, Queen Victoria Park has been public land for 140 years. In fact, Niagara Parks says so themselves. In their own annual report published last year, their mandate since 1885 has never changed: Preserve the natural beauty of these lands for the public.

Now, this Premier has directed them to hand that public green space to a private company for a second Ferris wheel through 2080—behind closed doors, no public vote, no consultation, when the people of Niagara don't want it. The Premier directed the board to approve an RFP, and they met behind closed doors—no public vote on record. And when the local paper asked the government who they consulted with, your minister refused to answer. Nobody asked Niagara. You're breaking a 140-year mandate.

Premier, why did you direct Niagara Parks to put in a second Ferris wheel before talking to anyone from Niagara Falls and the province of Ontario?

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

Hon. Stan Cho: Oh, Speaker, just when you think you've heard it all from the NDP—we're making investments in that member's riding, and he doesn't want it? Is that what he's saying this morning? This is a member, Speaker, who, when we're opening a new long-term-care home, he will show up to it. When we're widening the highways in Niagara region, he will go to that. When we're opening a new hospital, thanks to the member from Niagara West, he will show up.

Speaker, that member would show up to a letter opening, but the reality is we are investing in Niagara in a big way, despite that member's best efforts. Who doesn't want to see attractions? Who doesn't want to see amusement parks in a natural wonder of the world? It has taken the leadership of this Premier to say this can be more. We're going to triple the visitation to Niagara, despite that member's best efforts.

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

MPP Tyler Watt: My point of order is that I would like the Premier to correct his incorrect statement about my voting record on the housing—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): That is not a point of order.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Steve Clark: I just want to advise members of the House that the night sitting scheduled for this evening is cancelled.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Orléans has given notice

of dissatisfaction with the answer to the question given by the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery regarding government accountability. This matter will be debated tomorrow following private members' public business.

DAN NEWMAN

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

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: It's with a heavy heart that I rise to acknowledge the passing this past weekend—we laid to rest the Honourable Dan Victor Newman, who's going to be joining his wife of 35 years in heaven now. He served as Minister of the Environment, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, and Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Speaker, I would ask for unanimous consent to commemorate the life that he led. He's leaving behind a daughter, grandchildren and many family members who will miss him greatly, but he will live on in their memories.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member is asking for a moment of silence to recognize the passing of a member. Agreed? Agreed.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1157 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MPP Jamie West: Speaker, I have introductions of 14 people. It will take a little bit of time. But today we're being joined by members of the Governor General's Canadian leadership program. These are members who are part of the northern Ontario tour, who are in Toronto, at Queen's Park, this afternoon before they head back to Ottawa to meet with the Governor General and report back.

From Nova Scotia, we have Amber Froese; from Manitoba, Lisha Hassanali; from Quebec, Harvin Hilaire; from BC, Ry Bresser Moran; from Manitoba, Mathieu Roy; from Quebec, Youssef Belgana; from Alberta, Omer Hussein; from BC, Kiran Kooner; from Alberta, Ofodile Emmanuel Onah; from Saskatchewan, Carly Romanow; from Quebec, Carolyne Villeneuve; from the Northwest Territories, Kathleen Mansfield; from Quebec, Julie Hébert; and Tamara Centis, from Ontario. I know they're looking forward to meeting you shortly after this, Speaker.

Welcome to Queen's Park, everybody.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: This morning, I was honoured to meet with representatives from Abbott diabetes care: Katie Fretz, Vivian Ng and Chris Chapin.

I'd also like to extend a warm welcome to the type 1 diabetes parent advocates, including Alana Dening, Emily Drmay, Jamie and Neal Iles and daughter Ellie Iles, as well as T1D—or type 1 diabetic—Olympic athlete and founder of the not-for-profit I Challenge Diabetes, Chris Jarvis.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: I'd like to welcome the Girl Guides of Canada. We have many wonderful members today—they're just coming in—Aakshi, Ri, Leila, Lily, Sarah, Yoshita, Mariam, Hillary, Ava, Victoria, Kiara, Liana, Taylor, Teagan, Alia, Scarlett, Mackenzie, Hope, Adelaide, Mia-Noor, Madeleine and Serina.

They have put together a petition about pelvic health for women, which will be tabled later on today.

Welcome to the House, girls.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I'd like to welcome Pamela Bielak for her 25 years of leadership and commitment, supporting children and families through Crafting for a Cure by providing 750,000 kits to over 120 hospitals.

Welcome to Queen's Park, Pamela.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: It's a pleasure to rise to welcome a constituent of mine to the House today, Shawna Knight, and Angie Clark, who is the executive director of Phone-Free Schools Movement, Canada, who have come to watch the proceedings today and to see their petition be read in this afternoon.

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: I rise today to welcome Mayor Ferguson from Prince Edward county.

Mayor, thank you for coming. Welcome to your House.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: It's always a pleasure to rise in this House and represent the fine people of beautiful Beaches—East York, especially some members who are here today with Unplugged Canada and RAADD, trying to ensure kids' safety online. And I have Margot, Taryn, Dave, Cleo and many more up there.

Welcome to your House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LONDON HYDRO HOLDINGS INC. ACT, 2026

Mr. Rae moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr55, An Act to revive London Hydro Holdings Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

HEALTH CARE HONOURS, EMPLOYMENT, RETENTION, OPTIMIZATION AND EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 SUR LA STRATÉGIE EN MATIÈRE DE DISTINCTIONS, D'EMPLOI, DE RÉTENTION, D'OPTIMISATION ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'AUTONOMIE DANS LE SECTEUR DE LA SANTÉ

Mr. Shamji moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 133, An Act to provide for the development of a health care worker support strategy respecting honours, employment, retention, optimization and empowerment and to make related amendments / *Projet de loi 133, Loi prévoyant l'élaboration d'une stratégie d'appui aux travailleurs de la santé à l'égard des distinctions, de l'emploi, de la rétention, de l'optimisation et du développement de l'autonomie et apportant des modifications connexes.*

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Does the member wish to explain the bill?

Mr. Adil Shamji: The bill enacts the Health Care Honours, Employment, Retention, Optimization and Empowerment Strategy Act, 2026. The act requires the Minister of Health to develop and publish a health care worker support strategy. The necessary elements of the strategy are set out. Provisions respecting reviews and reporting on the strategy are included. A financial penalty is set out if the Minister of Health fails to meet a deadline under this act. Related regulation-making powers are provided.

The act also amends the Public Hospitals Act to increase the maximum term of appointments to the medical staff of a hospital from one year to three years.

Madam Speaker, the conditions of work are the conditions of care, and it's time to treat Ontario's health care workers as the heroes that they are.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

SENIORS MONTH

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Hello, everyone. Happy Seniors Month. June is Seniors Month in Ontario, and I'm calling on everyone in the Legislature to celebrate our seniors like never before. Seniors are the most important people. We are the ones who have raised the families. We are the ones who have built the best of the province, Ontario, in the best country, Canada, and our seniors deserve our dignity and respect.

This year's Seniors Month theme is "Let's Get Moving." We want to have our seniors moving so that they can get fit, stay active, healthy, socially connected, close to their homes and in their communities.

As a super senior, the best way for our seniors to get moving is to come together. Seniors love to be together. We are happiest when we are with other seniors. We enjoy each other's company, whether we are sharing our time with our old friends or making new friends. People are our energy. When we are together, we are making sure we don't experience social isolation. Social isolation is public enemy number one for seniors.

Madam Speaker, that is why I'm so proud to inform this Legislature that under the leadership of Premier Ford, our

government is making historic investments to make sure our seniors stay connected, come together and get moving. One way we are supporting our seniors is through the Seniors Community Grant Program. Since 2018, our government has doubled the funding of this program. We have now funded over 2,100 local and community projects that bring our seniors together, and we look to do more this year. We will announce the seniors community grants towards the end of June.

1310

But that is not all we are doing this Seniors Month. We are continuing the celebration with our annual senior achievement awards ceremony with the Lieutenant Governor. We are honouring some very well-deserving seniors who have made outstanding contributions to their communities and province.

One of the ways we can celebrate our seniors is by promoting our investments in our seniors active living centres. This year is an extraordinary one for our seniors active living centre programs. We are investing close to \$23 million to support 416 seniors active living centre programs across the province, including 100 new programs. We are also proudly celebrating the 16th anniversary of our elderly persons centres, now known as seniors active living centre programs. These were created under the Elderly Persons Centres Act in 1966.

Last week, I had the honour of celebrating this milestone at Life After Fifty in Windsor. This is one of the first centres that was designed with seniors programming in mind. Sixty years ago, the PC government of John Robarts began this great initiative, and I'm proud to say that under the leadership of Premier Ford, this PC government continues that legacy to support our seniors like never before.

That is why we also continue to support our seniors active living fairs. This past year, there were over 100 seniors active living fairs all over Ontario. These fairs brought seniors together and highlighted the many programs and activities available in their communities. These fairs are a huge success, and, come the fall, we'll see them start up again.

We are committed to supporting our seniors like never before. That is why we continue to invest in the Ontario Health atHome program. This gives medical support services to our seniors in their own homes.

We are also supporting our seniors with the seniors care at home tax credit. This tax credit supports a wide range of supports for our seniors so that they can continue to live in their homes. Our One Fare program, along with our seniors' public transit tax credit, helps our seniors save money so they can get to the appointments they need to get to or meet up with friends and family.

I would like to take this time to ask each and every one of you to reach out to a senior this month. Take the time to call, go for a walk, go to a movie, go for lunch or dinner and spend some time with the seniors in your family and community.

As well, there are many veterans who are seniors. We have dedicated funding for veterans under the Seniors

Community Grant Program in my ministry, but that is not enough. Take some time to visit with a veteran. Enjoy their company. They have sacrificed for our freedom, and that is something that we should honour during this Seniors Month and throughout the year.

As Ontario's first Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, I want to be able to grow and expand all of our seniors programming. Our work as a government is not done. My work as a minister is just beginning. So let's take some time this month to support our seniors. Let's get our seniors moving this June and over the course of the year. And Madam Speaker, let's celebrate the greatest generation of people who have helped to make Ontario the best place to live, work, raise a family and call home.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos):
Response?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: It's an honour to rise in the House and talk about the issues facing older adults in the province of Ontario. There are many issues facing seniors, from the ever-rising cost of living, creating a sense of desperation for those on fixed incomes—like most seniors. There are years-long wait-lists for the not-for-profit seniors' residences, and there are challenges in most communities getting the level of home care needed to allow seniors to age at home.

Active living programs are lovely, but once a person enters a managed home, seniors are experiencing the loss of their basic rights, and this is unacceptable. Today, I want to focus on two issues: the abuse of the Trespass to Property Act in seniors' residences and long-term-care homes, and the terrible effects of Bill 7 that forces families to put their loved ones in poorly maintained long-term-care homes that do not meet basic needs.

First, the Trespass to Property Act: The Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, has a Residents' Bill of Rights embedded in the act: "Every resident has the right to communicate in confidence, receive visitors of their choice and consult in private with any person without interference." Yet homes continue to abuse the Trespass to Property Act to banish family members from visiting with their loved ones. If a person is a genuine risk to staff or residents, there are legal remedies that require evidence and due process. But managers continue to misuse the Trespass to Property Act because there are no consequences for abusing the rights of their residents.

Now, you might think that this would be resolved by now. We've got the Residents' Bill of Rights. In 2021, this House unanimously supported motion 129, which was intended to end the abuse of the Trespass to Property Act. In 2022, the then-Minister of Long-Term Care said to me in this House that it's done and dusted, that we don't need to worry about this anymore because it's embedded in the Residents' Bill of Rights—wrong.

Law Enforcement Agencies and Partners Protecting Seniors, known as LEAPPS, also know it's wrong to use the Trespass to Property Act. It was also recognized just a few days ago by the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services that it is not acceptable to use the Trespass to Property Act. This is recognized in ruling after ruling in

the courts. It's recognized by the Solicitor General, who has ordered the update of training on the Trespass to Property Act for new police officers. It's recognized as abuse by inspectors working for the Ministry of Long-Term Care.

Yet other members of the long-term-care ministry are telling homes that they can use the Trespass to Property Act. The member from the Bay of Quinte, while parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Long-Term Care, made the same claim. And the Ontario Patient Ombudsman—shamefully, because he does know better—keeps telling managers that they can use the Trespass to Property Act.

So let me be absolutely clear: As promised in 2021, and as guaranteed in the Residents' Bill of Rights, the government needs to stop the illegal use of the Trespass to Property Act and cease charter right infringements of seniors and disabled persons residing in long-term care and seniors' residences.

1320

Next, I want to talk about the effects of Bill 7, which this government forced through in 2023. I've recently heard from a constituent who received an \$18,000 bill from Ontario Health after declining a long-term-care bed for her 83-year-old mother. This bill is actually going to come to \$30,000 for two and a half months of care in the hospital. What is the crime of this family that they're being billed for? They declined a bed because the home was not acceptable. The external view of the home is decrepit and, in the view of the family, it was not safe, dignified or a reasonable placement for an older adult unable to be cared for at home.

They've now received another offer of a bed in Milton, Ontario. That is a 15-hour drive from Thunder Bay. It would require moving their mother from northwestern Ontario to southern Ontario, to a community where she has never lived and where there is no family. This is not a meaningful solution for someone who needs continuity, familiarity and family support. It is a forced displacement.

Families are being financially penalized for refusing an unacceptable placement, then told that the alternative is to move an 83-year-old woman, who falls regularly and is unable to get out of bed independently, hundreds of kilometres away from her community and the family members who know and support her. This is not person-centred care; it is coercive, punitive and harmful.

Changing both of these policies is well within the control and mandate of this Conservative government to treat seniors with dignity and respect. As long as these abuses continue to take place, seniors will be robbed of their charter rights and robbed of the safety and dignity in their final years that we all hope for and deserve.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Toronto–St. Paul's.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I rise in response today to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility's statement on seniors during Seniors Month. First, I want to acknowledge Ontario seniors. They built our communities, they raised our families, volunteered countless hours and

helped create the province that we know today. They deserve to age with dignity, security and confidence that the services that they rely on will be there when they need them.

I also want to recognize caregivers, personal support workers, nurses, front-line staff who support seniors every day. Their dedication is extraordinary, and Ontario seniors depend on their compassion and on their professionalism.

While I appreciate the minister's remarks earlier, the reality is that too many seniors and their families continue to face significant challenges accessing the care and the supports that they need. The government frequently highlights investments and announcements in the seniors sector. Those investments are very important, but the question Ontarians are asking is not how much has been announced, but the question is whether seniors are seeing the results in their day-to-day lives.

Today, more than 50,000 Ontarians are waiting for a long-term-care bed. Ontario Health reports that the median wait time for admission to long-term care is now approximately 200 days for someone waiting in the community and 72 days for someone waiting in a hospital bed. This means that seniors are waiting months for the care that they need, and it means that their families are also navigating uncertainty and a lot of stress. And they mean hospital beds occupied by patients who should be receiving care in a more appropriate setting.

Every senior waiting for a long-term-care placement is not just a long-term-care issue; it is a hospital capacity issue, which we know so well of at these times. It affects emergency wait times, surgical backlogs and the ability of our entire health care system to function effectively.

The government often speaks about helping seniors age at home, and I think every member of this House supports this goal. We would all love to have that privilege. But aging at home requires more than good intentions. It requires access to home care, personal support workers, transport services, community supports and respite care for family caregivers.

For too many families, those supports remain really difficult to access. As a result, family members are filling the gaps themselves. Sons and daughters are balancing careers while caring for aging parents. Spouses are taking on increasingly demanding caregiving responsibilities while managing their own health concerns. Behind every statistic is a family doing its best just to hold things together.

The needs of Ontario seniors are also becoming more complex. More than 60% of long-term-care residents are living with dementia. The average resident is now in their mid-eighties, and the vast majority are living with some sort of cognitive impairment. That means demands on staff, caregivers and the broader health care system are only increasing.

While the government has spoken about recruiting more health care workers, recruitment alone is not enough. We have to also retain the workers that we already have. Personal support workers, nurses, long-term-care staff: They need working conditions that allow them to remain

in the profession. Otherwise, we're just going to be continuing to chase shortages instead of solving them.

Madam Speaker, the challenge before us is only growing. Ontario's own projections show that the senior population is going to increase dramatically in the decades ahead. By 2051, in fact, there are going to be more than 1.8 million additional seniors living in this province. That reality should concern all of us here today. Because if our system is struggling today, with more than 50,000 people waiting for long-term care and families facing ongoing challenges with that, imagine how it's going to cope when there's another 1.8 million seniors added to Ontario's population. That's the question we have to answer.

Ontario seniors have spent their lives investing in this province and they have earned more than announcements. They've earned health care systems that work and they've earned timely access to care. They've earned support for their families and caregivers and the peace of mind that comes from knowing that they won't be left behind.

As legislators, our responsibility is not simply to recognize seniors; it's to ensure the systems they depend on are ready for the future, because a demographic wave is coming and, in many respects, it is already here.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I'm heartened to rise this afternoon in tribute to Seniors Month here in Ontario, a time to recognize and celebrate the generations who helped build this province we call home.

Our seniors are more than valued members of our communities; they are our institutional knowledge. They built our towns and cities, raised families, started businesses, served their neighbours and laid the foundation for the quality of life we now enjoy. Yet too many seniors tell me they feel their past and continued contributions are not being respected. At a time in their lives when they should feel secure and supported, many are struggling to access vital services, whether it is community care difficult to access, long-term-care homes facing ongoing shortages or a health care system burdened by wait times and staffing shortages, too many seniors are being asked to navigate systems that are falling short of their needs.

As we celebrate Seniors Month, let us, as policy-makers, do more than offer our gratitude. Let us renew our commitment to ensuring that every senior can age with dignity, respect and the confidence that the services they depend upon will be there when they need them.

To all Ontario seniors, thank you for your contributions, your wisdom and your continued service to our communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I'm proud to rise today to recognize Seniors Month. Our seniors have built this province and make such a rich contribution to all of our society.

I want to applaud the investment in our seniors active living centre and a big shout-out to Rockway community centre and Breithaupt community centre. The staff and

volunteers here ensure that seniors can be included and active at all stages of life.

We know that seniors need a roof and food. It's through the work of Supportive Housing of Waterloo that I learned that seniors are the largest growing number of folks facing homelessness right now. Our seniors need access to a roof and food, and they face homelessness more than ever. So let's invest in affordable and supportive housing so seniors can age with dignity and in place.

PETITIONS

LAND USE PLANNING

MPP Wayne Gates: Niagara deserves a say in a second Ferris wheel in Queen Victoria Park. Queen Victoria Park is public green space beside the world's greatest natural attraction. Niagara Falls already has a successful observation wheel as part of the tourist sector. A second observation wheel could involve a long-term lease of 50—I'll repeat this—50 years.

Major decisions about public park space should include meaningful, local consultation, which has never been done to this day—never.

1330

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop any long-term lease or approval of a second observation wheel in Queen Victoria Park until the Niagara residents, the businesses, the tourist workers and the local leaders have been fully consulted.

The reason why I'm saying that—we already have a Ferris wheel. This would be about a block and a half away, and it's going to be in the best green space in all of Niagara Falls. Nobody comes to Niagara Falls—nobody in Pennsylvania or Ontario or northern Ontario is saying, "Let's go to Niagara Falls; we get to see a second Ferris wheel." It's absolutely ridiculous. And this park that they're going to try to destroy was named after the Queen in the early 1800s.

What are we doing? What are we thinking? I'm saying, we need to make sure that this gets stopped and gets proper consultation, because there is nobody—nobody in Niagara Falls or Ontario that wants a second Ferris wheel in Niagara Falls.

PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES IN SCHOOLS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Don Valley West.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: She's not here.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Oh, sorry; apologies—Beaches—East York.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Beautiful Beaches—East York, of course.

I'm proud to rise with a petition from my radiant residents and more Ontarians: the petition for the implementation of a bell-to-bell phone-free schools policy.

We know our phones and social media are major distractions amongst us, but they expose students to harm such as cyberbullying, social pressures, explicit content and persuasive, addictive design features that erode focus and well-being.

We want to ensure our kids are in school to learn and learn without distractions, and so the undersigned petition the government to create a bell-to-bell phone-free school policy.

I will sign that proudly and send it with page Philip.

HIGHWAYS 11 AND 17

MPP Billy Denault: I have this petition regarding Highways 11 and 17, and it states:

“Whereas Highways 11 and 17 are vital highways in supporting nationwide trade, they are key corridors to strengthening supply chains and enabling critical mineral development and are critical to ensuring reliable movement of goods and people across Canada.”

This petition calls on the federal government to partner with the government of Ontario to help achieve the expansion and modernization of Highways 11 and 17 as a project of national significance. In my riding, it is the lifeline of my community, and its importance cannot be overstated. We need a partner at the table to get this project going forward.

I wholeheartedly support this petition, and I will affix my signature to it and give it to Simon to bring to the table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Lisa Gretzky: I have a petition here to raise the social assistance rates.

Speaker, under this government's watch, over eight years, we have a historic number of people experiencing homelessness, a historic number of people—that is families, that is young children, that is seniors, that is people with disabilities, that is workers—who are accessing food banks. That is a record number of people living in poverty under this Conservative government.

This petition is highlighting the people that are most deeply and negatively impacted by this Conservative government's policies, and that is people living on social assistance.

Speaker, Ontario's social assistance rates are well, well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate—not even close to covering the rising costs of food and rent.

For those people on the government side who aren't aware—although they should be—the Ontario Works rate for an individual is \$733 a month. For someone living on the Ontario Disability Support Program, or ODSP, it's \$1,408. I would like to see anyone in this House try and keep a roof over their head and food on the table and—potentially, for those that can work—hold down a job.

Speaker, there was an open letter sent to the Premier and two cabinet ministers signed by over 230 organizations which recommended that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program.

While it's a small increase to the province's budget, it would make a huge impact to the people that this government is leaving in legislated poverty. If they can afford to buy a \$30-million private luxury jet for the Premier, spend a couple billion dollars on a foreign-owned luxury spa and give away Toronto's waterfront to J.P. Morgan, an American company, certainly they could take care of the people in this province that have disabilities by doubling social assistance rates.

I will sign the petition and send it to the Clerk.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: I have a petition here that calls on the government to stop privatization and support health care staffing ratios by mandating staffing ratios for nurses and health care professionals across the Ontario health care system; develop staffing ratios in consultation with nurses and health care professionals through unions; and use health care funding to ensure the Ontarians can access the care they need within the public system rather than privatizing health care through outsourcing services to private, for-profit corporations.

I'm happy to sign my name and send it to the table with page Alex.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I have a petition here entitled, “Time Ontario Protects Law-Abiding Gun Owners like Saskatchewan and Alberta.”

We all know about the federal confiscation program for firearms. We also know the program is encountering minimal compliance from various law enforcement agencies across the province, and there continues to be a patchwork of protection right across the province. We also know that Ontario's Chief Firearms Office refuses to answer the question of whether or not they will revoke firearms licences of those who fail to participate in the confiscation.

I have hundreds of signatures here, adding to last week's that were also tabled, asking the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ontario Chief Firearms Office to answer the very simple question that has been posed to them with respect to revoking licences and asking for the government to enact policy that will protect law-abiding gun owners, just like Saskatchewan and Alberta are doing.

I wholeheartedly support this petition, will affix my signature to it and send it to the Clerks' table with page Finn.

WOMEN'S PELVIC HEALTH

Mr. Matthew Rae: I'll be brief because I know there are lots of petitions today.

I just want to thank the Girl Guides of Canada; the Minister of Long-Term Care introduced them earlier. They are the ones I have the pleasure of presenting this petition to this assembly on post-pregnancy in women for, specifically around their pelvic floor.

One in four women in Canada struggle with pelvic floor damage due to childbirth. This petition highlights the importance of supporting those women. All women should not have their needs be determined by their income, and more women deserve to know how to take care of their bodies.

I wholeheartedly support this petition, and I will be giving it to page Julia for the table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition that calls on the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program.

We are living through a time in this province of unprecedented affordability challenges for all Ontarians, but the financial pressures are felt most acutely by those who are relying on social assistance to try to put food on the table and keep themselves housed. The current amounts that people receive are woefully inadequate to enable them to support themselves.

There has been extensive advocacy calling on the Premier and the cabinet, signed by over 230 organizations in this province, to urge the government to double social assistance rates. It would make a huge difference for those who are struggling to live on social assistance, who are continually trying to get by below the poverty line.

The petition, as I said, calls for a doubling of social assistance rates. I fully support the petition, affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Naya.

EDUCATION FUNDING

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I have before me hundreds of signatures calling on the Legislative Assembly to reduce the class sizes in our public elementary schools. Some \$6.35 billion has been cut from public education since 2018, and it has resulted in larger class sizes, increased violence, inadequate special education and mental health supports for students. The petitioners want the assembly to commit to making the necessary investments in public education to lower class sizes, increase student supports and ensure students have the schools they need.

1340

I wholeheartedly support this petition, I affix my signature to it, and I give it to page Vedha to take to the table.

PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES IN SCHOOLS

Mr. Brian Saunderson: It's a pleasure to rise to present a petition that has been sent to me by constituents in my riding and, in fact, cities across the province. The

petition is calling on the government of Ontario and the Ministry of Education to implement a bell-to-bell phone-free policy in the province's elementary and secondary schools to ensure personal mobile devices, including phones and smart watches, are turned off and inaccessible for the entire school day. In support of this petition, they note that smart phones and social media are major sources of distraction that expose students to harms such as cyber bullying, social pressures and explicit content.

We know that smart phones used during school hours disrupt learning and social connection, with growing evidence in Canada and internationally linking heavy device use to lower academic performance, higher anxiety and depression for students, and strained interactions between teachers and students. National surveys in Canada indicate that a strong majority of parents support stronger limits for full-day restrictions on smart phones, and there is the need for a clear, consistent bell-to-bell policy to help support equitable and consistent expectations for students.

In my riding, on take your MPP to school day, I heard directly from the vice-principal at a local school, Our Lady of the Bay, so I support this wholeheartedly, I will sign it and give it to page Philip.

BILLY BISHOP AIRPORT

MPP Alexa Gilmour: In a matter of hours this weekend, people from my riding fanned out across the riding to collect signatures on a petition called "Stop Ford's Takeover of Billy Bishop." They were horrified to read in the Toronto Star that four lobbyist companies hired by Nieuport Aviation had been lobbying every single level of the government. They were distraught to know that the Premier had said that the government was in relationship with the federal government, and they were very upset to know that the city's voice was being taken out of the equation.

They want the airport to remain an environmental landscape. They want Billy Bishop to remain a small airport and not have 900 metres of infill concrete poured into a lake, which seems ridiculous to all of us, I know, except for, apparently, the Premier.

I will sign my name to this and bring it down with page Anika.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'm pleased to present this petition on behalf of the Ontario Nurses' Association. It's titled, "Stop Privatization and Support Staffing Ratios," and it recognizes the growing challenges that we're facing in health care and elevates health care workers as the backbone of our health care system. It calls for staffing ratios to be implemented between patients and providers, and to ensure that funds that go into health care actually go towards supporting our public system.

This is a very important petition that I'm pleased to present and to hand to page Simon.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I'd like to thank Denise Ghanem of Belle River for sending me in this petition. It talks about our trade relationship with the United States and it talks about how Ontario is the number one customer of 15 of those United States, making us, essentially, the employers of millions of Americans. It also talks about how Donald Trump's tariffs have been declared illegal by the Supreme Court of the United States and it also talks about the fact that both the House of Representatives and the Senate have voted against those tariffs.

It calls upon this government to adopt regulations that would issue procurement directives, as appropriate, to prioritize Ontario-made goods and services, protecting and supporting Ontario's economy, and protecting and supporting Ontario businesses and workers.

I support this petition. I will sign it and give it to this fine page Ruben to bring to the Clerk's table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECTING ONTARIO'S STREETS AND COMMUNITIES ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 VISANT À PROTÉGER LES RUES ET LES COLLECTIVITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 28, 2026, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to enact two new Acts and to amend various other Acts / Projet de loi 119, Loi édictant deux nouvelles lois et modifiant diverses autres lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions and responses on the speech made by the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke? Questions? Questions?

Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's an interesting day here at Queen's Park. There's lots of energy. There's lots of rumours going around. There's a little bit too much excitement that this may be ending—

Mr. Adil Shamji: Who's resigning?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, who's next on the front bench who's going to be resigning?

However, it is always a pleasure to take my spot on the floor of the Legislature on behalf of the people of Waterloo. I would be remiss if I didn't also, of course, send my best wishes to the Sergeant-at-Arms, Tim McGough. He is very happily retiring, and I asked him to take me with him.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, I know—front bench.

I also wanted to update the House: Last Thursday, before we left for the weekend to go back to our ridings and attend all our events, I let the House know that I would be marrying my sister and her partner Kate in a hot-air balloon. The gods shone down upon Waterloo and de-

clared that it was too windy for that hot-air balloon to go up in the air, which is something that I secretly was praying for. However, I did marry them very happily in my backyard. It was quite an experience to marry somebody, especially—you know, as young children, as little sisters, we used to play, "let's get married," and here I was, marrying my sister. So all the best to them.

I guess I should thank the member who was just talking about pelvic floors—also something that has never happened in this place, I just want to tell you—for bringing in the private member's bill. Matt Rae, thank you very much for that opportunity to do so. Some good things happen in this place.

However, I'm going to pivot now to Bill 119. This is one of the PCs' tough-on-crime bills where they try to rebrand themselves as the party that really wants to address the ongoing justice issues and crime that are happening in the province of Ontario. It is, however, another law that this government has brought to the floor of the Legislature—a law-and-order-framed omnibus bill—made up, frankly, of disparate parts that don't create a coherent whole.

I will give them full credit for being consistent in bringing forward pieces of legislation that have great titles, but fail to do the work that the title portrays: everything from changes to the adoption act and the Ford government's version of the policing act, to maintenance of Christopher's Law. And while Christopher's Law was phenomenal legislation, its inclusion here is what you do best: You always drop a poison pill in a piece of legislation where there is some good, but there's more bad.

I have to say, I didn't get a chance to reintroduce the Lydia's Law petition, but having gone through the experience of bringing forward a solid piece of legislation, a bill called Lydia's Law, named after a young woman in my riding who, five years ago, came to me with her mom—she said, "Listen, my daughter has gone through a heinous crime." Sexual assault is one of the most morally corrupt and bankrupt crimes, because it's about power and it's about taking power and it's about holding power. It's about using someone's sexuality against them, Madam Speaker. When Monica and her daughter Lydia came to me five years ago, they said, "Listen, this is a hellish experience."

1350

But the court system and the justice system became a character in this tragedy because it took two years for this young girl to go through the justice system, all the highs and the lows, really just seeking a fair chance at justice so that the individual who had sexually assaulted her would get what they deserved, which is to go to jail and not get out on bail so quickly, for instance, and have communication and counselling also be part of that experience.

Actually, Lydia's Law, to be honest with you, was really what the Auditor General of the province of Ontario had recommended back in 2019. She recommended, quite honestly, in the 2019 Auditor General's report, that the Attorney General start to track these cases of sexual assault.

Why, last year, did 1,639 sexual assault cases get dispensed or stayed? Don't you want to know? I do. If I was the Attorney General for the province of Ontario, I would want to know what is happening in our court system. Why are they failing people who have enough courage to come forward and disclose sexual assault? Because it's not easy. It's not an easy thing to do.

Only 5% or 6% of women in Ontario disclose this crime—only 5%. Last year, 4,780 cases went through the court system. So that means at least 91,000 more cases, more women, didn't have confidence in our justice system to speak up. They didn't have justice or trust in the system that's supposed to protect them, Madam Speaker.

So that means that the people who did assault—because we know that only 5% to 6% of women will come forward, right? And then there's even a test, once you disclose to the police and once you go through the rape crisis centre and once you go through the sexual assault centre. We know that the bar is so high for these cases to get into the court system that people lose hope along the way.

Is that what happened with those 1,639 cases? We don't know. You know why we don't know? Because the Attorney General for the province of Ontario is not doing his job. That is why the Auditor General made these recommendations.

She also recommended that there wasn't enough support for women who go through the system. And she said—these were recommendations 1 and 3 of the AG's report—to make the independent legal advice program more accessible.

People need to know that they there will be resources there for them. I would think that that would be a really key piece in protecting Ontario streets and communities. Because when women don't disclose, that means that the people who created the offences, who assaulted women and assaulted men, are still out there because the reporting is not happening.

So here you have a piece of legislation that the government voted down last week in front of 100 survivors and advocates that were here. And it was shocking to see the rape crisis centres and the sexual assault centres listen to the member from Hamilton Mountain say that we are doing what Lydia's Law is asking for. It was shocking to hear that when the numbers disclose such a very different system, right?

I remember the member from Hamilton Mountain saying, "Well, the justice system is not the end of addressing criminality in Ontario." But you know what it is? It is the beginning. You need a court system that hears both sides, that defends the law as it stands. Last time I checked, sexual assaults were illegal, unless we're completely, now, undermining the rights of women in Ontario.

But it is really important for the system to be held accountable to the people that we're elected to serve. And that is why I will continue to bring the petition to the floor of this Legislature until this government enacts the Auditor General's recommendations from seven years ago to track what's happening around sexual assaults in Ontario, to address the lack of counselling for victims of

violence and survivors of violence, to address the gaps in legal supports. That is how you address crime in Ontario—you have a system that upholds the laws. You shouldn't have to say this in 2026. It just shouldn't happen.

Bill 119, as it is crafted right now—as I was listening to the lead debate on it, it did not address the need around other forms of crime that are happening in Ontario.

I just want to say to the government, as it stands right now, you cannot pretend to be tough on crime and not have a justice system that upholds the law. These things do not go together.

There's so much that's missing in Bill 119. It's almost like you wanted to change the channel or something. We've heard and the numbers confirm that the Solicitor General has indeed lost track of criminals in Ontario. The numbers do not lie, so I know that he and the ministry are desperately looking for some of these folks who have gone out on bail, are supposed to report back to bail and they just have not. They know that the system is not strong. In a system that is so weak on crime and on consequences and on accountability and on transparency, they know that they can manipulate the system.

The other part that is missing from the Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act is the piece around transit police. Despite the headline-grabbing announcements, there isn't anything explicitly in the bill that will permit transit police to make drug-related arrests. The bill's background makes clear that these new powers of arrest will be a matter of regulation.

I know it's inside baseball, but this government has created a general law and then left so much down to regulation, which actually takes away our rights as legislators, as lawmakers, to hold the government to account for some of those changes.

There is nothing in this law nor the bill that toughens penalties or focuses resources against an increase in targeted extortions, disproportionately targeting specific communities. I've heard the minister talk about extortion, about the growing power imbalance in some of our communities. And yet, why would you create a law that specifically leaves this part out?

It leaves out a part around animal welfare. Despite some of the early media coverage, there's no legislative ban on ear cropping or tail docking of any animals other than dogs in the bill.

So you can see that this bill is, no pun intended, a little bit of a Doug—dog's breakfast.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Doug's breakfast?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Doug's—I'm sorry. Dog's—sorry. I'm not really trying to be funny, because it's a serious issue.

Also, retail theft—you have to have just not been paying attention at all as to the brazen daylight theft that's happening in LCBO stores across Ontario. Despite some affirming media coverage, there is nothing in the bill that actually creates a retail theft task force or that grants further specialized powers of tiers of security guards. Some of these security guards who are in malls and retail centres are dealing with drugs, dealing with mental health

issues, dealing with weapons. So you know this, the Solicitor General of Ontario certainly knows this, and yet you crafted a piece of legislation which doesn't address it.

Then, of course, on victim services—the government continues to increase victim services funding through grants rather than sustained annual funding. This is a big issue. When you become a victim of crime in Ontario—for instance, let's just talk about sexual assault, because I'm going to do that for the remainder of this term, until you do something about it. The rape crisis centres and the sexual assault centres get little morsels, little crumbs of funding. There's no sustainable year-over-year funding that they can actually plan for and with to address crime in our communities.

1400

As well, the victim compensation: There's no improvement to Ontario's Victim Quick Response Program, which was a direct ask in Lydia's Law. So when the member from Hamilton Mountain gets up and says, "We're doing this," no, you're not. You're not even doing it in the piece of legislation that you dropped last Thursday, okay? It's one thing to come to this place and say whatever you want to say, but at the end of the day, this really does impact the lives of people in our communities.

Then there's the improving restraining order efficacy. This obviously affects women and safety in our communities. Restraining orders may offer little to no actual protection to victims. In fact, we've seen this. Femicide is a factor in Ontario. In fact, in Canada, every three days, a woman is killed by an intimate partner.

So we have a thousand-page report written or drafted in some way, shape or form by the member from Kitchener South-Hespeler. It's a big, thick report that hardly anybody is going to read and that you can't action. Even the executive summary is not an executive summary.

Women make up 51% of the population of Ontario. We should be at least trying to ensure that we can reach our potential in society, that we have access to the resources and the counselling if we have the great misfortune to experience violence in our communities.

Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region is fundraising to keep women safe. That's where we are in Ontario: We are fundraising to keep women safe in Ontario. It is a sad state of affairs, and it's also an abdication of one of the oaths that we take as parliamentarians. We say that we are going to come to this place, we are going to do the good work, we are going to serve the public, not just the donors, not just the insiders, not just the people who have access to the Premier's office—that we take this oath as lawmakers to make the lives of people in Ontario better, not worse. At least, the old adage from social work, the faculty of social work, is "do no harm," right? Do no harm. You have a piece of legislation here that not only just tinkers around the edges on a major issue like crime, but you've missed this opportunity. And I'm not going to let them change the channel, Madam Speaker, because these are very serious issues.

Improving Ontario courts is one aspect that may improve some courtroom availability, but it's also con-

ditional on resources. One can only look at the really bad example of the Toronto new courthouse, which was hit by delays and staff shortages. The Attorney General will talk about this courthouse as if it's the jewel of Ontario. This is what the Chief Justice said at the time, because many cases, including sexual assault cases, have had to be stayed or dispensed because of backlogs in this courthouse. This is a Toronto Star article:

"The Ontario government praises Toronto's new provincial courthouse as efficient, saying it will allow for the 'timely processing of criminal matters.'" That's a quote.

"The reality so far on the ground, however, is anything but..."

"Already, staffing shortages have contributed to the closure of numerous trial courtrooms, according to figures provided to the Star" last week.

"Criminal cases are being adjourned due to the lack of courtrooms available to hear them—leaving cases at greater risk of eventually being tossed for violating a person's constitutional right to a trial within a reasonable time."

It goes on to say that "burden on the staff is the greatest it has ever been."

This is a government that likes to celebrate the opening of a building but never acknowledges the value of the people in that building. It's the same in our schools, it's the same in our hospitals and now it's the same in our courtrooms.

This is a direct quote from the same article: "They need and deserve the level of resources and support required for them to do their jobs properly, and to reflect their professionalism and dedication to the administration of justice. They are the backbone of this courthouse. We cannot function without them."

Yet this bill, Bill 119, misses the mark on acknowledging the value of the people that work within that system. This has become incredibly very clear to the people. Putting out another press release, cutting a ribbon on a building that has no staffing—this will not keep people safe in Ontario. Having a strong justice system that is held accountable to the people that we're elected to serve, I would argue, is a core tenet of a strong democracy.

This Premier in particular has demonstrated his complete disdain for our democracy, so it's not surprising that you put out another bill that misses the mark. As the Liberals used to say, you've overachieved in this regard.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank my friend from Waterloo for her incredible leadership on Bill 112. This is the kind of leadership that Ontario needs right now.

If the government had voted against this once, one example could be called an anomaly, an aberration, an error. But considering the government first did an unprecedented move and took Lydia's Law to committee without any debate and now, given a second opportunity, has voted it down while claiming they're doing the work—ironically, this government claims that they're holding criminals accountable.

To the member, what does it say to survivors when the Conservatives vote to allow sexual assault predators to roam free in our society and then spend millions of dollars on garbage government ads claiming that they're tough on crime?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks to my colleague for also being a co-signatory to Lydia's Law. This time I did try a different tack with Lydia's Law. I had three male allies serve on the bill, because last time the government sent it to committee to die and have no debate. However, I do want to thank him for his leadership.

The government is showing us who they really are. They have not only disdain for our democracy but apparently a complete and utter disregard for the health and safety of women in Ontario. It's a sad state of affairs, when 51% of the population of Ontario are women. We deserve the same level of access to justice as anyone else in Ontario and Canada, for that matter.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I know in the member's riding is Supportive Housing of Waterloo, which provides supportive housing. They need more money. They found that the federal government has money to invest to expand supportive housing, but our province isn't providing operating dollars. So Ontario is missing out on millions and millions of dollars to address homelessness.

Do you think it's better to address homelessness with supportive housing and to invest operating dollars to match the federal government or to arrest people and put them in very expensive jail beds?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a great question from my friend from Kitchener Centre. This is one of the core issues around the ideology difference, I think, that we definitely see value in ensuring that women who are fleeing violence have options. Many of those women who are fleeing violence also have children in tow, Madam Speaker. They will stay in unsafe situations, especially with intimate partner violence, because they have nowhere else to go.

There's a cost to that lack of leadership. Investing in supportive housing and attainable low-income housing, where women actually have a place to go with their children to flee violence—the return on investment is in our favour as a whole of society. Not only are you doing the right thing, but you're also preventing costs to the justice system and to the health care system as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: Thank you to the member for Waterloo for both your presentation today and also the tireless work that you've done for sexual assault survivors across Ontario. As I was listening to your presentation, I was surprised by the way that you characterized the report that was written by the member from Kitchener South-Hespeler as being overly thick and not something that anyone is going to read.

When we look at the breadth and the weight of the challenges that sexual assault survivors, predominantly women, face in Ontario, don't you think that that type of

challenge should be met with something that is comprehensive, detailed and extensive, as opposed to a few platitudes and a few goals that could fit on the back of a postcard?

1410

Can you confirm that you have actually read that report, and do you support a detailed, in-depth investigation into what would benefit sexual assault survivors in Ontario?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you so much for that question. I have read that report. I would encourage every member to read it. It's just over a thousand pages. The footnotes are inaccurate. It is filled with inconsistencies in philosophy and therapy—it is true; have a read of it.

Also, I will say that there has been no commitment whatsoever to action that report. I'm the vice-chair of the justice committee. It has not come back to the committee. In fact, your government removed the member from Kitchener South-Hespeler from that committee, which actually shows who you really are. She's a former crown. She has seen this violence play itself out in our court system. She has also seen the delays in the court system, which she's now, unfortunately, having to defend.

Voting against Lydia's Law, though, is the final draw, right? You show who you really are when you vote the way you did.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank the member for Waterloo for her leadership on Lydia's Law to ensure justice for survivors of sexual assault in this province.

I'm sure we've all heard heartbreaking stories from survivors of sexual assault, but also victims of many other crimes.

This bill does nothing to improve supports for those who have experienced injury through a crime. There is nothing to improve Ontario's Victim Quick Response Program, nothing to ensure that victims get the financial support they need in a timely way and with an appropriate deadline to apply for support.

I wonder if the member could comment on what would make a meaningful difference for victims in this province, not just of sexual assault, but of other crimes.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks to the member from London West for that question.

This goes back to the Auditor General's report. This is why she recommended that the Attorney General have his eyes on what's happening in our court system. Victims of violence and survivors of sexual assault are depending on the justice system to deliver justice right now, and right now that is not happening in Ontario.

When the Attorney General comes to committee—and he will do so during the summer or early fall—I will ask him about these numbers, these 1,639 cases that got stayed or dispensed. That's not including the 470 cases that got dropped on the day of their court case.

Can you imagine going through two years of hell and then you get to the court day and they say, "Oh, we're going to drop it for today"?

We need timely resources, and we need the Attorney General just to do his job.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Deepak Anand: My question is to the member from Waterloo. As we all know, every child deserves a safe, stable, supportive home, and families navigating the adoption process deserve confidence that the system is rigorous, transparent, and acting in the best interests of the children.

Through this bill, we are proposing changes that would strengthen oversight of adoption practitioners, introducing meaningful compliance tools and ensuring only qualified, licensed professionals facilitate complex intercountry adoptions.

To the member: Can you advise about this process? What are your views? And are you going to support this bill?

Ms. Catherine Fife: There are two schedules in this bill—because you should always read the bill, I want to say.

Schedule 1 is the Child, Youth and Family Services Act. This grants new powers to directors to okay individuals for adoption—if the person meets certain criteria.

The fact of the matter is that we have to have eyes on these kids.

I'm dealing with a case right now, in my region, of a 14-year-old girl who's being trafficked. She's caught between family and children's services and the police right now, and she has no advocate. This is the problem. Without the resources in the community acknowledging that children are being trafficked in Ontario right now—you can have all the words on all the papers, but if you don't have the resources, if you don't have the knowledge on the ground, we can't keep these kids safe and we can't rescue them and liberate them from their traffickers. It's a serious issue.

I wish that this bill was stronger, and I wish that we could support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: As always, it's an honour to rise on behalf of the residents of Ottawa–Vanier. This afternoon, it's to speak about Bill 119, the Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act.

At first glance, this bill contains several measures that I think many members of this House can support because it seeks to modernize aspects of our justice system, strengthen certain protections for victims and address a number of public safety concerns. Whenever we have the opportunity to improve public confidence in our institutions and make our communities safer, well, we should approach that work constructively and in good faith.

But Bill 119 is also a reminder that legislation is only as meaningful as its implementation. Good intentions do not automatically translate into better outcomes. Public safety requires more than new powers, new offences or new enforcement tools. It requires governments to follow through on their commitments, invest in prevention, support vulnerable people and ensure that the protections they announce are actually available to those who need them.

As is often the case with omnibus legislation, this bill touches on a remarkably large range of subjects: adoption, sex offenders, police service boards, restraining orders, drug paraphernalia, administrative penalties for zoning violations, police record checks, plea negotiations, firearms, towing, criminal harassment and, notably, measures to implement protections for survivors of human trafficking.

It is that latter issue that I want to address first because I do have a special interest in this one.

I will begin with the schedule 9, which addresses coerced debts incurred by victims of human trafficking. This schedule finally provides the implementation measures for my private bill, Bill 41, the Protection from Coerced Debts Incurred in relation to Human Trafficking Act—legislation that was co-sponsored by members of all parties in this house, that received unanimous support in this house, that proceeded through committee and received royal assent in December 2023. That, Madam Speaker, was more than two and a half years ago. The bill, Bill 41—everybody supported it—received royal assent two and a half years ago, and it's still not available for survivors of human trafficking.

Since then, I've continued to raise this issue with the Attorney General, because the purpose of Bill 41 was straightforward but critically important. Human trafficking survivors are often forced, manipulated or coerced into taking on debts in their own names. Traffickers compel victims to sign leases, obtain credit cards, take out loans or incur other financial obligations through threats, violence, intimidation and psychological control.

Those debts, Madam Speaker, do not disappear when the trafficking ends. Instead, they remain with survivors as they attempt to rebuild their lives. They damage credit ratings, they prevent access to housing, they create barriers to employment, and they undermine financial independence for those victims. They become yet another long-term control tool even after a survivor has escaped exploitation.

Bill 41 sought to address this injustice by creating a pathway for survivors to have those coerced debts legally recognized and erased from their record.

Schedule 9 now establishes the review mechanism that will determine whether a debt was coerced and should be extinguished, while attempting to do so in a manner that avoids retraumatizing survivors. That's very, very important, Mr. Speaker; we don't want those victims, those survivors to have to retell their stories and to try to convince a body that that debt does not belong to them.

1420

So I do appreciate the work that ultimately went into developing these provisions and creating a process intended to protect survivors throughout the application process. But it is fair to ask why it took more than two and a half years after royal assent for these protections to finally reach the implementation stage. During that time, survivors continued to carry debts they never freely incurred. They continued to face damaged credit, barriers to housing, barriers to employment and the lingering financial consequences of exploitation.

I've talked to several of those survivors, Mr. Speaker, and the impact on their mental health is significant when you get phone calls all the time, every day, about debts that are owed but that you cannot reimburse and that you never got the benefit from. For them, the delay was not simply administrative; it was deeply personal. Advocates have waited. Communities have waited. But most importantly, survivors have waited and continued to suffer. The protections that were promised have not been available to the people who needed them the most. For that reason, the eventual implementation of these provisions will be more than a legislative milestone. For many survivors, it will be a long-overdue opportunity to move forward.

However, I do have some concerns regarding the proposed intervenor framework. The government has chosen to restrict eligible intervenor organizations primarily to those receiving provincial funding. In my view, that approach is unnecessarily restrictive, because an organization's ability to assist survivors should not depend exclusively on whether it receives provincial funding. There are many capable, experienced organizations across Ontario that could provide valuable support to survivors through this process, and restricting eligibility in this way risks creating the perception that maybe the government is favouring certain organizations while excluding others that may be equally qualified.

What we want is more of those organizations, not less. Currently, there is only Toronto victim services—that's located in Toronto—that appears to be one of the only organizations positioned to undertake this role. But Speaker, the survivors do not only live in Toronto. They live in Ottawa. They live in Thunder Bay. They live in Parry Sound and Muskoka. They live in communities throughout Ontario, and so it's important that those services be available province-wide. We should ensure that the survivors across the province have access to organizations capable of supporting them through this process.

Speaker, I also want to acknowledge the provisions in this bill that strengthen enforcement on restraining orders. This is an important tool, and these measures are important. For many victims of intimate partner violence, domestic abuse, harassment and coercive control, restraining orders provide a critical layer of protection and peace of mind. These provisions will allow restraining orders issued elsewhere in Canada to be enforced in Ontario, and that will spare the victims from having to undertake additional legal proceedings simply to maintain protections that they already possess. That matters because it removes barriers, it reduces stress and it allows victims to focus on rebuilding their lives.

For those reasons, we support this portion of the bill. But while there are useful reforms contained in Bill 119, I continue to find it very unfortunate that this government approaches public safety primarily through a reactive lens, rather than a preventive one. Building safer communities requires more than expanding enforcement. It requires addressing the conditions that place people at risk in the first place. When people cannot access housing, mental

health care, addiction treatment, victim support or legal aid, those challenges do not disappear; they become more visible, and they become more visible in the places where the government is saying it is trying to avoid. They become more visible in our streets, in our shelters, in our emergency rooms and, especially, in our justice system.

Prevention is not a soft approach to public safety. It's one of the most effective public safety strategies available to us. If we are serious about safer communities, then we must be equally serious about investing in prevention, early intervention, victim services, mental health supports, housing and legal aid. Legislation that promises stronger enforcements and greater protections is not enough on its own.

We must also ensure that the organizations charged with delivering those protections have the resources they need to succeed, and we must address the growing delays in our courts and tribunals that continue to prevent vulnerable Ontarians from obtaining timely access to justice.

I also believe this legislation could have gone further. We should be reducing court backlogs. We should be strengthening access to independent legal advice, and we should be improving supports for victims navigating the justice system. Some of this work could have been advanced through Lydia's Law, the private member's bill introduced by my colleague from Waterloo which sought to strengthen supports for survivors of sexual assaults. Unfortunately, the government chose not to support that legislation. So I must ask, where are the measures in Bill 119 that ensure survivors of sexual violence are receiving the support they deserve? Good public policy requires more than announcements. It requires sustained commitment, and it requires governments to follow through.

Speaker, I also want to address the provisions relating to pill presses and the production of illegal drugs. No one in this House disputes that organized crime and illegal drug manufacturing pose serious dangers to communities across Ontario. The proliferation of toxic street drugs, particularly fentanyl and synthetic opioids, has devastated families in every region of this province. I see those consequences in my own riding of Ottawa-Vanier to a scale that should be unacceptable to anyone. Communities are frightened. Parents are worried for their children. Health care workers are simply exhausted. Far too many Ontarians have lost loved ones to overdose and poisoning.

I understand the government's desire to demonstrate action through stronger enforcement measures targeting illegal drug production. But again, enforcement alone will not solve the mental health and addiction crisis unfolding across Ontario. That is the fundamental weakness in this government's approach: We continue to see announcements focused on criminal enforcement, while the underlying public health emergency remains inadequately addressed.

Their reality is simple: People cannot access treatment, counselling, supportive housing when they need it. Municipalities and front-line organizations are carrying enormous burdens with insufficient provincial support. At the

same time, the toxic supply continues to claim lives at an alarming rate that we can no longer ignore. So while the government emphasizes tougher measures on pill presses, Ontarians are asking a broader question: Where is the comprehensive strategy? Where is the meaningful investment in prevention, treatment, recovery and mental health care?

This government has closed safe consumption sites, places where overdoses could be reversed and where people could be connected to services. Safe consumption sites are not by themselves the solution to the addiction crisis, I totally acknowledge that, but they remain an important component of harm reduction. Closing them without ensuring robust alternatives is simply irresponsible.

In my riding, organizations lost funding for harm reduction services. They have proposed alternative models that would have preserved some level of support for vulnerable residents. Unfortunately, the province has shown very little interest in those proposals.

1430

Instead, we've been asked to accept assurances regarding the effectiveness of the HART hub model, without being provided sufficient evidence to evaluate its success. I actually asked how the success of those HART hubs was measured, and the response was that it's not actually being measured. So how do we know it's working?

HART hubs may not be a complete replacement for safe consumption services, but they are certainly preferable to having no services at all. Yet many vulnerable communities, including communities in Ottawa–Vanier, have been left without a HART hub after safe consumption sites were forced to close. I'm really, really concerned and scared about what this will mean as an impact in the community.

Speaker, addiction is both a health care issue and a public safety issue. If we fail to treat it as both, we will continue cycling people through emergency rooms, shelters, police interactions and the justice system without addressing the root cause of the crisis. Front-line workers have been sounding the alarm for years. Doctors, nurses, paramedics, outreach workers, mental health professionals, community organizations: Everybody realized we need to do something. They all told us that Ontario's mental health and addictions system is under enormous strain, yet access to care remains deeply unequal depending on where someone lives, what resources they have and whether they can afford private services. That is not a system meeting the needs of Ontarians.

I worry that measures such as these allow governments to appear tough on crime without confronting the more difficult work of building a fully functioning mental health and addictions care system, because real solutions require sustained investment. They require coordination across health care, housing, education and community services, and they require political will beyond short-term announcements.

Of course, illegal drug manufacturing must be addressed, and of course organized criminal activity must be dismantled, but if we are serious about saving lives and

improving public safety we must invest with equal urgency in treatment, recovery, prevention and mental health care. Otherwise, we are treating symptoms while ignoring the broader crisis unfolding around us. Ontarians simply deserve better than that.

Speaker, legislation alone does not protect people. Implementation protects people, funding protects people, accessible services protect people and a justice system that people can actually navigate protects people.

Bill 119 contains measures that move us in the right direction, and I welcome those improvements, but Ontario's most vulnerable residents deserve more than incremental progress. They deserve a government that acts with the urgency that is required, that follows through on its commitments and invests in the supports that allow people not only to survive but to rebuild their lives.

When survivors of human trafficking are waiting for promised protections, when victims are struggling to navigate the justice system and when communities continue to grapple with addiction and mental health crises without adequate resources, our work is not finished. I hope this legislation will continue to improve through committee review and consultation with stakeholders, survivors, legal experts and community organizations, because I believe it's possible to make this legislation stronger to actually bring some real relief to the victims and survivors. When it comes to protecting vulnerable people and building safer communities, we have a responsibility not merely to do something, but to do the right thing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to thank the member from Ottawa–Vanier for, really, a detailed analysis of Bill 119, Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act. I also want to thank her for speaking so strongly in support of Lydia's Law last week, based on evidence, based on research, based on the facts of what's actually happening in our justice system here in Ontario.

She referenced this ongoing narrative that the Conservatives are tough on crime. To the member from Ottawa–Vanier: Can you actually be tough on crime if your justice system fails victims and survivors of sexual assault?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I want to thank the member for Waterloo for her question, but also for her advocacy to protect vulnerable people, especially victims of sexual violence. I think we care about a lot of the same things, which is protecting vulnerable people, but also providing them with the services and the means to obtain justice.

Being tough on crime doesn't mean anything for those survivors or those victims if they don't have access to services to help them just try to rebuild their lives, or if they don't have access to a justice system that will actually bring justice. It takes a lot of courage for those people to reach out, come forward and ask for help. When that help is not available, it's beyond discouraging. It's like we're not showing them the compassion that they need, and that in a moment like where they are at, it's really what is necessary.

Being tough on crime doesn't mean anything if we don't address the underlying reasons why those criminals act in the first place. But also, the other side is the help for the victims and survivors.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member for Nepean.

MPP Tyler Watt: Before I ask my question, I just want to congratulate my wonderful colleague from Ottawa–Vanier. It's not often that a private member's bill from the opposition helps shape government legislation, and what you did back in 2023—getting that bill to receive royal assent—I think is a wonderful thing. It's unfortunate that it has taken this government years to finally start implementing it.

But your work on protecting survivors of human trafficking from coerced debt is now being implemented through Bill 119. Can you tell us why this issue mattered so much to you and what this change will mean for survivors?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you to my colleague from Nepean for the question and for also acknowledging the work that has been done to help survivors of human trafficking.

It was a very long process. The bill itself—I introduced it once and then reintroduced it. But before I reintroduced it a second time, I did a lot of work to talk to a colleague across the aisle and get support from all parties, because it's not a partisan issue. Human trafficking is a real problem.

The solution that was advanced in my bill was a small part to help them, but it was meaningful. That was to remove the coerced debts that they were plagued with, that were preventing them—that are still preventing them, actually—from rebuilding their lives.

I'm glad that finally the government has put in their legislation a mechanism to implement that policy. It's not for a lack of trying to get it faster. We've been in the Attorney General's face quite a number of times. I don't know how many times I've raised that issue in the House. But finally, it's there, and I really, really hope that these measures will actually be implemented for real.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Thanks to the member for her comments and her work this afternoon. I wanted to ask her about access to information. I think it's really important for people in our communities to know what's in their communities, what's around their surroundings.

Police already notify communities about high-risk offenders in their vicinity, but it's very disjointed information and hard to access for people.

Our proposed amendments in this legislation would establish a centralized, province-wide website, similar to models used elsewhere, to enhance that transparency, support law enforcement and strengthen public awareness. I wanted to know the member's thoughts on that change contained in the bill.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you to the member for this question. It's actually a provision that I read in the bill that

I didn't have a problem with. I didn't really mention it during my notes because those measures are good.

But again, what I find unfortunate is that we're not attacking the problem where we need to. What we need to do is prevent people from becoming criminals in the first place. And it's not by building more jails and locking up people that we're going to address that issue.

1440

There are too many people that are desperate, that are on the streets, that have mental health issues, that have addictions, and they have nowhere to turn. They often have a recourse that's not acceptable to our community, and they become criminals. Of course, on that part, having more access to a registry of those people is a good thing. I don't have a problem with this part of the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Parkdale–High Park.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I want to thank my colleague from Ottawa–Vanier for her remarks. I appreciated the support for strengthening protections against intimate partner violence. While it seems that Bill 119 is an important step, many survivors, advocates, families have told us that they need stronger, more detailed protection. One example was Lydia's Law, legislation that the Ontario NDP brought forward to improve risk assessment, information-sharing, accountability in cases where women are at high, high risks of violence.

We're also seeing that, while the changes are welcome in allowing restraining orders from outside of Ontario to be enforced here, the bill does not seem to be able to make them more effective because victims are still going to be left without help when those orders are breached, and at risk of being hurt or even killed.

I wondered if my colleague would like to speak to ways that we could improve that part of this bill, and perhaps the government would take those into consideration.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you for the question. Restraining orders are an important tool if they work and can be enforced. I've heard horror stories about women being locked in their home, in their apartment, and having an abuser on the other side of the door trying to get in and really intimidating and terrorizing that person. And so restraining orders, if you don't have the resources to make sure that they can be implemented effectively, that there's enough police services to take care of them, are less meaningful.

I find that it's very important, going back to Lydia's Law, because the measures that were proposed in that private member's bill were so great, evidence-based. The government needs to understand what's happening in our court system, needs to understand what the real numbers are and why people are not getting justice. Because if you don't understand what's not working, you can't fix it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): We have time for another quick question and response. I recognize a member for Kingston and the Islands.

M. Ted Hsu: Je voudrais demander à ma collègue de raconter une histoire ou peut-être un récit de sa

circonscription pour montrer pourquoi la question de la protection des personnes vulnérables est si urgente.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Vous savez ce qui a été un déclencheur pour moi de décider de travailler sur le projet de loi pour les victimes de trafic humain? C'est parce que j'ai rencontré une des victimes qui a voulu me raconter son histoire et qui avait besoin d'aide. J'ai été vraiment touchée par l'authenticité des défis qu'elle a rencontrés et je me suis dit qu'il faut faire quelque chose, surtout quand j'ai appris que cette personne-là allait à la même école que mes enfants.

Alors, ça m'a vraiment motivé à agir, puis à faire quelque chose de concret. C'est pour ça que j'ai investi deux ans de ma vie à travailler très fort pour être capable de proposer la législation, le projet de loi 41, qui a finalement passé et qui, j'espère, va être mis en oeuvre après l'adoption de ce projet de loi ici.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I'm proud to rise today and represent the people of Kitchener Centre in this House and bring their voice here.

I want to thank the government. There's a lot of good things in this bill, and I think it shows that there's some progress being made. I especially want to thank them for listening to, for example, the people of Brampton and Caledon in addressing the challenges with illegal truck yards and giving the municipalities more tools in their tool box to address these issues so that they can have a livable place of residence in their communities.

I also want to thank the government for coming to the finish line on alleviating debt for folks who've been trafficked. I know it's the member from Ottawa–Vanier and the member from Guelph—it was a cross-partisan bill. When we work across party lines I think we achieve good things, so I'm grateful that work has seen the finish line.

Also, the work around restraining orders: Recognizing that people often move from place to place in order to avoid accountability, we need to make sure that whether it's child protection, restraining orders or other things, we are making sure that we're working across jurisdictions to ensure that people are safe.

Some of the challenges with this bill are more of the Big Brother approach. I see that we have another bill that says the word “directives” so many times. I've heard from MPPs, “No, no, we won't misuse it. It will be fine. Don't worry. We're not going to take over police forces. We're not going to tell them what to do.” But that's exactly what directives are.

I want to hear from my police force—I haven't had time to consult yet with the police in my area—to see how they feel about this approach. It's a concentration of power.

Really, this is a Premier you can't trust. I think MC Hammer said it best when he said, “This is a Premier you can't trust.” No? Nothing? Come on, guys.

Interjection.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Thank you. Jeez.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association said this is not normal. It's not normal to have these kinds of directives. That says a lot.

Another concern I have is about more powers given to transit system officials. I live in an area where the safe consumption sites were closed. These are evidence-based, public health care responses. These were spaces that were health care clinics. The government used our own tax dollars to market them as chaotic cesspools of heathenness, whereas I walked into my CTS and I found a health care clinic filled with compassion and love, empowering science and a pathway out of addiction.

I'm sure the member from Ottawa–Vanier also sees that when you close these sites, people are pushed out into the streets, into alleyways. And now we're making it illegal to do drugs in public. I don't think any of us want to be witness to folks who have nowhere else to meet their addiction needs. This is a diagnosable illness; opioid dependence is a health condition in the DSM.

Now, for folks who don't have the privilege of having thousands and thousands of dollars to go to private rehab, the wait times have gone from one month to 10 months. They're forced—they're really forced because withdrawal cold turkey when you're homeless is just not possible. If anything, the increase in homelessness has led to more addiction. People cope with homelessness by using drugs. So now we do find people using drugs in transit spaces or public spaces, and now it's illegal. We talk about it being illegal to be homeless: “Let's clear encampments. People can't exist there,” but there's nowhere to go.

This government should be investing in rehab. It shouldn't take 10 months to access rehab. Everybody who works in addictions knows that if somebody comes to you—if my family member comes to me and says, “I want to get clean,” they need help then and there, not in 10 months. That's why we have revolving doors and people can't get clean.

This approach of criminalizing addiction, criminalizing homelessness, goes against evidence. That just shows that this government really has no plan that's rooted in evidence that's going to work. This is not a plan. This is not a strategy. This is a Premier you can't trust.

With the CTS closures, we're only going to see more drug addiction and drug use in public. By closing these centres, we are causing public use of drugs. You are criminalizing a problem that you're causing. We saw a 70% increase in emergency room visits, a 70% increase in overdoses when the last round of CTS sites were closed, let alone when this new one takes place. We had supports in my riding from child cares, from residences in the area who said they actually saw less needles when the CTS was there.

Policing and bylaw officers and handcuffs and jail beds do not solve homelessness and do not solve addiction. We know from Ombudsman reports that people are not accessing addictions services and mental health care in our jails. These are not rehabilitative spaces. If anything, they've been reported as violating people's human rights. This is not a way to make a population better.

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What we need is that homelessness ends with housing, and that's where people can go. Addiction ends with rehab; otherwise we are back playing whack-a-mole. This is a government that creates a game of whack-a-mole, and municipalities across the province are spending millions and millions of dollars on shelter beds, affordable housing, supportive housing, but also on security guards. We are burning dollars on municipalities doing the wrong approach to solving homelessness. We need a partner in this government to actually address this.

By empowering more people—I'm not sure about transit officer training. My hope is that we can ensure they have adequate training because we will see additional racial profiling. That's a risk of expanding police powers without adequate training. I worry that we'll see more Black, Indigenous and racialized people being jailed, and this is not a solution. We need assurances from this government that that's not going to happen.

And it's an expensive approach. Spending \$1.5 million or up to \$3.5 million on a jail bed is way more expensive than spending \$125,000 on a supportive housing bed. That supportive housing bed is on the continuum of housing to get people back into an independent healthy space.

We need to find solutions for our justice system—50% of charges are stayed. I want to give the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region and Community Justice Initiatives a big shout-out. We proposed using restorative justice as a way to support survivors of sexual violence. Have options. We need freedom. We need choice in this province when it comes to our justice system, but what we're left with is a failure of the Attorney General. A failure—50% is pretty much a failing grade. If you get 51% in high school, it's a gift. It means you actually didn't pass; they want you to just keep going. But 50% is not well.

I've talked to court workers, and they tell me exactly why this is happening. Court workers are underpaid. They're traumatized, psychologically speaking. They take sick days because of burnout, and they say they're way overwhelmed. We could be doing much better job running a good system. If we want to run this government like a business, at least start with the court system. Make sure it functions properly.

I don't appreciate locking youth up. We saw what happened at Waypoint; we had somebody locked up for 20 years. I think we have to learn some lessons about what we're doing at Waypoint and make sure this never happens to our youth. This could lead to more harm.

Finally, I'd like us to look at prevention, especially online. We're seeing an escalation of violence. Strangulation is the norm in pornography. We're seeing an increase in pornography addiction. I talked to a lawyer; she said she used to see one case a month where a violent offender would use violence against women to get an erection. Now she sees five in a week. That's how bad it is. We are doing nothing to prevent this misuse of violence in terms of pornography and pornography addiction, and there are no supports in the community for this.

We also aren't seeing prevention of trafficking. Kids are using Roblox, they're using Snapchat, and that's where predators go. There are no protections for them online. The luring is happening all the time, and I don't see us putting in those safeguards. We could be doing a lot to prevent our kids from getting into harm's way. That's what I would like to see in this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks to the member from Kitchener Centre on her presentation on Bill 119. She said something that I completely agree with: that the government is criminalizing a problem that they created—for sure. I mean, we live this, because in the encampment in Waterloo region, there was a ruling about it—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I'm sorry to interrupt the member.

Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

Government House leader.

Hon. Steve Clark: Hi, Speaker. Please continue the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Please continue.

Ms. Catherine Fife: This is a quote: "People who can't believe that a judge would prevent the dismantling of an encampment need to understand that this is what happens when we let things get so bad that the shelter of last resort is not even a bed in a municipal hospital but a miserable tent in an encampment outdoors.

"Judge Gibson even pointed out that simply allowing people to legally move to another similarly miserable encampment would likely provide the minimal respect for human life under the charter, which is required of governments.

"The region doesn't need to provide much, the province doesn't either, but they need to do something."

What does the member from Kitchener Centre think about the state of affairs with the encampment in Waterloo region?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I'm appalled, because there's been a lot of misinformation and disinformation. I live blocks from that encampment; I walk past it every day. My community rallied. We raised millions of dollars. We got developers, federal money. There are supportive housing beds that have had sheets on them since October across the street from this encampment—literally across the street.

I've been showing pictures to government members for months now, begging them to move these people across the streets, to put—because we have sheets on beds. It's built. We built it. We built it, and all we need are people to work there.

Another bit of misinformation is the fact that all the judge said was, "You can clear the encampment if you can give them somewhere to go." People have nowhere to go,

and in my community, for every affordable unit we build, we lose 39. We're hemorrhaging people onto the street through illegal evictions, high rents. The best we can do is at least provide somewhere else for people to go, and that place should be supportive housing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: The supervisor's report on South Riverdale said the following: "Extended perimeter needle sweeps are particularly important when a CTS is in close proximity to a school or daycare and the 15m perimeter guideline should be assessed especially in these occurrences.... CTS staff have commenced a second daily needle sweep just before school lets out."

This government made sure that there were no CTS sites operating within 200 metres of a school or a daycare. I would invite the member to comment on whether or not she thought this was a good idea.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: If you would like to see a letter from the child care centre saying that they support the CTS centre—we need health care options for people with addictions. They're not going to magically get clean while they're homeless. They're not going to magically get clean without rehab.

Those things do not exist in my community. In fact, I just said, we have 44 beds where people could get help. They could get better. The sheets are on the bed and there are no operating dollars, and that is not a unicorn.

We saw a 70% increase in emergency room visits. We saw a 70% increase in overdoses. I talked to an emergency room nurse. She said, "This is like trying to keep a wave upon the sand, because people come back and they come back and they come back." It gets in the way of them being able to do health care jobs.

We could be diverting folks with addiction issues into a CTS. We had done all of the heavy lifting. It was part of our community. Don't get me wrong: I am impacted by the effects of homelessness and drug addiction in my community, as are many of the business members, but we need solutions that are proven to work, not brushing it under the carpet.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): We have time for a very quick question and response. Questions?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I always appreciate hearing the member opposite speak, but I want to just get clarity, because she talks about some of the impacts and some other things she thinks the government should be doing. We need to put a finer point on it. Is she against enhancing the authorities that are needed to deal with the impacts of public consumption of drugs on our transit agencies and buses? I wasn't quite sure exactly if she's against that.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I just think there's a better way to spend money that shows that we solve the problem. When we move people, they exist somewhere else, and they do that thing somewhere else.

We shouldn't be spending money on security guards; we should be spending money on supportive housing.

Have you gone to a supportive housing facility recently? It's a—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'm honoured to rise in the House today and speak about the work this government is undertaking to protect Ontario, keep communities safe and hold offenders accountable. Of course, Madam Speaker, I'm referring to Bill 119, the Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act.

Without a shadow of a doubt, Bill 119 represents the wide-ranging ambition and the laser-focused determination that this government has for protecting Ontario. It builds on the major and historic measures that we've already taken to strengthen public safety, expand court capacity and crack down on dangerous offenders.

I'm talking about measures that have been implemented through the passage of legislation like the Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act in 2023, the Enhancing Access to Justice Act in 2024, and the Protect Ontario through Safer Streets and Stronger Communities Act in 2025. I'd be remiss not to mention Bill 75, the Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act, 2025, which, if passed, would provide law enforcement and the courts with formidable tools.

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The tools are to:

- make bail meaningful, more real and more consequential for people accused of serious crimes;

- crack down on dangerous and reckless driving that has the potential to devastate innocent families;

- enhance support mechanisms for victims of crime; and

- provide public safety personnel with the additional tools and supports that they need to carry out their jobs and responsibilities effectively.

Speaker, I could go on and on in heralding the important work our government has proposed and already delivered upon when it comes to public safety. But under the leadership of Premier Ford, this side of the House has always operated under the MO that looks to the future, not the past. With this in mind, in Bill 119, we're taking decisive action to make our communities safer, give police and other public safety personnel stronger enforcement tools, and strengthen protections for victims of crime and other vulnerable Ontarians.

In the time that I have to speak about this significant piece of proposed legislation, I would like to shine a light on some of the strong measures our ministry, the Ministry of the Attorney General, is looking to implement, because at its core, Bill 19 is a comprehensive whole-of-government effort. In addition to the meaningful initiatives that have been proposed by the Solicitor General, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Transportation, the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement, and the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, the Attorney General and I are stepping up to set the conditions for concrete change that protects Ontarians.

One of the provisions in Bill 119 that I'm most proud of relates to the actions we are taking to protect vulnerable people in this province. Through my time in government, specifically as the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, and in my current role as the Associate Attorney General, I have obtained a clear understanding of the trials and tribulations that victims face in navigating the justice system. Our government will always stand up to protect communities, our most vulnerable at-risk individuals and victims of crime. We take that commitment very seriously.

Here's how we're underscoring that promise: If passed, Bill 119 would allow restraining orders issued elsewhere in Canada to be enforceable without additional court declarations. What objectives does this proposal accomplish, Speaker? We believe it relates to quite a few, namely, closing gaps that previously existed in the protections the province could provide to victims, improving safety conditions for victims moving to Ontario by allowing restraining orders from other provinces to be enforced in Ontario without a court order, and making protections available faster for at-risk people.

As it currently stands, the system for enforcing out-of-province restraining orders in Ontario does not meet the standards and expectations that victims deserve. Because of the inaction of prior governments, at-risk individuals moving to Ontario face delays, additional legal costs and temporary gaps in protections. To us, the status quo is unacceptable, and that's why we're doing something about it. Simply put, our government will always be on the side of the victims of crime, and Bill 119 is another platform for us to demonstrate this and deliver real results for at-risk individuals.

Moreover, Madam Speaker, under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government is also aiming to stand with victims of crime and, more specifically, victims of harassment. Through Bill 119, we are amending the Victims' Bill of Rights to create a new statutory tort of harassment. This is significant because it provides a civil remedy for victims of harassment that is in keeping with protections found in other provinces.

As many in this House might know, harassment is a matter that is usually addressed in the criminal court system. But through our proposed amendments, victims would now be empowered to sue their harassers for damages in the civil court system, regardless of whether there is a criminal conviction or not. A lower civil standard of proof would apply in these instances, meaning that our changes would make it easier for victims of criminal harassment to get compensation, even if the offender is not convicted in court.

These reforms would ensure that victims of harassment have the same access to justice in civil courts as victims of human trafficking. And as a whole, this new statutory tort would provide additional recourse for victims, strengthen accountability directed at offenders and support victim-centred justice.

But perhaps the provisions of Bill 119 that stand out to me the most are the measures we're proposing to protect survivors of human trafficking.

In the year that I've spent as the Associate Attorney General of Ontario, I've heard from survivors, prosecutors, law enforcement and advocates about the issue of debt coercion that victims of human trafficking face. Currently, survivors can be left responsible for coerced debts forced on them by traffickers, damaging survivors' credit and limiting their access to housing, banking and employment. If a survivor of human trafficking remains trapped with damaged credit, this limits access to housing or banking.

Survivors of human trafficking carry an average of \$14,555 in coerced debt across eight financial obligations, including credit cards, telecom, payday loans and auto loans. That kind of a financial burden would seem monumental for most Ontarians; imagine how more devastating it would be for victims of human trafficking, who often have very little to begin with.

As I mentioned, coerced debt blocks access to housing, employment, banking and education. In extreme cases, survivors face a harrowing, difficult choice between returning to trafficking or filing for insolvency. I was stunned to hear this from stakeholders. No survivor should ever be faced with the possibility of returning to a way of life that took so much away from them.

As part of our government's commitment to stand with victims of crime and protect vulnerable Ontarians, Bill 119 is addressing the issue of coercive debt directly. Survivors called for this change, and we're listening. If passed, Bill 119 would implement the regulations set forth in another piece of groundbreaking legislation, Bill 41, the Protection from Coerced Debts Incurred in relation to Human Trafficking Act. Bill 41 has already enabled the creation of a program that is run by Victim Services Toronto: Reclaim. The program works with survivors and creditors to investigate and clear debts that were fraudulently or coercively incurred through human trafficking. Reclaim has expanded to 85 creditors, 67 agencies and 114 advocates across Ontario and beyond. And at program exit, participants reported significant improvements across multiple areas of their lives, mirroring exactly the areas most devastated by debt before they entered the program. For instance, 72% of survivors said that their hope for the future had improved very much following their entrance into Reclaim. Bill 119 would expand upon these program service offerings. Up to \$50,000 in debt relief could be provided for victims of human trafficking who were forced or coerced into debt.

Again, the positive outcomes that this piece of legislation would generate are significant and, quite frankly, life-changing on an individual basis. Survivors would be assisted in rebuilding their lives. Previously insurmountable financial barriers created by traffickers could now be removed. And survivors would attain the supports needed to live in dignity, with a pathway to the long-term recovery and independence that they so very much deserve.

Madam Speaker, as part of its many responsibilities, the justice system in our province has a duty to reinforce

public safety and protect victims. Survivors of human trafficking face challenges and traumas that are distinct and more long-lasting than victims of many other crimes. Our government recognizes this and is proud to stand with them in providing a sensible system of support that enables them to get back on track.

Building on measures and initiatives that have already been undertaken, Bill 119 continues our resolute commitment to supporting victims and survivors.

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This is also a great time for me to speak about our courts. Municipalities have raised concerns that existing workflows and resource models are no longer adequate to support timely and effective resolution of charges. Currently, when prosecutors and defendants reach a plea agreement for tickets, such as speeding, they still have to appear before a justice to enter the guilty plea. Madam Speaker, this contributes to delays and increased burdens on the judicial system. We need to change that.

Through the Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act, 2026, we are taking decisive action to streamline court processes and support victims of crime.

We're proposing changes to the Provincial Offences Act to resolve cases faster, by allowing prosecutors and defendants to enter plea agreements without judicial oversight. To be clear, this would only apply to minor offences charged by a ticket. These changes would reduce pressure on judicial resources and, again, help resolve matters quicker and more efficiently. As a result, these provisions would allow minor offences to be resolved in a faster manner, reduce court backlogs and free up judicial resources for more serious cases.

Our government intends to protect Ontarians and keep communities safe by proposing solutions that have real zeal and vigour. Our proposals to streamline judicial processes and, more specifically, streamline the early resolution process under the Provincial Offences Act will do just that.

Madam Speaker, we need to protect Ontario communities. If passed, our initiatives in this new piece of legislation will do just that. Indeed, this is just the latest step in our government's plan to strengthen Ontario's justice system, protect victims of crime, hold offenders accountable and keep communities safe.

Our prescriptive approach to addressing the needs of victims head-on is informed by stakeholder feedback, lived experiences and concrete evidence. And with this input, we're focused on delivering measurable outcomes that support our most vulnerable citizens.

But as I said earlier, Speaker, Bill 119 was a multi-ministerial, collaborative effort, and I'd like to express my admiration and appreciation for all my ministerial colleagues and their staff who worked so hard on this bill.

If passed, I know that this piece of legislation will help build upon the goal to make Ontario a safe place to live, work and raise a family. And even more, I know it will build on our commitment to safer communities and building a stronger justice system that provides supports to those who need them the most.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Before I ask my question, I just want to say a quick congratulations to my husband, Dale Fife, on his upcoming retirement. He has dedicated 31 years to his students in Waterloo region. He's a really good teacher—one of the best compliments you can give anybody.

Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School is a better school because of him and his commitment to public education. His love of history and law and anthropology was contagious for his students. Parents loved him at parent-teacher interviews because the dinner table conversation was more interesting. And in my humble and yet informed opinion, he is the best teacher in Ontario.

To my colleague across the way: I hear that you believe very strongly in this bill. I just cannot reconcile your passion for Bill 119 and for voting against Lydia's Law. So my question to you is, why did you vote against Lydia's Law?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for your question.

Congratulations to your husband as well on, I guess, a well-deserved retirement. Although, we need teachers with experience, and it would be nice to keep them in the system.

But with respect to where we stand and what we are trying to do: For us, the most important thing we can do is keep Ontarians safe and ensure that we provide the best supports possible to victims, and also to ensure that we build a system that works for not just the victims, but also deals with perpetrators and how we handle those situations and providing the necessary supports.

So the work that we're doing is really comprehensive. It's all-inclusive. It's trying to, across ministries, create a system that will support the individual and provide them with the requisite tools to be able to be safe, to be able to pursue civil cases against the individual and ensure that they have the opportunity to be able to move forward in their lives, which is something I think is really important. I think you'll agree with that as well, that an individual deserves every right possible to be able to go forward and live a full life.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Orléans.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you, Minister. I was particularly interested in the point about the harassment aspects as well. A technical question: If you don't have the answer today, I understand that. If maybe the House leader or the whip or someone could commit to getting us the answer, that would be great. Does the government envision that the provision around harassment would be retroactive, so cases, say, from three, four, five years ago might then be able to be taken up in this new provision for suing the harasser? Again, if you don't have the answer today, it would be great to be able to get that some time shortly in the future. Thank you, Minister.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for the question. I really don't know the answer to that from an Attorney

General standpoint. What I recall from law school is that laws technically are not retroactive, so it would be from the day of proclamation going forward. But I think that's something that's definitely worth looking into, to see if it could be in any way retroactive.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank the Associate Attorney General for his comments. I was listening intently. One of the things that struck me was that it really ties in with the Premier's message around quicker, faster, immediate. I'm sure many of us in this House have heard him talk about that: quicker, faster, immediate. We need to make sure that justice is meted out in a rapid manner, that it is respecting due process, of course, but also that it doesn't take a massively long amount of time, especially for the victims and especially for those who have been impacted by bad actors.

Can this Associate Attorney General share with the House a little bit about how this legislation builds on that goal of the Premier's to ensure that every aspect of government is quicker, faster and immediate? In this case, that's the administration of justice.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I thank my colleague for that question. It's interesting, because I see this legislation as having two parts: one, the part of establishing what it is that we're going to do; then the second part, which I think is probably more important, is the tools that are being put in place to be able to do the very things that we're trying to do.

I think that it is in line with the Premier's wanting to see things done faster and efficiently. It does bring and strengthens public safety by giving law enforcement, prosecutors and regulators stronger tools to crack down on illegal activity.

I think it is important because it addresses specific issues that have been brought to our attention from individual stakeholders, from organizations, from prosecutors and from crowns basically saying that we need to do more and how do we go about doing it.

I think this legislation does that. It creates what we consider to be important aspects of what needs to be done, but it also gives the tools to be able to do it more efficiently and give the results that are needed so that we build trust and hope in the system again.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to be able to ask a question. I appreciated the thoughtful remarks on human trafficking and the scourge that that is in the province. I've had the opportunity to do a ride-along and see a bit behind the scenes with the human trafficking division at DRPS and applaud them for the ongoing work that they do.

When the minister talked about victim services and, of course, the immense work that is happening across the province, his comments on duty to reinforce the public safety as a responsibility of government—I would like to know what that duty to reinforce public safety will look like as we're heading into a major sports event, FIFA. A

lot of the victim services and agencies are preparing for the fallout, the terrible crimes that will happen over and over in hotels with so many people coming to town. There isn't that public awareness that many of the girls that will be trafficked at these events, it's without their permission. People don't really understand this. Talk to any of the agencies.

I would ask the minister, as this is a continuing problem that changes, how do we educate the public as it continues to infiltrate our communities?

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Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: That's a great question. It's a question that deserves a much longer discussion.

From my standpoint, I've always said that the most important things we can do are education and prevention, being proactive and being able to go forward and provide people with supports or knowledge and information to keep people safe.

I think you mentioned YRP. YRP is one of the services that—I've attended victims of crime. I've attended many of their events. I've gone out with the police services. As a matter of fact, I'm meeting with the police chief and the incoming police chief to discuss what more can be done from the standpoint of ensuring that we embed into our systems a better knowledge base so that individuals can understand the sign—and not just the individuals who potentially are going to be trafficked, but also, what are we doing to educate the parents?

This legislation is really focused on addressing many of the issues that we already see in the system and trying to put the tools into the hands to do that enforcement, so it is, in a lot of ways, reactive. But there is a lot of work that's being done on a proactive basis, whether it's through the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, through MCCSS and other work that the Attorney General is doing, as well, to ensure that we have a system that's robust and providing that education and the prevention supports.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Hon. Nina Tangri: I have a question for the Associate Attorney General. I think we can all understand that retail theft has really become something very difficult for our businesses, and we can understand how devastating it can be for a small business. So I'd just like to ask the Associate Attorney General if he can speak to what we're doing to address retail theft in Ontario, as part of this bill.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for that question. I think, again, what we are doing with this legislation is to create the tools that are needed across the board—whether it be the police, whether it be prosecutors, crowns, whether it be corrections—in terms of how things are managed and how they're handled. That's one of the reasons why it's—actually, I hate to use the term “beautiful bill,” but it is, because—

Interjection.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: It's a big, beautiful bill—even better.

The reason that it's a big, beautiful bill is because it is really where all the ministries are intersecting and dealing with a facet of the problem. We know that when a problem is addressed in a siloed manner, there are always unintended consequences. I think one of the greatest things about this piece of legislation is that we've approached it from so many different angles.

Is it a perfect piece of legislation? Is it the last piece of legislation that we're going to put forward? We know it's not. And why? Because we're building on what we started in 2023, with legislation that—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Thank you.

Further debate? I recognize the member from Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you very much, Speaker, and I might ask a little bit of your indulgence.

This beginning of June marks the beginning of the very well-earned retirement of one of my favourite constituents, who also is my husband. Jonathan Arnold began—

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: He's all of our favourite.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes. He's one of my favourite constituents. Unfortunately, the constituents also might prefer him to me. But there you have it.

Jonathan Arnold is my husband. He began his 35-year career as a teacher. He worked for 30 years as a committed bureaucrat at the federal government—I had no idea how important the work of bureaucrats really is until I lived with one—at global affairs. He also worked for Indigenous affairs, and then Parks Canada.

He's leaving Parks Canada. He is currently serving in the role of regional director for Ontario. He's responsible for the Ontario national parks and historic sites and monuments and waterways.

He has made a career of believing in people and believing in better and working towards it.

So I want to congratulate him on his well-deserved retirement. I am looking forward to sharing all of his next adventures and the soon-to-be-renovated basement—yes.

Congratulations, Jon, on your retirement. I love you.

I was really tempted to sit down, but I have a whole speech to give.

Speaker, I am pleased to be able to stand and join in this debate on Bill 119, the Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act. Bill 119 is another law-and-order-framed omnibus bill. There are 16 different schedules in this bill that have quite a range of topics. But as we are talking about this bill—and we've had an important conversation about justice, about some of the specifics raised in this—I would say that our communities are not safer today than when this Premier took office. Our courts are backlogged, the opioid crisis has reached every corner of the province and prisoners are literally walking out of jail; that has been something we have dealt with in the last couple of months. This bill, I would say, is damage control.

This government has promised action on transit safety, retail theft and animal welfare. None of that is contentious, but none of it is in this legislation. So I think that this is a matter of “it can wait till regulation,” but I hate when they

do that, when it could be an important debate; we could make things better when we see it in the actual statute, in the actual legislation. New powers for transit special constables, the retail theft task force, and the ban on ear cropping and tail docking for pets have all been left to future regulations, and those regulations may or may not be a priority.

One thing this bill actually does get right is finally acting on coerced debt for human trafficking survivors, but it has taken three years to get here. Bill 41, which achieved the same goal, received royal assent in December 2023, and was never brought into force. Survivors waited while the government consulted, delayed and repackaged, so I will say it is better late than never, but victims did deserve better.

So Speaker, where is this coming from? Well, again, this is a kind of a justice and law-and-order bill, and the government talks a lot about that being a priority. But this is justice talk, not necessarily justice walk, is what we've got here. The government, or this Premier, is leaving victims behind again. While Bill 119 adds new rights for harassment victims on paper, it doesn't put a single dollar towards the supports that survivors actually need. Victim services organizations survive on grants instead of sustained funding, and the victim compensation fund was dismantled without a proper replacement.

Speaker, one of the things I want to tell you is that we've recently heard from the John Howard Society. An important part of any piece of legislation is that we listen to those affected, but also we should be listening to the experts. So if the government is bringing forward an omnibus bill to keep Ontario's streets and communities safe—or whatever this is called—I would have hoped that they would have talked to a number of different agencies and experts to find out what they wanted. So we've all heard from the John Howard Society, and they have brought to the attention of the MPPs in this House that referrals to the Direct Accountability Program—the DAP, which is funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General—have more than doubled in the past few months due to increased crown reliance on diversion.

So they have written, and I'll share part of their letter:

“Referrals to ... the Direct Accountability Program have more than doubled in the past few months due to increased crown reliance on diversion. Current funding is not keeping pace with demand, creating immediate capacity pressures. Our program supervisor at MAG states that there is currently not funding to address this issue....

“The Direct Accountability Program is being used more frequently to:

—keep low-risk cases out of court;

—support faster resolutions and fewer court dates to resolution;

—allow crown attorneys to focus on more serious matters.”

And they have said that without additional capacity, these cases will return to the court system, increasing delays and associated costs. This is a program that is

important, that is effective, that is necessary, and they're saying this government is underfunding it.

They have said their request is, "We are urging your support and advocacy for MAG to allocate targeted funding to expand DAP capacity in line with current referral volumes. This investment—equivalent to the cost of one additional full-time staff member plus associated expenses—is essential to maintaining system efficiency, preventing bottlenecks, and ensuring ongoing cost control. As demand increases, modest investment now will prevent greater costs and delays downstream."

1530

Shelley Lawrence, the director of community, justice and residential services, has signed this letter and sent it to all MPPs.

I want to read that last line again. "As demand increases, modest investment now will prevent greater costs and delays downstream." I don't know about that. Most people have heard the old adage, "Measure twice, cut once," or "Use your head and save your feet," or "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"—that idea of planning ahead. This is a government that cuts first and measures never, right?

Again, I'm highlighting an important voice in the community that says this is what's needed to help support, broadly, the justice system. But it's not in this bill—maybe the next one.

So I hope they are listening to those who are bringing them good ideas.

Speaker, recently in this House—in fact, just the end of last week—we were here during the debate for Lydia's Law. I want to applaud my colleague from Waterloo, who has invested her time, attention, her heart and soul in walking alongside Lydia and her mother and her family and survivors across Ontario in seeing this piece of legislation to the House—through the process now a couple of times and, very unfortunately, through a negative vote, where this government chose not to invest in this initiative, chose not to support Lydia's Law.

I want to read some of what the member from Waterloo shared: "Over 40% of sexual assault cases in Ontario took over one year to complete, from the time of their first court appearance to the rendering of a final victim verdict—even if they got a verdict, Madam Speaker—over 60% took longer than eight months and over 80% took longer than four months. The median time required for a completion of cases was close to a year, at 310 days." And that's if they make it to court.

I had a young woman in my office—unrelated—and she was very interested in Lydia's Law. She wasn't able to come on Thursday, but she brought to me her story. She had been to and through court. She did get her day in court—many don't—opposite an accuser who had signed a confession, all of the hospital paperwork that was necessary, everything that was needed. She ticked every single box in terms of having evidence. But he was found not guilty. He was acquitted. Without getting into it here, there's a lot that can be learned from her story and her case that would help when it comes to training, that would help

when it comes to how we treat a victim on the stand in a courtroom.

Lydia's Law is an important part—and I will read to you from Sharon, who wrote to me and said, "I am writing to ask you to support Lydia's Law/Bill 112 for sexual assault survivors. It is to make the independent legal advice program (ILA) more accessible to survivors, to review the Victim Quick Response Program, and to remove time limits for survivors seeking mental health support.

"These small changes will make a difference to me and to all the survivors of sexual assault who face the criminal court system here in Ontario. The criminal court system is a challenging place to navigate for a survivor and they need our support."

Thank you, Sharon, for your letter.

I would have imagined that this government could have, at the very least, supported those small pieces in Lydia's Law. It's not a system overhaul. It was about supporting victims. Interestingly, the member who spoke on behalf of the government talked about how it wasn't enough—that the system was quite broken, that this was too small—but their private member's bill about restraining orders has made it into this piece of government legislation. That small piece that she suggested was worth doing, and we can all admit it. So if we can say that Lydia's Law was worth doing but just wasn't big enough, then by all means, take it, make it your own, put it into government legislation; do better.

There are a lot of women who will not report, because why should they, when they see that they are unlikely to get their day in court. When they see that reporting is unlikely to lead to charges and someone actually serving time, it's very hard to make the case that it's worth reporting.

I will say—this is something that the member from Waterloo had shared with us: "It's important to hold the Attorney General to account," because she wants to know "why these 1,639 cases were dispensed or stayed. Were survivors exhausted? Were they harmed by coming forward? Did they look at the system as hostile? Did they lose trust in the system?"

"If I were the Attorney General, I would want to know, because I would want to solve that problem, and that is why the Auditor General made the recommendations."

I don't know why the Attorney General wouldn't want to know why women might not come forward, why survivors of sexual assault don't trust the system, by and large.

This is also from the debate: "Survivors believe the offender wouldn't be convicted or adequately punished: 40% of women believe that. And they feared the court process. The court system is not seen as something that is going to help you if you come forward and disclose."

The "reporting rates and reasons for not reporting are not the same in all communities, for all survivors. Indigenous women, racialized women, disabled women are more likely to not report. They don't see themselves in the justice system, and they do not trust it.

“About 95% of survivors of sexual assault choose not report to police, often because they believe it is unlikely that their report would lead to a conviction.”

Lydia's Law was a small piece that would support survivors of sexual assault, and this government was not interested in moving it forward. Twice, they have not been interested in moving it forward.

While I have the time, I will also add that, since this bill is about safety and about safer communities, I want to take the opportunity to highlight that while the leader of the official opposition was in town, in Oshawa, we got the invitation to meet with some education workers—from educational assistants and custodial staff, folks at CUPE 218. They were quite eager to tell us about the challenges in the schools that they face in terms of safety, lack of support, lack of resources, the realities of what that workload and constant stress and chaos actually feels like in their workplace.

I know that they are revving up for what could be strike action, and I really hope that this government takes a good look at what it would mean to invest properly in our schools, to ensure appropriate staffing levels, to ensure PPE that fits, to ensure that students have what it is that they need to be successful in schools.

Speaker, I used to be a teacher and I remember—I taught so long ago that “EA” stood for “educational assistant,” and they got to educationally assist. Now, EAs are not able to assist with the education needs. Many of them are dealing with children who are running, who might be flight risks; they're dealing with safety and behaviour. While that is very valuable work, it is really challenging to have such diminished capacity in the system that students who need someone to sit with them and help them, who need that extra support—those students no longer have that. That does not exist, at least not in the schools in south Oshawa or in many of our areas that are challenged.

So I hope that the government will look carefully and invest appropriately, not only to avoid the strike but to ensure that children across the province have the resources that they need and that everyone who works in a school has a safe and supported workplace.

I'm going to take a minute and add that, while we're talking about safer streets, as we're looking at this bill, we have seen the government lean into penalties and fines, but not always and not everywhere.

Case in point: I have a private member's bill; that is Bill 47, Fairness for Road Users Act. It's currently on the order paper. We've debated it in this House, when it was Bill 15. I brought it forward before when it was Bill 62, and before when it was Bill 122. It's an important piece of legislation, but it's pretty small. It's totally doable. It would have fit so nicely as schedule 17 in this bill. I would have voted against it but still applauded them doing it. Well, maybe—I don't know if I'm voting against this bill, actually, Speaker. We'll save that.

1540

But I think it's important—I want to remind the government that Bill 47 is the Fairness for Road Users Act, and

it would increase penalties if someone on the road breaks a driving law and hurts or kills someone. That bill would give the court options during sentencing so that families might no longer suffer insult after suffering injury. If someone makes a turn not in safety or an improper left-hand turn, they're obviously not setting out to kill someone, but if they do—or catastrophic injury—it's a \$500 fine, maximum. So what we've heard from the courts, what we've heard from judges is that they wish that they could reach for either a stiffer penalty or a different framework that would allow them to lose their licence or have a licence suspension or just different tools for the judge at sentencing instead of just a flat \$500 fine, which is a slap on the wrist and an insult to families.

I want to thank Gerry Rhodes, who is relentless. He's a fantastic advocate and voice, lives in Goulais River, actually. His MPP is here, so I'll be excited to pass along his letter afterwards. He's a member of the Bikers Rights Organization for 42 years, has been involved in moving this bill forward multiple times. When I had it, I had debated this bill in this House, it went to committee—different Minister of Transportation—it advanced through committee, and we had to do some fine tuning. Unfortunately, there has not been interest from this current Premier and government to move it forward. I would encourage them to take another look, to put it into one of their omnibus bills. Maybe I'll even get to vote against my own piece of legislation, but that's not the point. The point is that we make this province safer, we make this province better and we listen to folks out in the community like Gerry Rhodes who have been calling for years to ensure that all people on our roadways are safe, and if terrible things happen, that they do have access to justice.

Speaker, the Ontario NDP knows that real community safety means actively funding the system. So we will, when it's our turn to govern, push to clear court backlogs, properly resource bail supervision and restore meaningful compensation for victims of crime. Safe communities are built by investing in justice, mental health and the social supports that stop harm before it happens.

I believe in a better Ontario, and I wish that we could all work towards that because we do all indeed deserve safer communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Thank you to the member from Oshawa for her comments this afternoon on Bill 119. One of the parts of the bill she didn't talk about—I know her riding is kind of on the outskirts of the GTA, but it's more of an urban riding. But a big issue is the illegal truck parking lots in my riding, illegal land use, and there's a proposal in this bill to change the Planning Act to give municipalities administrative monetary penalty system powers to deal with these illegal land uses. And so, I want to ask the member what her thoughts were on schedule 7 of the bill.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Before I delve into answering that, Oshawa is not the outskirts of the GTA. I would like to hereby announce that Toronto is part of the greater

Oshawa area, and I hope that catches on. However, I take his point.

Speaker, what I will say is that the illegal truck parking has been an issue—

Interjection.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Psst. I'm answering you.

The illegal truck parking has been a real problem in the province. I was very pleased to see it in this bill. I was actually quite surprised that any of you were listening, no offence, because we have been raising it as an issue. There have been a series of petitions. We've been having meetings with the folks in the Caledon area. It's ugly and problematic.

But I would say that, while I'm glad to see that in this bill, I also want to see the government move forward on more trucking safety. We could have that conversation for hours. But even in those areas with the illegal truck yards, they're doing crazy things. Those roads were not designed for those trucks. It is not safe for anyone who lives in those areas. It is absolutely a significant problem. I am glad to see that it is in this bill. That was a piece I quite appreciated because I know it comes from communities, and I've been happy to be a part of the team bringing that forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to my colleague from Oshawa. She spoke about the bill, the Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act, for 20 minutes. In the beginning, you mentioned things that actually would help community, like Lydia's Law, or funding for courtrooms to reduce the backlog so people who are on trial aren't just ejected because they haven't been able to be tried on time—or prisoners who literally walked out of prison. I think there are still two of them wandering around our streets right now.

In your last response, you mentioned truck driver training briefly. I want to say, in northern Ontario, our streets are highways. We know there's a problem in northern Ontario, across Ontario, where people being trained on AZ transport trucks are able to drive even though they can't go in reverse, are able to drive even though they don't know how to unlock the brakes. There's proper training that should be happening that isn't happening, that the government has been aware of for a very long time and isn't enforcing.

How is it that that doesn't make it into a bill like this? I know my colleague from Mushkegowuk—James Bay had brought this up several times in private member's bills. How is it a good idea isn't adopted by the Conservative government to say, "Yes, let's stop this bad training so that we're saving lives in northern Ontario, on their streets"?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: There was a lot in that question. But what I'm going to say is if I, as an opposition member, know how bad the problem is or know many aspects of how bad the problem is with trucks on our roads—the lack of training, the lack of enforcement for bad actors. We've got a fantastic training school in Oshawa. It's got a great reputation, but it's not nearly as cheap as some of the bad actors, right?

The need to crack down, the need to enforce—that need is not being met by this government. If I have known about it for a long time, you better believe the Ministry of Transportation folks have known about it. And so, anything we see now in legislation is not enough. We had a heck of a report from the Auditor General, but we've had a heck of reports from a lot of the NDP colleagues on this side, not only the northern members.

It's a complicated problem, but it can be distilled down to: It can be fixed if this government decided to tackle it, enforce it and actually invest in it to keep our roads safe. It should be a priority of this government. I would challenge them to prove it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Interjection.

Mr. Matthew Rae: The member from Oshawa doesn't want me to ask a question this afternoon, colleagues.

I thank the member for her remarks this afternoon on a very important piece of legislation, Speaker. I know the member opposite did not want to say whether they're supporting it or not, but they will have to decide—my suspicion is relatively soon—if they're going to vote yea or nay to this government bill.

Will the member from Oshawa be voting to protect Oshawa and the greater Oshawa area of Ontario when the time comes? Yes or no?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I appreciate the opportunity to shed some light on my earlier comments. I will encourage the member to wait with bated breath until such time as I stand and cast my vote in this place, which might be tomorrow or perhaps the last day of this session—which could be tomorrow, Wednesday or Thursday. I will answer that question properly if that member will answer what day we rise.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Thank you to my friend the member from Oshawa for her comments today about Bill 119. I, particularly, was interested in her comments about Lydia's Law. I was honoured to co-sponsor Bill 112 responding to the 1,639 cases of sexual assault that were stayed or unfortunately timed out in Ontario's courts.

My question to the member: What does it say about the Conservative government that they voted against Lydia's Law and, at the same time, have these empty, vacuous commercials about how Ontario is being tough on crime when ostensibly they have potentially released 1,639 sexual predators into the community without ever having them face justice?

1550

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I appreciate the question. Before I answer it, I will say that I wish I had brought the letter I received from a father who wrote to me about the commercials and was very angry about them. Even when it was the Liberals doing all of their happy, shiny ads, I don't remember getting hate mail about it.

Ontarians are not impressed with the money being spent on these ads because they don't feel safer. They are not

reality, much like the preamble of this bill, which says that they are “protecting Ontario communities by supporting an efficient and effective justice system.”

The member was here and I appreciated his voice in debate on Thursday for Lydia’s Law, but this government should not be okay with having courtrooms in the province of Ontario that are shutting down because there isn’t enough money for courtroom security or crown attorneys or technical support. Because when the system fails at that level, we fail Ontarians. That’s what’s happening right now, on their watch, with their knowledge. I would say shame on this government for allowing that to be what is normal in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

MPP Paul Vickers: I’d like to ask a question about the private security sector. This sector plays an important role in safeguarding retail environments as well as protecting places of worship and critical infrastructure. However, as this industry has evolved, it is essential that legislation keeps pace to ensure consistent standards, proper oversight and modern training requirements. Proposed updates in Bill 119 would strengthen accountability while exploring new guard tiers that better align skills with risk environments, ultimately enhancing safety for both workers and the public.

Can the member opposite explain why they would not support modernizing this framework to improve standards and better protect Ontarians in these settings?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: No, I can’t really explain why I would be against that. But it’s a largely technical amendment in the act. The member is presuming that I’m against it; I have said no such thing.

But I’m excited to hear a government member talk about wanting safer workplaces, wanting workers to be safer, wanting the public to be safer. We have thoughts on that. In fact, I just raised the comments of workers in schools who don’t have what they need to have their workplaces be safe. So I’m hoping, in the spirit of that, they will make everyone safe.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Andrea Hazell: I rise today to speak to schedule 15 of Bill 119—amendments to the Towing and Storage Safety and Enforcement Act. We must confront the reality that brought us here.

Actually, I forgot to say I’m very happy I’m debating today. It might be my last time debating before this House rises.

We must confront the reality that brought us here. This legislation did not emerge in a vacuum. It exists because this government allowed parts of its towing industry to be associated with intimidation, with exploitation and with widespread consumer abuse. These are realities documented by police, by municipalities, by insurers and by this government’s own findings.

Let me be clear on the most troubling part of all: None of this is new information for this government. Police services warned about escalating safety risks years ago.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada warned about fraudulent activities years ago. Most importantly, consumers reported coercion and predatory towing practices years ago. This is nothing new here. This government, itself, established a towing task force in 2020 because of the severity of the problems plaguing this industry. If the warnings were already clear in 2020, why are we only now debating these minor amendments?

Governments do not solve systemic problems through headlines. Let me tell you, systems solve problems. Oversight solves problems. Transparency solves problems. Accountability solves problems. Ontarians are still waiting to see whether this government has actually built a system capable of delivering lasting reform.

Speaker, to understand the shortcomings of schedule 15 in this omnibus bill: There was no mention of commercial truck drivers’ training—nothing on commercial trucking in this schedule. This government’s own towing task force found that consumers experience coercion, aggressive roadside solicitation, inflated invoices, unauthorized fees and vehicle retention issues. These are not opposition accusations; these are the government’s own findings. Perhaps the most devastating finding of all was that 78% of drivers who accepted unsolicited tow trucks reported problems with their experience—78%. Speaker, when nearly eight out of 10 people report a problem, that is not a consumer issue. That is evidence of a systemic dysfunction. That is evidence of a system that lost public trust long before this government finally decided to act.

Listen to these experiences; they’re pretty alarming. Many Ontario drivers describe being pressured into signing documents immediately after an accident, while cold, shaken and under stress, only to later discover thousands of dollars in inflated charges. Many reported being unable to retrieve their vehicle because the company refused to release it to insurance representatives. Speaker, when families are involved in collisions, the first thing they should feel arriving at the scene is “help” in capital letters, H-E-L-P, not fear, not pressure, not intimidation.

This issue affects every single person who pays for car insurance in Ontario. Where does the money for these fraudulent inflated invoices ultimately come from? It comes from insurance payouts. When a \$500 tow becomes a \$4,000 bill with exorbitant storage fees, it’s the insurance system that pays. When insurance companies are forced to pay out billions in fraudulent claims, they don’t just absorb that cost; they pass it on to all of us in the form of higher premiums. That’s the whole entire issue.

Let’s review the changes to the appeal process. Schedule 15 amends the Towing and Storage Safety and Enforcement Act so that enforcement decisions may continue throughout appeal proceedings unless the divisional court specifically intervenes. In plain language, operators facing enforcement will no longer automatically pause those decisions by filing appeals.

The government says bad actors should not be allowed to abuse procedural loopholes. We agree. But when government expands its power, that requires stronger accountability, Speaker. This government seems to

believe that justice is only about speed. It can't be just about speed and speeding up the process. Real justice is also about fairness, consistency and meaningful access to appeals for everyone—everyone, not just those who can afford a lengthy court battle.

Speaker, on the 200-metre rule: This government will tell you they are creating a zone of safety, but let's be practical. Who will be enforcing this policy? Will it be police officers, while securing a collision scene, supposed to get out the measuring tape? I don't know. I'm just putting that on the table.

This rule does not permanently solve the issue. The real problem is the foot race to the victim. An operator can park 201 meters away and sprint to the driver's window. They are very aggressive—those are the bad actors, because we also know there are really, really good tow truck drivers. Speaker, these bad actors will continue their bad acting. The schedule creates a false sense of security while making minimal changes.

In 2025, the Ontario Provincial Police announced that a towing enforcement strategy had resulted in nearly 1,800 charges. The government will likely stand here and point to those charges as a sign of success. But a list of charges is not a strategy. An enforcement blitz is not a substitute for systemic oversight. It raises more questions than answers. Speaker, can the minister tell this House today, of those nearly 1,800 charges, how many resulted in a conviction? How many resulted in a licence being permanently revoked? Because charges without consequences are just headlines.

1600

We've seen those bad actors that are supposed to be off the street continue to be on the street. And then what happened? We've got a victim situation.

Can the minister provide the data on the average fine levied against operators found guilty of predatory practices? Can the minister tell us what proactive audits have been done on the thousands of other operators to ensure they are compliant? Or is this government's entire strategy based on waiting for the public to be harmed first, then they can react?

Speaker, this government wants the power to enforce the rules but not the obligation to be transparently accountable for them. They want the public to trust them with more power, but they refuse to provide the public with the basic data to justify that trust.

Nowhere in schedule 15 does the government establish mandatory public reporting requirements, annual transparency obligations or measurable accountability standards. They want stronger authority without measurable accountability.

If this government really wanted to fix the system, it wouldn't just make small technical changes. It would create a clear set of basic rights for drivers who need a tow. This would mean making sure people know the exact cost up front before their car is hooked up, giving them the freedom to choose which towing company to use and where their vehicle goes, requiring tow truck operators to be properly licensed, identifiable quickly, without being overcharged for storage or having their cars held unfairly.

This is what real reform looks like. It's simple, it's clear and it puts the safety and financial security of the public first.

Ontarians deserved better oversight years ago, not just now. Are we listening to our constituency? Are we listening to the people of Ontario? Ontario deserves real accountability now. This is something this government does not do very well.

I will miss you, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: I will ask a question about the towing topic or schedule in this legislation. I want to quote Lauren Fisher, manager of government and stakeholder relations, CAA South Central Ontario: "CAA welcomes the province's actions to strengthen oversight of the towing industry and improve safety on Ontario's roads. A collision or breakdown is a distressing moment for motorists, and drivers should not have to contend with unacceptable behaviour when they are in a vulnerable situation. These measures continue to reinforce the original intent of TSSEA—to protect Ontarians both by recognizing the need to ensure safety and standards in the industry and to protect consumers."

So my question to the member is: CAA supports these changes. Will you?

MPP Andrea Hazell: First of all, I didn't say "I'm not supporting" and "I'm supporting." I am just giving you a detailed conversation in the, what is it, six lines that you just quickly put into schedule 15 in your omnibus bill without fully explaining how this is going to happen. So my concern is, who is going to make sure that the tow truck drivers are within 200 metres of the driver that just got into that accident? Because let me tell you, when six and seven tow trucks are around you—we pass them on the highway. We pass them on the regular road. There is no concern for how that driver in that accident is feeling.

CAA will say yes, but I also have been having conversations with CAA that have been having a long-time conversation with this government on improvements on the highway, and it hasn't happened until this omnibus bill with a little schedule in it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Question?

MPP Catherine McKenney: Thank you for sharing with us your thoughts on this bill, Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act.

We've got backlogged courts. We've got a raging opioid crisis. We've got prisoners escaping from prison. There is absolutely no doubt—it doesn't matter who you talk to—that our communities are less safe than they were eight years ago.

I know there are pieces to this bill that are decent—no reason maybe not to support it. But do you see here that there's any coherent plan in this bill that will change the fact that people feel less safe in their communities today?

MPP Andrea Hazell: Thank you for that question. One thing I can tell you is, speaking to people in my constituency, speaking to people in Scarborough and just

hearing from them, the crime rate has been increasing. It's not decreasing. To tell you how troubling this is, we have a municipal election coming up I think in October—all of them are running on safety issues in Ontario, because they are listening to the people in their wards. I wish this government could be listening more to their constituents. Our constituents are not feeling safe at all.

If you look at the crime rates, whether it's in the tow truck industry which—I haven't even touched on the criminality of the towing industry. I have not touched on that. I can debate that for an hour. We saw the shoot-up in Scarborough with the tow truck. We've seen lives lost. We've seen trucks burned down. The safety is not going down—the safety is not going down. Thank you for the question.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Question?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you for your passionate debate, as always. I would like you for the next minute to describe all the safety issues that exist today in Scarborough so the Legislature knows what's going on.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Thank you very much. I really appreciate that. Just terrible, terrible stats—terrible stats. A couple of weeks ago, maybe it's about a month, the shooting—the young people and shooting in Scarborough has increased. This is happening in my riding and this has happened outside of my riding. Actually, two happened in my riding. I have to look at the parents every day. I went to one of those young men's funeral—16 years old. A senior's house got shot up. There were three teenagers who were driving on the streets in Scarborough just a couple of weeks ago just shooting up—shooting up for no reason.

But let me tell you what's happening here. The resources for our young people have been pulled from under their rug. The unemployment rate in Scarborough is almost—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Thank you.

Further debate?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: It's a privilege, as always, to rise on behalf of the good people of Niagara West and have the opportunity to participate in debate this afternoon here in the Legislature.

Today I'm very pleased to be able to rise and speak briefly on the second reading of Bill 119, the Ontario government's proposed Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act. I have to begin by acknowledging the strong work of the Solicitor General, the Minister of Transportation, the Associate Solicitor General, the Associate Attorney General, the Attorney General—many folks who have come together to share in this legislation.

Speaker, in Niagara, as I'm sure in many other corners of this great province, the people of my riding generally have a strong desire, I would say, to be able to live normal lives. Okay, so what does this mean? Obviously, we all strive to be able to provide for our families. We strive to be able to build legacies for our children. We strive to be able to contribute in society, and we strive to be able to build on that which we've inherited, to build on the legacy

of excellence that our fathers, our grandparents, our loved ones and those in the community around us have given us.

But one of the things I think that we all take for granted is the ability to do this safely. I have the privilege of working in both this capacity and in my personal capacity with some new Canadian: Canadians who are here from Ukraine; those who have come as refugees from Syria, from Lebanon, in my church community; those who have fled the Middle East because of persecution—I also recently spoke with a fellow from South Africa—about why they come to Ontario, why they come to Canada?

A question I like to ask just because I'm curious about it—I like to know people's experiences, previously and now. I'll often say, "What's the biggest difference?" The other day, a young woman with four children—I was speaking with her. She's a refugee from Syria. They've lived here now in West Lincoln for a couple of years—fantastic folks, really hard working, just wonderful contributors to the community, really involved—and she said, "We can go for walks without having to think about our safety." That was such a little thing, right? It's something that we can all, perhaps, not even think about, if you're used to that being something that is just part of what it is to live in Ontario: that you can go for a walk with your children without fear. And for many, many years, that was indeed the case.

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Unfortunately, what we had seen, previous to Premier Ford and our government coming to office, was an erosion of that ideal. We had seen a weak-on-crime government, a government that was willing to pander to ideological radicals, to those who believed that it was not possible to have an approach to crime that was tough on crime. But rather, those who seemed to believe that if you just gave everyone a hug and sang Kumbaya and held hands, there wouldn't be crime in the province of Ontario. You wouldn't have a problem. "Let's actually close a whole bunch of jails," the previous Liberal government said.

Speaker, as a result of that approach, when we came to office, we saw those numbers were already beginning this trajectory that was going in the wrong direction, where families were becoming more fearful about break-and-entries; were becoming more fearful about auto theft; were becoming more fearful about being able to live in their communities without having to worry about going for a walk, without having to worry about taking public transit and experiencing a severe crisis on those public transit routes from those who are on the bus or on the public transit system engaging in illegal activity.

And that's why, Speaker, this legislation is important, because it builds on a stern rebuke of that type of philosophy. This is a piece of legislation that builds on the Premier's goal of ensuring safe streets, safe communities and safe homes for our province. It builds on previous efforts that we have made here in the province of Ontario to protect our streets and enhance justice and public safety. I think of the investments that the Solicitor General and the Attorney General have made in new courthouses. I think of the investments that have been made in victim

services. I think of the investments that even in Niagara have been made to expand the Thorold detention centre to ensure that those who do the crime do the time. That is a very simple philosophy. It's not one that I think is controversial outside of some pretty radical corners of both this Legislature and our province. But it is one that people in Niagara West, when I speak with them about this legislation, about Bill 119—and also previous iterations of legislation that have sought to tighten up a framework in Ontario that was becoming too loose, that was becoming too permissive and too accepting of normalized criminal activity.

I think of, for example, the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act back in 2024 or the Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act in 2023. It builds on this suite of measures that says no. In a social contract such as the one that we have here in the province of Ontario, in the social contract that those new Canadians who are in my community and so many others across this great province come to, they expect to have a very simple approach, and that is this: You work hard. You pay your taxes. You follow the rules. You ensure that as you educate yourself, as you show up, do hard work, bring good ideas, take risks, are an entrepreneur and are someone who cares about your community, you will have a government that has your back.

And that's what this legislation is doing. It's saying, "We have your back." It's saying to young families in my community, to seniors in my community, "When you get on public transit, when you see people participate in criminal activity, this is a government that will ensure the police, and those who ultimately also enforce the law through the court system and into our correction services, will have the resources they need to be able to prosecute and to be able to ultimately ensure those who do the crime do the time." That's not a difficult concept, Speaker. It's one that builds on a legacy that the Premier has articulated going all the way back to our first days in 2018. Already then, we saw the Liberal government of previous years—the consequences of their policies, spilling out into the public square.

I think of the mayor of Welland, I think of the mayor of St. Catharines, and I think of the mayor of Niagara Falls who, just to name a few of the local mayors in Niagara, have talked about, for example, the need for greater action on encampments. Our government heard those needs of those local leaders in previous legislative packages and said, "Yes, we're going to listen to those concerns and bring forward measures that ensure that our municipal services can crack down on encampments so that young people out for a walk don't have to worry." I think of my son, five years old, and my daughter, two years old—they don't have to worry playing at the park that they're going to have dirty needles in their shoes or in their feet. They're going to rather have clean parks, clean streets, and they're able to expect that as a basic necessity in our province.

Legislation like this, Speaker, really builds on it, because it is a definitive expression of our government's commitment to public safety. There are many ways that

that expresses itself, but in this particular legislation, it addresses critical issues like intimate partner violence, child safety and human trafficking, while also streamlining the judicial appointment process and giving police additional tools to combat auto theft and other serious offences.

One thing I'm particularly proud of in this legislation is that it will strengthen the bail system by making sureties more accountable for bail breaches, and that's really important. Some of you might have actually heard about this: Last year, we had a jewellery shop, Harmony Jewellers—incredible people, just salt of the earth, giving to their community every chance they get. At Harmony Jewellers, they were broken into for the fourth time in less than a couple of years by gangs coming out of the GTA who came to Niagara. In the middle of broad daylight, they rammed a pickup truck into Harmony Jewellers in Grimsby, they grabbed the jewellery, they ran in another stolen vehicle, and they ended up dumping that vehicle a couple of cities over. I understand police were able to catch one of the offenders, a young man, and were able to charge him, but one of the things that led to this kind of repeat offence was that there was such a lax approach to the bail system in the province of Ontario.

This legislation puts a greater emphasis on ensuring that those who commit to being a surety for someone who is out on bail, someone who has committed a crime, someone who is being held in our criminal justice system for the day that they will go to trial—those people who have provided that surety are also being held responsible; that that signature means something; that that commitment to ensuring that person keeps the terms of their bail means something, to uphold that social contract and ensure that our communities are safe.

I will engage more with this in the question and answer, but I wanted to express my wholehearted support for this legislation. It builds on, again, an iterative series of legislative packages that I know will keep our streets safe and our communities safer.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

MPP Lisa Gretzky: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 119 and to the comments made by my colleague from the government side from Niagara West. It was interesting—at the beginning he was talking a lot about safety, but not once did he talk about the safety of women in this province. He threw a fly-by mention of IPV in at the end, but I'd like to know from the member opposite, why is the safety of women in this province not a priority for this government?

We had 1,600 sexual assault cases that were thrown out, that were not heard in this province because this government underfunds and under-resources the court system. In London, on Friday, a woman was walking down the street when a man grabbed her and pulled her onto a lawn and sexually assaulted her. What in this bill makes any woman in this province safer from something like that?

The member from Niagara West talked about people wanting to live a normal life. Women in this province want

a normal life that means that we can go to work and we can go out in our community and take our children out and not have to worry about being sexually assaulted and the cases not being heard because the government will not properly fund the justice system so that we can get justice for the people that attack us.

Speaker, I want to finish by saying, the Sloka verdict, where 48 women were told by a judge that they were making up sexual assaults and all of those cases were thrown out is a shining example of why we need sexual assault training for—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries.

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Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank the member opposite for her extended question, and I want to say that I completely reject the premise. Absolutely, people in the province of Ontario include women. I don't know if you realize, but 50% of the people in the province are women. That's what I was speaking about.

If you listened to the beginning of my remarks and debate, I spoke about young women who I had spoken with in the community who talked about the need for this legislation—the young refugee woman who I met with in West Lincoln, and her desire to be able to go for a walk in safety—and the fact that that's why this type of legislation is so important. So I hope next time that the member opposite will listen a little more carefully to the debate before asking about this.

But I will say that she raises the point that is really the impetus for this legislation. Speaker, the Premier has spoken about the need to strengthen bail reform because we need to ensure that those who have been viciously assaulted are getting the punishment that they deserve, so that they're not coming back out and reoffending.

We know that those who have once offended are at a greater risk of reoffending in the future. We need to continue to ensure that the measures, for example, enhancing the requirements for surety, so those who put surety for others who come out on bail are in fact being held responsible—that's one measure, but it builds on a number of measures—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Question?

Mr. Ted Hsu: This bill talks a lot about protection. There are some good things in this bill.

But one thing I'm very concerned about is protecting young men's brains from advertising for online gambling, and I'm wondering why that is not addressed in this bill. My question to my colleague on the government side is, don't we have a moral duty? Don't we have a moral duty, if I could borrow the words of St. Paul, to not put obstacles in the way of our brothers that might cause them to stumble and fall? Don't we have a moral duty to do something to protect young men's brains from online gambling advertising?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: Yes, absolutely. Speaker, I know he's speaking about what he doesn't see in this

legislation. I know many conversations could be had about what's not in a given piece of legislation.

Because, ultimately, the legislation we're debating is about what is in this bill, I'm going to speak about what's in this bill. One of the things that is in this bill, of course, is ensuring that those who are young men or young women, for example, who would be involved in the private security sector are ensuring that they have the proper training, that they have the proper enhancement and oversight to ensure that private security does the job that we know it's supposed to do here in the province of Ontario. I think there are many career opportunities for young men and young women in security, whether it's in providing policing or security resources in the private sector, as well, in this province.

I hope to continue to be able to see that this legislation moves forward, because it will enhance the oversight, ultimately, and also the credibility of those incredibly important professions for people who choose those paths.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Question?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank the associate minister for his comments. I commend him for his insights, but also for his sartorial splendour today as we enter spring.

But the question I want to ask the member is this: In my practice of law, I dealt a lot with family law in a small community in my riding, and in many cases, it was necessary to get restraining orders. That kind of inter-partner violence is predictable. It's not random; it's predictable.

Many of my clients would move out of the riding or move out of the area, and often they'd move out of the province. They had the comfort knowing that when they got to their new home, the restraining order from Ontario would be enforceable in the new jurisdiction. However, the reverse wasn't true. If clients came from out of the province with a restraining order, they actually had to go to court to get a court to approve that order in Ontario, so—

Interjections.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: You had your turn. Shut your mouth.

So my question to the member is this—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Would the member kindly retract that comment?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Which comment was that, Madam Speaker?

Interjections.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Next time, maybe the question could be something other than—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I would like all of you to please take a breath. Please, all, just take a breath.

Will the member kindly retract that comment?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I'll retract.

So, back to the member, the associate minister: Could you please explain how someone coming from outside Ontario with a restraining order will now be protected in Ontario?

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: One of the things that I know is so important in our province that was led, I believe, by previous Premier Mike Harris back in the day—and, I believe, your father, who participated in that government, really led the charge on this—was around safeguarding against high-risk offenders, including sex offenders.

So one of the things that is included in this legislation is changes to Christopher's Law. The changes in Christopher's Law will better align the reporting requirements for the Ontario sex offender and trafficker registry with those of the national sex offender registry. Additionally, there will be changes under this legislation to the Community Safety and Policing Act which will authorize the OPP to maintain a public website providing updates about high-risk sex and other offenders who are subject to a community notification by a chief of police. Because the member is absolutely right that we cannot have folks who have committed a crime in one part of the province or even in another part of the nation move to a community thinking that they are able to walk away from the consequences of their crime. There have to be consequences. That is, again, part of that incredibly important social contract that we have here that maintains stability, that maintains a system where people can trust that the laws are being enforced and that they're going to be safe in their communities. This legislation enhances that, builds on that work, and I think continues that legacy began by your father, by Premier Harris and now that we continue on these years later.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

MPP Lisa Gretzky: I spent some time asking a question of the member for Niagara West, who was speaking, talking about making it safer for women in their workplaces and on the streets and out in community. When my colleague from Simcoe–Grey got up to speak and I said something, his reaction was to very aggressively—very emotionally unhinged—yell across the aisle at me, “Shut your mouth” while pointing at me. So I'm proposing an invitation to my colleague from Simcoe–Grey to reflect on his behaviour and understand how that is part of the problem in this province—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I would like to ask all of the members to just be calm, please. Please be calm.

The member will be given the opportunity to ask her question but very quickly and to the point.

MPP Lisa Gretzky: Thank you.

So my question to the member for Niagara West, who spoke, is, will he take an opportunity to discuss with his colleague from Simcoe–Grey why such behaviour anywhere—anywhere—would make women in this province feel safe, and will he ally with women in order—because men have to be part of the—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): The associate minister.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I have to say, I always appreciate hearing questions—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Regrettably, we are out of time.

Further debate?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's an honour for me to rise today and to add the voices of the great people of London North Centre to today's debate on Bill 119.

When we look at this bill, though, it's yet another omnibus bill from this government that is largely disconnected and has a hodgepodge of items. Really, this is not a surprise at this point.

Now, this Sunday will mark my eighth anniversary representing my community in this Legislature. I take this responsibility to heart. Ontarians need their elected representatives to meaningfully listen to their concerns, work together on solutions and meticulously analyze legislative proposals.

Ontarians, and especially the people in London, are struggling with the cost of living, facing a trade war that is putting good unionized jobs at risk. Small businesses are struggling to stay afloat, rent is spiralling out of control, youth unemployment is at record levels and families are struggling to get the health care and services they need and they deserve.

In my riding of London North Centre, we're also seeing vital community services pushed to their absolute brink. Just last week, I held a press conference with my friend from London–Fanshawe and the MPP from London West about urging the government to release much-needed funding to prevent the closure of London's House of Hope. Without this support, Speaker, 45 residents could lose their housing and face the prospect of ending up back on the streets. House of Hope is a solution to encampments, and yet this government is sitting on their hands, sitting on their wallets and not providing matching funding so that those people can continue to rebuild their lives.

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At a time when homelessness is rising and communities are already stretched beyond their capacity, this government should be protecting essential services such as these and housing supports, not leaving them uncertain about their future.

Shamefully, this government does not feel the same responsibility to tackle these concerns. We're about to rise for another extended summer break after our extended Christmas break. Dollars to doughnuts, I would imagine that this House will not resume until well after the municipal election of October 26, I believe it is. This is after we had an extended summer break just last year, after the election of 2025. Conservatives are so focused on hiding from scrutiny over their scandals that most of them avoid question period by not scheduling sittings of this chamber.

That leaves us with legislation like Bill 119, an omnibus dog's breakfast of half-steps across dozens of subjects. This government has resorted to passing vague legislation

across ministries with regulation deferrals, allowing promises to be quietly shelved without any accountability whatsoever.

This bill is full of confusing provisions, and the member from London–Fanshawe is absolutely right: This government has skipped the committee process on so many pieces of legislation and absolutely shut out the voices of Ontarians altogether from this chamber.

Schedule 9, for instance—confusing provisions—is on coerced debt for human trafficking survivors. It addresses an incredibly meaningful and substantial problem that deserves to be debated in this Legislature. But we already passed similar legislation that received royal assent in 2023 and was simply never brought into force by this government. It makes us ask the question: How many survivors of human trafficking would have been helped by legislation such as this since 2023 that this government has completely brushed aside and completely ignored?

This government claims with many of their empty and vacuous ads that they are concerned about public safety, yet, at the same time, Ontario's justice system is in crisis and urgently needs the Legislature's attention. Our courts are backlogged. Some 58,000 criminal cases were withdrawn, stayed or dismissed in 2022–23. Our jails are at 130% capacity, and 80% of inmates are being held on remand, awaiting trial. But this bill does nothing to provide those resources to fix those problems.

To claim that this legislation is about public safety is even more offensive when we saw what happened in this chamber just last week. I was a proud co-sponsor of Lydia's Law. I heard from women, advocates, families and community organizations who see our justice system as failing survivors of gender-based violence. We brought advocates to this chamber to watch our debate. They know how important these changes are to ensure that the system, the courts, the community and their government have the backs of survivors. They know how transparency, accountability and action must be taken to end the normalization of delays and failures in our justice system. They know how important it is that we, as men in this chamber and across Ontario, step up to challenge systems that hurt women. They know how important it is for us to break the cycle of violence against women and build safer communities for us all.

But then, shamefully, this government voted down this bill. They voted down what women have been asking for. They ignored women's voices. They allowed 1,639 cases to simply never be heard. What does that mean, Speaker? That means that this government does not have the backs of survivors. They are not listening to women, and they are not in any way, shape or form concerned about law and order, justice and community safety.

Lydia's Law is the kind of legislation we should be working on every single day. We must listen, as my caucus colleagues did, to our communities about the problems that they're facing. We must bring forward solutions, like the ones found in Lydia's Law that were recommended by the Auditor General in 2019, and vote with these sorts of interests in mind.

It's shameful that this government shuts down meaningful solutions for our justice system only to bring back omnibus measures, tinkering around the edges, ramming them through the Legislature and then kicking out for summer break. This government is not interested in accountability and transparency in its governance of the province. Every day it's taking more power away from the people represented in this Legislature and concentrating it into the Premier's office.

Today's legislation is yet another example of that consolidation of power. Schedule 3 expands ministerial power over our local police service boards. Without meaningful consultation, the government is threatening civilian oversight and opening the door to political interference in policing. This is not about providing better coordination with local police. Existing legislation already allows the minister to consult, advise and provide research to police service boards. This is about allowing the Premier and his ministers to rule over more of our province without accountability. This new mandatory directive power lets the Premier override boards that reject his—insert adjective here—ideas.

Speaker, Ontarians are noticing. I hear from constituents, through letters to my office, through rallies across our community and when I'm door knocking that our Premier is more interested in power than with solutions. Whether he's taking over local conservation authorities, locally elected school boards, city councils, or, now, police boards, more and more of our province is being consolidated under his control.

But what can he show for it? Has anyone in this chamber heard from their constituents that services have gotten better when consolidated under the Premier?

Interjection.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Yes. I don't hear anyone saying that.

Really, this legislation, Speaker, is about grabbing more power for the sake of power. Conservatives continue to bring in enabling legislation—whether it's today's bill, Bill 5, Bill 60, or others—that allows the province to make major regulatory changes after the fact, not through rigorous democratic debate but through regulations and MZOs issued from their offices.

Today's bill is yet another collection of half measures, weak frameworks and regulation deferrals. This is not a serious bill proposing serious solutions for Ontarians. The government makes its big decisions elsewhere. Its decisions are made in the backrooms with monied people who are going to make a fortune off of government investments, off of our public services. They're trying to squeeze every dollar out of Ontarians' pockets and into the pockets of the few. This government never gets tired of trying to turn millionaires in their inner circles, in their little cabal, into billionaires.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: My question to the NDP member is this: How is the NDP "defund the police" policy helping victimized women?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: You know, right back at the member from—I'm not going to designate you with a riding, either—who indicated in a blog prior to his election that he believed that there should be fewer educators in schools because that would lead to student resilience. Didn't the member from Essex say that? I do recall that he did. He said that there should be fewer. If the classes were bigger, students would be more resilient.

That's the kind of idiotic ideological thinking that really doesn't lead to student success. It doesn't meet students where they are. It doesn't match students with a caring adult based on their special education needs. It is the kind of foolish claptrap that just makes absolutely no sense. And yet, it's the kind of thing that someone was happy to put into print.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I'd like to ask the member to withdraw his comment, which was "idiotic."

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to thank my colleague from London North Centre raising the House of Hope. House of Hope is a home for people who've been in encampments, some of them for decades, finally getting stable, safe housing which allows them to access health care and other treatment. It results in less visits to the emergency room. It results in less policing interactions, less time in the justice system.

We asked the Minister of Health, the Minister of Housing and the Solicitor General to all come together collaboratively to provide that gap in funding. Can you explain to me why this government refuses to do that, and what excuse would they have not to fund housing, health care and public safety?

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Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank my friend from London—Fanshawe for an excellent question about House of Hope.

Yet, we actually see this government funding models just like this. There's Dunn House in Toronto, which has actually won the Governor General's award for innovation in 2026. And what it does is it has shown how housing is health care. It shows how making sure that people have the wraparound services that they need costs less than leaving someone languishing in homelessness.

In six months, the House of Hope had 434 fewer ER visits. They had 356 fewer stays in hospital, and they actually took their police interactions and cut them in half. There were 398 police interactions down to 178.

This model, over 18 months, saved this province \$1.2 million. The request from the House of Hope is to have matching provincial dollars to match municipal expenditures, just like what happens at Dunn House in Toronto.

If this government makes this investment, people will remain housed, they will not be going back into encampments, and these spaces will continue to allow these people to rebuild their lives. This is the kind of smart investment the government should be taking.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: To the member: How does the position of the NDP to put drug injection sites within 200 metres of a child's guardianship or a child's daycare assist children and families in staying away from drugs?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Yes, I'd like to thank the member from Essex for another ideologically based question.

I would like to actually focus my answer on science. And the science indicates that harm reduction is an important model that helps meet people where they are, allows them to build relationships and helps them get into those rehab spaces.

This government talks about people needing rehab, yet it doesn't fund those very spaces. It made a promise on April 1, 2025, that they would be providing 60 spaces at the Salvation Army Centre of Hope, along with CHMA addiction services Thames Valley. And yet it took until October 27 for you guys to actually cut the cheque. You sat on your wallets for 209 days.

That is an abdication of responsibility, and shame on you for it.

Making a promise of April 1 and not delivering until October 27? You would be evicted. You would be bad for business. I mean, you were all of the things that you claim—and I think about those 60 beds. They had them ready. They were physically ready. They had people hired, people ready to get their lives back on track, and you kept those 60 beds closed because you couldn't cut a cheque. So shame on you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. Stephen Blais: I am pleased this afternoon to rise on behalf of the residents for Orléans to speak in support of Bill 119, the Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act. I didn't feel like having everyone wait with bated breath on what we're going to do tomorrow afternoon.

Speaker, the title of the bill sets a very high bar. I will admit that I'm generally not a fan of omnibus legislation. Bill 119 brings together 16 schedules covering everything from adoption to policing, to human trafficking and vulnerable record checks. That's a considerable amount of ground to cover in a single bill.

Many of these issues would warrant a very fulsome debate on their own, but there are several schedules in the legislation that I believe deserve a little bit of debate this afternoon, and I want to focus my attention on three in particular.

First is schedule 9, which protects survivors of human trafficking from coerced debt; schedule 4, which ensures restraining orders from outside of Ontario are now automatically enforced here in the province; and schedule 8, which aims to reduce long-standing delays to vulnerable sector record checks.

All three schedules have something important in common: They focus on genuinely helping people, on removing barriers, and they focus on protecting some of the most vulnerable people in our province.

Madam Speaker, first with schedule 9: This schedule is particularly important because it builds on legislation first introduced by my friend and wonderful colleague from Ottawa–Vanier.

In 2023, Madame Collard introduced Bill 41, the Protection from Coerced Debts Incurred in Relation to Human Trafficking Act. This bill was a perfect example of cross-party collaboration, with members from every party united in supporting this important legislation. I believe MPP Scott may have done some work on this file over the years—and others. I was proud to support that bill then, and I spoke in favour of it during that debate a few years ago, Madam Speaker.

At the time, MPP Collard helped many of us in this Legislature understand something that often gets overlooked when we talk about human trafficking. Most people understand that victims of human trafficking suffer physical trauma. We understand that victims suffer emotional trauma. We understand that victims suffer psychological trauma. But many people don't realize that often victims suffer tremendous financial trauma as well. Human traffickers don't just exploit people physically; they exploit them financially. They take out loans in their name. They open credit cards in their name. They accumulate enormous debts in their name, and when the victim finally escapes, the trafficker moves on, but the debt remains a liability for that person who was trafficked.

Now, during the debate on Bill 41 at the time, I spoke about a survivor named Kelly. Kelly had escaped a horrific trafficking situation, but when she finally got out, she discovered that her trafficker had accumulated significant debt in her name. Her credit had been absolutely destroyed. Instead of being able now to focus on rebuilding her life, Kelly was forced to deal with this debt she never agreed to in the first place, a financial obligation she never chose to take on. She struggled to rent an apartment. She struggled to access credit. She struggled to rebuild her independence.

And unfortunately, Kelly's story isn't unique. The reality is, escaping a trafficking situation is often only the beginning of a survivor's journey. Human trafficking does not end the day the victim escapes. For many survivors, the trafficking ends, but the consequences continue for many, many, many years.

Madam Speaker, imagine finding the courage to leave an abusive situation only to discover that your financial future has been completely destroyed as a result of this deeply emotional and physical situation you've just come out of. Imagine trying to rent an apartment and being told no. Imagine trying to buy a car so you can get to your new job and being told no. Imagine trying to go back to school and being denied a student loan. Imagine receiving collection calls for debts that you've never heard of and certainly that you never agreed to.

I think most Ontarians would agree that this is fundamentally unfair and just wrong. A trafficker should not be able to destroy someone's financial future and leave the victim carrying the burden forever.

This is why we're pleased to support this schedule, which is included in Bill 119. At its core, this schedule is

about fairness. Survivors of human trafficking should not be denied an apartment, a car loan or a chance to rebuild their lives because of a debt that was forced upon them by their traffickers. The bill would ensure that there is a very fair process in place to erase and remove coerced debt from credit reports.

One aspect of the schedule I really appreciate is that survivors don't need a police report to begin seeking help. We know, for many survivors, reporting their trafficker can be incredibly difficult and traumatic. We know that investigations can take time. We know that many survivors are understandably hesitant to come forward to share their stories, particularly when it requires them to revisit deeply traumatizing experiences. This legislation realizes those realities. It focuses on helping survivors move forward rather than creating additional barriers.

I also want to acknowledge that many advocates and organizations worked tirelessly on this issue. Progress like this doesn't happen by accident; it happens because survivors courageously tell their stories, often reliving painful experiences in the hope of helping others in similar situations. It happens because advocates refuse to give up, and it happens because legislators from different political parties can come together to solve important issues.

This issue, Madam Speaker, I think and I hope, has always been non-partisan. Human trafficking does not care whether someone is a Liberal, a Conservative or a New Democrat, and supporting survivors should not be partisan either.

Now, I'd like to turn to schedule 4. This schedule would make restraining orders issued outside of Ontario automatically enforceable here in Ontario. At first glance, that might sound like a technical change, but for victims, I think it is incredibly meaningful.

If someone has gone through the difficult process of obtaining a restraining order to protect themselves or their family, that protection should not disappear simply because they crossed a provincial border. The danger certainly doesn't disappear simply because you've crossed a provincial border. Victims move for many reasons. Sometimes they move to be closer to family or to find new work. Sometimes they move because they're trying to rebuild their lives in a place where they can finally feel safe. The last thing they should have to worry about is whether the legal protections they have obtained somewhere else still apply once they are here in Ontario. I think that's a practical change. It closes a gap that should have never existed in the first place. Most importantly, it gives victims greater certainty and greater peace of mind at a time when they need it the most.

1650

Finally, I'd like to speak about schedule 8. The schedule addresses vulnerable sector checks. This may not be the most exciting topic in the bill, but it's one that affects a tremendous number of Ontarians. Teachers need vulnerable sector checks. Educational assistants need them. Child care workers need them. Nurses need them. Volunteers who coach youth sports need them. People working with seniors need them. Vulnerable sector checks are an important safeguard. They help protect children.

They help protect seniors. They help protect vulnerable members of our communities. But unfortunately, we know that they can take time, and sometimes a very long time. I've heard from constituents about delays preventing them from starting a new job or a volunteer position, schools facing delays filling positions, community organizations facing delays recruiting volunteers, families facing delays accessing services.

Schedule 8 would allow police services from other jurisdictions to help process these checks when needed. The goal is to reduce wait times and improve efficiency, while maintaining the same level of protection. If we can get qualified people into classrooms more quickly, that's a good thing. If we can get volunteers into community organizations and coaching sports more quickly, that's a good thing. And if we can reduce the number of organizations that are waiting for this service, obviously that's a good thing.

Government doesn't always have to be about choosing one side or the other. We should always strive to work collaboratively to implement common-sense measures that help improve people's lives. I believe the schedules that I've highlighted today are good examples of that. Schedule 9 helps the survivors of human trafficking reclaim their financial independence and rebuild their lives. Schedule 4 strengthens protections for victims of violence and harassment. Schedule 8 makes it easier for people to work, volunteer and serve in their communities without unnecessary administrative delays. These are practical measures to address real problems. They will improve people's lives. These schedules are non-partisan and should be supported by everyone in the Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to my colleague from Orléans for his debate on this bill.

A lot of bills have been like this. You've been around for a while. These bills are tabled with really short notice. This one was tabled, and a day and a half later we were debating it. What does that do to the process, when you talk about democracy; when you're getting feedback in your riding on what people think of the bill and if they support it or are against it; when they're looking for the pros and cons, and how that's frustrating—bona fide feedback, and a reflection of how, perhaps, the government doesn't want feedback on their bills. Would the member mind commenting on that?

Mr. Stephen Blais: As I said, I'm generally not a fan of large omnibus bills. This bill has 16 schedules; there's a very broad set of subjects that it covers. There wasn't a lot of time to consult with residents. Normally, I would say that's—we know that the government doesn't have a particularly strong or detailed legislative agenda. It's one of the reasons why we've sat, I think, the least number of days, if not ever, then certainly in a very long time this year. And all signs point to an extended summer break in our ridings—announced later tomorrow.

Certainly, the more time there is to review a bill and consult, the better feedback we can get and the better we can articulate the views of our constituents.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

MPP Jamie West: To my colleague: We've had two rounds of questions, and normally it goes in a clockwise fashion, so it would be your party, then the government party, then our party, and again and again. In both rounds, we had no questions from the government on a government bill that seems to be really important to them. In hindsight, what does that mean about the priority of the government to speak to the bill?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Well, I've always thought that the lack of questions means that everyone agrees with what I've said, and so I take it that the government agrees completely with the things that I've said this afternoon—which, in fairness, is not unusual for them. They often agree with what I say. I remember a couple years ago, the Premier called me an excellent MPP. I've used that quite often to counter some of the reaction online from hard-core Conservatives when I say things.

But generally, it's the end of the session. We're coming up towards getting home to our families for the summer. I can understand why people are perhaps just anxious to come to a conclusion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Hon. Laurie Scott: A bit of a question, a bit of a statement—I wanted to thank the member for Orléans for all the work and support and going to committee when we did Bill 41. All parties came together to deal with yet another part of human trafficking. We have to try and keep up legislation with what's going on in the real world and the horrible legacy of debt and how survivors cannot recover while they are not able to move on with their lives and get proper financing.

I wanted to thank the member for his time that he spent on committee with all parties when we listened to this debate. You can certainly take 60 seconds and go further into the great work. I'm very proud of this work that was done by all parties and that's now in our government's bill, so I thank our government for making it happen.

Mr. Stephen Blais: While the member should be very proud of the work—she was obviously working on this for a long time and was a co-sponsor of the previous bill and probably, likely, work before that I'm just not familiar with.

This is often a place where we have visceral disagreements—we saw one about a half-hour ago. Things get very emotional and overheated sometimes—sometimes necessarily, sometimes not so much. And so when we can work on something in a cross-partisan way to address what is clear and undeniable suffering, to close a loophole or come up with something that is just eminently common sensical, that obviously is important for us to do.

People who suffer human trafficking—let's be honest, they're almost all women. The fact that they would have to, in addition to rebuilding their emotional and psychological and physical trauma that they go through, then have to spend time trying to figure out how to rehabilitate their credit so that they can rent a house or buy a car and

go to school and do the other things you need to rebuild your life—I think it's pretty clear we shouldn't ask them to have to go through that. Ensuring that their trafficker cannot continue to have that power over them once they have fled, I think, is important. It's why we supported the bill. I want to thank my colleague again for all of her hard work and incorporating that into this bill as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

MPP Wayne Gates: I agree with you, member, that we should work together on important bills. This bill is very, very important. I can tell you, in Niagara our crime rate is going up; there's no doubt about it. In every single community, I've talked to the police. They tell me their jobs are getting more and more dangerous. I understand that, but yet, I'm hearing the same rumour as you are, that we may rise tomorrow and not come back until November.

How does that serve the citizens of Niagara and citizens right across the province Ontario when we might not come back for six months? It makes absolutely no sense. And in the summer months, as you probably know—you see it in Ottawa all the time—crime is going up. A lot of it is to do with affordability and people being desperate so they're stealing at Shoppers and all these places. So how do you think—if this bill is so important, why are we rising maybe tomorrow or the day after?

Mr. Stephen Blais: I tried to get the government House leader to give me some details about when we might rise but he held his cards pretty close to his chest. He's a pretty good House leader that way.

Look, crime is up. Crime is up in many parts of the province, if not all parts of the province. After eight years, people are struggling. We have an affordability crisis. We have young men, in particular, who are not being particularly well served by the education system, who are being bombarded by gambling ads, who are being tempted by the rapid opportunities that exist by going into criminal lines of work because those legitimate lines of work just aren't open to them. We've seen crime go up in Ottawa, certainly, and I take the member at his word, in Niagara as well. These are issues that the government should be spending time addressing.

1700

Clearly, they don't have a sophisticated or lengthy legislative agenda, otherwise we would spend more time here debating additional government bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: This is a bill that's entitled Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act. But one of the biggest challenges we have in keeping Ontarians safe right now is the fact that we're seeing more than half of criminal charges stayed or withdrawn, or court cases stayed, because they have exceeded the time limit.

The government is not tracking how many cases this is happening to and how long it's taking, despite the fact that the Auditor General has been recommending since 2019 that they track so that they can take action to reduce that number and make sure that victims are actually getting their day in court.

Despite that, last week the government voted against Lydia's Law, which would have improved that tracking of court cases and charges being withdrawn. It would have required the Attorney General to review the level of support for survivors and ensure that they are receiving adequate support. It would have ensured that police were informing sexual complainants about their access to the legal advice program.

Do you believe that a government that votes against those measures is truly committed to addressing public safety?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Well, certainly their votes as it relates to Lydia's Law and other measures will not have been the first time this government writes cheques that its voting record simply can't cash.

We do have a public safety issue in Ontario. Crime is up. The government, despite rhetoric, despite millions of dollars of advertising, has not taken total measures to address that.

We do have a backlog in the court system. Cases are being dismissed because of the time. Statistics would suggest that some of those cases that are dismissed are people who are guilty, and so those people are getting off from their criminal activity.

We have a government who has let criminals out of jail and lost them for extended periods of time. Not only did they lose them, they chose to not be honest in this Legislature about having lost them, something they had to apologize for later. They chose not to be open and transparent with the public in terms of how many people they had lost, what crimes they had committed, what part of the province they were from and how long they had been lost—and so, yes.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: It's a privilege to rise this afternoon to speak on Bill 119, the Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act. Indeed, it's always a privilege to stand in this place to speak on behalf of my community of Wellington–Halton Hills and be their voice in the Ontario Legislature.

This is a very important topic for residents in my community. Public safety is a top concern. This legislation represents the next step in our government's plan and strategy to make things better in that regard, to make our communities safer and to hold offenders accountable.

There are a number of items in this legislation—16 schedules—and a lot of them don't get the attention in this House or in the media that they deserve. So I want to take a look at some of those items that maybe aren't spoken about at length in the debate thus far.

One of those items is the illegal drug production and holding landlords accountable for that illegal drug production. Proposed in this legislation are new offences targeting equipment, precursor chemicals for illegal drugs and holding landlords accountable for knowingly permitting illegal drug production activities. Oftentimes, we see landlords that take a hands-off approach. They're just a landlord; they're not involved. That is unacceptable, and

there are elements in this legislation that will address that and hold those bad actors, those landlords, accountable. People who have properties leased next door to them don't want to have illegal drugs being produced on those properties, and the landlords must be held accountable.

We are also modernizing oversight, training and licensing requirements for security guards and private investigators in the province of Ontario. I want to give a shoutout to a good friend of mine, Ian Wylie, who was previously a security guard at Erin Mills Town Centre. He has now moved to doing hospital security down in the Windsor-Essex region. He is a great example of someone who takes public safety very seriously. By making changes in this legislation to have that oversight, to make sure the safety standards are adhered to and that training is done effectively, we can ensure that we have a strong private security force keeping our communities and services safe across the country.

This legislation also explores options to address retail theft, which is a huge issue—a \$9.1-billion issue of organized retail theft—in the province. I want to quote Kim Furlong, the president and CEO of the Retail Council of Canada. She says, “Retail crime is not a victimless offence. It drives up costs for consumers, puts front-line retail workers at risk and fuels organized criminal activity in communities across Ontario. RCC welcomes today’s announcement by the Ontario government on combatting crime, most notably the creation of a dedicated prosecution team to target organized retail theft. This is a strong and important step toward holding repeat offenders accountable, disrupting criminal networks and making stores safer for employees and customers alike.”

We need continued advocacy to the federal government, as well, for this legislation to update the Criminal Code, to recognize assaults against security guards as an aggravating factor in sentencing. That is a big element of retail theft. Again, going back to my friend Ian Wylie at the Erin Mills Town Centre: Just brazenly, people would go in there in masks, taking resources from different stores. It needs to be put to a stop, and this legislation provides great resources to fight back against that blatant disregard for the law.

Another big issue that we have heard from constituents in my riding is the delays in our court systems, whether it was from previous underfunding from the previous Liberal government or delays accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are delays in our court systems, but we are making great strides.

Another thing in this legislation that helps to deal with that is changes to the Provincial Offences Act that will allow prosecutors and defendants to enter plea agreements for minor offences without appearing before a justice of the peace. That will resolve matters much faster, reduce court backlogs and free up judicial resources for more serious cases. Again, this change in the legislation in Bill 119 will help deal with that backlog of cases, making sure that justices of the peace can focus on the serious offenders that are in our communities and in our court system.

As was mentioned by some other members, the human trafficking debt relief is a fantastic change that we are

making to this legislation, providing up to \$50,000 in debt relief for victims of human trafficking who are forced or coerced into debt. This is a loophole that has existed previously, that should be fixed. I want to thank many members in this Legislature that have advocated for that. The trauma and everything that individuals that go through with that horrible, horrible crime—this should not be something that they are worried about. That should be something where we collectively care for them in that way.

With the remainder of my time: Many members of this Legislature will know that illegal land use, specifically illegal truck parking lots, is a tremendous issue in Halton Hills, but also in Wellington county. I had a meeting with Guelph/Eramosa township in this Legislature last week, and they shared that it’s a big issue for them as well. I was so proud to be able to join the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Energy and Mines, and the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health in Caledon to make that great announcement a couple of weeks ago that we are allowing municipalities, through this legislation and changes in the Planning Act, the ability to deliver the administrative monetary penalty system over to improper zoning as well.

For those that don’t know what administrative penalty systems are, that’s the system that municipalities use for dealing with items such as parking tickets, where it’s in-house, internal. They deal with it themselves. They don’t have to go through the provincial courts and experience long delays.

1710

For those who don’t know, I was a municipal councillor in Halton Hills prior to having the privilege of being in this role. I had many conversations with folks in their back yards in Hornby, on Steeles Avenue, in Stewarttown. I want to give a shoutout to Ron Craighead, a resident of Stewarttown on 15 Side Road. We had many conversations in his backyard. Actually, when I was a councillor, we did a little drive around to take a look at some of the illegal truck parking lots that exist in rural Halton Hills. There are over 50 illegal truck parking lots currently in the town of Halton Hills, so this is fantastic news.

I want to also give a shoutout to Regional Councillor Clark Somerville for wards 1 and 2 in the town of Halton Hills. For many years, he has been advocating for this change. He’s been a great champion for rural Halton Hills, the landowners there and the neighbours there—as well as my ward 2 colleague, Councillor Jason Brass, who was able to join me at the announcement in Caledon a few weeks ago, recognizing his strong advocacy on this important point, and also my successor on council, Councillor Matt Kindbom, who has done a fantastic job since I left my municipal post to be in this House. He has been taking up the mantle extremely well, being a strong voice for the residents of ward 2, advocating to all levels of government to respect our farmland.

The impacts to farmland, the impacts to the environment that these illegal truck parking lots pose—there was a large parking lot on Hornby Road and Steeles Avenue,

and there was a creek that ran through the property. On a weekend, they came in. They bulldozed the place, put down gravel, no concern for the creek. Really, that damage is done, and it will be extremely difficult, extremely expensive to remediate that property, to bring that creek back to life. This legislation will allow those situations not to take place in the future.

There was another illegal truck parking lot near Conestoga Cold Storage, a fantastic facility in ward 2 in Halton Hills, my community, where they have fantastic robotics. They make up their own robotics. They employ a lot of highly skilled individuals to maintain their operations there, a real hub for our food industry. That cold storage has chocolate and chicken strips and all kinds of frozen foods as a hub in the GTA right there at Steeles Avenue and Winston Churchill, a major intersection—also right by the future connection between the 413 and the 401 and Milton-Halton Hills border. It's a greatly located position, but right next door to that fantastic facility was an illegal truck parking lot.

I want to thank the Premier. I want to thank the Solicitor General and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for their leadership in moving this forward and delivering that fantastic news for our community. I look forward to supporting this legislation and protecting all of our communities and streets throughout Wellington-Halton Hills.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you to the member for his debate on Bill 119. At the beginning of his debate, I couldn't quite hear exactly what he referred to. I think it was schedule 6, the Pill Presses and Precursors Act, 2026. It's a new act that makes it a provincial offence to possess a pill press in most cases. It sounds like it's clearly meant to deter people from producing illicit drugs such as fentanyl. I can tell you that in London-Fanshawe a few weeks ago, three people died from poisonous fentanyl that they were given.

The member, if I recall, said something about “landlord's responsibility.” I don't know if that's connected to schedule 6; I couldn't quite catch that. Could you expand on that please for me?

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Thank you to the member for London-Fanshawe for that question. My cousin actually used to live in your riding in London-Fanshawe, so I'm familiar a little bit with the community.

This is a deterrent. It's very important that we do not have illegal use of illegal drugs in our communities. Landlords need to be part of that accountability; they cannot be hands-off. If there are illegal drugs being produced in their facilities, they should be held accountable for those actions. It's critical that we protect our communities from these people.

I'm sorry about the individuals in your riding. That is a story that should not be happening, and if we can target the landlords that are hosting these illegal operations, I think that's a very important thing to do.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

MPP Paul Vickers: I'd like to congratulate my neighbour here on the great remarks that he has brought forward to talk about this bill.

The open use of illegal drugs on public transit or in public areas makes Ontarians feel unsafe. People need to know that they can safely travel to and from work or even walk downtown to do shopping in our areas. The Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025, currently provides police and prescribed provincial offences officers with enhanced powers to combat use of illegal drugs in these public spaces, with limited exceptions. Right now, only police officers can exercise authority under this act.

We've already heard from the Solicitor General, at his earlier announcement, the government's plan to increase safety on transit and our streets. Could the member tell us what will this government do about the issue and why it's so important?

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Thank you to the great member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for that question.

I had the privilege of hosting my wife here at Queen's Park a couple of weeks ago. It was her first time visiting the Ontario Legislature when we were in session, and she enjoyed herself, much to her surprise. But we also took the subway, and she was nervous about taking the subway. There's that perception, and often reality, that the subway or our transit systems across the province are not safe. So Ontario is introducing a new regulation that extends officer powers under the act to special constables. These powers include allowing them to request individuals to stop consuming the illegal drug, direct them to leave, confiscate the drugs, arrest if they fail to comply, as well as power to lay a provincial offence charge. This proposed regulation would provide additional authority to manage public drug use by allowing select special constables to combat public drug use in transit settings. This will help commuters feel safer, like my wife and others in this city, when they're on their way to work, school or wherever they need to go.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

MPP Wayne Gates: My question is—one is—are there any provisions in this bill that will say to the sitting government that you can't change the law when you're found guilty? The example of that would be the FOIs, where they went to court, said to the Premier, “You've got to give out your cell number, give it all back so we can look at it,” and then the government said, “Well, we'll just change the law.” Is there any provision in this bill that says they can't do that?

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Speaker, what this bill is focused on is making sure that our communities remain safe. Just in the last week in Georgetown, we have had electrical devices stolen from a construction site on Main Street. That was just a few days ago. A wallet was stolen from a woman in the Georgetown mall just in the last week. A man sexually assaulted a teenage girl in Georgetown on May 25, just after 7 p.m. That individual, today, six days later, is out on bail. That's unacceptable. That

needs to come to a stop, and that's what this government is focused on.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to my colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills for his great remarks this afternoon. We do share Wellington county, and as he alluded to, there are illegal truck parking lots in the southern portion of Wellington county, along some of the large arterial roads. The member also represents an area with a lot of busy highways. I know he's been very passionate in his leadership on this. I want to thank him on illegal truck parking and advocacy around that.

But I was wondering if he could explain to the chamber today why it's important to work with our municipal colleagues—because this is something that came from local councils, that we heard at committee around this specific issue—and why it's important to see this feedback from municipalities in a piece of government legislation like this as well.

1720

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: That's a fantastic question. I want to thank the member from Perth–Wellington as a parliamentary assistant of municipal affairs and housing, as well as a committee member. He went around the province a few years back, gathering that feedback. He has been instrumental in bringing this forward, and I want to recognize that and thank him for his advocacy.

Speaker, I also wanted to say while I'm here and answering the question, the importance of working with our truck operators—the legal operators and companies—throughout the province. Part of the announcement that was made in Caledon was talking about dedicating MTO property, looking at ways that we could have legal truck parking on those properties. We have a lot of fantastic highway projects under way in my area of Wellington–Halton Hills, so being able to take a look at what lands are available there for legal trucks right by those major transit corridors is an important part of that announcement as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to my colleague for this debate on this. A couple of times during questions and in debate as well, you talked about—I don't know if “illegal trucking lots” is the right way of describing them, but just what it means in your area. I've had the opportunity as a teenager to have summer jobs near your area, and I know how beautiful that area is.

I just wonder if you want to expand on what it means to the people in your riding to have these sorts of auto lots. I don't know the right term for it, but if you could, expand on what it means in your area for this to be happening.

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Thank you to the member from Sudbury for that question. Not only is there a loss of farmland, a loss of the environment from streams, fields and wildlife taken up by these bad actors, but more importantly, it comes down to the fact that they are not following the rules.

Lots of people that want to build, want to have a shed or a garage, do different things with their properties, often have to jump through all kinds of hoops to get those building permits approved. They can take months to get done.

But these individuals, they come in on a weekend, and they're parking their trucks there. That frustrates people in my community. They follow the rules—99% of people in this province follow the rules; less than 1% are breaking our laws, and these are the people that we need to make sure we are going after and punishing—that they are held accountable for their actions, and that's what pieces of legislation like Bill 119 do for our community.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): We have time for one very quick question and response.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Based on some feedback that we received from our police partners as well as from MTO enforcement teams, there were growing concerns in the towing industry, including concerns that tow operators would position themselves close to a collision site.

Now, unfortunately, police were not able to basically serve any violation tickets, because that goes against their current ability to do that. My question is, if current enforcement tools are limited as officers—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Regrettably, that's all the time we have left for questions.

For further debate, I recognize the member from Ottawa West–Nepean.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'll be sharing my time with the member for Sudbury.

As I begin my remarks, with your indulgence, Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize the Rev. Dr. Gary Hauch, who passed away earlier this year.

Gary was the priest at the Anglican Church of the Ascension in Ottawa for many years, and someone who was very important to my husband and me. He officiated our wedding, baptized all of our kids and presided at the funeral of our cousin.

Gary was incredibly wise, thoughtful and empathetic. His sons described him at his funeral as someone who was deeply curious about everyone he met, and this contributed to Gary's gentle, non-judgmental nature. He truly cared about people: his parishioners, but also everyone that he encountered in his life.

This didn't mean that he was someone who turned a blind eye to injustice. Gary was passionate about justice and peacemaking—a prophet for a world of good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners and sight for the blind, where the oppressed are set free. In fact, I think Gary's life could be well summed up by Micah 6:8. He was someone who pursued justice, loved kindness and walked humbly with his God.

My condolences to Gary's wife, Linda; his sons, David and Nathan; and their partners, Jenn and Stephan.

I'm rising to speak today on Bill 119, which is the Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act. It's another omnibus bill for this government. It covers 16 different acts, including introducing two entirely brand

new acts. It covers things from private international adoptions to police oversight, penalties for land use violations, animal welfare, misconduct by social workers and more, all in a single bill.

But despite that, what the government has talked about most with regard to this bill is not actually in the bill. It's another one where their headline-grabbing announcements are actually left to future regulations, future directives and future announcements that may or may not ever materialize. And despite its title, most of the urgent priorities on protecting safety aren't actually in this bill.

One of the biggest challenges that we're facing right now is that when police investigate, when they lay criminal charges, when something has happened, more than half the time those charges are stayed or withdrawn, or they're dismissed. They're not making it to the point of trial, or they're not making it to the point of a verdict, which means that many victims in Ontario are never getting their day in court. They're never seeing a verdict handed down against the person who has harmed them, and they're never seeing a sentence imposed.

In 2022-23, that was 56% of criminal charges, Speaker. Yet, this bill doesn't do anything to address that. It doesn't do anything to address the fact that the Auditor General has been recommending since 2019 that the government track the number of cases where that's happening so that they can do something about it.

The bill doesn't offer stable annual operational funding for victims' services, many of which are being operated on short-term grants. They provide counselling, referrals, court navigation supports, emergency assistance and trauma-informed services that are so incredibly important to helping victims navigate the court process. In many cases, it can be the difference between whether or not they're willing to pursue charges or to testify at all. But these organizations are forced to spend their time and energy applying for grants to keep the doors open instead of providing these important services.

People are really tired of symbolic announcements and press releases with no follow-through. Yet, the government is offering press releases here with a bill that doesn't actually provide these measures. What it does provide is future regulations that may or may not happen someday.

But last week, when the government had an opportunity to actually support legislation that would have tracked criminal case delays and charges being withdrawn so that we could work on reducing that number; that would have required the Attorney General to review the level of support for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking; a bill that would have required police to inform sexual assault complainants over 16 about the independent legal advice program so that they could access it; and a bill that would have eliminated time limits on programs to provide funding for mental health supports for survivors of sexual assault, this government voted against that bill. That really tells you all you need to know about their record, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member for Sudbury.

MPP Jamie West: I am rising today to speak about Bill 119.

There have been some rumours that we may be rising early. I have a member's statement on Wednesday that my co-op placement student from Collège Notre-Dame wrote for me, so I am hoping I am able to read it, but if not, Jasmine, I just want to say how helpful you are in the office, and I want your teachers to know the great work that you did for us and how all of us in our office really appreciate that work.

This bill is titled Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act. Actually, the day it was tabled, I found out that Deputy Hiltz in Sudbury was retiring from Ontario policing. I wanted to briefly just talk about the work that Deputy Hiltz did.

You know, we're fortunate in Sudbury that the chief of police and the deputy chief are both women. We have Sara Cunningham as the chief of police and Deputy Natalie Hiltz as the deputy.

For 31 years, she has been policing in Ontario—started in Peel Region. She knew basically since she was about five or six years old that she wanted to get involved in policing and has been a role model for policing, and not just for women thinking about going in policing, but at different events, she really made a connection with young girls. In community events, you have a lot of young girls showing up wearing princess costumes. It's interesting, after speaking with Deputy Hiltz and her interacting with them, how they move from being the damsel in distress to being the protector.

I just want to thank Natalie for everything she's done to influence, to be a great role model for policing in general and just to advocate for different career choices for women and young girls. I wish her the best of luck because she's not fully retiring—she's going to Victoria to work for their police department as well. But I'll miss her; she's great.

1730

This, basically, is an omnibus bill, a bit of a grab bag of bills. I talked about this in the past, and during some of the questions, I talked about this as well. These bills, they're thick—this one's about a quarter-inch thick, lots of material in it—and they are tabled and debated pretty rapidly. Some days, they're tabled that morning, debated that afternoon. This one was tabled and about 48 hours later, we started debating it.

There is a problem when you don't consult, and I had a letter actually come in talking about this. I just want to read it out because it talks about what happens when you don't have enough time to consult and get feedback. Michael Sanders from Aaron Taxi, he wrote to me and he said:

"Late on Friday afternoon before the Victoria Day long weekend our provincial government launched new regulations that blatantly undermine municipal governance and endanger the safety of northern communities.

"The Northlander Rideshare Pilot's ... rationale was to create greater connectivity along" the "Northlander train route. Despite there being no details of when trains will actually be running or any proposed safety enforcement protocols, it proceeded.... The pilot's original intention"—

I'll just summarize: Basically, the Northlander would come and there would be ways for you to get on and off the train back and forth.

But “the consultation period for the pilot included zero input from northern stakeholders and concerns raised by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police regarding safety and oversight were completely ignored.

“Accessibility was another unrealized aim from the original proposal: Currently, there are no requirements within the recently announced regulations for participants to field even a single accessible vehicle.

“Multiple public safety advocacy groups (such as Know Human Trafficking) were denied participation in the consultation.

“The province’s duty to consult was not even mentioned in the consultation process of the pilot itself.

“It should be noted that a major proponent of this entire initiative was Uber-retained Rubicon Strategy, a company headed by”—it says the Premier’s name, but the Premier’s “campaign manager Kory Teneycke.

“Northerners don’t need” the Premier “to unilaterally decide how we travel or who drives in our communities. There is already an abundance of ride options for northern passengers.

“Aaron Taxi in Sudbury manages to service Ontario’s largest municipality with average wait times under 10 minutes (while guaranteeing all their drivers the benefits of full employment).” And it is important to point out that rideshare operators, after paying for all of their insurance and maintenance on the car, are making less than minimum wage.

The Premier’s “pilot endangers the fair working conditions these and other operators offer and their considerable involvement with local charities and organizations.

“All current operators and drivers are governed, licensed and overseen by their respective municipalities.”

It goes on to just talk about how this seems to be able to put other countries’ interest ahead of it. And so, I’ll skim down and it says the Premier’s “pilot would hand extremely preferential regulation to large US conglomerates,” talking about Uber and Lyft, “while disadvantaging dozens of operators, thousands of drivers and many thousands more of their passengers.”

Because I’m running out of time: They want to ensure that they have the time to provide feedback and to listen to northern voices on this. And during the debate of that bill, in fact, there wasn’t an opportunity really to reach out to people.

I’m going to run out of time because there isn’t enough time to talk about it, but the reality of this bill, Speaker, is that it sounds good on paper: We’re going to protect communities, we’re going to protect our streets and protect our communities. But a lot of what’s in this actually has to do with the fact that it’s going to go to regulation, or it’s not going to actually help people who are living in an affordability crisis, or the fact that people are literally walking out of our jails, or that our courts are backlogged, or that criminals aren’t being tried. My colleague just mentioned 56% of criminal charges are being waived

because people have been waiting for their court date for too long.

We need to do better than this. This bill, basically, is a bit of a press release to puff up the government in a time where people are talking about the Premier being out of touch because he bought a jet plane, and that’s my time.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to my colleagues from across the way for the remarks this afternoon on Bill 119, an important piece of legislation around protecting our communities. I know we’ve had a lot of discussion on it today, Speaker, and my question to either member of the NDP would be on the illegal truck parking and whether they think we should listen to our municipal partners and provide them the tools.

They’re talking about a lot of stuff—I know the member from Sudbury around going to regulation. This is actually in the act, giving some municipalities power to levy AMPs. This is what we heard from them at committee. Would they support this piece of legislation because of those initiatives?

MPP Jamie West: Of course, that part of the legislation absolutely makes sense. But if we’re going to talk about trucking, let’s talk about the fact that the member for Mushkegowuk—James Bay, several times, has brought forward bills about people who are driving transport trucks in northern Ontario who aren’t properly trained. The member from Timiskaming—Cochrane has talked many times about transports in the ditch where they don’t know how to release the Z brakes, the air brakes that are required in transports.

You have an AZ licence. This is an Ontario provincial licence that’s given to people. I couldn’t get a licence for my car if I can’t go in reverse or if I couldn’t release my parking brake. This is something the government could be tackling right now without regulation but just proper enforcement.

So if we’re going to talk about trucks that are parked somewhere, let’s talk about trucks that are dangerously driving on the road with people who don’t have the skills they need to have their licence.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Question?

MPP Catherine McKenney: Thank you to my colleagues. There’s absolutely no doubt that our communities certainly feel less safe than they did eight years ago, when this government took office.

The community that I represent had a supervised consumption site. It was closed down using fake statistics. That’s been proven through an FOI, as a matter of fact.

Today, the number one concern is that people do feel less safe. We had a place for people to go to safely be able to use drugs; today, it’s happening out in the open.

I want to ask both my colleagues—either one—do you see anything in this bill that will make urban centres that are struggling today safer as a result of what’s in this bill?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to my colleague from Ottawa Centre for that excellent question.

I'm sure the member knows that the Ottawa Citizen recently covered what the impacts of the closure of the safe consumption sites have been on Ottawa. I think it's very fair to summarize that piece—which was quite lengthy, Speaker—as being an utter disaster.

What's happened is that drug consumption that was taking place indoors is now taking place outdoors, on the street, which means that there's both a lot more visible consumption of drugs but also a lot more needles and other drug paraphernalia that are being found in public places, including in public parks. There's a bus shelter now in Ottawa that has a sign up saying that it is the Premier's "unsupervised consumption site" because of the large number of people who are using drugs in that site. There's no doubt that that is a measure that has made the people of Ottawa far less safe.

We also know I visited the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre earlier this year, and they said that they're seeing an increase in the number of people who are being released but who are coming back because what they actually have is addictions problems that aren't being treated. So our jail system is being used as a rotating door instead of actually providing them with supports that would allow them to be healthy, that would keep them out of the criminal justice system.

The measures the government has taken are failing, and they're not taking the measures that evidence shows will work.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: We've seen this bill—different bits and bobs—but one thing that I'd like to learn more about is prevention: preventing crime, preventing unwellness, preventing drug use, preventing homelessness, preventing trafficking. What do you recommend in perhaps another crime bill, if there is one, that the government could be investing in to actually prevent people from becoming so unwell that they end up breaking the law since we changed the law to make it be unwell?

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to my colleague. I think this is related to the earlier question that was asked. There aren't a lot of things put into place for prevention.

The Conservative government, for example, in 2018, removed rent control on new all new builds, and that created this spike of rents—really high rent prices. We have OW and ODSP forcing people into poverty. We have WSIB that, instead of funding people who are injured so they can live in dignity, strips more and more money away. Some 70% of the people who are denied in the first round on appeal win, but those people, because of WSIB, end up being the majority of people who are homeless in our communities—because we're not investing in community.

In my riding—where I grew up is a working-class neighbourhood—there's a lot of people with hard times in their lives. There's an organization called Better Beginnings Better Futures that helps kids. They have after-school programs. They have homework programs. It's a place to go so that you don't get into trouble.

Those small investments will pay off in the future, because the path I could have taken could have been one where I'd be involved with, maybe, criminal activity, violence or something like that, but instead, I'm an MPP today. I think that's the thing we need to invest in. Better beginnings will create better futures.

1740

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: My question is to the member from Ottawa West–Nepean. It's regarding the private security sector, because they do play a critical role in safeguarding retail, as well as worship places, where people gather to express their faith. This industry obviously has evolved over the years, and we believe that it is essential that the legislation keep up to ensure we have consistent standards, and that's proper oversight as well as modern training requirements, especially when it comes to risk level etc. My question to the member is, would you not be supportive of modernizing this framework so that we can ensure we're improving standards to better protect Ontarians?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'm very supportive of anything that ensures that people who are providing security have basic training both for keeping themselves safe and for responding appropriately when there is an incident so that it keeps members of the public safe and doesn't end up putting people in harm's way. But I'm also a big fan, Speaker, of anything that prevents crimes from happening in the first place, and that's what we don't see in this bill or in the government's agenda. We have an affordability crisis where people can't afford to buy groceries, a million people using food banks, and yet we had a budget that doesn't even mention the words "rent" or "groceries." When we ask why are people stealing we have to look at the fact that people can't even afford to live. So why would we invest in private security rather than investing in making sure that people can access things in the first place?

We have spoken quite a bit this afternoon about the government's lack of support for mental health and addictions and the fact that then we have certain unsafe behaviours taking place on our streets. Why would we want to invest in private security rather than making sure that people actually have mental health supports, supportive housing, addictions treatments so that they're not ending up on the street, where we have security incidents? I would much rather see an agenda that is focused on preventing incidents from happening in the first place than needing to respond because something has already happened.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Question?

MPP Wayne Gates: I'm pleased to rise to ask a question.

When I came here about 14, 15 years ago—but this government has been in office for eight years—I'd never even heard of encampments, didn't even know what an encampment was. That happened under this particular government.

The second part of that statement, quite frankly, is, in 2018, they stook rent controls off new builds. I'm a firm believer that when you're asking people to pay \$3,000, \$3,200—Etobicoke: I heard \$4,200 for rent—it makes people desperate. They can't afford their rent. They can't pay the food, so they end up stealing.

Do you believe that if this government would revisit rent controls on new builds to lower the rents—so make it more affordable for people to live—it would lower the crime rate in the province of Ontario?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Sudbury.

MPP Jamie West: We have 30 seconds, so the short answer is yes, but the longer answer, basically, is that you have more and more people who are relying on food banks who are working full-time or seniors with pensions who cannot make ends meet. The Conservative government has not helped life by making rent much more affordable for people.

With 10 seconds left: The reality is that if we had affordable rent, you'd have a better chance of moving forward in the world. You can't save for a house if you can barely afford rent, let alone food.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Steve Clark: Good afternoon, Speaker. It's great to see you in the chair.

I'm pleased to provide just a few short remarks on Bill 119, Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act.

Our government made a commitment to this House and to parties in this House that we wouldn't close off debate

on bills at six and a half hours. As you saw earlier in debate today, I allowed us to continue.

This bill is a very, very important bill for the government. We firmly believe that with the House's will, the bill should move from the debate stage into the second reading vote stage and, ultimately, before a legislative committee for public hearings.

With that, Speaker, I'd love to hear your feelings about whether this bill has received sufficient debate time, so I will move that the question now be put.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): 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? Did 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.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Orders of the day.

Hon. Steve Clark: No further business.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1746.

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