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Thursday 3 December 2015

Jeudi 3 décembre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 3 December 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 3 décembre 2015

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SMART GROWTH FOR OUR COMMUNITIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR UNE CROISSANCE INTELLIGENTE DE NOS COLLECTIVITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 1, 2015, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act / Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker, and good morning to you. Here we are on December 3—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Good morning, Percy.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Indeed. No matter the day, the week or the month, it's always an honour to stand here in Ontario's provincial Parliament on behalf of the good people in the riding of Windsor—Tecumseh.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: It's good to have you here.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you. Speaker, I have to tell you that as a relatively new member of this House, it was a real eye-opener for me to take part in committee hearings and a clause-by-clause review of Bill 73, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act. We heard from quite a few stakeholders, and they put forward some great ideas.

I just assumed that when we consult with the people whose lives and livelihoods will be affected by the legislation that we bring forth, we would take their points of view very seriously. Imagine my disappointment when it came time to go through the bill clause by clause.

Based on what we heard at committee, we in the NDP put forward dozens of amendments; however, very few were approved. It was the same thing for the amendments brought to the table by the Conservatives: the Liberal majority on the committee voted most of them down. It makes you wonder—at least it made me second-guess the entire process. We, the NDP and the Conservatives, fought to have the delegations given much more time for their presentations than the Liberals had originally said they would have. I guess that in itself was a victory. I just assumed, since we would hear more from the delegations, that we would actually listen to what they had to say and, if it made sense, we would adopt it as an amendment to the bill. Well, live and learn, I guess.

For example, the mayor of Barrie came to the committee. Jeff Lehman is also the chair of the Large Urban Mayor's Caucus of Ontario, LUMCO; he represents the mayors of the 27 largest cities in our province. He told us about Barrie and their very unique issue. Council there has been working on a deal with developers that would see them—the developers—pay, on a voluntary basis, more than what is called for under the traditional formula for development fees. But the bill says you can't do that; you can't have voluntary fees paid over and above development fees. This agreement, which was negotiated in an open, transparent and collaborative manner, was put at risk by Bill 73.

You see, the developers want to open up a chunk of land in the south of Barrie, and the city wanted it to happen but didn't have enough money to pay for the roads, sewers, bridges and storm water retention ponds that would be required, if the development was to proceed in a timely and cost-efficient way. So, through negotiation, they worked out a voluntary agreement as part of the municipality's asset management plan. They spent a great deal of time analyzing the project and the cost of it, and apportioned who would pay for what and when the plan would proceed.

Yes, there would be tax increases to help pay for it, but in order to make sure it happened, the developers agreed to prepay development charges to front-end the cost, and an agreement was entered into that would see the city get more money on a per-unit basis that would not be refunded to the developers. But wording in the proposed bill is, like, "No, no; can't do that," even though the city's—the taxpayers'—interests were balanced with those of the developers.

Mayor Lehman told us flat out that this bill not only will cause great hardship to the city of Barrie but to the regional economy as well. Make no bones about it: The mayor said the city cannot handle the financial shortfall that this bill would impose on them. He wanted his area to be grandfathered, to be protected, because of the time the region had already invested in this plan and because of the financial arrangements that had been freely negotiated with the development community.

LUMCO, the large urban mayors' caucus, was in full support of Barrie's request, and that was testified to by the mayor of Oakville, Rob Burton, who also presented

to the committee. They both argued that growth should pay for growth, and—like the presentation from the president of AMO, the mayor of Tecumseh, my good friend Gary McNamara—they all feel, as did other presenters, that there should not be any services handcuffed by a 10% discount and that there should be an end to the ineligible services list.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me get back to the Barrie example by telling you about a similar case brought to the committee by the city of Pickering. The director of corporate services, who doubles as the city solicitor in Pickering, is Paul Bigioni. He told us what impact the proposed bill would have on his community. In Pickering, they have something on the planning table called the Seaton lands. This is a huge proposal. It's one of the largest greenfield developments in all of Canada at the moment. Within six years, Seaton is planned to have 13,000 new housing units occupied by 36,000 new residents.

0910

Picture this, Speaker: Currently, the population of Pickering is about 94,000; imagine adding 36,000 more folks there by 2021. On top of that, just picture this construction site: more than seven million square feet of retail, commercial, institutional and other non-residential development—seven million square feet. That's what Seaton is. You talk about places to grow—this is huge.

Think about it for a moment. Imagine the bulldozers and all that heavy equipment. Imagine the number of jobs that would be created for the construction trades needed for this development, a massive infrastructure project. Think about it: fire halls, recreational facilities, libraries, roads, storm sewers—you name it.

But here's the rub: Pickering, like Barrie, has negotiated a deal with the province, the private landowners where the Seaton development is planned—so that the cost of providing the needed infrastructure is shared among all the parties. But part of that deal, just like the one in Barrie, calls for voluntary fees over and above the regular development charges, and this bill will put an end to any and such agreements.

Again, Pickering asked to be exempted or grandfathered. Mr. Bigioni called this section of the bill dangerous because it could nullify all of the hard work that has gone into Pickering's proposal. He told us he doubted the original intent of the smart growth bill was to curtail growth; in other words, to complicate it, to kill it.

The massive scope of this proposal, a proposal, by the way, that is no ordinary traditional subdivision agreement—Mr. Bigioni called it a provincial plan, a provincial plan created by the province under the Ontario Planning and Development Act. It's part of the central Pickering development plan, and it's one of only a handful of such plans ever created by the province. It's good policy.

The rub, again: When I asked them whether that deal had been signed, sealed and delivered, he said no, adding that it had taken months to negotiate it, was agreed to in principle by all the parties, including—get this—the province. But maybe, maybe, it's a case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is up to. But the architects of this bill will nullify this huge agreement in principle.

During clause-by-clause, I reminded the government members that they held seats in Barrie, in Pickering and Oakville, where Mayor Burton was from. He testified, too, as being in total agreement with it. We suggested a recess in the hearing proceedings. The member from Oxford suggested we take a 20-minute time out to allow the government members to consult with their local members who would be affected by any political fallout from this bill if the bill scuttled these agreements in principle in Barrie and in Pickering.

Well, we were hoping they would contact them and get a handle on what would be the fallout if these projects weren't exempted or grandfathered. We took that 20-minute break. Now, guess what? I don't know if indeed the member from Barrie was consulted, or the member from Ajax–Pickering or the members from the Oakville area were consulted or not, but I do know that the government members, when they got back after a recess, would not support our amendments asking that those properties be exempted from this bill.

I'm no fortune teller, but I would guess there could well be political fallout if indeed those massive projects fail because this government didn't do what their municipal representative said was an absolute necessity.

Let's get back to the presentation from the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. The principle of development fees is that growth should pay for growth; at least that's the municipal principle. I drank the municipal Kool-Aid for seven years as a city councillor and a board member, not only with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities but also I served as vice-president and chair of the large urban caucus at AMO.

I believe that growth should pay for growth. I'm not alone in that, Speaker. I'm sure many members of this House feel the same way, especially those who had some municipal council experience. That's why I sat up and listened closely when the AMO president was speaking. He called for an end to the list of services that are currently exempt from development fees, and he called for an end to the list of services that get a 10% discount from development fees.

I was hoping that the government members would see this smart growth bill—because that's the title of it: the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act. But Mayor McNamara represents 444 communities in Ontario. He knows what it takes to pay for growth, and he knows what his communities need in order to grow. But for the most part his presentation fell on deaf ears because the government members don't drink the municipal Kool-Aid; they get their drinks from the development community, which doesn't like paying the fees they're charged now, let alone being told they have to pay a little bit more.

We also heard from the Municipal Finance Officers' Association of Ontario. Now, these are the good folks who put together preliminary budget proposals for the mayors and councillors. They pointed out that only 204 of the 444 municipalities in Ontario actually collect de-

velopment fees. Although this new act allows for greater recovery of transit costs, they also reminded us that of those 204 municipalities which collect development fees, only 37 of them—37 of the 204—actually have municipal transit systems. So the bottom line on that is, even though there are some improvements in the bill, it won't mean much to a whole bunch of other municipal governments in Ontario.

We heard from the regional chair from Waterloo, Ken Seiling. He's also the chair of MARCO, the group which represents the regional chairs and mayors of the larger single-tier municipalities in the province. Chair Seiling says that it has been very clear for a long time in Ontario that growth doesn't pay for growth. He is of the view that in the region of Waterloo, for example, development charges are expected to fund only 36% of the growth-related infrastructure over the next 10 years—36%. He also had a very bad experience with the Ontario Municipal Board, which basically tore up his community's official plan and he was abandoned—abandoned—by the province when it came time to repeal that OMB decision. That's despite the fact, Speaker, that his official plan was in complete compliance with Ontario growth plan statements and policies—complete compliance. This all led to a five-year delay in the region's growth plan.

Speaker, we in the NDP tried to get real changes to the OMB but were rebuffed by the government members, who stated that there will be another time, another place for those discussions. Similarly, we tried time and time again to engage the government members in a real dialogue on inclusionary zoning. Oh, how we tried. Again, all attempts were turned away with the promise that there will be another time and another place for that discussion. They say their Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy will be ready sometime in the new year. We've heard that all before. Our member for Parkdale–High Park has had numerous private members' bills adopted and sent to committee and never heard from again.

0920

Speaker, if inclusionary zoning had been adopted the first time Ms. DiNovo brought it to this House, we would have seen the creation of 12,000 new affordable housing units in Toronto alone—12,000 new affordable units that we missed out on because of the government delay in bringing in any kind of legislation to deal with inclusionary zoning in Ontario.

Several delegations came to us about inclusionary zoning; for example, ACORN, which represents low- to modest-income people on social justice issues. Alejandra Ruiz Vargas reminded us that we are in a crisis situation in Ontario when it comes to affordable housing. She didn't see inclusionary zoning as a magic bullet, but she knew it was one tool to help the situation. We all in this House should recognize that as well. What are we afraid of?

Toronto Councillor Mike Layton came to the committee and reminded us that he has unanimous consent from his council colleagues for a made-in-Toronto form of inclusionary zoning that he was asking for. He wants the City of Toronto Act to be amended to make that a possibility.

The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Mr. Milczyn, has a private member's bill calling for inclusionary zoning. He's a former city councillor in Toronto. He knows it's just one tool that municipal planners could choose to use if it would make sense for their community. So let's get on with it. We in the NDP caucus will be supporting his bill or any bill that the government brings forth on inclusionary zoning.

This bill is flawed when it comes to smart growth, meaning we could have accomplished so much more with some well-thought-out amendments. But having said that, the bill does merit support, as flawed as it is, and that's because it's a small step in the right direction.

We could have done more for smaller, rural municipalities. They need flexibility in their planning. If a developer shows up at the town hall or at the township office and makes a proposal, they want to jump on it. They don't have time to jump through the hoops that this bill puts in front of them. We can't have one cookie-cutter approach that's designed by someone in an office in downtown Toronto.

Our northern communities need growth, and they don't get a lot of opportunities. They don't have the money for asset management plans and official plan updates. That takes time away from their small staff, who have other duties in a scaled-down office. Yet we insist on them doing what the larger municipal staff are expected to do. Flexibility is the key to their success.

You know, Speaker, we also stood up for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. They said if the bill puts a citizen member on the planning advisory committee, if it's in an area of high agricultural use, they wanted that member to have a farming background. We asked for that, and again we were rebuffed by the members of the government party on that committee.

We asked, again, for more use of more flexibility in our northern communities, just like we asked for communities which had agreements with developers for voluntary fees above the regular development fees to be exempted or grandfathered, and our concerns were rejected. It's all there in the committee minutes in Hansard.

We know, on our side of the House, that leaders at the municipal order of government know better what their community needs are than we do down here in our little bubble at Queen's Park. They know what they can charge by way of development fees without strangling the local home builders and bringing their growth plan to a stuttering halt. They know what they need to pay for growth. They know how to best work with their developers. They know that a cookie-cutter approach which works best in the largest communities won't necessarily work in the smaller ones.

We tried driving home those points to the government members on the committee, but with little success. We tried to convince them to use a section of the smart growth plan to rein in some of the powers being abused by the Ontario Municipal Board, but they would hear

none of that, promising a more complete review of the OMB somewhere down the road.

I've got to tell you, Speaker, the government members didn't think that a lot of the suggestions we made had merit; we thought they did. We supported most of the amendments put forward by the Conservative members as well. That's not to say that we didn't support anything that the government did, because we also voted for pretty well all of the government amendments that they made to the bill, minor in nature that they were. But this bill, as I say—I'll repeat myself: It's a small step in the right direction, and it does merit support. Thank you for your time this morning.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to congratulate the member for Windsor–Tecumseh on his reflections on the amendments that were offered on Bill 73. He took us through a very insightful description of what happens in committees as stakeholders come to present their perspectives on the issues that are outlined in the bill. Some of the things he talked about, particularly related to the issue of growth paying for growth, are very relevant to my community of London. Certainly the discounted services for soft growth, the 10% discount, excluding parks, recreation facilities and libraries, meant a $5.3-million tab for the taxpayers of the city of London, because the costs for these facilities were not included in the calculation of the development charge.

The member talked about the presentations from municipal leaders who were urging an end to other exempted services from development charges, like museums, like theatres, like art galleries and like park land acquisition. Certainly we know these are the kinds of services that do help communities grow and that should be reflected in the calculation of development charges.

Secondly, he talked about inclusionary zoning and about the number of people who came to committee to urge that amendments address inclusionary zoning. This is a huge issue for my community. We saw an 18% increase in the number of singles and couples with no children waiting for affordable housing. Inclusionary zoning would allow my municipality to increase the stock of affordable housing and address some of those wait-lists.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I wouldn't normally get up to respond to the member opposite, although I was touched by some of his observations. This isn't a perfect bill, right? Sometimes when you're putting legislation in place for 444 municipalities, it's difficult to get everything exactly right. There are always some anomalies. There may well be some way around that that we can look at. Perhaps those that have already negotiated a deal, you know—I'm going to ask my staff to look at that. I'm not going to make any commitment here today, but I'm going to ask them to look at that.

I'm always impressed with the member opposite. He seems to have a good grasp of municipal issues. Not everybody in this House has a good grasp. My learned colleague from the Tory side is one who has a good grasp of municipal issues and reminds me of my responsibilities all the time, which I'm always appreciative of.

But the bill is, on balance, thoughtful and reasonably comprehensive. It didn't catch everything. It didn't catch inclusive zoning, and it didn't catch long-term housing. There are some things—it didn't catch the OMB—all of which, we would acknowledge, need to be addressed. I think in our conversations, both in the House and privately, I've indicated to the member opposite that we intended to transgress some distance on that in the not-too-distant future.

I wanted to add that note of optimism and to thank the honourable member for his thoughtful comments. I appreciate his critique, always. It was useful for me to hear his words today, which is why I came into the House today.

0930

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm happy to rise and make a few comments on Bill 73.

I would remind the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs that amendments were put forward to make this bill better. Yes, it's not perfect—no bill probably is—but amendments were put forward to improve this bill, and they were refused by the government. And now we're hearing from so many stakeholders, developers, municipal councillors and all kinds of groups in the community who advocate for things like more bicycle parking on properties; they want to see affordable housing in the province. How can that be done if we're not all working together to make sure that happens?

Development fees don't materialize out of thin air. They do not come out of the profits of developers. I think that's the game everybody wants to play here. They come from the cost of purchasing a unit. That means higher mortgage expenses, higher fees, and it means that sometimes people are buying a new property and paying such high development fees—we hear in the neighbourhood of $60,000—that they don't recoup on resale value. If they have to be transferred a year later and move somewhere else, they could actually end up selling the property for less than they purchased it for and not just have to start where they left off, but they have to start further behind. That makes housing far less affordable.

As far as the parliamentary assistant, he is on record as saying that he supports moving from a five-year review to a 10-year review. I can quote what he said: "So the 10-year review period, I think it's—I know that some of the municipal politicians in my riding, and others, really appreciate that change...." That change wasn't supported by the government. And he said himself that oftentimes, they would do a five-year review just to have to start all over again.

Yes, it's not a perfect bill; amendments were put forward to make it better, and they weren't listened to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mme France Gélinas: I appreciated the comments that were made by the MPP from Windsor–Tecumseh; he basically summed it up. You have to look at this in perspective: We have a government that has been in power for 12 years. For those 12 years, they've always said that they wanted an OMB review. For the last year and a half, they have held consultations on land use planning and development charges, and they have heard every single comment that the member from Windsor–Tecumseh brought forward this morning—they heard those through the consultation.

Then, what they brought forward is this tiny, weeny little bill. Sure, it goes in the right direction when we talk about development charges, but it does nothing to address the long-promised review of OMB. So the member was sort of surprised, because when we opened it up after second reading for deputants to come and do presentations, he heard basically the same thing that had been heard over the year and a half that the consultations took place. Those same issues were brought back.

The NDP put forward amendments to the bill so that what had been heard would be included into the bill. A bill doesn't get—it's not an incremental process. When a bill goes through the House, it is a huge process and they don't come back on a regular basis. Those were not NDP amendments; those were amendments that, for a year and a half of consultations, the people of Ontario wanted to see. Those were amendments that the people of Ontario came to committee to tell us that we needed to do. But the Liberals don't listen. They went ahead with their little bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh. You have a two-minute response.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to respond to the member for London West. I think she hit it on the head when she started off by saying that growth should pay for growth. That's a concept we should all buy into. If you want to build, you should be paying a fair share of the cost that the municipality has to provide for you to open up that lot.

She also talked about inclusionary zoning. Again, I respect the minister; he says it's going to be coming in his Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy sometime next year.

I really hope that we can all work together in this House, the parties on both sides, and finally come up with—it's just another tool; it's not a magic bullet. But, like I say, if they would have brought it in 12 years ago, when we first started talking about it, we would have had—according to Jennifer Keesmaat, the chief planner for the city of Toronto—12,000 new affordable housing units within the city boundaries. That's just in Toronto, not the rest of the province. So if we can think of that as another tool that'll help us out, we should go for it.

As I said, I have great respect for the minister; his heart is in the right place. I just want him to move a little quicker on some of the things that we feel are important in this House.

The member from Thornhill, thank you, and to the member from Nickel Belt as well. When we talk about the OMB review, we all know it's overdue. We've all seen the abuses, and we've got to do something about that.

I heard the other day, when they were bringing in closure on other bills, how members say, "Let's get this to committee, where the real work is done." Well, trust me, after my one experience at committee, there's no real work that gets done. You listen to the people, you make a lot of notes—my stack of paperwork on this bill was this high. But when it came time to what we heard, going into the amendments, from the other parties, it didn't happen.

Thank you for your time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? Further debate? Last call for further debate.

Mr. McMeekin has moved third reading of Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Deferred vote? Okay.

A recorded vote is required. It will be deferred until after question period today.

Third reading vote deferred.

HEALTH INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LA SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 2, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004 / Projet de loi 119, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements personnels sur la santé, à apporter certaines modifications connexes et à abroger et à remplacer la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements sur la qualité des soins.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now refer to the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm glad to be back on day two to continue with my leadoff for our party. I guess I have 48 minutes left to continue with my leadoff, and I'm proud to do so.

Yesterday, remember, I had just started talking about how technology has changed and how we continually need to ensure that the legislation to protect the infor-

mation in our computer systems—online, in the cloud, wherever we have it—is as current as possible; and as we move further down the road to implementing a total move to computerized recordkeeping, that we ensure that the legislation is maintained. I'm glad this legislation has been reread in Legislature and that we're actually proceeding in debating it.

As I said, this is the leadoff for second reading. I'm sure we have a few more hours of debate before it goes to committee. We just heard from the member for Windsor–Tecumseh, that when it hits committee, it's kind of, I guess, frustrating on the opposition's part that we partake in these discussions at committee and take notes and, based on what we hear at committee, bring forth amendments to improve and strengthen bills. However, I too have the experience quite often in committee where either the NDP or Progressive Conservative Party amendments are voted down each and every time by the government. It's unfortunate.

But we still have two years and six months left to go before an election will occur, maybe sooner. I'm sure the people of Ontario are hoping for a sooner election. However, we do have that length of time to go, and maybe, by that time the government will be listening to our amendments, because I truly believe that all members of this House do have the capability and knowledge to improve any bill coming forward.

0940

We will continue on our side of the House to bring forth amendments which we think strengthen legislation when they hit committee, and hopefully at that time the government will understand that we do make sense and we are doing it for the betterment of Ontario.

Anyway, as I said, this legislation has been brought forward again. Unfortunately, in 2014 there were 439 cases reported to the Information and Privacy Commissioner's office of breach of information. Again, that's 439 too many cases. We should have a system where there aren't any breaches in the system. That's the standard we want to hit. I know it's probably hard to maintain that or reach that, but it's a goal we should be going toward, and 439 is way too many that would be acceptable.

I did mention last time that Ontario is one of the last provinces to update the legislation to require mandatory reporting of breaches to a privacy body. It's unfortunate, when Ontario is probably the epicentre of Canada and should be the best province, that we are last to put in the necessary provisions to protect our privacy, to ensure that breaches are reported to the privacy commissioner.

We look at eight other provinces that have already passed legislation: British Columbia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Yukon. They all have passed legislation on privacy. You look at Alberta and Newfoundland and Manitoba: Those three provinces are leaders that have strong privacy legislation, that have had prosecutions from them. We have yet to have any prosecutions under our legislation, and unfortunately we are one of the last to update our system.

As we modernize health care, as we try to push the government to ensure that health care is patient-centred and it's a priority, we feel that this bill will help improve patient care by protecting patient data, which will increase patient safety.

The Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, was aimed to protect the privacy of patients; however, as I mentioned earlier, no one has ever been convicted for the privacy breaches. As reporting was not mandatory in the act as it read in 2004, there could be many more than the 439 privacy breaches that we know of that occurred. The only way a prosecution could be launched was if there were reasonable grounds an offence had been committed, and it was left up to the police to determine this.

Even if the privacy commissioner investigates a breach and concludes that it should result in prosecution, a further investigation is still required to determine whether reasonable grounds exist to believe an offence has been committed.

Brian Beamish, the privacy commissioner, has commented to the media, saying that confusion over the roles of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Health and the privacy office has also hamstrung potential prosecutions.

This is not to mention the lack of consistency in hospital reporting. Twenty-seven hospitals in the GTA and Hamilton were surveyed and some said it was not their job, it's the job of the privacy commissioner, while another argued that a police complaint would be a privacy violation in itself.

I think it's unheard of that any hospital in the system does not think it's their job to report privacy breaches. I think that's an embarrassment to our system. People are going into the hospital with the faith and trust that they'll get better, they'll be treated, but also that their personal information will be protected and safe.

I don't know how you would be able to fix the system, or go after perpetrators into the system, if there was no mandatory reporting on the side of health institutions throughout this province. I don't know how you would ensure that we could go into the hospital and be safe—and somebody breaks into our health care system and looks at our data and uses it for whatever it's used for today, and how we could ever fix that situation if it goes unreported.

It's analogous to someone breaking into pharmacies in a city. If the pharmacist never reported that there were continual break-ins to steal, most likely, narcotics in the system, it would continue to go on. But once you report it—in our case we would report it to the police, who would have one of their divisions—they would probably get a better routine of monitoring the pharmacies in said city. If that is never reported, then that situation would never be fixed. The same could be said about the health information system: If you don't report when breaches occur, you can't fix a system to make it stronger and take care of the perpetrators.

Some background information: the Personal Health Information Protection Act was enacted back in 2004. It outlined the privacy policies and practices for health

information custodians in the province of Ontario. Health information custodians, health care providers and organizations in the health care sector must follow these rules when collecting, using or sharing a patient's personal health information.

The PHIPA also gives patients the right to see their health records and correct any mistakes. The legislation also has rules for non-health information custodians, such as insurance companies and employers that receive personal information from a health information custodian.

Health information may include the following: physical or mental health records of the individual; family health history; identification of an individual as a health care provider; plan of service; payments or eligibility for health care; donation of body parts or bodily substances; the individual's health number; and identification of an individual's substitute decision-making.

Back in 2014, we had Bill 78, which was the Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act. Ontario first introduced Bill 78 in May 2013 to protect the privacy of personal health information that is collected, used or disclosed by health care providers. The bill reached second reading before it died on the order paper in 2014.

The EPHIPA proposed to establish rules for health care providers accessing shared electronic health records. The EPHIPA imposed specific obligations on prescribed organizations that create or maintain electronic health records, including requiring them to:

—take responsible steps to limit the personal health information they receive;

—ensure employees and third parties comply with privacy obligations;

—make available to the public and health information custodians a description of the electronic health record and safeguards to protect the electronic health record as well as any applicable directives, guidelines and policies;

—maintain an electronic health record of all instances in which the personal information in the EHR is reviewed, handled or dealt with;

—audit and monitor electronic health records, perform assessments on risks of the security of personal health information to the electronic health record, and make the assessments available to the health information custodians and the public; and

—notify the health information custodians that provided the personal health information for the electronic health record and the Information and Privacy Commissioner in the event of a breach.

Similar to the lockbox provisions under the PHIPA today, the EPHIPA also allowed an individual to provide to a prescribed organization a consent directive that withholds or withdraws the individual's consent to the collection, use and disclosure of personal information.

The EPHIPA proposed to double the fines for offences under PHIPA from a maximum of $50,000 to $100,000 for an individual and from $250,000 to $500,000 if it was a corporation.

The EPHIPA would have eliminated the six-month limitation period for prosecution under the PHIPA.

So there have been discussions previously to upgrade the health system. Now, as I said, we have two-plus years left in this current session—unless they come up with a throne speech in the meantime—so the bill is on the table to be discussed, debated and to go to committee and get passed. I think it's important that we do ensure that this legislation goes through and gets passed, because there is quite a bit of—as I said, there were 439 breaches in the last year that were reported, and that's not talking about the ones that may have been missed.

As we've moved into the 21st century, we are looking after and ensuring technology and its protections are in place at the same time. As the electronic health records are going to expand—I know there has been quite a bit of difficulty in development in the doctor's office, but as I mentioned last time, the majority of doctors are now electronic with their data.

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The next step is the sharing of that data and who can access it. As I said previously, we'd love to have the hospitals, the doctors' offices, the labs, the pharmacies and other health institutions be able to share data amongst one another. We need to ensure that when we reach that level—I'm sure, down the line, someone will eventually have coordinated a system where that is possible. If we can reach that level, we need to ensure that privacy is in place. You do not want to say—for instance, you've been in the hospital and given a full and complete history, something that you weren't telling, say, your pharmacy, just because you thought it was none of their business; it probably wasn't any of their business. However, pharmacies are allowed to access that hospital data. There needs to be assurance that they don't go over their boundaries and peek into someone else's history—and maintain the privacy.

I'll go over a few of the known breaches that have come forward and the importance to have the legislation in place to ensure our protection. Health information: Breaches have occurred more than they should. Just a few weeks ago, private health information made headlines when there was a breach. A former Rouge Valley hospital clerk received a $36,000 fine, but somehow avoided jail time, for selling thousands of confidential maternity records to RESP firms.

You'd think, when someone is breaking in, stealing your data and sharing it, that the end result would be malicious ways where you could frame the person or embarrass the person. But when you look at what happened, in Rouge Valley—they were doing it to improve their own business. She was making money, but the company buying the data was using it so they could focus their advertising campaign on the people who had just had a child so they could increase their business. That's bad. That's breaking the law, in my eyes. It should be banned. But when you think of needing protections in place, you're only thinking that it's to protect from malicious means, whereas it also protects you from unscrupulous business folks who will do anything in their power to make a dollar. We need to ensure that there's legislation put in place to ensure that this doesn't occur.

This person, this hospital clerk, made roughly $12,000 off the deal. It's unfortunate that that clerk betrayed her patients. After almost 20 years of working there, the clerk admitted to stealing upwards of 12,595 maternity records and providing them to the company, and then they went after the parents to buy RESPs. It's kind of interesting that she only made $12,000 for selling 12,000 maternity records. I wouldn't say she was a very bright criminal.

Mrs. Gila Martow: You would have made more.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Most business people would have figured that one out. That's a vicious circle that had continued to go on for a number of years. It's unfortunate that those parents received those tactics to buy RESPs. Their privacy was breached. Unfortunately, that's something that can happen all too often. But the person only received a fine and unfortunately no jail time.

Mr. Robert Bailey: But the businesses are safe.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: The businesses? Nothing. Yes, it's something.

As of May of this past year, at Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital four clerical employees were caught looking in the files of 52 patients over a five-year period. Those four employees were only disciplined. In 2014, the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health had five staff members go through the medical records of 22 patients. At St. Michael's Hospital, a clinician posted an inappropriate comment about a patient's behaviour during a procedure on Facebook. A Toronto East General Hospital doctor chatted on a cellphone about the private details of a patient, unaware that the patient's relative was in the same room.

At the end of the day, people get disciplined and moved on. I think we need to ensure—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member knows that's not allowed. I could have you ejected. I think between the two of you, that was totally inappropriate.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Continue.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm sorry I missed that, Speaker.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Me too.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I wish I was watching; I could have seen what was going on.

Mr. Michael Harris: Keep talking.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you. So anyways, they were disciplined, but that was it. That was the extent of it. I think people in this day and age have the understanding that their privacy should be protected.

One other story I want to bring around as well is—it goes back to October of last year. I think this really highlights why we need this type of legislation. We all know about Rob Ford. Last year, stories were breaking about his cancer treatment records. These records were breached on four separate occasions at three hospitals: Humber River, Mount Sinai and the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. As of July, three of those workers have been charged, thankfully.

I talked about the privacy breaches in maternity wards where everyday people—their information was taken and sold for profit to funnel towards these people, which is terrible. But then you look at famous people who live their lives in the media, such as Rob Ford, who creates news stories each and every day that he decides to create a news story. The fact that somebody thought, "Well, let's figure out what's going on in his private life," where he's having health treatments—something that should be between him and his health care team and that's it. It's unfortunate that there are people out there who will think that this is a great idea, to go after that information. This is what we need legislation to stop.

I'm sure there are people out there who would love to go after any politician's health records and display them for their own personal gain or to the detriment of that politician—people who'd do anything they'd like to do in order to ensure that that career is ended. And it's not just politicians; it could be CEOs of high-ranking companies, it could be a neighbour that you dislike or it could be someone who wronged you in another way. It's something that is out there, and, as I said, there's not enough teeth or strength in legislation currently to probably stop this from occurring.

We hope this legislation actually gets through so that we can catch up to the other provinces and ensure the stories that we heard—either in the maternity ward or with Councillor Rob Ford—don't occur again. No matter what you think of people, no matter what we think about how they operate and what their life is like, their privacy needs to be protected as much as anyone else's. I think it's very unfortunate.

Other topics happened in the news—tragic events such as death or serious disability—that occurred during the preparation of this legislation. The Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004 was being overlooked. There was an upsetting story in the Brampton hospital. Under the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004, a confidentiality cloak is surrounded by the internal investigation, encouraging health care providers to be upfront with what occurred to ensure an occurrence never happens again. Under this legislation, the only ones involved in the release of information are the health care providers who were involved. No information is given to the families, which leaves them in the dark and looking for answers.

We're waiting for a committee to review the findings on another tragic loss of life. A 20-year-old man had hanged himself while under the psychiatric care of a Brampton hospital. His family has been left with many questions and no answers as the Quality of Care Information Protection Act withholds them. This story brings a lot of questions to mind, the first one being how could this act be written in such a way as to keep the people most affected by the death of a loved one in the dark? As such, changes to the Quality of Care Information Protection Act have occurred under the legislation we are debating today, and has been replaced by the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2015.

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But that still doesn't answer our questions pertaining to mental health. The tragic loss occurred in a psychiatric ward within a hospital. That means the patient came into the hospital requiring immediate medical emergency care pertaining to mental health, but was left alone in a room. When a patient enters a hospital due to mental health reasons, it's important that they are monitored extensively and stabilized with treatment. Mental health problems are only getting worse across the province as we see, and we're seeing many, many more young people affected by mental health problems.

We just finished committee yesterday on Bill 122, which made changes to the Mental Health Act. That bill came forward because of a court case in the Ontario system that struck down the constitutionality of the bill. Unfortunately, at that time, the government had a year to bring this bill forward to fix this case in mental health, and yesterday we heard—this past week in committee, as the member from Windsor West—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Windsor–Tecumseh. I think I'm going to merge your ridings into Windsor West–Tecumseh.

The member from Windsor–Tecumseh was saying how it's difficult in committee to get amendments passed. I sat with their health critic, the member from Nickel Belt, myself and the great member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. We brought forth a number of amendments to the bill; a few were accepted. However, the majority of what stakeholders brought forward was not. The reason why we had so many amendments to bring forward was because, unfortunately, the government created Bill 122; however, they forgot to involve consultations with the majority of stakeholders, who would have had a say and had recommendations to create a stronger bill. I think it was a flawed process, and possibly leading to a flawed policy down the road.

We found that negotiations stopped mid-April and reconvened after the bill was introduced in September. I don't know why we didn't have time throughout the summer months to have consultation with the very stakeholders—I even asked in committee. Perhaps the Canadian civil liberties group—were they not available during the summer? Maybe they took the summer off? Unfortunately, they were available and were willing to have a discussion with them.

It was unfortunate that many of the stakeholders that wanted to undergo consultation for Bill 122 were not spoken to until after first reading, and even the bulk of them were after second reading, after we had debated. We're in second reading right now for this bill, Bill 119, and we're going to pass this bill probably in the next little while. But if you think of Bill 122, with a majority of the stakeholders not present, or not talked to until after all the debate has gone on—a lot of them didn't even know the bill existed. You'd think maybe a message would have been sent out that "We're going to be changing the Mental Health Act." The government took what was in place from the court's decision, made the necessary changes, but they also changed other aspects of the Mental Health Act in addition to just taking care of the court case.

They had an opportunity to make other changes, and as has been brought up in this House with regard to mental health, the act isn't opened too often. We have a mental health strategy that was an all-party select committee. They came up with key recommendations in order to fix the system, and we're still waiting. We thought that we would perhaps get the opportunity to make the changes necessary when the Mental Health Act was opened. The government said they were rushed, and they had to quickly do it, but they didn't speak to anyone for a number of months. If they really wanted to make changes to the Mental Health Act, if they wanted to make decent changes and improve the mental health system in our province, they had the opportunity. They knew they were opening the act. They could have made the necessary changes and come forth with a stronger bill, with the input of Ontarians instead of the input of a few.

Back to Bill 119: It's interesting, with Bill 119 we're still at second reading, and Bill 122 is already finished committee and is coming back. It's funny; people at home don't realize how some bills get through quicker than others. Sometimes they're time-allocated and rushed through.

With Bill 73, which we just finished, there's a time allocation agreement between the parties to get this bill through. Bill 122 has already done committee; Bill 73 just finished third reading. Politics is interesting; working in the Legislature here is an interesting time. As an opposition member, my job and role is to ensure that we critique the government, and we will continue to do so.

It's about priorities for this province, priorities for Ontario, priorities for our country. Sometimes it's frustrating on our part when the priorities that we share with our constituents are put to the bottom of the list. This government, unfortunately, has their own agenda that we continually see seeping into the system.

I guess Hydro One would be one that the opposition here has brought forward; they didn't even talk about it in their platform. They decided to go forth and sell off an asset, which even the Financial Accountability Officer said is a terrible idea. They've sold 15% already, and perhaps they can stop. There is still time. They've made a little bit of a mistake. Maybe they can stop and hold off selling off any more—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Take the pledge and stop.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Take the pledge; stop the sell-off of Hydro One. Eighty per cent of Ontarians agree that it's the wrong plan to go forward.

We're hoping that down the road, maybe over the winter break that's coming up, maybe over Christmas, they'll get a change of heart, kind of like Scrooge, overnight. I'm not saying the government is like Scrooge but, on the opposition side, we think they are like Scrooge.

Mr. Robert Bailey: They'll get a lump of coal in their stockings.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: A lump of coal is coming.

But anyways, Speaker, I kind of went off track there. Thank you for indulging me as I went off on a small tangent. I'll get back to the bill.

What is this bill going to do? This bill will create an electronic health record system that will enable health information custodians to store and use a patient's health information over an electronic interface. The effortless exchange of health information is designed to improve patient care. It will become an integrated electronic system by creating the prescribed organization as an entity under this bill to manage personal health information in an electronic format and to create and maintain an electronic health record.

I could go off on a tangent and talk about the $2 billion this government has spent on creating an e-health system that is still in its infancy.

Mr. Wayne Gates: How much?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: It's $2 billion and still going. That is such a large sum of money to be spent on a system that is still in its infancy. There are so many providers that have gone out of business. There is a lack of compatibility between offices; I can just wait until they try to hook everyone together. It was mismanaged from the start.

I don't know—is it the same minister who created the Green Energy Act who did the eHealth, too? It could have been.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Smitherman.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: George Smitherman?

I'm sure, going forward, this government will say, "That was a different government," because I heard that yesterday with the Auditor General's report. This government actually claimed that it was another government that created the energy mess. It was a minister who was in the cabinet, the Premier who was in the cabinet, when they created the green energy mess, or our energy system mess. They actually came to the Auditor General's report with a straight face and said, "It was a different government, a different Premier."

It's kind of like what they did to poor Chris Bentley from London West. They threw him under the bus, backed over him a few times, and now they're getting ready to throw the rest of the people back from those days—who were their colleagues—under the bus again. They do anything they can to not accept responsibility for their actions. I think that's terrible.

Anyways, I didn't want to go off on that tangent, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, I did. I'm sorry.

Back to what this bill is going to do: If a health custodian is in need of retrieving information regarding a patient, the health information custodian can make a request for the information, and then that information will be disclosed. Each time a file is viewed or requested, that information is tracked back to the health information custodian.

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Health information custodians are only permitted to collect personal health information if they are providing assistance in a health-related issue to an individual, or eliminating or reducing a significant risk of serious bodily harm to a patient or a group of individuals. For example, if a patient arrives at a hospital and is having a serious allergic reaction, this would be a proper time for a doctor to look up what the patient may be allergic to.

This bill is also amended to allow patients to know who has accessed their records by requesting a copy of an audit of who has accessed their files. I think that's pretty key. I think it's very important that people own their own information. It's theirs; it's not the government's, and it's not the health care organization's. It's their information. The government is holding the information for them and protecting it. They should, at any time, know who's peeking at their information and keeping an eye on what they're doing.

This legislation also allows individuals a choice to conceal certain health files or all health files on their electronic health records from being viewed by custodians or prescribed organizations. Again, that's key. As the system grows and gets larger and larger, more people are going to have the opportunity to peek into our files and take a look.

I know people's privacy concerns vary. I have a constituent of mine who wants to be totally offline. It's a hard task because she doesn't want her health card information to be anywhere. She wants to know how to get out. She calls me from a pay phone. It's an interesting thing, and I respect the fact that she's that private, because she's concerned of any breach of her information. And then I've got other people who couldn't care less who knows what about them. This amendment will give them the flexibility to decide who can see what and when and where.

What many Ontarians might not be aware of—maybe we'll have to do a public relations campaign, much like the one we saw yesterday on TV about all these animals on TV, about climate change. The government is reviewing how they're going to fix climate change. It's interesting. They have a polar bear; they have a moose; they have a badger, I think, in that. It's a well-done commercial; I kind of enjoyed watching it.

Maybe when this bill is brought forward and introduced and passed, there can be an awareness, because every Ontarian is going to be added to this list where people can access their data, so maybe we need to get that message out that they can block certain people and groups from accessing their health files. We need to ensure—

Mr. Robert Bailey: We could put the taxpayer as an endangered species.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: That's a good point, Bob.

We need to ensure that these requests to have information concealed are done, so people in Ontario are going to know that, when this bill is passed, everyone in Ontario with a health card's information will be open in the system. There will be nobody blocked from seeing anything yet, so you'll have to make that motion going forward to conceal information that you want to be concealed. So that's a great idea.

When the government wants to spend money on self-promotion, perhaps they could use that money and teach people that, "Hey, you know what? We have protected your privacy information in the health care system; however, you need to come forward and say who can and can't look at your health care records." I'd be very supportive of a public campaign in that understanding. I think it would be money well spent on educating people on who can access their information. All that we need to ensure is that people need to be specific in their consent of who can access their information, so there is the opt-out part of it.

Patients can also ask to have their records masked completely, or just from certain individuals. Maybe that's something you can tie into renewing your health card, because today I might not want so-and-so to access my health records, because maybe I don't have an understanding.

Maybe I'm a general person in the public, and I don't want my pharmacist to see certain things, but as I develop my relationship with my pharmacist and realize their strengths in the health care profession, I think they should know that information. In fact, I forget that they can't access that information because three or four years have passed, and I'm assuming they're accessing that information, and maybe something down the road went wrong because they couldn't access that bit of information.

Maybe, when you're redoing your health card—I just renewed my red and white one. I'm finally updated, Mr. Speaker. Maybe when you renew that, they give you a list of who you want seeing your health care information, and you check it off.

I went, Mr. Speaker, and they asked me about donating organs if I died, because you can only do it when you're—I guess you could do it when you're living. But I thought it was really neat because they gave me a checklist of what I want to do, and I became a full donor on Friday. I had never had my health card updated. So I am registered, and I would like anybody and everybody here in the Legislature to sign up and become a donor. It's an easy process and—

Interjection.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Sorry? I'm done, again, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We seem to meet at this point all the time.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'd like all members to help me welcome Ruth Dolan, who is from my riding of York–Simcoe. She is attending today as part of pulmonary arterial hypertension action day at Queen's Park. Welcome.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to welcome a few constituents here today to question period. Both Sophia Tang and Tatiana Guzman are here on behalf of the Scleroderma Society of Ontario for pulmonary arterial hypertension action day. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Our page captain, Rachael Young, an incredible young lady, is being joined by her mother, Pamela Young; her father, Christopher Young; her sister Gillian Young; and they even brought along a family friend, Beverly White. Let's welcome them all to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to welcome the delegation from PHA Canada and the scleroderma society here today, including Dr. Sanjay Mehta from London Health Sciences Centre and Dr. John Granton from the pulmonary hypertension program at Toronto General. Welcome today.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have two friends here this morning, Speaker. Nick Lane is here because of your youth arts program. She's a student at Walkerville Collegiate—and her father, Mike Lane. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'd like to welcome two brave souls who braved the traffic all the way in from western Mississauga: Joan Paulin and Maria Realejo. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to wish my good friend the member from Northumberland–Quinte West, Mr. Rinaldi, a very happy birthday today.

Mr. John Fraser: We have some members of the Ethiopian community here with us today visiting Queen's Park. We have my friend Samuel Getachew, Abebe Negash, Girma Desta and Taye Aragow. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I would like to introduce some guests today, in the west gallery for the pulmonary hypertension action day at Queen's Park: my constituent Nicole Dempsey; Darren Bell, a director of PHA Canada; and Dr. Sanjay Mehta, the chair of PHA Canada.

We also have, from the scleroderma society, Rebecca Wissenz, Maureen Sauve and Ruth Mullin. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I've got a couple of friends from Thunder Bay whom I'd like to introduce to you today, down for constituency office training from my riding office in Thunder Bay–Atikokan: Lindsay Fron—my newest hire, who has been with us for about one month; and Karen O'Connor, a long-serving member in my Thunder Bay constituency office.

M. Grant Crack: Il me fait un grand plaisir ce matin de souhaiter la bienvenue à mes amis dans la galerie est. It gives me great pleasure to welcome three of my constituency staff here today: my executive assistant, Annie Lafortune, and also Sylvie Labrosse and Louise Coughlin here at Queen's Park. Welcome. You're here for training. Go.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm delighted to welcome to Queen's Park Janoi Edwards, who is a staffer with me in

Kitchener. He's here for a training session. Welcome, Janoi.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It gives me great pleasure to welcome a constituent of mine, Jeannie Tom, to Queen's Park today. She's here with the pulmonary hypertension action day.

Also, Mr. Speaker, it's an honour for me to welcome Kardinal Offishall. He currently has six records and four Junos, and he was a recent speaker at our culture strategy consultation in Ontario. Joining him today is Jeffrey Remedios, who is the president and CEO of Universal. I have to say, a couple of weeks ago, six of the top 10 Billboard hits were done by Ontarians, and Universal was representative of those artists. They're over there. Stand up, guys.

Hon. Mario Sergio: It is my great pleasure to introduce my extended family to Queen's Park today. Starting with my constituency office—they are here in the west gallery: Loris Fata, Phyllis Arturi and Alessia Fata. From the Queen's Park office, I have Ferd Longo—everybody knows Ferd Longo, Speaker.

Interjection: Best ever.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Best ever—Celeste Bottero, Semia Kandahar, Gianluca Ferrari and Madier Anzari. And some good news and bad news: Sarah Campbell Morales, who has been working for me all these years, is going to greener pastures serving the newly elected MP for Newmarket–Aurora, Kyle Peterson. We hate to see her go, but it's good that she goes because she's a great person and she's going to do much, much better in Newmarket–Aurora.

I welcome them all.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'd like to have the House welcome the great, talented students from Neil McNeil High School and their civics teacher, Crissy Orr. Welcome to Queen's Park—up the Beach.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome some constituents from the riding of Northumberland–Quinte West: Alana, her daughter Luisa, and grandpa Pat and grandma Louise. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Today is a very special day because Andre and Marlene Ceci have joined us. They are the parents of Brock Ceci, a wonderful staff member of mine. Welcome.

WEARING OF BUTTONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister for Children and Youth Services and the minister responsible for women's issues on a point of order.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I believe you will find we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear buttons in recognition of the National Day of Remembrance, and that we observe also a moment of silence before question period with respect to the terrible tragedy that took place in 1989 and the women who were killed that year in Montreal.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to wear the buttons and to ask us to take a moment of silence. Do we agree? Agreed.

Could I ask all members and our guests to please rise to observe a moment's silence in remembrance of the tragic events in Quebec?

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Pray be seated.

GEORGE STAMOU

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This morning, in the Speaker's gallery, we have George Stamou and his wife, Helen. This is definitely not George's first time at Queen's Park, but it is his last. He has now retired as a photojournalist from CTV. May we welcome him to the throes of retirement. Congratulations, George.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I did have an agreement that he would always take a picture of my good side.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Which one is that? I'm looking for it. Show me that good side today in your leniency.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have a feeling I'm not going to be able to do that today.

It is now time for question period.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Premier: After yesterday's scathing report from the Auditor General, many on that side of the aisle have a lot to answer for. The AG told us that between 2006 and 2014, the people of Ontario have been overcharged $37 billion for electricity in global adjustment fees. Ratepayers will be overcharged another $133 billion in the future. As the Globe and Mail breaks it down, that's over $12,000 per person; that's $457 a person per year. Can you picture all the presents that could be put under the Christmas tree? That's a year of hockey in rural Ontario. That alone deserves for the minister to be fired.

Will the Premier do the right thing and fire her Minister of Energy?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First of all, I haven't had the opportunity to say publicly that I thank the Auditor General for her report. As I said yesterday, the job of the Auditor General is to look at government, to look at the way services are delivered, to look at the way government functions, and then to provide a critique of that. That is her job. It's a very healthy aspect of democracy that we have that objectivity built into the system.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to acknowledge that today could be heated, and I'm not going to let it get too hot. So let's just—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I don't need the armchair quarterback either. So let's just pay respect to this, please.

Premier, finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I know that we want to get to the specifics around energy, but I think it's very important to understand that this is a very important part of our democratic process.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: I know it's all nice to thank the Auditor General, but this is 773 pages of an indictment of your government. You may make nothing of this, but this is precious taxpayer dollars.

I'm going to break it down: When it's all said and done, the minister will have overcharged an average household $32,000 more than they should have paid. With that money, a family could have bought one of the last Windsor-made Dodge Grand Caravans this year. It covers the cost of a Chevy Impala at the GM plant in Oshawa. And $32,000 is the cost of four years of tuition at the University of Ottawa.

Does the Premier think anyone overcharging Ontarians by this much should still have their job?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just continue, because I think what is important about the Auditor General's report, and all Auditor General reports, is that recommendations are made—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lambton, the member from Dufferin–Caledon, the member from Leeds–Grenville and the member from Renfrew, come to order.

Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Recommendations are made, and is the government listening to those recommendations? There are already initiatives in place to address many of the recommendations the Auditor General put forward. That includes addressing issues around CCACs and LHINs, strengthening the Ontario Energy Board through legislation and introducing a mineral development strategy soon that will bolster the sector. In many cases, we are already acting on the recommendations of the Auditor General.

Yesterday, I would say, as part of the report, the Auditor General said this—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will conclude in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: It's not just the overcharging that hurts Ontario; it's the overspending too. According to the Auditor General, the government could have had the exact same renewable energy programs if it had listened to the experts. Instead, they ignored the advice, rushed ahead and overspent by $9.2 billion.

This isn't about the merits of renewable energy; this is about political deals that cost Ontario $9.2 billion. That happens to be exactly what the government is going to get from the Hydro One fire sale. I still don't understand how this minister has his job over such incompetency.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There are 150 countries and jurisdictions right now in Paris talking about how to do exactly what we have done, which is make our energy production cleaner. I think what the minister said yesterday is that we're skating to where the puck is going, not where the puck is.

I want to just comment on what the Auditor General said in her follow-up—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, second time. The member from Lambton, second time.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: On the actions that we have taken, the Auditor General says, "I am pleased to report that 76% of these actions have either been fully implemented or were in the process of being implemented. I want especially to note the exemplary performance of the Ministry of Education, Ontario Power Generation, ServiceOntario and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in implementing recommendations from our audits two years ago."

We listened, we learned and we took action.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, since I can't get any remorse from the Premier for this indictment by the Auditor General, let's try with the Minister of Energy.

Overcharging, overspending—I see a bit of a trend. It includes overproducing and oversupplying power in the province. Between 2009 and 2014, Ontario's average annual electricity surplus was absurd. Ontario wasted almost as much as Manitoba produced. Ontario has among the highest energy costs in North America, and Ontario shipped away a province's worth of power.

The minister can't seem to get anything right. Can the minister name one corporate CEO who would still have his job after an abysmal mess like this?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I really want to address the issue of the global adjustment and the surplus power, and it does relate to corporate executives. The global adjustment, for example, is kind of a catch-all for costs that are in the system that are not associated with the price of power.

I'm going to use an example: Home Depot. They did 161 conservation projects in Ontario. They removed the

equivalent of 3,000 homes off the grid. The cost of that conservation was put in the global adjustment. The global adjustment represents 3,000 homes taken off the grid. It represents millions of dollars of savings for Home Depot.

The global adjustment serves a good purpose. There are many examples, and I'll refer to more, Mr. Speaker.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, second time.

Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Minister of Energy: This isn't just in the past. This problem will persist into the future. In the next five years, Ontario will produce so much surplus power, we could power the province of Nova Scotia for five years. I think our own bills are high enough, before we start giving away power for free to other provinces.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader, second time.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Seniors can't afford their hydro bills, and the government just ships our power to provinces at a loss.

Let's be very clear: We are selling power outside of our province for less than it costs to produce. I repeat, we are selling power outside of our province for less than it costs to produce.

The minister has turned Ontario's energy sector into the laughingstock of North America. Will he turn to his right, make the Premier's job easier, and resign?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: When we have surplus power, electricity exports help cover fixed costs that otherwise would have to be paid by Ontario consumers. A lot of people don't understand that, but I have a quote here that makes it very simple, Mr. Speaker. They're going to shout me down because—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I will remind the member from Simcoe–Grey that I have asked many times that we use titles or ridings. So consider yourself coming to order.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The quote says, "Any power we sell to the US, to Quebec, to Manitoba, or power they sell us, is surplus power. It's opportunity power. It's pure profit, in terms that it's power that otherwise would go to waste or not be generated."

That is from the member sitting across there, the member from—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To the Chair, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is the IESO—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. We're getting to that point where I'm going to start moving to warnings, and I will. Once you've been warned, the next time I speak to you, you will be named.

Carry on, please.

1050

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The former PC energy minister says it would go to waste if it wasn't sold and it's pure profit. Now, the IESO last year indicated that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's it. I stand and you stop.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again, to the Minister of Energy: Fifteen years ago, we made money in the energy sector, but because of your interventions, you've made us into the joke around North America.

The arrogance of this minister is astounding. Rather than criticizing the Auditor General, you should listen to the independent oversight.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Chief government whip, come to order.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Let's put this into simpler terms, so that the minister can understand: The government is overcharging an average family by $32,000 for their electricity needs. They have overspent $9.2 billion in renewable energy contracts. The last five years in Ontario—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Second time for the chief government whip. I need to hear.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: For the last five years, Ontario has produced as much surplus power as Manitoba could produce in that total time. For the next five years, we'll produce so much surplus power that Nova Scotia could use it for five years combined.

Overcharging, overspending, overproducing and oversupplying: Someone needs to be held accountable. Do you find this acceptable? Do you have any remorse?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, he's comparing a population of one million in Manitoba and one million in Nova Scotia to 13 million in Ontario. How ridiculous is that? It's comparing apples and oranges.

I'll tell you why we have a surplus. In 2020, Pickering is coming offline. That represents 3,000 megawatts. We have to be ready in a short couple of years. That's why we need surplus.

Next, the contracts of some of the original gas plants are starting to come up, Mr. Speaker—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington is warned. I'll gladly put the rest of you on the list. I'm going to hear the answers.

Finish, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Some 3,000 megawatts, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Tell us about the gas plants again, Minister.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nipissing is warned. Who's next?

Finish, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Some 3,000 megawatts from Pickering coming off. Some of the gas contracts are starting to expire and we don't have to renew them. That creates some capacity for us. During refurbishment, 15% of the total nuclear capacity will be out of commission. We're doing wise management, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. It is clear from the Auditor General's report yesterday that we need more oversight of Hydro One and the energy system, not less. Can the Premier explain to Ontarians why this year was the last time that the Auditor General of this province will be able to report on Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One is motivated by the need to invest in infrastructure in this province. The organization will be a different organization. I think it's clear from the Auditor General's report that there is a need for this to be a better-run company. There are problems with the company that need to be rectified, and that is exactly what will happen. As a result of the broadening of the ownership—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I feel like I'm being challenged, so the member from Renfrew is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There will be new oversight in place. There are different mechanisms in place, but there will nonetheless be oversight and Hydro One will need to disclose information as per those regulations and legislation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's very clear that there are problems at Hydro One, and the way to serve Ontarians is to actually fix the problems. Instead, after years of politically motivated decisions and failure on the energy file, the Premier is waving the white flag, handing control over to private shareholders and simply abandoning Ontarians and hoping the problems will go away.

By selling off Hydro One, is this Premier admitting that she is unable to fix the years of bad decisions her government has made when it comes to this province's energy sector?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the decision that we have made is to invest in the infrastructure of this province, which will allow us to grow, will allow communities to thrive, will bring investment to the province. That is the decision that we have made. Part of that decision was to look at the current assets that are owned by the province of Ontario, and to leverage those assets in order to be able to make new investments. That is exactly what we're doing.

It is quite clear that there are improvements that need to made at Hydro One. Those improvements will be made in order to provide better service to the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Oh, there are improvements that need to be made, that's for sure. Hydro One's maintenance backlog has increased by 47% since 2012. Two thirds of the transformers replaced by Hydro One in 2013 and 2014 were perfectly fine. Outages are increasing in this province.

How do we know this, Speaker? Because the auditor can go in, order Hydro One to give her all the information, and she can then make it public, which she did yesterday. But instead of using that information to fix Hydro One, the Premier is selling off Hydro One and hoping that privatization will magically make everything better.

Can this Premier explain why she thinks Ontarians deserve less oversight, less transparency and less accountability in our energy sector, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think it's very important that there be oversight and that there be accountability.

Hydro One, under the new configuration, will be regulated by the Ontario Business Corporations Act, the Ontario Securities Act and the Ontario Energy Board. They'll have to file information with the Ontario Securities Commission. They'll have to disclose the compensation of their top executives. The Ontario Energy Board will continue to have oversight and approve electricity rates. In fact, we've taken action through legislation to strengthen the oversight of the OEB. We've made those decisions to change and to strengthen oversight.

At the same time, the fundamental decision is that we must invest in infrastructure in this province. It is critical to the future competitiveness of Ontario that we make those investments, and those are the investments that we are going to make.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Yesterday's Auditor General's report showed what Ontarians have been feeling in their gut for a long time: The choices that this government is making are not about them.

Can the Premier explain why her government handed out almost 80% of its business grants to companies that didn't even have to apply for them and that they may not have actually needed, while inadequate funding means that seniors are waiting 200 days for the home care that they have applied for and that they desperately need?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First, let me say to the leader of the third party: It's our responsibility to attend to many things at the same time. It is our responsibility to make sure that we work to improve the home care system, to provide services for seniors. That is a fundamental responsibility, and it's one of the things that the health care system is being transformed to do better on.

At the same time, it is our responsibility to make sure that we work with businesses in this province to ensure that they have the capacity to expand, that they have the capacity to move into the 21st century.

I sat with CEOs who are part of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters yesterday, and they raised the exact investments that we're making through the Jobs and Prosperity Fund as necessary to their ability and their members' ability to make the investments to be able to become part of the advanced manufacturing sector.

If we don't work with businesses—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, it's true that many things need to be done by government at the same time, but it is all about priorities when it comes to government. People want their government to work for all Ontarians, not just the select few. Instead, the Premier is failing to protect the most vulnerable children in our province. They are failing to look after seniors in our province. They are failing to ensure that Ontarians can afford their basic hydro bill.

Will this Premier own up and admit that her government is failing Ontario families?

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me go back to my original comment because I think it's very, very important. There are a number of areas that the Auditor General has looked at. That is her job. It is her job to look at the way government delivers services and it is then her job to critique those. It's a healthy aspect of our democracy.

The important question, once that critique has been made and once those recommendations have been made, is does the government take them seriously and act on them? Absolutely.

In order to assess that, we need to look at the follow-up reports, because those are the reports that demonstrate, when there's a recommendation made, does the government follow through.

Yesterday, the Auditor General said this: "I am pleased to report that 76% of these actions have either been fully implemented or were in the process of being implemented." That's how we learn and we take action.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Five years ago, this government was told that they needed to fix the problems in home care. Five years later, this Auditor General says the problems are worse and not better. So I agree with the Premier: She needs to get to work.

Governments should be able to get the basics, the fundamentals, right: Help the most vulnerable people; make sure people can afford to keep the lights on and the heat in their homes on; make sure that seniors can actually get home care without waiting for 200 days; make sure that when kids get on the school bus, it's safe, and that when they arrive at their school, their school isn't crumbling around their ears. This is the minimum—the minimum—that people should expect from their government.

How are the Premier's priorities so backwards that she is getting the fundamentals so wrong?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would say to the leader of the third party that in each one of those instances, we are working, as a matter of our policy and our priorities, to make sure we make the investments that are necessary.

There are billions of dollars that are going into the repair, the renovations, the maintenance and the building of new schools. There are, again, billions of dollars going into the building of new health care facilities. We recognize that there is work that needs to be done in terms of the provision of home care. In fact, the Minister of Health is committed to announcing a discussion paper on the future of that system, which is in direct response to the concerns of the Auditor General.

I will be the first to admit that over the last number of years, we have worked to invest in the home care system to make sure people get what they need, but there is more that needs to be done and I think there are structural changes that need to be made.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: To the Minister of Energy: The minister calls surplus power an opportunity. It has certainly been treated as an opportunity by our neighbours, who have picked it up from you at yard-sale prices.

Energy planning should not be done for short-term political gain. The government shouldn't be intervening in energy day after day to save seats in the Legislature, yet this Liberal government wasted $9.2 billion playing politics with their renewable energy contracts, $1 billion playing politics with the Lower Mattagami hydro project and the infamous $1.1 billion playing politics with the gas plant scandal.

If this government just listened to the experts, like any reasonable government would, ratepayers would have saved $11.3 billion.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Transportation is warned.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Does the minister think the auditor still doesn't know what she's talking about, or is $11.3 billion just another Liberal cup of coffee?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm pleased to talk about Lower Mattagami in the first instance. First of all, that project came in under budget and under time. As well, there were comparisons made to the cost of power to Lower Mattagami and other hydroelectric projects. The other hydroelectric projects referred to were built 15, 20, maybe 50 years ago. The capital cost has already been paid.

The other issue is that building a modern facility has tougher environmental requirements and has tougher requirements in terms of accommodating First Nations. There are now the legacy grievances of all the old hydro programs that are now under dispute and will eventually cost money.

It was a good project that created 1,800 jobs, 500 jobs for First Nations, and we make no apology—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I definitely want to make sure I get to the supplementary.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Back to the minister: This isn't about renewable energy, it isn't about climate change; it's about what we could have saved. We could have had the exact amount of those renewables for $9.2 billion less if you had just listened and done your job.

The energy experts told the minister—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Barrie is warned. If you haven't figured it out, I'm into warnings.

Carry on.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The energy experts told the minister what to do. He did the exact opposite, plain and simple. Now the minister wants to silence energy experts by passing Bill 135, which won't even let the experts bring forward their concerns with your directives that have already wasted $11.3 billion.

Will the minister listen to the experts and withdraw Bill 135, or does he just not care about the cost of hydro and the people of Ontario?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, first of all, in terms of renewable energy, at the time the previous cabinet, the previous Premier were doing good green things for the province. They looked at the Green Energy Act. They looked at the renewable promise. What they did was, they looked at other jurisdictions: 80 jurisdictions around the world had equivalent prices. They had standard offers. It was not a competitive process. This administration has eliminated the standard offer. It's a competitive process.

There have been no large solar or wind projects approved in this province since 2011. The ones that are out there now in the system are under the old process. It's more competitive, it's less costly, it's renewable energy and it's greening—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

HOME CARE

Mme France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. This morning, right across Ontario, there are thousands of seniors sitting alone at home, waiting for the home care they need. Some of them are in pain, some are at risk of falling, but they've been told to wait for weeks, for months—for some of them, over a year.

Back in 2010, the Auditor General told the Liberals to fix the wait-list crisis in home care, but five long years later, a staggering 65% of home care clients are forced to wait for their assessment.

On behalf of every senior waiting for home care, I have a simple question for our Premier: How much longer will this Liberal government force frail and vulnerable Ontarians to wait for the home care they need now?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I completely agree with the sentiment of the member opposite, that it is unacceptable for people who are in pain, who are frail to have to wait an inordinate amount of time for care, which is exactly why we have been increasing funding for home and community care. We are increasing it by $250 million over the next three years. That is allowing us to provide 80,000 additional home care nursing hours and to help in the transition of people from hospital to home, because that is when people are at their most vulnerable. Last year in Ontario, the home and community care sector provided service to more than 800,000 individuals.

The reality that we're dealing with is that the demographic in Ontario is aging. We need to do more in order to support people, and that's why we need to make structural changes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mme France Gélinas: The Premier says things, but her actions show that she just doesn't get the priorities of Ontario families. When the Liberals want to sell off Hydro One, things move really quickly, but when thousands of seniors suffer for months on end waiting for home care, the Liberals wait five years and let the problem get worse.

She talks about investing money, but there are things such as: How come, five years later, we still don't have a minimum standard of care? How come, five years later, we still don't have oversight of the private providers of home care? How come, five years later, the wait-list has ballooned, not gone down?

How can this Premier defend five years of inaction, five years of broken promises and, frankly, five years of suffering for the people who needed home care but were on wait-lists?

1110

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, because for the last five years we have been working to improve the system: 35 million visits from our personal support workers and nurses, an increase of 1.3 million visits in the last year. The increases have been going up every year, and we've reduced administrative costs. Since the 2010 Auditor General's report, we've decreased administrative costs by 12%. That was money that we were able then to invest directly in front-line care.

In May, we released Patients First: A Roadmap to Strengthen Home and Community Care. We understand that there are changes that need to be made. We have invested more money. We have increased the supports in terms of wages to personal support workers in order to try to deal with the precarity of their work, because we need them as the front-line workers. We know now that

we need to make some structural changes and we will be consulting with Ontarians on that.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. With the holiday season approaching and academic terms winding down, many Ontarians are planning vacations. During a long winter, a trip to warmer destinations with friends or family can be a welcomed escape. With this in mind, I know that constituents in my riding of Burlington will want to know about consumer protection when it comes to the travel industry. With significant planning and financial investment going into their vacations, Ontarians will be comforted knowing that they will be able to take the trips they planned under the terms they agreed to.

I know the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services takes these concerns seriously and works closely with partners like the Travel Industry Council of Ontario, or TICO, to ensure consumer concerns are well represented.

Can the minister please explain to us how his ministry helps ensure that vacationers are protected from misleading, unscrupulous business practices?

Hon. David Orazietti: I want to thank the member from Burlington for the question and for her advocacy on behalf of her constituents. I certainly appreciate the importance of a family using their hard-earned money for a vacation or a well-deserved break, and I'm pleased with the progress that we've made in this area as one of only three provinces in the country that regulates its travel industry.

Ontario consumers are protected by the Travel Industry Act as well as the travel industry compensation fund, both of which are administered by TICO. Our regulation of travel agents and travel wholesalers adds a level of accountability to the Ontario travel industry.

The same level of accountability cannot be guaranteed with organizations that operate from outside Ontario, so I encourage Ontarians to book their trips or vacations with local businesses.

As a result of the Travel Industry Act, consumers now get full disclosure of pricing, all transaction details are provided to them, they get prepaid deposits protected in a trust account and they're also eligible for the travel industry—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Supplementary?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I want to thank the minister for his explanation of the protections that Ontarians enjoy under the Travel Industry Act. I know many of my constituents looking forward to vacations will be pleased to learn that their arrangements are subject to industry-wide oversight, and I will be watching closely for more from the TICO's consumer awareness campaign.

The minister mentioned a series of important regulations put in place to protect consumers. In addition to learning about these safeguards, my constituents would like to hear more about how our government has worked to level the playing field and ensure a fair and equitable tourism sector.

Can the Minister of Government and Consumer Services please outline how our government has worked with the act to build a safer, fairer tourism market?

Hon. David Orazietti: Thank you again to the member from Burlington. Our government continually reviews trends in industry and identifies areas of consumer concern, adding protections where appropriate. In this regard, we've amended the Travel Industry Act, improving consumer protection by enhancing financial reporting requirements from travel agencies and ensuring trip compensation claims are fair and effective in the event of closures.

The Travel Industry Act has been extremely effective in adding accountability to the travel industry, as TICO includes over 2,500 registered travel agents who fall under the act. As of this past spring, TICO's dedicated reimbursement fund was valued at $21 million, allowing for payments of up to $5,000 per person and up to $5 million per event. Since its inception, TICO has provided over $13 million in compensation to consumers and has had 39 convictions so far this fiscal year.

I'm pleased with our government's track record in protecting consumers so that all Ontarians can plan any trip with confidence.

HYDRO ONE

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, yesterday the Auditor General revealed that Hydro One has consistently been one of the least reliable among large Canadian electricity distributors. She continued: "In a scorecard published by the Ontario Energy Board ... Hydro One was ranked worst ... of all distributors in Ontario...." Yet in May, your Minister of Energy said, "Hydro One is one of the most reliable companies in North America. It has been recognized as such, as one of the top five."

Speaker, for too long, the Minister of Energy has attempted to keep the House in the dark when it comes to Hydro One. My question for the Premier is: Now that the auditor has revealed the truth, will she accept the truth?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm wondering exactly where the member is going with this question, because we have said that there need to be improvements at Hydro One. There are serious challenges with this organization. In broadening the ownership and changing the way this organization is going to be governed, there actually will be improvements made.

I'm going to take from the question from the member opposite that they actually support the broadening of ownership of Hydro One and the changes that need to be made to the company.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Todd Smith: I can tell you categorically that the answer to that inference is: No, we don't.

Back to the Premier: In May, the minister went on to say that Hydro One, in terms of the infrastructure, is extremely reliable. What we're getting at here, Premier, if you don't understand the question, is the credibility of your Minister of Energy. He says that it's a reliable system. He says that they know how to plan infrastructure. Yesterday, the auditor said that a project that was extending a corridor from the Ottawa Valley to the Peterborough area forgot to include 47 kilometres of roads, three bridges and 35 towers. The auditor also revealed a $4.4-billion infrastructure deficit at Hydro One because your minister and your government are completely incompetent.

Is it acceptable to the Premier that her minister has either been ignorant of or complicit in the incompetence at Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: At least this question is consistent with the ideology of that party. At least it's consistent with past positions, which are that broadening the ownership of Hydro One—improving the company—would be a good thing to do. Our motivation on this side of the House has been to invest in infrastructure. That is why we are repurposing; that is why we looked at assets; that's why we are broadening the ownership of Hydro One: In order to be able to leverage that asset to invest in infrastructure across the province—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This is a company that needs improvement, and that improvement will happen. But the motivation is to invest in infrastructure that is needed in every riding, in every corner of this province.

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. The Auditor General's report on child protection services in Ontario made it clear that this government is putting our most vulnerable kids at risk. Societies are not always checking the Child Abuse Register before placing children, meaning that even 13 years after the death of Jeffrey Baldwin and while the Katelynn Sampson inquest is ongoing, we continue to place children in homes with people who have records of child abuse. Ontario is taking an average of seven months to complete abuse investigations, when the guideline is 30 days. "In more than one third of investigations we reviewed, safety assessments to identify immediate safety threats to the child were either not conducted or not conducted on time."

Speaker, can the Premier please explain why she is allowing children to be placed in homes when the abuse register hasn't even been checked?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Children and Youth Services is going to want to talk about the specific things that we are doing—the initiatives that we are taking—but this is a perfect example of why it's so important that we have an Auditor General: that we have those eyes on what government does and what the organizations do, and pushing a government to follow up and to take action, which is what we do.

As the Auditor General said in her follow-up report, 76% of the recommendations have been followed through on; initiatives have been taken. There are things that have happened in terms of children in care that are unacceptable; that is absolutely the case. We are taking action, and the Minister of Children and Youth Services will talk about what those actions are.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Miss Monique Taylor: Unacceptable? What is unacceptable is that report that was given to us by the Auditor General yesterday. We need leadership on this file. We need to immediately remedy these disturbing results.

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Children in care are some of our most vulnerable citizens in this province of Ontario. We have a duty to protect children in care, and this government is failing them again.

To make matters worse, the ministry isn't even ensuring that recommendations following the death of a child in care are being implemented by societies. How is it possible that we aren't learning from mistakes after children are dying in care?

Will the Premier take responsibility for the fact that children in Ontario continue to be placed in homes with convicted child abusers?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the critic for raising these very important questions. I think we all agree that the protection and support and safety of our most vulnerable children is paramount to all us.

I want to thank the auditor for her recommendations. While she has recognized the tremendous progress that has been made in the child welfare sector when it comes to the safety and support of our children, there are some serious issues that have been identified. I take these issues very seriously.

With respect to the child abuse registry, I'm very concerned these checks aren't happening as often as they should. My ministry previously issued a directive on this to all children's aid societies in Ontario. I'll be issuing another directive and following up very soon. It's very disappointing that this is happening, and I take accountability to make sure this is followed up on.

When it comes to completing investigations in time, as we've heard from the association, some take longer, some take less time. However—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I stand, you sit.

New question.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

As you know, Minister, the Maplehurst Correctional Complex is located in my riding of Halton. I often hear from the community of concerns they have about the safety and well-being of correctional officers and inmates in the facility. I know correctional officers in my community and communities across the province work hard every day to keep us safe, and we are grateful.

What many people may not know is that our correctional officers are often faced with difficult challenges as greater numbers of inmates suffer from mental health and addiction issues. It is important that, as we modernize our correctional system, we focus not on building more jails, but instead on addressing these realities and providing better services to help break the cycle of reoffending.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain what he is doing to transform corrections in Ontario?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member from Halton for this important question. The transformation of corrections is a key part of my mandate from the Premier, and something we are working hard on every day.

We are absolutely committed to moving forward with better mental health supports and enhanced rehabilitation and reintegration programs so that we can help break the cycle of reoffending. We have opened the forensic early intervention service, a partnership with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health that is the first of its kind in Canada, at the Toronto South Detention Centre. It provides early intervention forensic mental health services to remanded inmates.

In addition, as part of our transformation, we have launched a comprehensive review of Ontario's use of segregation within our correctional facilities, particularly in relation to its use for those with mental health needs.

These are just a few of the important things we are working on in relation to inmate mental health as we work to ensure we break the cycle of crime and reoffending.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the minister for your tireless efforts on this issue. I know that Halton residents and Ontarians across the province will be encouraged to see the important steps that you are taking to transform corrections in Ontario. I think your emphasis on providing more mental health supports and a greater focus on rehabilitation and reintegration programs is particularly important.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is also important that the minister work closely with all of his corrections partners to deliver these key programs and services. Staff in the Maplehurst Correctional Complex and other facilities will play a key role in this transformation.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please provide some information on the role he sees for correctional officers as his ministry works so hard to modernize the correctional system?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, correctional officers and probation and parole officers are integral to my ministry's efforts to bring about change. These are our frontline workers. They are the experts in the field and I wanted to thank them for their hard work and dedication.

We have hired nearly 500 new correctional officers since 2013 and are working to hire more. In fact, we have a class of almost 100 in the Ontario Correctional Services College who are graduating tomorrow.

The recent tentative agreement with the corrections bargaining unit is further evidence of our government's continued support for correctional officers and our probation and parole officers. If ratified, Speaker, it will provide the framework for a stand-alone correctional bargaining unit collective agreement for future rounds of collective bargaining.

Correctional officers are a vital part of the work that is under way to modernize our correctional system. We have a renewed opportunity to work together under this new framework.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday's report from the Auditor General is the last time she will be able to review Hydro One. It's too bad because, as usual, her reports are very revealing. She wrote that the Ontario Energy Board is the "protector of consumer interests," and yet, we now know the OEB wasn't even consulted on the sale of Hydro One.

The minister ignored the OEB and the Liberal government silenced the Auditor General when they voted down the independent oversight of Hydro One. Is the Premier afraid of independent oversight because she doesn't like what it reveals?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Energy Board has a very important role to play in terms of the regulation of the system. The Ontario Energy Board will continue to play that role in terms of setting rates.

The broadening of the ownership of Hydro One was a decision that we made in order to have the capacity to invest in infrastructure. That was a decision that our government made. It is a decision, I believe, that will put us in a very good position in the immediate, the interim and the long-term, because it will mean that roads, bridges and transit—investments that could not have been made otherwise—will be made.

The member opposite is asking me whether I think that we should have asked the OEB. The OEB has a totally different role. That role will remain consistent once the ownership of Hydro One is broadened.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, the Premier's words do not match her action. She did not allow the OEB to participate, to have any feedback on whether the sell-off of Hydro One occurred.

When the Premier wrote the Minister of Energy's mandate letter, she said, "It is of the utmost importance that we lead responsibly, act with integrity, manage spending wisely and are accountable for every action we take."

The people of Ontario have 37 billion reasons to see that the minister has failed in his mandate. It's very clear from the Auditor General's report that the Liberal government has been meddling in the energy file for the past eight years, costing homeowners and small businesses $37 billion.

Will you finally admit you need to start listening to the AG, the municipalities, the people of Ontario, and stop any further sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the point I made earlier today and yesterday—that there are 150 countries right now that are in Paris trying to forge a deal that would allow the globe to move to a low-carbon reality. The fact is, the initiative that we took to shut down all the coal-fired plants, to move to more renewable, cleaner energy is a decision that jurisdictions all over the world are going to have to move to if we are going to avoid the devastation of climate change.

You only have to look across this country. Look at Alberta and their plan. They have said that they are going to move off coal. It's going to take them 15 years. The fact is, we're there. As the Minister of Energy said, we skated to where the puck was going and now we will work with all of those countries to make sure that they can take the same kinds of initiatives that we've already taken.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Mr. Percy Hatfield: To the Premier: Good morning, Premier. Yesterday's Auditor General's report on SAMS made it clear that the Premier and her government were well aware of the problems with SAMS but rushed it through anyway. SAMS problems impact our most vulnerable citizens in Ontario: people with disabilities, people who are marginalized and impoverished. Clients with developmental disabilities had their bank accounts frozen when ministry mistakes were made. This is unacceptable.

1130

More unacceptable still are the minister's prior comments that problems with SAMS could be compared to a BlackBerry glitch.

Speaker, will the Premier explain to vulnerable Ontarians why she rushed the implementation of a computer program she knew didn't work?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Community and Social Services is going to want to speak to the specifics, but I want to say to the member opposite that we know there were problems with the implementation of SAMS. We've acknowledged that. We are working very, very hard to correct that. The minister has been on the front line, has met with front-line workers. There are changes that have been made.

We know there were challenges, there were problems with the way this system was implemented. We will learn from those problems, as we have in other sectors. We will demonstrate that we have learned from those problems, and we will correct the challenges in order to improve the service to the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I don't know if the Premier knows, but I know that city staff in Windsor caught a SAMS cheque for $1 million before it went out to a client.

SAMS is forecast to be $90 million over budget and still isn't working properly.

The ministry had no oversight over consultants. Consultants were overseeing consultants. Front-line workers shouldered the brunt of this disastrous implementation while somehow the minister was unaware of what was going on in her own ministry.

Speaker, will the Premier admit her government is still failing Ontario's most vulnerable citizens?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Of course, we do take the recommendations of the Auditor General very seriously. We have listened to her advice and learned from her report.

We are already addressing all five of her recommendations on her report on SAMS. We have acknowledged many times in this that there were severe and significant challenges with the implementation of SAMS, and this is why, as soon as we became aware of this, we did contract PricewaterhouseCoopers to do an independent review.

We've been working on all of PricewaterhouseCoopers's 19 recommendations. We've developed a transition plan, along with the advice of municipalities, unions and front-line staff. As part of the transition plan, we are already in the process of implementing many of the changes that the auditor is now recommending.

I want to thank all the caseworkers for their patience, and the vulnerable clients who have had difficulties through this transition. We are making—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Perth–Wellington is warned.

New question.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the President of the Treasury Board. I was pleased to see that this past Friday, our government released the final Open Data Directive. This marked a big step forward for open government for our province. With this directive, Ontarians will have greater access to Ontario data, and which will spur innovation, lead to the generation of new ideas and problem-solving through the development of apps.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Could she tell us more about the directive and explain its significance as part of our government's Open Government strategy?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the very hard-working member from York South–Weston for that question.

Speaker, I'm proud to say that Ontario is a leader when it comes to open data. We were the first to launch a public voting tool so Ontarians could vote on the data that matters to them. We received over 30,000 votes. We've now released more than 400 data sets on our open data catalogue, and they've been downloaded over 200,000 times.

As the member notes, last week we released the Open Data Directive. With this directive, we're making data open by default. That means that ministries and provincial agencies must open data to the public unless there's a very good reason that it not be open; that is, unless it's exempt for privacy, legal, confidentiality, security or commercially sensitive reasons.

I look forward to the supplementary, where we'll talk about how we developed that directive.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to thank the minister for that answer, Speaker. I am pleased to hear that Ontario is a leader in this area.

By making our government's data open by default, we will not only promote greater openness and transparency, but also drive open data innovation in our burgeoning technology sector, which will lead to more products, more services and more solutions for government and for businesses.

I understand that the development of the Ontario Open Data Directive represented another first for our government in that we posted a draft online for public feedback. Speaker, I'm hoping that the minister can tell us more about how the people of Ontario contributed to the development of the Open Data Directive and how they shaped the final directive.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As the member knows, the Open Data Directive marks another first for our government. In the spirit of open dialogue, we posted the draft directive online and opened it up for public consultation before we made it final.

We were the first in Canada to open up a draft Management Board of Cabinet directive for public comment, and we did that because we know that when we increase transparency, when we increase accountability and engagement, we get better policy and better outcomes for Ontarians.

I just received a letter from Brian Beamish, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, commending us on this consultation. He said, "I ... want to commend the government on the extensive public consultation it conducted during the directive's development. My office was pleased to participate in these consultations, and provided extensive comments.... I want to thank Brian Fior, director, Open Government office and his team for their positive and open-minded approach to these consultations."

HYDRO ONE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Nowhere in this province is the government's outrageous and damaging energy policy felt more than in northern Ontario. Yesterday's report from the Auditor General also revealed that Hydro One, which many northern and rural residents rely on, spent $660 million on smart meters, yet Hydro One does not use the smart meters to detect power outages in the system. The energy minister launched a full-scale attack on the auditor last year when she criticized the smart meters, and it turns out they're not even using them.

I ask the Premier, why does she think it's okay for Hydro One to leave northerners to languish for days on end without power?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, again, I think what the member opposite is alluding to is that there need to be improvements in the way service is delivered by Hydro One to the people in Ontario who are reliant on Hydro One. There are improvements that need to be made in this company. We have made a decision motivated by the need to invest in infrastructure in the province, but also by a sincere desire to see improvements in the company. That's what we will see. Those are the parameters within which we're operating.

I know the member opposite doesn't support the investment in infrastructure across the province that we are making, but, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you—and, through you, him—that there is not a municipality in this province, including his municipality, including North Bay, including municipalities across the north, that doesn't need those infrastructure investments, and they are looking to us to make them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Homeowners in the north have seen hydro bills during the coldest months of the year jump literally hundreds of dollars a month. It might be news for the government, but when it's 40 degrees below, turning off the heat is not an option. For many of our most vulnerable, the government is literally forcing them to choose whether to heat or to eat.

The auditor's facts are clear: Hydro One customers have seen 24% more outages from 2010 to 2014; and on my road in Corbeil, they can last for days. I ask the Premier, why are you okay with northerners paying so much more for hydro and getting less and less under this government's watch?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I hope the member opposite, when he is talking to his constituents who call his office, makes them aware of the northern energy credit, which our government brought in to help people who needed support in jurisdictions where they were dealing with high energy costs. I hope he also talks to them about the program for low-income Ontarians that helps to offset the cost of electricity.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there are different conditions in different parts of the province, which is exactly why we have programs that apply across the province, and we have specific programs that apply regionally, like the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program and the Northern Ontario Energy Credit. They recognize and

acknowledge that there are regional differences around the province.

RING OF FIRE

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Premier. In the Auditor General's report, her audit found what the people of the north already knew: that despite this province being the largest mineral producer in this country, it was ninth overall in attracting mining projects.

You don't have to look farther than the Ring of Fire to see that. The Auditor General's report found that, since 2010, the Ring of Fire Secretariat, created by this government, has spent over $13 million and has nothing to show for it. One company throws their hands up in the air and the other is threatening to leave—$13 million over four years and you haven't even fulfilled your duty to consult with the First Nations in this area.

Speaker, what is this government doing to develop this deposit? Are they only providing busy work for their well-connected friends?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'm grateful to have an opportunity to speak. I'm very grateful to the Auditor General for her recommendations.

But quite frankly, I think that we're very much geared to strengthening our ministry's operations and mineral sector policies. Indeed, we're going to be moving forward with a renewed mineral development strategy which will actually be dealing with a number of the recommendations that the Auditor General is putting forward.

Let me speak quickly, though, about the work that we're doing in the Ring of Fire. Listen, we support the recommendations, and indeed we want to see a timeline and deadlines put in place. The bottom line is that we're not going to be imposing those when—we're going to make a priority of working with our First Nations. You'd be the first to be critical of us if we did not consult in that fashion. You referenced that yourself.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo is warned.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: That's hugely important in terms of the regional framework that we would put in place, let alone working with the industry. May I say, the opportunity we're going to have now to work with a new federal government, which is very keen to move forward on this—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

The time for question period is over.

VISITORS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I know that it's already been done, but I want to add my voice as well and encourage everybody in this House to join me in welcoming, again, the original hip-hop ambassador for Toronto, Kardinal, and his colleague Mr. Remedios.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I'm very pleased that a guest of mine from Peterborough, Mr. Ray March, arrived in the members' east gallery.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Up in the gallery is my very hard-working constituency assistant, Neil Werely. Welcome.

DEFERRED VOTES

SMART GROWTH FOR OUR COMMUNITIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR UNE CROISSANCE INTELLIGENTE DE NOS COLLECTIVITÉS

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act / Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1143 to 1148.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gravelle, Michael	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Naqvi, Yasir
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Natyshak, Taras
Baker, Yvan	Hatfield, Percy	Nicholls, Rick
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoggarth, Ann	Orazietti, David
Ballard, Chris	Horwath, Andrea	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Potts, Arthur
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bisson, Gilles	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Jones, Sylvia	Sandals, Liz
Brown, Patrick	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Clark, Steve	Lalonde, Marie-France	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Crack, Grant	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Tabuns, Peter
Delaney, Bob	Mantha, Michael	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Martins, Cristina	Taylor, Monique
DiNovo, Cheri	Martow, Gila	Vanthof, John
Dong, Han	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Duguid, Brad	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McDonell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Fife, Catherine	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Forster, Cindy	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yakabuski, John
Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Yurek, Jeff
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David
Gates, Wayne	Moridi, Reza	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 89; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1152 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Arthur Potts: I would like to have the House welcome three guests of mine from the constituency: James and Patricia Hung, and my good friend Justin Van Dette, who are in the east gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: It gives me great pleasure to introduce to the House two members of my staff from Kitchener Centre who are here today at Queen's Park: Jill Kolb and Janoi Edwards.

Hon. Brad Duguid: It gives me great pleasure to introduce a couple of good friends of mine: Rohit Singh, who actually works in the constituency office of Chris Ballard, our colleague up in Newmarket–Aurora, and John Souri, who works in my constituency office. Gentlemen, thanks for being here.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'll introduce them, but they're on their way up to the gallery. I'm pleased to introduce the grade 5 civics class—I think this is them walking in—from St. Ignatius of Loyola Catholic School in my great riding of Scarborough–Rouge River. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HALTON COURTHOUSE

Mr. Ted Arnott: As the government begins preparations for next year's budget, I rise in this House once again to underscore the need for a new courthouse in Halton region.

The current Halton courthouse, which was built more than 50 years ago, is aging, overcrowded, unsafe and inadequate to meet the needs of our rapidly growing region.

I toured the courthouse on September 10, 2014, and participated in a town hall meeting with lawyers, judges and other courthouse users later on that day. I told them I would do what I could to help.

I've raised this issue in debate in this House and in question period. I've written to the Attorney General, and I've spoken to her many times. I even initiated a meeting with the Attorney General and all the Halton-area MPPs on September 8. I also discussed the need with the Minister of Finance and the President of the Treasury Board last month, asking for their support.

The Attorney General assures us that a new courthouse for Halton region is a priority for her ministry. I thank her for the interest she has shown to date and urge her to keep pushing.

The fall economic statement showed that the government has allocated $243 million for justice infrastructure for this year. That's up almost $100 million from last year. Where is the Halton courthouse in their long-term infrastructure plan?

Halton region needs a new courthouse. I am prepared to reach across the aisle and work with the other Halton-area MPPs. Let's work together and get this done.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: As you know, many members are signing Christmas cards this week. I didn't do that, so I have to make do with this:

'Twas Christmas week and the members were busy in their ridings—as always—
Only security and the legislative ghosts walked the Queen's Park hallways.
Spirits, which were seen, were captured for Clerk Deller
And locked back up in the attic or down in the cellar.
This month, the time seems to go by pretty fast.
But there has been a sighting of a ghost of Christmas past—
Dalton's been "Making a Difference"—at least that's the title of a book he's been hocking ...
Might be better than a lump of coal in a Liberal stocking.
Patrick, north of Simcoe, has no time to dally ...
As west of Don Valley, Kathleen was seen at a Whitby–Oshawa rally.
No wait, please wait, I'm not done yet—
I want to get in a plug for a poet laureate.
And I would like a final thought or two to be entered—
Before I get the hook by my leader Andrea from Hamilton Centre.
Obviously as a wordsmith, I'm no skilled artisan ...
But this message is non-political, non-partisan.
Happy Hanukkah to some; season's greetings to all.
It shouldn't be hard, Speaker, as in this hall you can plainly see,
This has been your Christmas card from the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There's no truth to the rumour that you're applying for poet laureate.

GURU NANAK DEV JI GURPURAB

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: On November 25, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Honourable Bill Mauro, and I had the opportunity to attend the Gurpurab, Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birth celebrations, at the Ontario Khalsa Darbar Sikh temple in my great riding of Mississauga–Brampton South.

Born in 1469, Guru Nanak Dev Ji was ahead of his time. He had an extraordinary insight. He proclaimed, "There is but one god, the supreme truth; the ultimate reality, the creator, without fear, without enemies, timeless in his image, self-created, by his grace revealed."

He believed in justice for all and in values such as equality, compassion, tolerance and universal love and respect. He rejected the dreaded caste system and advocated for an inclusive and just society.

Today, we talk about gender parity. More than 500 years ago, Guru Nanak Dev Ji said:

Remarks in Punjabi.

"Why should we call a woman inferior when it is she who gives birth to kings?"

Guru Nanak Dev Ji's teachings and philosophy are even more relevant in the times we live in.

LAND TRANSFER TAX

Mr. Michael Harris: When is a Liberal-government pocket-fleecing tax not a tax? When it's met head-on with a wall of opposition and inbox-exploding email campaigns that awaken government to the absurdity of their dream-crushing tax plans.

This week we saw one of the quickest U-turns in history when the municipal affairs minister bowed to the demands of the municipal land transfer tax opposition motion tabled by my colleague from Leeds–Grenville just two days before it was debated. It took a massive wave of e-opposition and weeks of pushing in this House to break through, but, in the end, the minister simply couldn't stand up to the outcry against the expansion of the municipal land transfer tax.

The about-face by the minister was a testament to the true democratic power of the people in rising up to oppose wrong-headed proposals that would crush the dreams of those looking to buy a home. It was a victory for all those who stood against the proposal that would have seen people in my area of Kitchener-Waterloo forced to pay up to $10,000 to realize their dream.

After refusing my colleague's repeated request to shelve any plan to expand the municipal land transfer tax, it was heartening to see the united voices of the people finally being heard when the minister climbed down, only days before he would have been forced to defend what he obviously realized was simply bad policy.

Speaker, I want to recognize all who refused to sit silent while government dug further into our pockets: to the home builders, the real estate agents, and those who raised their voices in MPPs' email boxes.

RIDING OF NICKEL BELT

Mme France Gélinas: We all know that Christmas is right around the corner, so I want to share with you my Christmas wish list for Nickel Belt.

First, I wish that no train will derail, explode and spew hundreds of litres of crude into the river, like what happened on March 7 in my riding in Gogama. I wish that the oil would stop coming up the Makami River in Gogama. I wish that the people of Gogama would get support from their government and be fairly compensated. I wish that somebody would tell me that it is safe to eat the fish.

My fifth wish is that the northeast continues to have a search-and-rescue helicopter based out of the Sudbury airport. This way, we can ensure the safety of our hikers, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers. I wish that, if government is doing a review of this decision, that the terms are referenced in minutes and who worked on that, because the elf in my office has filed freedom-of-access-of-information requests, but nothing is coming back.

1310

I also wish that the people living along Highway 69, where the blasting is happening for the widening of the highway, get fair compensation when their houses get destroyed by that blasting.

Lastly, I wish that the people of Wahnapitae First Nation don't have to drive through two ridings—hours and hours of driving—to get service from their MPP, and that they get moved back into the riding of Nickel Belt, like at the federal level, where they belong.

SOBER STEERING

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I rise to actually deliver some positive news from Kitchener-Waterloo. As you know, in my riding of Kitchener Centre, the tech sector is flourishing. Today, I'd like to share with you news of a tech start-up that has developed a remarkable innovation that's designed to keep kids and drivers safe on our roads.

Sober Steering is the name of this company, and they've produced a new sensor technology that could make Breathalyzers obsolete. Here's how it works: Sober Steering uses a biosensor in the steering wheel which detects the driver's blood alcohol level. To start the engine, you have to put your palms on the steering wheel, and the sensor measures alcohol in your system through the skin. If alcohol is detected, then the engine won't start.

The company's chief operating officer, Catherine Carroll, says this technology could revolutionize the way that we monitor drinking and driving.

Sober Steering is currently targeted for school buses, but it could also be used on public transit, construction machinery and so much more.

I'm pleased to tell you that Sober Steering got off the ground in 2009 with an investment from this province. Researchers at the University of Waterloo helped to develop the technology.

Currently, there are three school bus companies in Waterloo region that are testing the system in a pilot project.

This company, I believe, has a very bright future, and I'm so proud of the people who work there and all the other innovative businesses in my region that are developing creative solutions and creating jobs.

HANUKKAH

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'll continue the tradition with a little poem:

The holiday of lights is here
Good friends and happiness to share
Sweets with honey for us to eat
Candles to light and friends to greet

One little candle, two little candles ... all the way to eight little candles to celebrate the eight days of Hanukkah, which is going to be upon us this Sunday, December 6, at sundown, because the Jewish holidays pretty much always start at sundown the night before.

Actually, I've never heard this little poem before, because it's not an English Hanukkah song, a Yiddish Hanukkah song or a Hebrew Hanukkah song. It is actually from a Spanish Hanukkah song, which is called Ocho Kandelikas. You can imagine how it goes: "Una kandelika, dos kandelikas"—and "kandelika," we all know, can be translated easily into "candle."

So I want to remind everybody here that, yes, Hanukkah is being celebrated, but the Jewish community is not just here, obviously, in Ontario. It is found all over the world in every culture and pretty much every language. That means people will be singing Hanukkah songs in every language across the world, starting December 6 this year, since it follows the Jewish calendar, which makes adjustments, as we all know, and likes to confuse everybody, including the Jewish community.

Chag Sameach. Happy Hanukkah. I'm looking forward to celebrating with people in Thornhill. There are many events going on all over the GTA, Ontario, Canada and the world. Chag Sameach.

ONTARIO SENIOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I rise today in this House to recognize the outstanding seniors who are this year's Ontario Senior Achievement Award recipients. Ontario acknowledged 21 outstanding seniors for their significant contribution to their communities and to the province. The Ontario Senior Achievement Award recognizes individuals who have made exceptional contributions to their community after the age of 65. It is the highest provincial honour for seniors.

It is important to acknowledge that in 2015, for the first time, there are more seniors 65 and over than children under 15, both in Ontario and across Canada. In Ontario, there are currently more than two million seniors, and this number is expected to double in the next 25 years.

The awards were presented at a Queen's Park ceremony by the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and the Honourable Mario Sergio, the minister responsible for seniors affairs.

I'd like to highlight a recipient of the awards, who is my constituent from York Centre. Ekaterina Lotkina is an active volunteer with the Jewish Russian Community Center of Ontario. She is responsible for the mailing operations of the organization, making sure that thousands of letters, birthday greetings, invitations and tax receipts are prepared, signed and delivered on time.

As Ontarians, we should take inspiration from these seniors who have made such diverse contributions to their communities. They are a constant reminder that life is long and that no matter the age, the potential to bring about positive change is always possible.

PATRICIA HUNG

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's my pleasure to honour Patricia Hung today, a constituent of Beaches–East York and the first-ever Parkview Hills Citizen of the Year.

Now the Parkview Hills Community Association has represented the residents of Parkview Hills in the northwest corner of my riding for the past 25 years. Until just a few weeks ago, it was headed up by my good friend Justin Van Dette for the last seven years. Before exiting as president, he launched the Parkview Hills Citizen of the Year Awards and also helped kick off a $25,000 campaign for the Toronto East General Hospital, which, as you may have heard recently, has changed its name to the Michael Garron Hospital as a result of a $50-million donation by the family to the hospital.

Congratulations, Justin, on your very successful tenure as president. We're glad that you're staying on the board. I also want to offer best wishes to Lee-Ann Reid, the new association president, and to the rest of the board.

But let's just talk briefly about Patricia. A self-declared do-gooder, she is a police officer, an author, an inspirational speaker and a tireless volunteer who has been helping our community for decades. After the tragic loss of her daughter Stefanie in 2008, Patricia began the healing process by helping others. From holding workshops and sitting on victim advisory committees to contributing to her blog, Joy in the Aftermath, Patricia has been helping families who have been impacted by tragedy find hope. In 2012, she also launched the Quality Care Employment Agency, a volunteer organization which recruits live-in caregivers for children, the disabled and seniors.

Please join me in congratulating Patricia on her well-deserved award: Parkview Hills Citizen of the Year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Congratulations.

Thank you to all of the members who have made statements today.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Grant Crack: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 122, An Act to amend the Mental Health Act and the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 122, Loi visant à modifier la Loi sur la santé mentale et la Loi de 1996 sur le consentement aux soins de santé.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

MOTIONS

SIGN-LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the use of sign-language interpreters in the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The deputy House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that on Thursday, December 3, sign-language interpreters may be present on the floor of the chamber to interpret the proceedings during ministerial statements and responses.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Hon. Brad Duguid: I have a statement here to read on a very important day that we're celebrating today, but I have to make a quick comment on the statement made by my colleague to my right about seniors' awards. One day he may be eligible for seniors' awards as well, but he's far too young for that now. It's good to hear that statement.

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Now, for the business ahead. Thank you to all of you for your unanimous consent to allow our speech interpreter to be here with us in the Legislature today. It's very much appreciated.

I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The theme this year is "Inclusion Matters" and the focus is "access and empowerment for people of all abilities."

Inclusion, access and empowerment inspire my ministry's work every day. We made these values part of the law when we introduced the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 10 years ago. That law made Ontario one of the most inclusive jurisdictions in the world, a feat that I think all of us here in this Legislature can be very proud of to this day.

Mr. Speaker, this year was the 10th anniversary of Ontario's landmark accessibility legislation. It marked a halfway point on our journey towards an accessible province. I was pleased to enhance this milestone by launching our accessibility action plan.

Ontario's Accessibility Action Plan focuses on three key priorities:

(1) engaging employers to hire people with disabilities;

(2) building on our accessibility laws and our standards;

(3) promoting Ontario's cultural shift to build awareness of accessibility.

In order to move closer to our goal of inclusion by 2025, we hosted the most accessible Pan and Parapan Am Games in history, Mr. Speaker, and we're very proud of that. We hosted the first-ever Accessibility Innovation Showcase, and we benefited from the leadership of our special adviser, the Honourable David Onley, a globally recognized champion of accessibility.

But government cannot achieve inclusion working in isolation. We must also foster a cultural shift within individuals. That's why I'd like to highlight the work of a couple who has been working toward this cultural shift, and I know they are watching today on TV: Andy and Jackie Speers of Fergus, Ontario.

As the parents of a child with a disability, the Speers saw the need for an accessible playground in their neighbourhood. Eventually, through their hard work, they raised $200,000 for a playground in Fergus and a further $1,000 for another one in Elora. Those playgrounds are now the centre of their communities. The work they have done goes on and on and continues, and they're working on many important projects today.

My ministry's goal is to provide those who are inspired by them with the tools necessary to affect change towards inclusion. One such tool will be Ontario's Accessibility Certification Program, which will make it easier for people to identify accessible businesses and organizations.

We're working on other fronts as well. We just launched another program to help promote inclusive workplaces, our Community Loans fund, a partnership with leading financial services institutions which will encourage businesses to tap into a talented pool of people with disabilities. This program provides discounted rates on financial products like loans to small and medium-sized businesses that commit to hiring people with disabilities.

Studies show that workers with disabilities have higher retention rates, take fewer days off and possess unique insights and skills that make a workplace and a business more productive. Yet 70% of small businesses say they have never hired someone with a disability. I

believe this fund is one way to break through that barrier to employment and encourage businesses, large and small, to open their doors.

I also believe that enforcement remains an important part of our efforts to increase compliance. We've strengthened our efforts and instilled some techniques, learned through the years of experience at our Ministry of Labour. We are still in the midst of conducting enforcement blitzes and we're working on ways to better respond to common complaints through our enforcement efforts.

Following our last awareness campaign in the fall of last year, we saw a significant increase in compliance. In fact, compliance more than doubled. At the same time, it might not be through compliance alone that we achieve our targets, but also through technological innovation.

This point was driven home for me at the Accessibility Innovation Showcase this past summer. There I met a mother who was able to see her baby for the first time because of new technology. She now works for the start-up that developed that technology.

More than 50 companies and organizations demonstrated their innovative accessibility technologies during that showcase.

As we observe this special day, let us all commit ourselves to continuing our efforts to be global leaders. Let us show the world that an Ontario without barriers is one without limits.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I rise today to join my colleagues to mark the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This internationally recognized day helps increase awareness of the importance of ensuring people with disabilities have access to every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

It also reminds us that every government should prioritize the inclusion of people with disabilities and act as a leader for the rest of society.

In Ontario, one in seven people has some type of disability, which is nearly two million Ontarians. We recognize that people with disabilities have long faced barriers that limit participation in our communities. Our province is stronger when barriers to inclusion and accessibility are removed, and when everyone has the opportunity to find work and contribute to the province's growth.

I'm proud that Ontario is a Canadian leader in accessibility. We are the first in the world to move to a modern regulatory regime that mandates accessibility and requires our staff to be trained on accessibility. We were the first Canadian province with legislation that set out a clear goal and a time frame to achieve accessibility in public, private and non-profit sectors by 2025.

June 2015 marked the 10th anniversary of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Today, we also posted the 2015 report on the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities. This agreement reflects our shared commitment to support employment programs for Ontarians with disabilities, including social assistance clients and post-secondary students with disabilities. Beginning in 2014, this agreement provides Ontario with $76.4 million over four years to support employability and employment for people with disabilities. It also allows Ontario to continue successful programs that help remove barriers for people with disabilities so they can seek training, find jobs and build careers.

Our commitment to inclusion is at the heart of our work on developmental services. In 2014, our government reinforced this commitment through our investment of $810 million over three years to spur innovation and transformation in community and developmental services. Part of this $810-million investment is providing direct funding to thousands of people so they can participate more fully in the community, offering more choice and flexibility of supports than ever before.

For example, because of this investment in the past year, 14,000 individuals and their families received new direct funding through the Passport and Special Services at Home Programs. This direct funding is empowering people to determine the best use of these investments for their personal circumstances.

We know there is no one-size-fits-all housing solution for adults with developmental disabilities. That's why as part of our government's commitment to inclusion, choice and independence, we have launched the Developmental Services Housing Task Force. Through the hard work of agencies, families, community partners and housing task force members, we are piloting new residential support partnerships across Ontario.

Twelve projects selected by the task force from the first call for proposals are already under way. The housing task force will be launching its second call for proposals later this month. Lessons from these projects will be used to assist with developing new housing solutions across the province and improving the existing developmental services system, including reducing waitlists for housing and residential supports in a timely manner.

In addition to supporting individuals with disabilities in their home and community, our government is also helping people to pursue a successful place in our province's workforce. We understand that a job is not simply a potential path to financial security, it's one of the best routes to social inclusion. Our plan promotes inclusive work environments and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to find competitive employment, develop successful job skills and contribute to the growth of the province.

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It is motivating to see the roots of inclusion already planted in Ontario. For example, several projects under our employment and modernization fund, a $4-million project launched in 2014, involve shifting away from traditional settings to community-based employment.

We are creating a new Centre for Excellence in Employment Services for people with disabilities. The

new centre will provide resources to help local community agencies enhance their employment programs, build community networks and conduct employer outreach.

The Community Living Sarnia-Lambton Tools for Transition project is developing summer employment and pre-employment training tool kits for developmental services agencies.

Mr. Speaker, partnerships among government, families and communities are crucial to building a truly inclusive, supportive society. I extend my thanks to all of the leaders in the disability sector, including the Provincial Network on Developmental Services and March of Dimes Canada, who are here today, for being important partners in building inclusive services for people with developmental disabilities. Together, we will build Ontario up, create new opportunities and champion a secure future for people with disabilities across our province.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, 30 years ago, the United Nations General Assembly designated December 5 as a day to celebrate the contributions that volunteers make around the world. I'm proud to recognize the incredible efforts of volunteers in our province on both a global and local scale.

More than five million Ontarians generously donate their time and talents every year, strengthening their communities and helping to create a vibrant and inclusive society. The Ontario government formally recognizes volunteers through a number of programs, including the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards, the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers, the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award for Voluntarism, the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship, and the Ontario Senior Achievement Awards.

Speaker, it is an honour to pay tribute to our incredible volunteers. Not only do their efforts make our communities better, but they make a real difference in our way of life.

We are fortunate in Ontario to experience the power of volunteering first-hand. For example, this past summer, 23,000 volunteers played a pivotal role in making the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games a resounding success. And since 2008, more than 180,000 young Ontarians have taken part in volunteer activities across the province through ChangeTheWorld Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge.

We also know that volunteers will continue to play an important role as Ontario welcomes its share of Syrian refugees arriving in Canada. I'm proud of how Ontarians have reached out during this humanitarian crisis. Thank you to all those Ontarians who have already offered to help, from engaging in private sponsorship to volunteering and supporting organizations working with refugees. For those who want to learn more about what they can do, I encourage them to visit Ontario.ca/syrianrefugees.

Our government has been working on an action plan to strengthen volunteerism across the province. Through our plan, we will work together with partners across all sectors to strengthen Ontario's volunteer base. We will raise awareness of volunteering and promote its value in our society. And we will work to enhance the volunteer experience.

My ministry is working on these and other initiatives to help ensure that our province is home to a strong, diverse and energized volunteer base.

Speaker, volunteers are the heart of our communities. They make our economy stronger. They touch the lives of Ontarians each and every day, and they are an essential part of life in Ontario.

I encourage everyone to join me in showing appreciation for our province's amazing volunteers on International Volunteer Day and to thank them for everything they do.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Brad Duguid: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure is standing on a point of order.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Just to correct my record, Mr. Speaker, my legislative assistant, Aleks Dhefto—you'd better be right on this—said that when I was talking about the Speers's contributions or the work that they have done and the money they have raised, I said it was $2,000 for a playground in Fergus and $1,000 for a playground in Elora. It's $200,000 for a playground in Fergus and $100,000 for another one in Elora in the fine riding of our colleague the member for Wellington–Halton Hills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The member is correct that you can correct your record—and he did say $1,000.

It's now time for responses.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I am pleased to rise today in celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This year marks the 23rd anniversary of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which was designated by the United Nations General Assembly. We observe the International Day of Persons with Disabilities to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

The theme for 2015 is Inclusion Matters: Access and Empowerment for People of All Abilities. This includes equal access to transportation, employment and education, as well as social and political participation.

I would like to take a moment to recognize our former Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable David Onley, who has championed accessibility in all areas of his life. His work has helped many people across the province.

There is no doubt that Ontario has come a long way in improving access and opportunity for all individuals. However, there is much more to be done.

One urgent area of improvement is housing. I hear from parents and families, both in Perth–Wellington and across the province, who cannot find appropriate housing for their children. Access to residential supports for individuals with disabilities must be improved, and it must be done now.

I would like to recognize the outstanding agencies that provide inclusive programs and housing across our communities. Your services are invaluable. These agencies need the government's support and partnership. They need budgets that allow them to address the needs in their community.

Finally, I would like to extend my utmost respect for families, as they are truly the front lines when it comes to inclusion and empowerment. They support their loved ones, encourage them every day, and help them reach their full potential. To everyone who participates in our communities, overcomes individual hurdles and shares their abilities, we take a moment to say thank you.

Projects like those playgrounds in Fergus and Elora are perfect examples of community involvement. Let's all work together to ensure our communities are accessible and that everyone has the resources to accomplish their goals.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today to mark International Volunteer Day.

We all know that volunteers are the heart and soul of Ontario, and we're incredibly privileged to live in a province where civic pride and volunteerism form the bedrock of our communities. It does contribute to such a beautiful social fabric and unites us across our vast geography and diverse backgrounds.

I also want to recognize the almost five million volunteers in our province who demonstrate exemplary self-sacrifice, putting the needs of others above their own. Almost every single event in our communities is supported by volunteers. Whether it's the parades, the festivals, the hospital auxiliaries, the fundraising foundations, people coaching our athletes, or our many service clubs, volunteers are part of the reason we have such a vibrant and healthy community, and they speak to a very deep Canadian pride that often goes unnoticed.

In 2010, more than 13.3 million people volunteered and Canadians devoted 2.1 billion hours to those activities, which is in a report from the TD Bank that I found. All those hours combined are equal to 1.1 million full-time jobs, or 8% of full-time jobs in Canada. I just think that's a statistic that we all should be so proud of.

I also want to say, as critic for citizenship, immigration and international trade, that I'm certainly proud of all the communities and the private sponsors for stepping up to the plate and accepting Syrian refugees into their homes and communities. I think it shows the great compassion that we as Ontarians and Canadians have.

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I have said on many occasions in this Legislature and at my community events how proud I am to live in a province and a country where we have a place of opportunity for everyone. I think that just strengthens our diversity and it helps us all succeed in this globalized world.

A favourite part of my job, of course, is thanking all of the volunteers in all of our communities and across the province. I don't think I could ever thank them enough.

I want to share my time with the member from Halton Hills who wants to say a few words.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Ted Arnott: I too wish to respond to this important statement today in recognition of the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and thank the Minister of Economic Development for acknowledging my constituents in Centre Wellington, Andy and Jackie Speers, and the whole community that got behind the idea of the need for accessible playgrounds. It's an amazing community success story. I would invite the minister to visit my riding to see for himself what's been done. I cordially look forward to greeting him when he visits my riding.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to join my colleagues to speak on behalf of our party, the Ontario New Democratic Party, to recognize the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. It's a day where we acknowledge the challenges and the triumphs that people with disabilities face in our province, in our country and, indeed, around the world.

As the brother of someone who has a disability, I know full well—our family knows full well—the challenges that families specifically face when having to support someone with a disability, and also the triumphs: those achievements that can go with proper support, proper family dynamics and the wonderful contribution that people with disabilities can make, given the resources.

Speaker, there are certainly some barriers that continue to exist: employment barriers, social exclusion, family stress, economic insecurity, physical and emotional strain. I would be remiss if I didn't talk about people who are advocates for people with disabilities that have been incurred through workplace injuries. These are people who struggle each and every day for some of the basic, most fundamental supports that it is our responsibility to provide through this Legislature and through the measures of the province.

There are folks in every riding that do a lot of great work. I want to recognize Michelle Jones-Rousseau from LaSalle who last night was awarded the AODA Anniver-

sary Champion Award for her work with the Amherstburg Heroes Athletic Club. She is also involved with the Special Olympics and is a former member of the Amherstburg accessibility committee. She's doing wonderful work.

I would like to also give a shout-out to somebody who watches this place regularly. From Sudbury, he's a friend of those in the NDP caucus: Robert McCarthy. Robert just posted on Facebook that he wants us all to remember that there is really no such thing as a disability; he would like us all to refer to it as a "diffability." It is a different ability—things that those who have those challenges face have just a different way about getting around it. And we can all do our part, as Robert has and as Michelle Jones-Rousseau has, to raise awareness, support those in our communities who have disabilities—diffabilities—and raise the bar so that, collectively, we all benefit as a society in helping one another.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am always proud to stand in this Legislature on behalf of my constituents in London–Fanshawe and I'm glad to be here to recognize and celebrate International Volunteer Day. For International Volunteer Day 2015, I am honoured to have the privilege to acknowledge special individuals in my riding who are engaged in volunteering their time, energies and skills to change the world for a better future. Their contributions have made a real difference.

One of these individuals is Margery Sherritt. Margery has volunteered with more than 10 local organizations since the age of 65. Among her many contributions is her work as co-chair of the transportation working group of the Age-Friendly London Network, where she implemented a three-year action plan to improve access to affordable transportation for seniors in London. I would like to extend my congratulations to Margery as she was a recipient of the Ontario Senior Achievement Award this year.

Another exceptional London volunteer is Jacqueline Fraser. She is a prominent member of the London community and spends countless volunteer hours making change in northeast London. For several years she has spearheaded events and initiatives through the North East London Community Engagement project which hosts monthly community conversations on a variety of topics that range from LGBTQ issues, poverty issues, seniors' issues and housing issues.

Jacqueline is also passionately committed to making a difference in the lives of women and girls. She is a strong community activist with regard to seniors' issues, cultural diversity and inclusion, and food security.

These are just a couple of outstanding volunteers who do work in London. I wish I could highlight all the work of the wonderful, dedicated volunteers, but there just isn't enough time.

I encourage all members of this Legislature to take the time on this International Volunteer Day to say thank you to the people who do great work in their ridings.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Julia Munro: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

As I am in agreement, I have signed it and given it to page Ajay.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mme France Gélinas: I have this petition signed by Mrs. Maureen Spec from Lively in my riding. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians" deserve "and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: Return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Aislin to bring it to the Clerk.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly entitled "Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water." From this petition I would

especially like to thank Dr. J.E. Clement and Dr. John Lafferty from London, Ontario.

It reads as follows:

"Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

"Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

"Whereas dental decay is the second most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

"Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, a concentration providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentration to protect against adverse health effects; and

"Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the ministries of the government of Ontario amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario."

I'm pleased to sign and to support this petition and to send it down with page Aaran.

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PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Laurie Scott: "Stop the Sale of Hydro One.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the decision to sell Hydro One has been made without public input and the sale will be conducted in complete secrecy; and

"Whereas if the people of Ontario lose majority ownership in Hydro One, ratepayers will be forced to accept whatever changes the new owners decide, including higher rates; and

"Whereas Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer has warned the sale of Hydro One would be detrimental to Ontario's financial situation; and

"Whereas the Liberal government has removed independent oversight of Hydro One, including the Auditor General and the Ombudsman.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario immediately stop the sale of Hydro One."

It's signed by hundreds of people from my riding. I'll hand it to page Lauren.

PRIVATISATION DES BIENS PUBLICS

M. Michael Mantha: J'ai une pétition à présenter.

« Hydro One, pas à vendre!

« Pétition à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que le gouvernement provincial conçoit un projet de privatisation qui entraînera une hausse des tarifs d'électricité, une baisse de la fiabilité et des centaines de millions de dollars en moins pour nos écoles, nos routes et nos hôpitaux; et

« Attendu que le projet de privatisation sera particulièrement préjudiciable pour les communautés du Nord et des Premières Nations; et

« Attendu que le gouvernement provincial conçoit ce projet de privatisation dans le secret, faisant que les Ontariens n'ont pas un mot à dire sur un changement qui affectera sérieusement leur vie; et

« Attendu qu'il n'est pas trop tard pour annuler le projet;

« Compte tenu de cela, nous, les soussignés, pétitionnons l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario comme suit :

« Que la province de l'Ontario annule immédiatement son projet de privatisation du réseau de distribution d'électricité de l'Ontario. »

Je suis complètement d'accord avec cette pétition. Je la présente au page Aaran pour l'apporter à la table des greffiers.

GO TRANSIT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Cambridge, Ontario, is a municipality of over 125,000 people, many of whom commute into the greater Toronto area daily;

"Whereas the current commuting options available for travel between the Waterloo region and the GTA are inefficient and time-consuming, as well as environmentally damaging;

"Whereas the residents of Cambridge and the Waterloo region believe that they would be well-served by commuter rail transit that connects the region to the Milton line, and that this infrastructure would have positive, tangible economic benefits to the province of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Direct crown agency Metrolinx to commission a feasibility study into building a rail line that connects the city of Cambridge to the GO train station in Milton, and to complete this study in a timely manner and communicate the results to the municipal government of Cambridge."

I agree with the petition, and I affix my name and give it to Megan Faith to bring down.

LUNG HEALTH

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than $4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than $80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

It's signed by a significant number of constituents, and I support this petition as well.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition that originated with Dr. Anh Thi Tran in Concord, Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Reverse the cuts to health care;

"(2) Return to the bargaining table with the OMA (Ontario Medical Association) to resume negotiations for a fair physician services agreement;

"(3) Work with all front-line health care provider groups to develop plans to create a sustainable health care system for the people of Ontario."

I agree with this petition, will sign my name to it and give it to Ben to take up to the front.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than" 2.5 "million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than $4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than $80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on" my colleague "MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and give it to page Noam.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I have a petition here to lower hydro rates.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Whereas the billion-dollar gas plants cancellation, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020; and

"Whereas the Liberal government wasted $2 billion on the flawed smart meter program; and

"Whereas the recent announcement to implement the Ontario Electricity Support Program will see average household hydro bills increase an additional $137 per year starting in 2016; and

"Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

"Whereas home heating and electricity are a necessity for families in Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity."

I agree with this petition and send it down with page Hannah.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition brought to me by some of the good people in Kirkland Lake.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government has cancelled the Northlander passenger train which served the residents of northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the provincial government has closed bus stations and is cancelling bus routes despite promising enhanced bus services to replace the train; and

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) has been given a mandate that its motor coach division must be self-sustaining; and

"Whereas Metrolinx, the crown corporation that provides train and bus service in the GTA ... is subsidized by more than $100 million annually; and

"Whereas the subsidy to Metrolinx has increased annually for the last seven years;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To direct the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to reverse the decision to cancel bus routes immediately and to treat northerners equitably in decisions regarding public transportation."

I wholeheartedly agree and will give my petition to Megan Faith to bring to the table.

1400

LUNG HEALTH

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than $4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than $80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

I agree with this, will affix my signature and hand it to page Aaran.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (CONTRAVENTIONS CAUSING DEATH OR SERIOUS BODILY HARM), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (CONTRAVENTIONS AYANT CAUSÉ UN DÉCÈS OU DES BLESSURES CORPORELLES GRAVES)

Mr. Gates moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 154, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to create an offence of contravention causing death or serious bodily harm / Projet de loi 154, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour ériger en infraction le fait d'avoir causé un décès ou des blessures corporelles graves pendant la commission d'une contravention.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation. The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to rise and speak today. I speak as the New Democratic Party critic for transportation, but also as someone who continues to do everything he can to fight for safety on our roads to ensure that our families stay safe. I'm committed to ensuring that the roads in this province are safe and that regulations are fair across the board.

What I'm proposing today with this bill is relatively simple. I believe there is an oversight in the Highway Traffic Act; a gap, if you will. I don't think it's there on purpose, but it has big consequences.

Right now in the province, if a driver commits an unsafe act or turn, they are exposed to a penalty of $500. I think that if all they're doing is turning unsafely, then perhaps that penalty fits the crime. Making an unsafe turn is always dangerous, but a ticket and a police officer educating the driver about the dangers is a penalty that fits.

The problem comes when the driver committing an unsafe turn does cause a death or serious bodily harm. I'd like to recognize two guys here today: Gerry Rhodes—stand up—who drove eight hours to be here today for the presentation; and Brian Bennett, the vice-chair.

Interjection: Burnett.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Burnett; sorry.

Though this problem affects anyone who drives in this province, the issue was originally brought to my attention by the Bikers Rights Organization of Canada. I had the pleasure of speaking at their conference last year, when they came to Niagara Falls, and I was frankly shocked when they presented the evidence to me. My colleague the MPP from Algoma–Manitoulin, Mike Mantha, was our transportation critic at the time. He has done some great work on this issue. I'm glad that I was able to go to the conference on his behalf because this is where this important issue was raised to me.

Bill 154, before this House today, is a very important piece of legislation. Between 1993 and 2012, nearly 300 motorcycle riders were killed in accidents through no fault of their own. In fact, during those years, up to 43% of the accidents that involved people riding motorcycles were caused through no fault of the motorcycle rider.

You need to look no further than July 2002, the case of David and Wanda Harrison, to understand how this issue impacts the people of Ontario. The Harrisons were both bikers who enjoyed riding their motorcycle as a hobby. They were a family who spent quality time together. They spent it out on the open roads, enjoying all the beauty of our great province, what it has to offer. Perhaps, most importantly, they spent their time together, doing something they both loved to do.

In my riding in Niagara Falls, we have some of the most beautiful scenery you can find in Canada, not to mention all the wineries, craft brewers, ciders and—one of my favourites—horse racing in Fort Erie. Motorcyclists and cyclists drive and ride along the Niagara Parkway all summer and just take in the feeling of the open air and the truly incredible landscape. These are just ordinary folks, like the members here in the House, some of them older, some of them younger—probably more are getting older—but they all enjoy riding motorcycles and the feeling that it brings them.

Well, the Harrisons were the kind of people who did that. In July 2002, they rode on a ride when everything changed. On Highway 17, a vehicle made an unsafe turn between three motorcycles. In the resulting collision, both David and Wanda Harrison lost their lives. They weren't doing anything wrong, other than enjoying their hobby and their time together, but one split-second decision, a driver making a turn without taking proper safety precautions, and it changed everything.

I think most of us would be shocked to learn the current penalty that exists for this sort of issue under the Highway Traffic Act. We'd be shocked because, if there's an accident that causes serious injury or death, we assume the penalty would be harsh enough that it fits the crime. However, that's not the case. Under the Highway Traffic Act there is no difference when someone is injured as a result of an illegal turn or not. So what is the penalty for the driver who turned and caused the death of the Harrisons? It's not any sort of jail time; it's not even the loss of a licence. Under the Highway Traffic Act, this sort of infraction—even if it causes the loss of a life—carries a maximum penalty of $500.

I'd like to explain to you why this happens. Under the Highway Traffic Act, when there is no penalty set out for a violation of the act, a penalty is decided based on section 214. Section 214 is the general penalty section of the act and is used in cases like this. Unfortunately, that section does not allow for penalties to be increased on the basis of the death or serious harm that was caused.

What this bill will do is add a section to the HTA that ensures any driver who causes or contributes to causing death or serious injury while violating the act is subject to harsher penalties than if they hadn't caused a death or serious injury. The penalty needs to fit the crime. That is a fundamental part of our justice system.

1410

I'm not here trying to convince this government to dramatically increase penalties across the board. I believe that, for the most part, the Highway Traffic Act is a good piece of legislation that helps keep our roads safe. I'm not asking for unreasonable measures to be added to the Highway Traffic Act. All you need to do is compare some infractions and consequences and you will see that section 214 of the Highway Traffic Act is severely lacking.

For example, if you are stopped by a RIDE program and deemed to be over the legal limit, you automatically lose your licence for 60 days. You lose your licence for 60 days because you had too much to drink and you put other peoples' lives at risk. I think that all of us in the House understand that concept. When you put other people and their families and loved ones at risk, you have to pay a penalty.

Compare that to the case I mentioned, where someone making an unsafe turn not only puts somebody else's life at risk but actually seriously harms them or, in this particular case that I'm describing, kills both of them. The penalties don't match up at all.

If someone comes to Niagara Falls and makes an unsafe turn and hits the car of someone who is carrying their children, the maximum penalty under the Highway Traffic Act is $500. That needs to change, and we can do that.

We need to do more to ensure that any individual who causes or contributes to causing death or serious injury while violating the Highway Traffic Act is subject to more severe penalties than are currently in place.

Mr. Speaker, don't mistake my intention here. My intention is not to demand stricter penalties to punish those who make unsafe turns. I don't truly believe people make these turns on purpose. I think that most people do their best to make sure they're paying attention to the road and trying to keep themselves and others safe. Unfortunately, sometimes we make mistakes.

We made major changes to the Highway Traffic Act in the last session to protect drivers on the road when it came to the issue of texting and driving. Bill 31 increased fines for distracted drivers and increased fines for

collisions involving cyclists. This amendment that I'm putting forward today was proposed at the time as well.

That was very important work. As the father of three daughters—Jacqueline, Chantal and Tara—I know the importance of making sure that we eliminate distracted driving. When my youngest daughter, Jacqueline, was learning to drive, we always stressed the importance of giving your undivided attention to the road.

We know it happens out there and we knew we had to do something about it. As legislators, it is our responsibility to make sure that our constituents and families are safe on our roads. That means trying to fight back against distracted driving and it means having stiffer penalties for any individual who causes or contributes to causing death or serious injury while violating the Highway Traffic Act than the ones currently in place.

How do we do that? How do we go about making sure that all Ontarians understand the danger of distracted drivers? We engaged in education campaigns to tell Ontarians, especially our young people, that texting and driving puts you at serious risk. In fact, it is the most dangerous thing happening on our roads today, which is why it was so important for us to pass Bill 31. Now we need to continue working, as figures in our communities, to tell people the dangers of distracted driving.

In addition to that, we also increased the fines and penalties for anyone who is caught violating the distracted driving rules in the Highway Traffic Act. We dramatically increased the penalties for distracted driving. We added demerit points and increased the financial penalties. We did this because it would act as a deterrent to those who were going to drive and text at the same time.

When we increase these penalties, people know how serious they are and have a better understanding of what the consequences will be of violating the act. It also ensures there's a proper penalty for those who get caught ignoring those laws or driving unsafely. The penalty needs to fit the crime. It's no different than what I'm proposing here for this amendment to the Highway Traffic Act.

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: That's all I've got left?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thirty seconds, buddy.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Wow, that went quick. Sorry about that. Okay, I'll wrap up here.

Mr. Speaker, by adding this proposed section to the Highway Traffic Act, we help ensure that motorcyclists are safe on the roads. We help ensure that anyone who strikes a motorcycle or a bicycle or a pedestrian, causing death or serious injury, is subject to penalties that fit the crime. Passing this bill will help bring justice for the families who have lost loved ones, families like the Harrisons and the Mayhews, who knew all too well the pain following a motorcycle accident.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House on behalf of my constituents in Burlington, and on this particular occasion to speak to Bill 154, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

I'd like to thank the member from Niagara Falls, who spoke with great eloquence and passion. I want to honour his guests, who travelled such a long way to be here today to join us for this conversation. I know, from having talked to the member, that he shares my passion for road safety, a passion and commitment that is indeed resonant with so many members of this House.

The good news is—of course, there is a lot of room for improvement, and I'll get to that in a moment—that important contextually is that for the last 13 years Ontario has been ranked either first or second in North America for road safety, a statistic for which our government is very proud. We have among the safest roads in North America. Having said that, the unfortunate reality is that too many people in Ontario fall victim to collisions that cause serious bodily harm or death, as the member opposite mentioned.

Sometimes this can be the result of poor and reckless judgment, such as impaired or careless driving. Other times it can be caused by an unfortunate human error and bad choices. Either way, individuals and families are left to deal with the damage done and lives lost. When these tragedies are caused by the bad choices made by somebody else, there can be an unfortunate and overwhelming sense of frustration, anger and helplessness.

I know this all too well, Mr. Speaker. As members of this place will know, I lost my husband, OPP Sergeant Greg Stobbart, on June 6, 2006, as a result of the poor choices and recklessness of a man who, at the time, had five convictions for driving while under suspension, four convictions for driving with no insurance and $15,000 in unpaid fines. Two months later, he was involved in another at-fault collision, all of this while driving commercially.

His poor choice—to pass my husband out on a training ride on his bicycle while he was travelling on a two-lane road going uphill—cost Greg his life. While this loss was overwhelming for all of us, it led us to fight for steeper penalties in Ontario, just as the member is doing today; in this case, for repeat offenders, people who drive habitually and repeatedly under suspension.

Greg's Law was passed in 2009, a proud legacy in response to my husband—

Applause.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you—who had dedicated his life and his career to keeping roads and communities safe right across our province for 25 years. It's is worthy of note that Greg had many friends who owned and drove motorcycles, as the member referenced today. Sadly, he investigated a number of fatal motorcycle collisions, so he knew that only too well.

As this kind of advocacy demonstrates, anything that we as legislators can do, including the type of conversation we're having today, is important when it comes to discussing road safety and making our roads safer right across Ontario. Keeping our roads safe is the highest priority for our government, which is why we continue to

focus on improving road safety through a combination of initiatives that include legislation, public education, supporting the enforcement efforts of Ontario police officers and partnerships with road safety partners like CAA and Arrive Alive Drive Sober.

That is why we are proud of the all-party support—the member opposite mentioned this a few moments ago—that was received by Bill 31, which passed in June of this year. I had the privilege of working on this bill with partners at MTO for a number of years, prior to being elected. As was noted, it was a tremendous step forward in road safety. In fact, it was the most significant update of the Highway Traffic Act, when it comes to cycling, in the history of our province. As CEO of the Share the Road Cycling Coalition, I sat on the 2012 coroner's review into cycling deaths in Ontario, and many of the recommendations in the review were included in Bill 31.

As much as education and awareness are important, however, we need to ensure that those who are responsible for collisions receive the penalties and sentences they deserve, because this, in and of itself, can be a deterrent. Bill 154 proposes to amend the Highway Traffic Act such that if bodily harm or death is caused as a result of a collision that happens during a contravention of the act or its regulations, the driver will face a fine of up to $5,000 or imprisonment for a term of up to 12 months, or both.

Creating these types of offences and penalty provisions in the HTA, or Highway Traffic Act, as laid out in the bill could encourage reliance upon charges and convictions for lesser provincial offences, which could actually result in fewer convictions under the Criminal Code of Canada. I know that's not the member's intent. It's perhaps an unintended consequence, but this kind of federal legislation—as the Criminal Code is—is typically where serious charges are laid. I'm hoping that in working with the member opposite, whose intentions are sincere, together we can find mechanisms for changing and strengthening the Highway Traffic Act.

1420

The other serious charges that are covered under the Criminal Code, of course, include things like impaired driving and distracted driving, which the member mentioned, and they involve mens rea, or intent, and that is why they are so serious. Criminal driving misconduct deserves a truly criminal charge and conviction. Of course, provincial offences are lesser offences, and that is why they are not covered under the Criminal Code

In addition, many Highway Traffic Act offences of the type that might be expected to result in serious bodily harm or death, such as street racing, aggressive driving, careless driving, failure to remain at the scene of a collision or failing to stop for emergency vehicles—these kinds of things do have significant penalty provisions and other licence sanctions that fully reflect the seriousness of the misconduct.

So while I support the member's call for strengthening the act, I think this bill—and this conversation, which I'm so pleased that he started—deserves a little bit of tweaking and some work.

To go back to the Criminal Code for a minute, the penalties if death is involved are extremely serious. A conviction for criminal negligence causing death, for example, carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

While this bill has a few technical challenges, I will ultimately be supporting it, and again, I thank my colleague from Niagara Falls for tabling it. I know that he, like all of us in this House, wants to make sure that all road users in Ontario are safe.

I look forward to the ongoing debate, today and into the future, on this important issue and to working with the member from Niagara Falls on road safety—an issue, certainly, of common interest and concern.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm pleased to rise and speak on Bill 154, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Contraventions Causing Death or Serious Bodily Harm). I have to admit that I'd prefer to talk about something a bit more lighthearted.

The member opposite lost her husband in a cycling road accident, and it's sad. But it's also heartwarming when people are able to share difficult stories and we can all learn from that. I think that really has to be the focus: how we can better educate the public to be more cautious.

I'm driving around right now with a bumper sticker, a magnetic thing, that's from the region of York. They made it up. It says, "Cyclists and motorists share the road"—actually, I don't look at it very often, but it's something to that effect. You can go look at my spot and see exactly what it says. It reminds me, whenever I do look at it, to watch out for the cyclists and the motorcycles on our roads.

Before I came down to work at the Legislature, I was hosting on Rogers cable in York region, and one of the shows was on motorcycles, basically. We had a police officer who is a motorcycle cop—if you're still allowed to say "motorcycle cop"—a motorcycle officer. One of the things that surprised me is, I asked him how old a child has to be in order to ride on the back of a motorcycle on our roads, and he said, "There's no age limit. It's a height limit." I asked, "Oh, am I tall enough to ride on the back of a motorcycle?" I'm joking. I'm not that tall, as we know. How tall does a child have to be in order to ride? I thought maybe it's to ride one of the loop-the-loop roller coasters at Wonderland, that that's how tall a child would have to be to be on the back of a motorcycle. If we would allow them on that kind of a roller coaster, maybe we'd allow them—to be fairly safe. We all know that motorcycles can be a little risky sometimes. But they can ride on the back. The police officer said, "No, it isn't a certain height restriction. They just have to touch the pedals with their feet. A lot of people have those pedals moved up so that they can fit very young children on the backs of motorcycles." Well,

I find that very disturbing, because I don't know that young children really understand the precarious nature of being on the back of a motorcycle, just trying to hold on. They're not even that strong.

That gets me thinking a little bit about how we have to all be aware and do our part. Life is full of calculated risks. I'm not going to say people shouldn't be on the road with bicycles; I'm on the road with a bicycle often enough. People should be encouraged to exercise, to be on bicycles, on motorcycles, if that's what they choose. But I think it's up to the rest of us, who really—as I said to my kids when they started driving, "You're driving a tank." You are driving a piece of metal. You touch the pedal and it moves very quickly. You feel like you're flying, and you think that it's all very carefree. But actually, there are pedestrians out there, there are cyclists and, yes, there are motorcyclists out there, and we have to all be thinking of that.

We heard from the member opposite that there are difficulties between the traffic act, and penalties, versus charges under the Criminal Code, which require a certain level of intent. I have to agree with her that intent sometimes plays into things, and oftentimes it's a struggle between the spirit of the law and the letter of the law.

We have heard of cases in the newspapers where somebody has been injured. In the States, when Brady was shot, he survived for perhaps 20, 25 years. But when he died, they went back and recharged his assailant with murder, 25 years after he was shot. The fact isn't that they could have killed you; the fact is whether or not they did kill you. I always have a problem with that, because I always think that if somebody aimed a gun at me, whether or not they hit me shouldn't matter so much. It should be that their intention was to hurt me or possibly kill me.

I think this is what it comes down to, oftentimes, with highway safety: that, too often, people are very focused on, "somebody died, and somebody should be penalized." Of course, it shouldn't be just about a penalty—and $500 is ridiculous. It should be about, "Is that person understanding the consequences of their actions?"

Maybe there's a further course; maybe there's education. Maybe there's something more we can do in the Legislature to warn people. Yes, nobody has the intent to make a wrong left turn and hit a motorcycle and kill somebody—nobody has that intent; I really don't believe they do—but to be focused on what you're doing and how dangerous it is, and how complicated our world has become in terms of road safety.

Yes, our roads, the government tells us, are supposedly ranked high in road safety, but perhaps that's because of our gridlock, because nobody's able to go at a speed where they're going to cause those severe accidents.

We all saw an increase in severe accidents during the Pan Am Games with the HOV lanes. My guess would be it was because you had people going the speed limit in the HOV lanes, with other people in complete gridlock. When you have people merging from absolute gridlock into those very fast-moving HOV lanes or the other way around, that is a recipe for disaster. It's the same problem with cars and motorcycles: The difference in speed and power, and the danger of exposure, is phenomenal. Too often, I think, we lose sight of that.

I look forward to this bill making it to committee. I think that there's a lot we can do. I myself have a private member's bill, Bill 30, the Highway Incident Management Act. We need more oversight of our highways. I would like to invite the member from Niagara, who presented this private member's bill, to come and speak to the fact that we need to have a specific task force. We had it before and dismantled it after an election a number of years ago. We need to look at our highways, not just motorcycles. We need to look at what we can do to make our highways safer.

Yes, my private member's bill is more focused on clearing accidents quickly off the highways. I brought letters of support from CAA; IBC, the Insurance Bureau of Canada; other insurance companies; and the provincial towing association, all in support.

I think part of that is the fact that if you have an accident on the highway and it doesn't get cleared quickly, it causes further accidents. We see time and time again that there's a car—it might not even have been in an accident, but perhaps it's a truck that dropped something. We heard of a horrific one yesterday—I don't know if they found it yet—where a metal rod six feet long went through a car windshield.

There are a lot of issues on our roads in terms of people carrying things for resale, or it's just construction equipment. It's not tied down properly and sometimes a windshield gets cracked, and that's an annoyance. But too often we see people getting injured.

1430

What can we do in the Legislature to address this? Well, we can move forward with a private member's bill such as the member put forward so that it can get to committee, so that we can hear from the stakeholders and so that we can move forward.

I look forward to working with him, both on my private member's bill and his private member's bill. Perhaps there's something we can work out together.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm always proud to stand in this Legislature on behalf of my residents in London–Fanshawe. I stand today to speak to the bill from my colleague from Niagara Falls, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to create an offence of contravention causing death or serious bodily harm.

I'd like to thank my colleague from Niagara Falls for introducing this piece of legislation. The member has been a strong advocate for the residents of his riding and has been quite active in his critic portfolio of transportation, so I would like to take a minute to thank him for his contributions to this Legislature.

This bill proposes changes to the Highway Traffic Act and is a step in the right direction. Essentially, the bill

amends the Highway Traffic Act to enshrine increased penalties for anyone who causes death or serious injury to another person while violating the act. Bill 154's proposed new penalties include fines of up to $5,000, a licence suspension of up to a year, plus time spent in prison, if applicable, or a jail term of up to a year.

Currently in Ontario, someone who violates the Highway Traffic Act and causes an accident that results in death or serious injury could be subject to a $500 fine. The families and loved ones of those killed in accidents are looking for, I guess, a fairness piece.

Residents of my riding have contacted my office on this very issue, asking for stronger penalties for those who kill motorcyclists. A couple of years ago, I received this email from a resident of London–Fanshawe. I'll quote him:

"I am an avid motorcycle enthusiast, so what I am about to bring into light and would like guidance in concerns all riders.

"As you have probably noticed, this month has been a bad month for motorcyclists. I believe six deaths this month alone. As much as it saddens me, it also infuriates me.

"The last two deaths and most recent both concerned experienced drivers with families and their life was ended due to impatience and negligence on the part of automobile and truck drivers.

"The part that bothers me most is the drivers involved in 'killing' these motorcyclists were given nothing more than a slap on the wrist. A minor traffic fine and two points off their licence.

"I am appalled at the total disregard for the motorcycle rider on the part of the courts and the judicial system." That's the end of the quote.

This message is one that I think all members of the Legislature have heard in the past. People feel that the penalties aren't equal to what happens when a motorcyclist is killed in an accident.

When I received this email from my constituent, we did some research on it. In fact, in recent years, the Ontario Safety League has campaigned to amend the Highway Traffic Act to increase sentences where careless driving results in injury or death. According to the league official, Ministry of Transportation officials have been receptive to the proposal. To date, however, no such bill has been put forward to the Legislature. That is why I commend the member from Niagara Falls for introducing this legislation today for second reading.

Other organizations like the Bikers Rights Organization have called for this type of legislation to be introduced, as has been done in other states south of the border, such as Iowa, New York and Maryland.

But residents of London–Fanshawe have been feeling this much closer to home. Just a few months ago, there was a tragic accident involving two motorcyclists in London. I'd like to read a quote from the London Free Press about the vigil held in memory of these two individuals.

"As dusk fell along Wellington Road, just outside St. Thomas, candles flickered on the ground beside a shrine of photos and flowers.

"Cars lined the busy road and more than 100 people made the solemn walk along the shoulder to the Ferguson Line corner.

"Tears flowed. There was a sad, still silence while they remembered two young lives from London's east end."

Speaker, this was a tragic event in my riding, and I imagine that there are stories just like this one all over the province. In fact, between 1993 and 2011, 275 motorcyclists were killed in accidents that were no fault of their own, and between 1993 and 2012 up to 43% of the accidents involving motorcycles were through no fault of the motorcycle rider.

Again, I would like to thank the member from Niagara Falls for bringing this legislation forward. I think the fact that we're bringing it forward for education and awareness—what we need to do is talk about these things and educate the public about their responsibility on the road to be vigilant and watch out for pedestrians and motorcyclists.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's always a pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge and North Dumfries. I wanted to say hello to those watching at home today about this very important debate.

I wanted to start off by thanking the member from Niagara Falls for bringing this legislation, his private member's bill, forward today to potentially change legislation.

I know, in speaking with the member, that road safety is the core issue of why he wanted to bring this bill forward. I commend anybody thinking about road safety for doing that. As you know, Speaker, our government is really proud of our record being the first- or second-safest jurisdiction in North America for our roads. But we also know that there is more that can be done to improve road safety. That is why our government continues to focus on improving road safety through a combination of initiatives that includes legislation, public education and supporting the enforcement efforts of Ontario's police services.

Most recently, we were very proud to see Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, pass in June of this year with all-party support. I was very proud of that. But I also do know that the road safety issues that this legislation addresses continue to be persistent challenges in Ontario. I wanted to mention in the House that, two kilometres away from my house, a friend of my son was recently killed, so this strikes very close to home.

I also wanted to mention that I have had a lot of experience in the emergency departments, the intensive care units and also as a home care nurse. A great many of my patients were there because of road safety issues. Either they were cyclists, pedestrians or drivers that experienced a motor vehicle crash, so I know the signifi-

cant toll that it takes, not only for the patients but their families and surrounding communities when it comes to road safety issues.

According to recent statistics, over 45% of drivers killed in Ontario were found to have drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol in their system. Drinking and driving fatalities represented nearly one quarter of all fatalities on our roads in 2011. From 2008 to 2012, an average of 14% of convicted alcohol-impaired drivers were repeat offenders. This has to stop.

If current collision trends continue, fatalities from distracted driving may exceed those from drinking and driving by 2016. This is completely unacceptable.

In 2011, pedestrians constituted approximately one in five motor vehicle-related fatalities.

Bill 31 addressed some of these concerns by increasing penalties in the areas of impaired driving, distracted driving and cyclist safety:

—distracted driving fines, from a fine range of $60 to $500, increased to $300 to $1,000, upon conviction;

—driver's licence suspensions for those found to be driving under the influence of drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol; and also

—requiring drivers to keep a one-metre distance from cyclists when passing to keep them safe.

I'm also very happy that we have extended the "slow down, move over" law to include tow trucks with flashing amber lights because they have also been at risk when they are helping to rescue these motorists.

I wanted to point out, on Bill 154, that there are a number of substantive policy issues with this bill that need to be addressed. I know that there's an absolute significant legal difference between an offence classified as an absolute liability offence, for which there is no defence, and an offence classified as a strict liability offence, for which there may be an defence.

1440

As we all know, and as the member for Burlington pointed out already, very serious charges can already be laid under the Criminal Code as it pertains to driving offences. These charges can include dangerous driving, dangerous driving causing bodily harm, dangerous driving causing death, criminal negligence causing bodily harm or criminal negligence causing death. In the case of Bill 154, a Highway Traffic Act charge would therefore be perceived to be inadequate in circumstances where a death has occurred.

Under the Criminal Code, the penalties if death is involved are extremely serious. A conviction for criminal negligence causing death, for instance, is punishable with imprisonment for life.

As I said earlier, I appreciate the member bringing forward his concerns about road safety, and I, for one, would really like to see this bill brought forward into committee, and we can have a more fulsome discussion. I just really want to give him a shout-out today for trying to improve our road safety, as do we on the government side.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you to the member from Niagara Falls for bringing this Highway Traffic Amendment Act forward today so that we can discuss the best routes, moving forward, to ensure that our legislated penalties reflect the realities of impacts resulting from the offence committed; in other words, to make the penalty fit the crime.

While we understand the principles behind this bill to do just that, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that there is a series of further concerns that the lack of detail considering the overall impact of this act would have.

I do know that since the bill had notice waived and was introduced on Tuesday, obviously a number of stakeholders—the Ontario police association, the Ontario Bar Association, the CAA etc.—did express some surprise. It's my hope that the consultation that may not have been able to be accomplished ahead of today's debate will be able to be done in earnest if this bill is successful in passing second reading later this afternoon.

I say, Speaker, that while we do have some concerns as to the wide brush that is used to paint the framework for these enhanced penalties, as I noted earlier, some of the principles supporting the direction the member is heading with this are not without merit.

Specifically, we can find merit in the need for enhanced penalty structures when it comes to the penalties faced by those who cause fatal injuries that are directly linked to their lack of adherence to Highway Traffic Act rules. I think of the work done by our friends on two wheels, motorcyclists and cyclists alike, who understandably have been looking for more than the current slap on the wrist when it comes to motorists who break laws and cause the deaths of their fellow, two-wheeled, commuters.

The Bikers Rights Organization of Ontario, for instance, has instituted a petition with a preamble that helps to paint a pretty clear picture of the need for a strengthened system of penalties. They draw the comparison of the very important and well-supported penalties faced by an impaired driver—penalties we worked with government to support in Bill 31 less than a year ago—with the driver who causes the death of motorcyclists. The petition's preamble notes:

"A driver stopped at a RIDE program and found to be over the limit loses their licence for an immediate 60 days, without a trial or conviction, and then upon a conviction loses their licence for a further year, pays a minimum of a $500 fine and after reinstatement of licence must pay to have a Breathalyzer device installed and maintained in their vehicle for a further year.

"Compare those penalties to a driver who makes an unsafe turn in front of a motorcycle and kills both riders. That driver will receive a $500 fine only.

"The first person pays a comparatively large penalty because they have the potential to do harm, but a person who actually kills cannot receive anything more substantial than a $500 fine."

The petition site goes on to relate the tragic story of David and Wanda Harrison, who were killed in a collision with a vehicle that had turned left in between three motorcycles on Highway 17. They report that the driver of the car was convicted of an unsafe turn and received the maximum penalty allowed under the Highway Traffic Act; that is, a $500 fine.

With all that, Speaker, while we support enhanced safety measures on Ontario roads and can understand the principles for strengthened penalties to meet the impact of HTA contraventions, I feel that as it is currently written, this proposal seems to use too broad a brush to address poor driving behaviours that are already penalized under the Highway Traffic Act. I look forward to further debate perhaps in committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to rise in this House—and today to support the bill from my colleague from Niagara Falls regarding increased fines for accidents that cause serious injury or death.

Before I start my comments, I would like to commend the member for Burlington, who brought forward a personal story, a very tragic story. That is actually the strength of this House, that we all have life experiences and we all bring those experiences forward. I'd really like to congratulate all members, but especially the member for Burlington, for enriching the debate of this bill today.

Now, I'm going to put a shameless plug in for my own riding, because in my riding we have the New Liskeard Bikers Reunion. On average, it's on the first July weekend, and there are 25,000 people who come to watch. We get about 6,000 bikers who come. One of the most touching moments of that is the Freedom Ride. We have miles and miles of bikers who first go to the hospital. We stop and they give gifts to cancer patients, and then we do a long ride over a lot of roads. This is all done to raise money for cancer. Since it started in 1999, it has raised $1 million for cancer research.

Why I bring it up, besides the shameless plug, is that when you see those motorbike riders, there are a lot of families and a lot of retired people. So for people who think—there are still some people who think, "Those irresponsible bikers are going way too fast," and I've always wanted to be able to say this in the House: "They've got these crotch rockets." There are a few of those, but most bikers are trying to live within the rules of the road and are a benefit to society. I know I have some fellow bikers here in the House. The member from Beaches–East York; I've commented on his bike. He has a pretty unique bike.

One thing about the Bikers Reunion is they give away a Harley every year. You can buy tickets. Since I'm a Triumph rider, I'm not really a big Harley fan, but I can live with it.

But the one thing—I think it's for pedestrians, it's for bicycles, and perhaps bikers have a better sense of it: There are a lot of risks on the road that you don't notice until you're on a bike. Because if somebody does something wrong in a car, you get maybe a fender-bender or something more serious, but there aren't too many fender-benders on a motorbike. I notice it. I'm a weekend rider. I do a bit of constituency work in my riding on a motorbike, and you have to watch out all the time. I've had people stop at stop signs and then pull out right in front of you. On a bike, you don't have much time. If those people knew—because it's going to keep happening—that the fine, if you actually hurt someone, is pretty serious, perhaps it would be a deterrent.

We're not saying that this bill is perfect. That's why we're bringing it forward. The way this should work is we bring this bill forward; hopefully, it gets passed today and hopefully we can all agree and the government agrees to bring it forward to committee where we can have fulsome debate with all the stakeholders and see how we can make the roads safer for everyone.

Why it's a little bit focused on motorbikes is because you, at least from my point of view, see the risks much more. When I walk to work, when I'm down here—when you're a pedestrian, too, you always have to watch out, but stuff goes slower. You have a bit more chance to react. On a motorbike, somebody makes a left in front of you or somebody—one of my cousins, who's a pretty shy guy, so I won't name him, was in London and he was on a Norton and somebody stopped at a red light, looked at him and pulled out right in front of him. He has been in years of therapy to get that solved. Basically, they had eye contact and still the guy went out. Those are the issues that we're trying to deal with in this bill.

1450

So I fully support this bill and I think it has to go forward. It has to go to committee where we can have a fulsome discussion about how to make our roads safer.

I'm going to go back, because I still have a minute, to talk about things like the Bikers Reunion. Bikers have evolved—they do great things for our community—and the laws also have to evolve to represent how that sport has changed.

There have always been families who were into biking; it's a pretty big family occupation. On weekends, when I go riding around I see a lot of families who do this as a family occupation or family recreation; and they should be secure in the knowledge that the laws reflect what they enjoy doing.

On that note, I'd like to end my comments.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to commend the member from Niagara for his tenacity on his portfolio and his dedication towards transportation in Ontario. But I also want to recognize an individual whose driveway I finally had the opportunity to walk up. We had a chat in his driveway. His dedication towards getting this forward—I was introduced to him through my colleague from Timmins–James Bay and then through our discussions. Gerry, you need to take a bow because it was your tenacity working with the member from Niagara,

that got this here today. Congratulations, Gerry Rhodes; this is on you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Niagara Falls, you have two minutes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I really do appreciate all of my colleagues standing up and talking on this bill.

Like my good friend here, I would like to talk about my colleague from Burlington, because when you're in this place, sometimes the personal stories really touch home. When you have somebody stand up and say, "I lost my husband," and to share that today, the effect it has on your family and on your kids, and she is still fighting to make things better for others, I want to say thank you very much.

To my good friend from Kitchener–Conestoga, I really appreciate his comments and the fact that he read out the petition, which I was going to do tomorrow. So I want to say thanks to him as well.

I want to tell a story about the two guys who are here. I had the privilege of meeting them, almost two years ago now, in Niagara Falls. To my colleague's comments: He never gave up. He never gave up on this issue. He remembered his friends who were killed that day. He dedicated the last 10 years of his life to try to get to this point where the Legislature's elected officials from right across the province of Ontario would understand and give the opportunity to get this past second reading, maybe get it into committee and even make the bill better. So I want to say thank you very much, but also to take the message back to the motorcycle riders who do a lot of good stuff in our communities today. In our community we have a big ride for cancer that they do every year. Last year we had a family that needed a hand up, and who came to their aid? They did a motorcycle ride around the Niagara region. So take the message back. They do great work, we appreciate it, and hopefully my colleagues will pass this on your behalf. Thank you very much for being here.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll take the vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

CUTTING RED TAPE FOR MOTOR VEHICLE DEALERS ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 ALLÉGEANT LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES POUR LES COMMERÇANTS DE VÉHICULES AUTOMOBILES

Mr. Clark moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 152, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act / Projet de loi 152, Loi modifiant le Code de la route.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure to stand here today to begin second reading debate of Bill 152, the Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2015.

I first want to take the opportunity to thank the three House leaders for their co-operation in allowing this last-minute change for me to debate this bill today. I had planned to have a much different discussion this afternoon, but the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing gave me and would-be homeowners across the province an early Christmas gift this week. So, Speaker, if you'll pardon the pun, given the topic of my bill, I have shifted gears today.

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm sorry. You didn't like that joke.

First of all, I just want to take this opportunity to thank a number of people who helped me with this bill. First, in the west members' gallery, I'd like to introduce and thank Frank Notte from the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association. Thank you, Frank.

I'd also like to give a shout-out to the auto dealers back home in my riding of Leeds–Grenville; there are three from Brockville that I'd like to thank in particular: Dave Watson of Pastime Motors, Arnold Dixon from Kia of Brockville, and Ted MacMillan of Riverside Chevrolet Buick GMC. I should highlight that Ted was just named Brockville's 2015 business person of the year by the Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce; I want to congratulate Ted for that.

Much of what we debate on Thursday afternoons in private members' public business has its origins or concerns that were brought forward at our constituency offices. These few hours we have each week provide us with the opportunity to provide a solution for those problems. That's what I'm trying to do with Bill 152. As members can see, the bill isn't very lengthy, but it does address a specific issue, one that affects auto dealerships in communities across the province. So I guess the question that some members might want to ask me is: How did we get here?

Over the summer, several car dealers raised concerns to me about a situation at the ServiceOntario office in the city of Brockville. This wasn't a complaint about the staff at this location; actually, the dealers were quick to say how friendly and efficient the ServiceOntario employees were when they could finally get to the wicket. That was the problem: the wait to see them. Their employees were wasting dozens of hours every week in line waiting to have their paperwork processed for vehicles sold or leased on their lots. It wasn't uncommon for them to spend a couple of hours or more waiting around on each visit. At certain times during the week there was a dedicated wicket, but not enough to meet that demand.

That meant dealership employees, usually with multiple licences and registrations to process, had to wait their turn in line with the general public. To make matters worse, they could only do two transactions at a time. That meant they had to pull another number, and wait again and repeat it again if they had more than four, which sometimes they did. This was a very cumbersome process.

Obviously these delays were a significant cost to the dealerships, especially when you multiply it over the

thousands of transactions every year. As businesses priding themselves on outstanding customer service, they had another concern: They were seeing customers growing increasingly frustrated as they waited anxiously to drive their new vehicle home. As we all know, customers today don't hesitate to go online to rate every aspect of an experience with a business. They were justifiably concerned that these delays, which were completely out of their control, would affect their overall ratings on some of these consumer websites.

I was able to arrange a meeting with Arnold, Ted and also with Bob Watson. We went and met with the local ServiceOntario manager. I have to tell you, it was a very frank discussion, but it was clear that with the budget constraints that all ServiceOntario locations were under, a solution was not at hand. That is what brought Bill 152 forward today.

As I mentioned, it is a pretty straightforward bill—it's very tiny compared to many private members' bills that get tabled here—and it removes the need for dealership employees to physically attend at a ServiceOntario to complete licensing and registration transactions for customers. It does this by amending the Highway Traffic Act to add a section authorizing electronic applications by motor vehicle dealers on purchases or leases. The new section 6.1(1) of the HTA would allow "a motor vehicle dealer registered as a general dealer under the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2002" to "do any of the following by electronic means or in an electronic format:

"1. Apply for a permit, number plates or a validation for a vehicle under subsection 7(7).

"2. Apply for a new permit for a vehicle under subsection 11(2).

"3. Apply for a used vehicle information package under subsection 11.1(2).

"4. Anything else as may be prescribed."

That's it, Speaker. It's certainly not a government omnibus bill that we've seen in this Parliament, but it's legislation that I think—and I hope some of my colleagues today will agree—will provide a significant benefit for this important sector in our economy. Bill 152 does exactly what the Ontario PC caucus is constantly asking the government to do: It cuts red tape to save businesses time and money while allowing them to serve their customers better.

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I want members to hear why the Trillium Automotive Dealers Association is a strong supporter of this bill. I'm going to read to you an excerpt that Frank Notte, the director of government relations with Trillium, wrote to me. Here's the excerpt from the letter:

"Auto dealers spend a considerable amount of time, money and resources in order to go above and beyond expectations, and to ensure the proper and quick delivery of the vehicle to the customer.

"However, there is considerable cost in both time and money. If passed, Bill 152 will dramatically cut down on this expense and make the vehicle purchase transaction more efficient and convenient for both the dealer and the customer.

"Dealers will not have to waste time sending a person to a local licensing office in order to process the registration. And consumers will not experience a delay in order to take delivery of their vehicle—which is often a very exciting time for families.

"In effect, the dealership's business hours will determine when the vehicle can be registered—not the local licensing office."

His letter continues: "Bill 152 will allow the car dealership to become a one-stop shop for customers. Theoretically, a person can sign a purchase contract and register the vehicle all in the same day, perhaps within hours—without having to return to the dealership to take delivery of the vehicle.

"For dealers in areas of the province where a licence office is far away, this bill will have an even greater impact. Dealership employees will not have to waste time travelling far distances numerous times to provide this service, and can use their time more productively to running the business.

"Bill 152 is a vital tool that supports Ontario's auto sector.

"Too often, the retail side of the auto sector doesn't receive the attention it deserves. While auto manufacturing may grab headlines, it is the retail side where the rubber hits the road.

"This bill will help Ontario's 1,000 new car dealers save time and money and give them the tools to provide a more convenient customer service experience."

That's the quote, Speaker. I thought it was very important to bring Frank's comments forward today because they confirm what I said earlier about the benefits of Bill 152.

I do want to take a moment, Speaker, to say something about ServiceOntario. I don't for a moment want anybody to presume the legislation is a reflection on the services offered by front-line staff working in these offices. As I said earlier, the dealers that I spoke to and who met with me in my office and at ServiceOntario had nothing but praise for the staff in Brockville.

Besides removing auto dealer transactions from the equation, it will free up ServiceOntario staff, I believe, to look after everyday Ontarians coming in, to help them do it more quickly.

Bill 152 reflects the reality of the world we live in, where just about every transaction can be done on a smart phone: We buy and sell stocks; we pay our mortgage; we apply for new government identification; we renew licence plate validation, and just about everything else in between. It's the way Ontario is today. All of this is done at our convenience, safely and securely, without having to spend time waiting in line. We can use the same technology to create a secure system and reduce red tape for auto dealers. It's not like we're steering down an untravelled road.

Again, a highly secure system, I should tell members, is already working in Quebec. In that province, new car

dealers and, as of April 2015, some used car dealers can also do the following: They can license a new or used vehicle. They can register a new or used vehicle. In Quebec, you can change and confirm operations, consult a vehicle's ownership history, register vehicles in stock, and order forms and official documents. If they can implement this system in Quebec, we can do it in Ontario.

In fact, we've done it in this province already. Members of this House will be very interested to know that the government conducted a pilot project on in-house vehicle licensing and registration in 2011. Two test dealerships were involved—one in Peterborough and one in Belleville. I have to say that the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs will be very, very familiar with this pilot. He was featured prominently in an article about how well it was working for Peterborough's Trans-Canada Nissan.

As he stated in that Saturday, April 23, 2011, article in the Peterborough Examiner—I'm now quoting the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Jeff Leal, "After they go through this pilot period, we will put together the data and this will be the basis of introducing this service to all dealerships right across the province of Ontario.... This is the kind of initiative that the Peterborough dealers have been asking me for.... We believe the data we put together here will serve us well as we bring this service right across Ontario." He concluded, "This is about providing better consumer service."

You know what, Speaker? I agree with Jeff Leal, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Perhaps, in a real world where I could have gotten to him sooner because of the changes this week, he might have even co-sponsored this bill. Who knows?

We can help auto dealers serve their customers better by modernizing our vehicle licensing and registration system. We have the data from the government's pilot project, which, by all accounts, were very well received. My plea to members today is, let's get the bill into committee, let's put the data from the pilot project into the mix and let's get on with modernizing this aspect of our government services.

I welcome the input from my colleagues this afternoon, I'd appreciate their support and I ask for their support for Bill 152 at second reading.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Once again, it's an honour to be called upon to speak in Ontario's provincial Parliament this afternoon, on behalf of the good folks in Windsor–Tecumseh. I'll be speaking to the private member's bill brought forward by my friend from Leeds–Grenville, Mr. Clark.

I have to tell you, Speaker, that there are two ways of looking at it. I'm going to give you perhaps the more positive side, and I think my friend from Algoma–Manitoulin may have a little different way of looking at this bill.

Speaker, let me tell you that as a reporter, reading news stories about a boy wonder from Brockville back in the early 1980s, there was this 22-year-old young man with a mop of curly hair. He had little to do after graduating from the University of Waterloo, so he ran for mayor and became the youngest mayor in Canada, at that time, being re-elected several times and serving for what—10 or 11 years?

Mr. Steve Clark: Nine.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Nine years. Little did I suspect, back then, that I would one day be serving here in the Ontario Legislature with that same boy wonder and have the chance to discuss his private member's bill this afternoon.

I have great respect for the member from Leeds–Grenville, as we do all in this House. He's a former president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Speaker, and that means a lot to me because, as you know, I served several terms on the AMO board. I also served as the chair of the Large Urban Mayor's Caucus and as AMO vice-president. I never did get to run for president; I ended up here, for some reason. But I have great respect for those who serve in that capacity, because I know and appreciate the amount of time it takes to serve as president of AMO—time away from your home, your family and your other municipal duties back in your home community.

His Bill 152 is called Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act. It's a short bill, less than 20 lines. I guess the bottom line and the intent behind his proposed legislation is to make the working lives easier for Ontario's 8,000 car dealers and the more than 26,000 men and women who work as sales staff at those dealerships. In order to simplify their lives, the member from Leeds–Grenville says they should be able to apply online for motor vehicle permits or licence plates, or to get a used vehicle information kit. That would certainly speed things up for the rest of us when we're in line at ServiceOntario offices.

Much has been said over the years by all three political parties about the need to reduce red tape. Red tape, Speaker, is an idiom: "a group of words that have a meaning to most of us that are not deducible from the individual words." For example, if we hear someone say that the drinks are on the house, we don't go running up to the fourth floor and climb out a window to try to get one of those free drinks.

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So it is with red tape. There's no actual tape, but "red tape" is an idiom that Wikipedia says "refers to excessive regulation or rigid conformity to formal rules that is considered redundant or bureaucratic and hinders or prevents action or decision-making. It is usually applied to governments, corporations and other large organizations."

There's another definition that says that red tape is the "collection or sequence of forms and procedures required to gain bureaucratic approval for something, especially when oppressively complex and time-consuming."

If you don't like that one, Speaker, here's another one: Red tape is the "bureaucratic practice of hair-splitting or

foot-dragging, blamed by its practitioners on a system that forces them to follow prescribed procedures to the letter." Red tape includes "filling out paperwork, obtaining licences, having multiple people or committees approve a decision, and various low-level rules that make conducting one's affairs slower, more difficult, or both."

I'll conclude with the definitions by saying that red tape can also include "filing and certification requirements, reporting, investigation, inspection and enforcement practices, and procedures."

You can understand why many of us would like to see more red tape cut out of our everyday lives.

I have a roll of red tape in my office, Speaker. I was going to bring it down with a pair of sharp scissors this afternoon, but I knew you would say I couldn't use a prop, so I'm prop-free.

Congratulations to the member from Leeds–Grenville for bringing this bill forward. He's plowing ahead with his determination, and he gets that grit from when he was the founding chair of the International Plowing Match committee back in Leeds–Grenville in 2008.

This bill is simple in nature, and I must say that I'm looking at it from the perspective that if you sell cars in Ontario, you're part of the Ontario automotive industry. In my community, we build cars, and we make a good living at building cars. They say that for every job in the plant—what is it; six, seven or eight—

Mr. Wayne Gates: Seven.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: —seven other spin-off jobs are created for every job created in the assembly plant. If we can make life easier for anyone in the automotive industry, make it easier for them to sell the cars we build, then we want to stand up for that and make it happen.

That's why I'll be supporting this bill. I think it makes sense. I'd say it makes common sense, but then again, somebody would say, "No, no, we had a Common Sense Revolution here not that long ago"—what, 1995 to 2000? I know some people would like to forget that.

Let me just say let's get on with it. Let's pass Bill 152 and stand up for the automotive sector in our great province. Thank you for your time this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to be able to speak to this bill, Bill 152, the Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, which was introduced by the MPP for Leeds–Grenville.

I am personally all in favour of cutting red tape. I don't think there's anyone in this House who would disagree with that. I've had some success and great pleasure in working with government services to look at our Corporations Act in terms of how we can revamp that and make it easier for businesses to do business in Ontario. This debate is a continuation of that type of discussion.

This is about customer service. This is about supporting businesses in our communities, especially our smaller communities, which don't have access to numerous ServiceOntario outlets. I understand that.

I know that as a government, we've worked to support a competitive motor vehicle sector, and we'll review any initiatives that aim to streamline the processes for Ontario vehicle dealers. I'm pleased to support this private member's bill as it moves through second reading and gets to committee, where we can give it that fulsome debate that it deserves.

With regard to this bill, it's also important that the government carefully consider the impacts on ServiceOntario, which we understand could be significant. ServiceOntario is constantly reviewing technology, with openness to digitizing government services when doing so benefits Ontarians. Over 11 million online transactions are completed annually through ServiceOntario, so clearly ServiceOntario has some expertise when it comes to using the Internet to digitize transactions with the public.

The government has shown leadership, I believe, in this area, as the first province in Canada, for example, to provide drivers with an online licence renewal service. I took advantage of that this year, Mr. Speaker, and it certainly made life a little bit easier for me, not having to mail things in or go stand in lineups—just to go online, and with a few clicks of a button, the work was done for me. In fact, that accomplishment was applauded by the Auditor General in her 2015 annual report.

We've also made available over 40 types of online transactions, including business name registrations, land searches and birth certificates.

As I said earlier, to get this right—it may seem like, off the top, a very simple request on behalf of car dealerships, but it has to be done right. Times change, technology changes, and I know that today we have to be so careful with anything government does online, especially with private information. It's just not as easy as it was five or 10 years ago. We have to make sure that there is security in place and that there is a very robust process in place to make sure that the transaction is secure and that storage of information is secure. I know that this is something that, perhaps, off the cuff, is not as easily done as we would assume, and I know that ServiceOntario and government services would look at it very closely and give us their opinion in terms of how it might be done.

There are a number of implications involving costs, the IT applications and security of personal information that would have to be thoroughly studied for the government to move forward with the proposed legislative amendments.

As I said at the outset, we value our relationships with motor vehicle dealers, and we'll continue looking for ways to support their sector as they move ahead with this and other ideas.

Technology like this has made our lives so much easier in so many ways, when we can just rely on the Internet and log on to a website and click a few buttons and click a few boxes and we're done, rather than physically having to take paperwork, perhaps, and go into a lineup. I can see how it would frustrate a dealer if they have to spend a fair amount of time, if they have to spend

resources, in terms of personnel, to go and line up. I certainly wouldn't want to see a process that upset a customer because the customer might think it takes a bit too long for them to get their new car. Having been a new car owner myself just a short while ago, you want to get into that shiny new vehicle as soon as you can, and if it involves the dealership taking two or three extra days to get your licence, that might be a problem.

The private member's bill, as I said earlier, could have significant impacts on ServiceOntario and its operations. ServiceOntario has investigated electronic registrations for motor vehicle dealers in the past, and it will continue to look for ways to cost-effectively expand online access to high-demand services for individuals and businesses. We value our relationships with our partners and service providers, and we need to carefully consider them in any decision-making process.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I wanted to share my time with the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore and allow him a few minutes to speak further.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on this forward-thinking, red-tape-reducing private member's bill brought to the floor by my colleague from Leeds–Grenville.

1520

I also want to recognize another good friend of ours in the press gallery here, Frank Notte from TADA. Frank, thanks for joining us today.

As we've heard, the Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act would do just that: cut through the red tape that wastes both the time and money of auto dealers and their employees seeking to simply do their job. As that job is to sell cars in Ontario and support our auto sector, I see it as a timely initiative we all can get behind.

As we've heard the member explain, this bill would allow motor vehicle dealers to initiate a series of transactions electronically, transactions like applying for a permit, number plates or a validation for a vehicle, or applying for a used vehicle information package. Transactions like this, while relatively easy to process and complete in principle, can provide long-line headaches and paperwork for people who could be spending their wasted lineup time and effort in doing what they do best: selling vehicles. It's a prime example of some of the over 380,000 regulations and red tape that tie down businesses in Ontario and choke off progress that they might otherwise be moving forward on, if we could provide a simpler way of meeting the need for these transactions without the forced, lengthy visits to the local ServiceOntario desk.

The bill before us today helps to provide that simpler way, Speaker, allowing vehicle dealers to get the transactions done in a timely fashion, made possible by today's secure electronic technology, so they can get on with the job. That, too, is the key point. We all do share concerns when it comes to electronic transactions and the ongoing need for security, but the fact is that the technology exists. Technology is already in use to ensure that the straightforward transactions covered by this bill can be done both safely and securely by dealers. We see it every day in today's society, where consumers and businesses increasingly conduct transactions electronically. Today's bill simply calls on government to move in the same direction to meet their demands.

As we heard, this proposed red-tape-reducing solution is nothing new. We're not blazing any trails on our own here. We're simply talking about adopting some best practices—best electronic practices, in this case—that have been put in place in other jurisdictions, and even piloted here in Ontario to allow businesses to move ahead.

Our neighbours in Quebec are already enjoying the ease of service a highly secure system can provide, allowing dealerships and some used car dealers to electronically license and/or register a new or used vehicle, among a number of other initiatives.

As we've also heard, dealers in the Cobourg area have already benefited by a ServiceOntario pilot project on electronic registration.

We have the technology. We have the security. We have the ability. Now it's time to look at allowing the groundwork to take hold across the province, to relieve vehicle dealers of the red tape burden facing them every time they sell a car, truck or motorcycle.

Dealers across the province know all too well of the time-and-effort-consuming impacts of the current regulatory regime that is involved with the mandatory service visit. That's why the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association, representing over 1,000 new car and truck dealers in Ontario, has pledged their support to see this through. In fact, TADA would like to see more transactions added eventually.

Not only would the changes called for in this this bill benefit the vehicle dealers, it would also benefit those government representatives at ServiceOntario themselves. It's a win-win, Speaker, and I'm hopeful the members opposite will help us to ensure that we put this winning proposal into action.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to commend the member from Leeds–Grenville. He brings an issue here to the floor, something that he's passionate about, something that comes from his riding, and I commend him for that.

However, I also come with great passion from people across my riding in Algoma–Manitoulin, and also as the critic for northern development and mines. I need to speak as to why we're talking about Bill 152 today, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act. Why is it here today, Mr. Speaker? Quite frankly, it's because of the cuts and all the slashing and burning this government has been doing to the public sector and to all sectors across this province. That's why we're talking about this.

The member talks about the message that he's hearing from the dealerships in his riding. What are they getting in these dealerships?

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Yes, absolutely, they're wasting a lot of time waiting for permits when they're going over to ServiceOntario counters. Why are they wasting a lot of time? Because of cuts this government has done, because of services that they have removed, because of hours they have cut, because of services they've taken away from these individuals.

Let me back up here a bit, because this is something that I have been talking about for a very long time in this House, because of how disconnected this government is with northern Ontario issues. Not every issue can be fixed with a white paintbrush, as this government does and as they proceed with. There are things that operate differently in northern Ontario. There are distances that we have to factor in. There are travel costs. There are seniors. There are vast distances between our companies. That has to be considered.

Now, don't get me wrong: The individuals who work at our ServiceOntario counters are, bar none, some of the best individuals that we have working in the public sector. They go out of their way each and every day to assist individuals, to make sure that when a licence is needed, or when a permit is needed, or when an individual can't come to their ServiceOntario office or can't do it within hours—you know what they do, Mr. Speaker? They actually take the time; they take the file—not on paid time—and they go out of their way to meet up with them before the day starts, to make sure that that permit is done, that that truck can leave the yard with that overload, or that senior who cannot come in is provided with the service they need.

But guess what? By cutting the hours and reducing the employees who work in these areas, they are having the negative effects as to why we have Bill 152 with us here today. That's what is happening. It was clear in the comments that the member from Leeds–Grenville came with today.

Yes, I've heard from car dealerships in my area as well that they are challenged. They can't close a sale on a Friday afternoon. "Oh, why?" "Well, ServiceOntario has cut their hours and they are closed at 2, and in order for me to close a deal at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, I'd have to wait until Monday. But the individual who was in to buy a vehicle is from out of town. He won't be staying here all weekend for the deal, so I've lost a sale." Those are the challenges that are happening in northern Ontario.

But wait a second: It got even better. In order to provide the ServiceOntario kiosk services that they needed in northern Ontario, the government went out and said, "You know, let's privatize some of this. Let's make sure that all the areas have an individual service and that everybody within a 100-kilometre radius has the service that they need from a ServiceOntario office."

How did they entice people to come in? They introduced a stipend; that's what they did. They got individuals to open up ServiceOntario kiosks. First, they got them to buy the services that they need. They bought the tools that they need, the technology that they need and the insurance that they required in order to provide this service. Once they did that, they tied them in to a four-year contract. Then, all of a sudden, in the fifth year: "You know what? We're going to take away that stipend now. Now you're going to have to work on fees. These are the fees that you're going to have, and you have to survive on those fees. That's how you're going to operate."

You took away over 60% to 70% of their annual income, which is what they were using in order to provide the service to many of the communities, and said, "You know what? Too bad. Diversify. Wait a second. We're going to provide you with the health card photo ID in order for you to renew the health cards. That will help you out. Wait a second. We're also going to give you the ability to use the sticker, and you can go put the sticker on that senior's plate and charge them a fee." Are you kidding me? That's the way that they're going to bring services to northern Ontario and across this province?

Mr. Speaker, there's a problem; there definitely is a problem. But introducing bills like this is not going to solve those problems. The way we're going to solve this problem is by investing in our public sector, recognizing the work that they do, the quality that they do, recognizing that if we are to open up this can of worms, there are definitely going to be questions in regard to oversight and transparency that we need to deal with. Information is going to be out there for other individuals who do not have the right to have access to that information.

There's a problem here. We have the ability to fix it by cutting the budget, cutting their cuts, slashing jobs, slashing amounts. Taking away the rightful, experienced individuals that we have in our public sector, doing their jobs, is not the way of fixing these types of problems.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's a pleasure to rise in the House this afternoon to speak to Bill 152, Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act.

I want to congratulate the member from Leeds–Grenville for being able to switch gears so quickly to bring something forward to cut red tape rather than cutting red herrings, as he was earlier this week.

Mr. Speaker, that was supposed to elicit more laughs.

Interjection: I got it.

1530

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: In any case, this bill proposes to make it easier for motor vehicle dealers to get a permit, number plates, sticker validations and used vehicle information packages, all online. This is certainly something that, in the 21st century that we find ourselves in, is the direction we should be going.

Our government has actually done a great deal to reduce red tape, and there are ongoing initiatives to do more of that. I think this ties nicely into the approach to

try to make it easier to do business in this province and to provide more convenience and more choice to individuals and businesses. So I do endorse what the member for Leeds–Grenville is trying to do with this bill.

Certainly ServiceOntario does provide exemplary service to both businesses and individuals throughout the province. This isn't about the quality of service they provide; this is about providing more convenient services for Ontarians. There are already so many services that as an Ontarian you can do online in terms of licence renewals and plate renewals and so on, so this is very much in keeping with that.

The only caveat I would put here is that, as we know, with IT projects there are risks. The risks can be the protection of privacy of individuals, as was the case with some ServiceOntario kiosks that had to be removed because there were fears about the security of the information that was being transmitted through those kiosks. But there are also the risks of, whenever you bring in a transformative piece of technology, whenever you transition from an existing system to a new system, can you do it on time and on budget?

This is not unique to our government. At the city of Toronto, where I had experience, this was always a challenge. I know many of my friends in the private sector and in the financial services sector can also tell you some of the horror stories they have had dealing with IT projects. So it's not just government; it's the complexity of IT projects. That's a little bit of a concern for me here. I don't want to go down a road of just quickly pursuing this type of technology and end up with additional costs for government, and certainly I wouldn't want to create additional costs for auto dealers. I wouldn't want us to have to turn around and pass those additional costs on to them, so a plate renewal or new licence plate ends up costing more than it did before—there would be convenience, but there would be additional costs.

I think if we do this carefully and methodically, we can get to this point. So I'm happy to support the member's bill at this stage. I think it does need to go to committee. I do think it needs some further study. We need to get the information that was collected from the pilot project that the government has already done. I think with that careful study and thoughtful and methodical approach, we will be able to get there, to cut red tape for automobile dealers in this province.

I take seriously the comments of the member from Algoma–Manitoulin that you don't want people to be told, in an Amazon and eBay era, that they can't complete their transaction because it's 4:30 in the afternoon on a Friday. We do need to get to that point where we can be part of the digital economy as a government as well. I think we're moving in that direction. We're making great progress. This is another area where we can make progress. I don't think it's quite as simple as the member for Leeds–Grenville may think it is, but I think we will all get there if we work together on this.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm glad to stand in support of my colleague from Leeds–Grenville's bill before the Legislature today. I want to say that this member, Mr. Clark, has a knack for these pieces of legislation where they make you say, "What the heck? This is actually really a rule in our province?" Not too long ago, he brought forward a bill where he changed it so that dentists could once again treat members of their own family. There was a bizarre ruling in the province where dentists could not treat their spouses or their kids, which was preposterous. Mr. Clark, the member from Leeds–Grenville, said that this made no sense and brought in a bill. It has now been fixed in the province of Ontario.

He then said that housing costs were expensive enough, that homes were becoming increasingly out of reach for average families and new Canadians, so he brought forward a bill to stop a new land transfer tax from being imposed in the province. He was successful in that; he got the minister to act.

Now, it's number three for the hat trick in allowing car dealers to give even better service to their customers. I want to say that it's been mentioned that Frank Notte, head of Trillium Automobile Dealers Association, is here today. I'm going to mention for the first time in Hansard that Frank and his wife, Sue, recently brought into this world a son, John Michael Notte—very special. Frank's dad was a great man. I got to know him much over the years. We had a lot of good conversations. He passed away not too long ago, and Frank named his son after his dad. I thought that was very, very sweet.

Frank always reminds us when he's here lobbying that we talk about the auto sector—it's important to the province of Ontario—but we often leave out the dealers when we talk about the auto sector. We think of the manufacturers, but the dealers actually comprise over 49,000 men and women in this province. They generate $29 billion in activity with 600,000 automobiles sold in the province—new cars sold in the province each and every year. If we can make that easier and they can hire more people, God bless, all the better for it.

Look, one of my favourite writers, P.J. O'Rourke said, "A little luck and a little government are necessary in life, but only a fool trusts either of them." Government's role is to help willing partners facilitate contracts. We have legal systems and a little government to ensure that's the case. We have mechanisms to make sure that those agreements are transparent and people have full and equal knowledge. There are some activities for which we need a licence, like owning or operating an automobile. But does the government actually have to make you come before them to fill out all the paperwork or is that a thing of the past? Instead of a dealer in Beamsville or Smithville having to go to the ServiceOntario office and have to drive even farther, why don't you bring the ServiceOntario office directly to the dealer? You can do that electronically these days and save a lot of time and aggravation, and let us all take home our new vehicle sooner and show it off to our wife or kids, or friends or what have you—take it for the proverbial first spin off the lot.

I think there's more to do. This is an important first step. I think Mr. Clark, the member for Leeds–Grenville, put it in the realm of immediate doability—if that's a proper word and parliamentary, Speaker—to allow it in these circumstances. Then they can look to have even more electronic service delivery for automobiles or others down the road, like Quebec has done, for example, allowing the payment of fines that may be outstanding on a licence or registration—to facilitate a transaction like this would be another example—or transferring a leased car to permanent ownership.

This is an excellent move by Mr. Clark. He's on a roll. I think he's going to score the hat trick and put three pucks in the net before Christmas. I'm proud to support the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I, too, commend my colleague and MPP for Leeds–Grenville Steve Clark for putting this bill forward. As my colleague Tim Hudak just said, he is on a roll for the hat trick. I respect Clarkie's work and believe he truly knows the pulse of not only the people in his riding, but of people across the province.

With Bill 152, he's essentially looking to cut red tape and free up front-line staff at ServiceOntario and the dealerships. His private member's bill is in response to concerns he has heard—that many of us have heard in this House—in regard to car dealers who are growing frustrated over the cost and the time wasted in having staff line up at ServiceOntario to complete simple paperwork.

I understand this concern is also echoed by an umbrella organization, the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association—I too would like to applaud Frank on the arrival of his new son—which represents over 1,000 new car and truck dealers. They represent a very active and vibrant industry all across communities in Ontario.

Consider the volume of sales, Mr. Speaker, that's involved. In September alone, 178,681 cars and trucks were sold across Canada. A chunk of that activity happened right here in Ontario with 70,202 new car sales in that single month. In October, deliveries in Ontario rose 6% in the first 10 months of 2015, and sales grew 10%. In fact, industry analysts predict vehicle sales are on track to hit another annual record. When the auto manufacturing industry and the dealerships are rolling, so is Ontario's economy.

1540

Bill 152 would allow motor vehicle dealers to complete all of these transactions electronically, including applying for a permit, number plates or a validation for a vehicle, or for a used vehicle information package.

I want to share a little story: One of my colleagues, Jimmy McDonell from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, bought a new car recently. As we're all aware, we're here most of the week—lots of people work in a community other than where they live. But he could not get his vehicle for an extra week because he couldn't get home on Friday while the ServiceOntario office was open. He had to wait yet another week and had to go without a vehicle for a week. That's not very productive for our economy. So this makes sense all across the board.

It means submitting all required documentation without that time-consuming visit to the government office. We have the technology. It exists today to ensure that these transactions can be done safely and securely. In fact, similar programs are in place in the US, where they have existed for some 20 years already. One of the colleagues across said it has to go to committee and be done very slowly and methodically. I think the time is here. As well, Ontario itself successfully completed its own pilot project in Cobourg.

I want to stress that the number one benefit of the proposed changes for consumers is that they will be able to receive their registration and licence plate at the point of sale. This bill will improve efficiency and save businesses money while improving the customer experience when purchasing or leasing a vehicle.

I'd also like to add that Bill 152 will make the registration process more seamless and potentially improve the buying experience. It is, however, designed to implement the changes in a responsible way. This is done with the express effort to help the government avoid their typical pitfalls like with eHealth and SAMS, where the latter amassed $140-million worth of mistakes in welfare payments, according to the 2015 Auditor General report.

I would also respectfully suggest that the responsible minister may want to fast-track Bill 152 and help free up front-line staff processing the high volume of dealer applications they do currently. Allow them to focus on other priority areas. As we are hearing, the minister is dealing with a possible backlog at his ministry with regard to medical reviews. When people are held up because of those medical reviews, it impacts their ability to work and it impacts their driving privileges to get to such important things as their doctors' appointments, work, volunteer opportunities and all those types of things that we all encounter.

The medical review section is mandated to review cases and take appropriate action within 30 business days. I have a gentleman in my riding right now who is a truck driver employed in the snow removal area. He cannot get his licence because of a technicality, and they won't even look at it for 30 days. If we could free up the time that's spent with all these vehicle registrations and, as my colleague said, bring it right to the dealership, there would be a lot more time for front-line staff to work on these very important medical reviews. It's especially critical in our rural ridings, where driving plays such a crucial, important role in all of our day-to-day living.

We ask the House to support Bill 152. It's a win-win for consumers and dealers and one we should all get behind.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Leeds–Grenville. You have two minutes.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank all the members for their very kind words: the member for Windsor–Tecum-

seh for his little bio on me—that was very nice and I really appreciate it—and the members for Newmarket–Aurora, Kitchener–Conestoga, Algoma–Manitoulin, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and Niagara West–Glanbrook.

I also want to say that the member for Mississauga–Erindale and I had a chat during debate and I appreciate that the pilot project was done under his watch as minister. I want to thank him for his kind and encouraging words while the debate was going on.

I also want to say something in response to my friend from Algoma–Manitoulin. I do share some of his concerns. I have a small village in my riding—the village of Westport—and they were going to lose their ServiceOntario contractor because of illness. The ministry obviously couldn't do their due diligence; they couldn't find an operator. I found one. About an hour ago, I found a business that now wants to take that over. So I share some of his concerns about the government's policy that an MPP has to go out and shake the bushes to try to get somebody to take over a ServiceOntario location in a small community.

I've tried to keep my focus very narrow with Bill 152. It does authorize dealers to do a number of things through regulation. It's one of the sections. I did that because of what was said yesterday by the Auditor General. She had a very cautionary tale about what can go wrong when you rush into a new electronic system. I know that it has been acknowledged that we could have gone a lot further, that there were a lot more suggestions, but I tried to keep the focus very narrow in this bill to get it moving and to get it accepted.

The fact that I'm limiting it to permits, number plates, validations, new vehicle permits and used vehicle information packages was done for a reason. I think it allows us to address the major problems facing the auto dealers while also ensuring that a system is running and is working.

Once we've had a chance to test drive it, hopefully it will get into committee and we'll be able to move it forward, get it passed and move this issue.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll take the vote at the end of private members' business.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT (TEMPORARY HELP AGENCIES), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI (AGENCES DE PLACEMENT TEMPORAIRE)

Ms. Malhi moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 143, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to temporary help agencies / Projet de loi 143, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne les agences de placement temporaire.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: For a number of years now, temporary workers have been advocating for strengthened protections that will respect their rights as employees.

During the election campaign in 2014, I was often asked about what our government would do to strengthen protections for these workers. The proposed legislation we are debating today will ensure that workers get their fair share while businesses do their best to hire and retain staff for the long term.

There are many temporary employment agencies operating across the province—about 100,000—and over 600,000 people in Ontario have temporary jobs. I believe that the time has come to ensure that temporary employment agencies meet certain standards as set out by the provincial Legislature.

Ontario's labour market is changing and has been over the past decade or longer. There's a growing trend of part-time work, many times because Ontarians can't find full-time positions that pay enough to make ends meet. Finding full-time work is especially challenging for young people who are just the starting out their careers or for those who are older and trying to move into a new career, as well as for newcomers to our province and visible minorities. It can feel like a Catch-22 situation: You need experience to get a job, but you can't get experience without working. Sometimes the answer people are turning to for this situation is a temp agency.

Temporary employment agencies find workers for companies that need people to fill in on a short-term basis. They're also called "assignment employees" by some. The employer company benefits because it doesn't incur all of the administrative costs of placing an ad, interviewing and, in some instances, training a new employee. The company also saves by paying a flat hourly rate to the temp agency, which issues a paycheque to the temporary workers and handles all the payroll withholding and benefits.

The temp agency finds workers and places them with the appropriate company, and the temporary worker is on the job only as long as they are needed, which could be for a few days, a few weeks or a few months. However, sometimes people end up working as a temporary worker at some companies for years. The amendments to the Employment Standards Act that I'm proposing will address this situation.

Temporary employment agencies are set up to benefit both the employer and the employee. The benefit for the employer is the ability to try out potential candidates for permanent jobs. The benefit for the temporary worker is the potential for the temporary position to blossom into a permanent, full-time job. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this is not always how the scenario goes.

There are many different types of temp agencies. Some specialize in particular industries, such as computer technology or accounting, and others specialize in

certain types of jobs, like managerial or administrative. Still others hire low-skilled or semi-skilled workers to build—manual labour jobs—particularly during peak season for the business.

Ultimately, those looking for work should look into several temporary agencies before they choose one to work with. They should ask about placement fees and how long the typical time is between assignments, if they provide training and whether they provide any benefits. In addition, there should always be a contract signed with a temporary agency—a contract that is clearly understood by both parties.

For whose desire it, part-time work can offer flexibility and an element of freedom. Working at a temporary agency provides an opportunity to see what different company cultures are like and what you prefer as an employee. It's an opportunity to determine whether you like a fast-paced environment, enjoy sitting at a desk or working with the public, and find out what you're good at and what you really want out of a job.

As a temp worker, you'll be represented by an agency with more contacts than you could ever develop on your own. The agency has the knowledge of who is hiring and what skills and knowledge they are looking for. When you work with an agency, you come with a seal of approval and are well ahead of the applicant who walks in off the street.

Once on the job as a temp, the employer gets to see your work efforts and how well you fit into the company or the job. Ultimately, a short-term assignment will turn into a permanent job offer.

1550

Many temp jobs offer the flexibility of working for a few weeks, while the assignment lasts, and taking some time off once it is over. Not too many people have the luxury to take time off in between assignments, however, so it's best to know what the temp agency's job placement rate is like.

Being laid off from a job is sometimes an opportunity to move on to a more lucrative career. Taking courses at the local community college or adult education school will teach you new skills, but nothing teaches you as well as personal experience. The combination of classwork and on-the-job experience is the ideal way to prepare for a new line of work. If you can prove to a temp agency that you have some basic skills, they will likely place you in jobs where you can work under supervision and further enhance your skillset.

Unfortunately, there are downsides to temp work, as well. Temporary workers may feel isolated, as they do not know any of the full-time employees. Temporary workers are often made to feel temporary and treated like second-class citizens. There's a lack of certainty in regard to income. The agency may not pay health insurance or contribute to a pension plan or provide paid vacations.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I am regretfully aware that there are employment agencies that take advantage of vulnerable workers. All individuals who use employment agencies to assist them with finding employment in Ontario must be protected, whether they are just starting out in the job market, older and laid off from a job due to downsizing, new to Canada or struggling with a physical or mental illness that keeps them from full-time employment.

Those who are often desperate to find employment can find themselves being manipulated by temporary help agencies who want them to utilize their services. Often, they are the most vulnerable workers, those who do not know how to stand up for themselves and their rights.

There are agencies that do not provide temporary workers with access to benefits and protections offered to standard, full-time workers. For many years, this issue has been a subject that I hear from constituents: basic employment rights and respect for temporary workers; payment of holiday and termination pay; and clear information about contracts and stopping the practice of temp agencies charging prohibitive fees to workers.

One of the changes that this bill proposes, Mr. Speaker, is to establish a licensing regime for temporary help agencies. Anyone who wishes to carry on the business of a temporary help agency must submit an application to the director of employment standards and shall give the director any information that he or she requires and pay the prescribed fee.

The director shall issue a licence to an applicant who agrees to abide by this act and who satisfies the prescribed requirement, if any, for the licence unless the director believes, on reasonable grounds, that the applicant is not suitable to be licensed.

Further, the director may impose condition on the licence when it is issued. The licence will have an expiry date, as set by the director of employment standards, and an application for renewal must be made before the expiry date of the current licence. During the application for renewal of the licence, the current licence shall continue in effect, as long as the renewal application is submitted by the deadline requirement, until the director notifies the applicant whether it has been renewed or refused to renew.

Secondly, an applicant applying to renew a licence will be required to submit certain information, such as the number of hours worked by each assignment employee for each client and for each workweek in the previous six-month period; and a declaration that certifies the applicant's temporary help agency is in compliance with the act, signed by the applicant or a director or officer of the applicant.

In fact, this information shall be required to be reported to the Ministry of Labour in a semi-annual report, submitted each year on or before September 1, with respect to the first six months of the year, and, again, on or before March 1, with respect to the last six months of the previous year, so that they can show they are complying with the amendment being proposed in regard to the 80% wage requirements. Any other information prescribed within the licence shall also be required to be reported.

Another proposal within this bill would allow the director of employment standards the ability to suspend

or revoke a licence should the licensee cease to satisfy the prescribed requirements, is no longer suitable to be licensed, or any other matters the director considers appropriate.

Should this legislation pass, a temporary help agency shall be required to pay an assignment employee at least 80% of the amount that the agency charges its clients for the employee's services. This amount will not, in any case, be lower than the minimum wage applicable in the province of Ontario.

This measure is intended to help ensure temporary workers receive equal and adequate compensation for their work. It would also ensure that temporary work arrangements remain in the best interests of the worker that is being placed.

Further, this bill proposes that each employer ensures that the total number of hours worked by assignment employees in a workweek does not exceed 25% of the total number of hours worked by all employees, including the assignment employees, in that workweek. This is intended to ensure that the number of temporary workers in any establishment does not exceed 25% of the total permanent workforce, so that temporary workers are not used as a long-term staffing strategy. This also provides temporary workers who are seeking long-term employment with the opportunity to develop meaningful long-term employment.

There is a provision for exemption to this prohibition in certain circumstances, such as an employer with fewer than 10 employees or an employer who experiences a temporary increase in business volume, such as casual seasonal workers. This bill, if passed, would provide the opportunity for an employer to apply to the director of employment standards for an exemption from compliance with this prohibition.

Some of these proposed changes are seemingly basic rules, insofar as they require employment agencies to implement what most of us likely regard as good business practices. This legislation will allow the province to monitor the use of temporary workers and current labour trends, as well as reduce the ability of agencies to intentionally evade labour-related costs.

The goal of this legislation is to ensure that temporary agencies respect the employment rights of temporary workers. My bill proposes changes to the Employment Standards Act that will help vulnerable workers and low-income families who work hard to contribute to this province, while cracking down on temporary help agencies that exploit short-term and assignment employees.

Temporary agencies are an important part of our economic recovery. They're an important part of getting settled or even just getting your foot in the door with a potential employer. That being said, the workers deserve a fair share of the wages being paid, and employers should always do their best when it comes to retaining their own workforce. Requiring a licence to operate will ensure that these rules will be followed.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the private member's bill introduced by the member from Brampton–Springdale.

Looking after the rights and safety of workers in Ontario is one of the most important tasks this Legislature can perform on a regular basis. All governments in Ontario have passed various pieces of legislation designed to adapt to the ever-changing conditions of work and employment in our province. As a Legislature, we have to continue to raise the bar with respect to workers' rights and protections in Ontario. I think that is something we can all be proud of, at the end of the day.

Bill 143 is another piece of legislation that aims to highlight the need for this Legislature to look at some of the trends of employment in Ontario, so that we can adapt the Employment Standards Act accordingly. As the explanatory note says, Bill 143, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to temporary help agencies, will amend the ESA "to establish a licensing regime for temporary help agencies and to require them to pay their employees at least 80% of the amount ... for the employees' services. It also requires employers to ensure that no more than 25% of the hours worked by their employees are performed by assignment employees.

"Temporary help agencies are prohibited from operating without a licence. The procedure for applying for a licence from the director is set out. The director also has the power to suspend ... licences.

"Temporary help agencies must pay their employees at least 80% of the fee they charge to their clients for the employees' services. Temporary help agencies have to submit a semi-annual report to the minister that declares they are in compliance with this requirement."

Also, "Employers must ensure that no more than 25% of the total number of hours that are worked by their employees are performed by assignment employees. There are exemptions from this requirement for employers with fewer than 10 employees and employers that have experienced a temporary increase in business volume. Employers can also apply to the director for exemption from this requirement."

There are certainly some interesting ideas in this bill, and I believe that further work needs to be done to look at the impact of the various aspects of the bill. If this bill moves to the committee stage, I would like to see a thorough and in-depth review. Before this Legislature can make any decisions on the merits of this bill, we need to hear more from the stakeholders in the staffing service industry as well as from workers who have had experiences, both good and bad, when using staffing services.

Also, I believe this Legislature needs to hear from the Ministry of Labour on this particular issue. I understand that the member from Brampton–Springdale's colleague the Minister of Labour has been busy this last year conducting an official review of the Employment Standards Act with industry stakeholders.

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The Changing Workplaces Review is being led by two special advisers: Mr. C. Michael Mitchell and the

Honourable John C. Murray. In their review, the Minister of Labour and these two gentlemen have been looking at, among a number of things, non-standard employment, which includes involuntary part-time, temporary, self-employment without help, and multiple-job holders.

I've had the opportunity to work with the Minister of Labour on a number of issues in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton so I fully anticipate that the minister and the special advisers have been actively engaged in discussions with a broad group of stakeholders. I'd be interested to hear the comments of the Minister of Labour on Bill 143 and, if and when the Changing Workplaces Review is finalized in the coming months, if the minister will be recommending changes to the ESA that will mirror what is in Bill 143 or not.

In preparing to discuss this bill, I was also reminded that the Minister of Labour amended the Employment Standards Act with respect to temporary employees as recently as 2014 by passing Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act.

The question for consideration before we vote today should be: Since Bill 18 only received royal assent on November 20, 2014, has enough time passed that the members of this Legislature can accurately assess what the impacts on working conditions have been for temporary employees? Of course, I am aware that there have been a number of media stories in recent months about the experiences of individuals who have been working as temporary employees. I do believe that there's a need to look at employment practices in Ontario.

Before having the privilege of coming to Queen's Park as the member of Parliament for Sarnia–Lambton, I've had the good fortune of working almost my entire career for the same employer. I realize that not everyone has had that luxury. In fact, just earlier this year, I finally retired from NOVA Chemicals in Sarnia–Lambton after 37 years of service.

I understand the desire of individuals to be hired on as full-time, permanent employees. There's a sense of security and achievement that comes with that designation, and I certainly had the privilege of enjoying that. From my time at NOVA and working in Sarnia–Lambton's petrochemical industry, I also understand why companies utilize staffing services or temporary help businesses.

A recent study of this subject by the Montreal Economic Institute cites a poll of employers on why they use staffing agencies to meet employment needs. Their responses were as follows: 52%, unexpected growth; 47%, unexpected and long-term absences; 47%, to bridge to a permanent replacement; 36%, for special projects; 28%, seasonal rushes; and 21% for the pre-selection of candidates.

These numbers indicate that businesses are using temporary help agencies as a short-term solution to remain competitive and adapt to the rapid pace of change in our economy. Of course, as with any industry, there are going to be a few bad apples in any group. Bill 143 may address the issue of the fly-by-night staffing agencies that are taking advantage of workers. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, some workers may find themselves to be too intimidated, worried about losing a much-needed job, or just unaware of their rights under the ESA to speak out.

Again, I would like to hear the Minister of Labour's comments on the ESA in its current version and if he or his ministry think it needs to be amended further so that there aren't rogue agencies taking advantage of vulnerable workers.

In my own riding, I know that we have a number of staffing agencies that operate with the highest standards of integrity and respect for workers. I had the opportunity, as I said, in my former employment with NOVA Chemicals, of working with a number of those agencies where we placed temporary staff. They reported through me and other individuals within the company, and those companies provided excellent staff. They screened them before they came to us and they looked after their timekeeping and payroll.

I was very satisfied with the work that they put out and I know that my company, NOVA Chemicals, was as well because they still continue to this day to employ those people and those companies that provide those people. Some people have been there—they're the next thing to full-time employees, they've been there that long. They enjoy many of those benefits that full-time employees do.

Mr. Speaker, my office participates annually in a pay-it-forward program that is organized by one of the local firms, Express Employment Professionals, that helps to place local workers with business during the busy holiday season.

I would like to see that same standard of professionalism advanced across the province, maybe led by MPPs' offices or federal members of Parliament's offices, where when we have people take vacation, or because of workload—Christmas cards at Christmas etc.—we would give these employees, these temporary help people, an opportunity to come to work in a provincial, federal or municipal office and give them an opportunity to experience some type of work where they would have the opportunity to actually use those skills.

I've been very satisfied. One of my EAs, Michelle Roe in my office, administers that for me every year. We're very happy with the people and the calibre of the people they advance to us.

I would like to say in conclusion that I believe the issue that Bill 143 is attempting to address is one that the members of this Legislature should certainly take a closer look at. I've always believed that along with family, a good job—and with it, a sense of belonging—is the best foundation for a person to build a life around. Full-time, permanent employment is the standard that we all want to achieve. How many of us in this Legislature have fielded calls from parents or grandparents in our riding concerned about the lack of availability of good jobs for their children or grandchildren? I know I hear about it on an ongoing basis.

Working conditions in this province are changing. Part of that has to do with changes in our economy, part of that has to do with government policy and its impact on employment in Ontario, and part of it has to do with the

emerging sectors of our economy and the demand for workers. I'm certainly looking forward to seeing the final copy of the Minister of Labour's Changing Workplaces Review to get a better understanding of how this government will form these policies moving forward.

Bill 143 addresses an issue that's certainly going to be covered by the Changing Workplaces Review. If this bill passes today and goes to committee, I would like to see a very thorough examination of the bill by that committee. I would also like to see the possibility of the Ministry of Labour and the member from Brampton–Springdale working closely together to coordinate their efforts so that members of this Legislature from all three sides, along with many workers and employment agency stakeholders in Ontario, have a clearer understanding of this government's policy direction on staffing services and temporary workers' rights.

I'd like to applaud the member from Brampton–Springdale for bringing this legislation forward. I think it's a good example of this Legislature—all afternoon, we've been debating different bills. I think it's what makes this Legislature so unique: that on Thursday afternoons, we have private members' bills on anything from licensing to labour issues. I think that's what makes this a stronger and better Legislature, when our private members are able to debate their private members' issues that have come up in their ridings and bring them forward.

This clarity will be of benefit to everyone when we do address this bill. On that, I look forward to the rest of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I am honoured to join in the debate. I want to begin by saying, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Brampton–Springdale that I commend her for bringing forward a bill that addresses a very important topic. I want to thank her for doing that and I invite everyone to give her a round of applause for bringing forward this bill.

Applause.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It's an important topic and, as the member who brought the bill forward knows, it's one of the major issues impacting people in our ridings and in our region. The region of Peel and Brampton specifically are hard hit by precarious work. It's an issue that impacts people across the GTA. In fact, it's something that's Ontario-wide.

It's an issue where we are finding increasingly that people cannot get full-time employment. People are struggling to find full-time jobs and instead have to rely on temporary job agencies.

The agency was designed initially—the idea behind it was that people needed to find employment, an employer needed to find people who were willing to work, and they connected the two. The idea was that you would work for a period of time with this company, through an agency, to eventually get a full-time job. But the reality is that people are working year after year through the same agency, working at the same job, but never getting a permanent position. This is unacceptable. This reality is all too true for many people in this province, and it is simply unacceptable that this is the condition.

But let's look at some of the history. How did this come to be?

While I commend the member for bringing this bill forward—and I know the member is a new member—it is under this government that this industry has seen some of the most tremendous growth. What I mean by that is this: Ten years ago, if you look at the number of temporary job agencies that existed in this province when this government took office in 2003, you'll see that they ballooned exponentially. Right now, as of December 2015, there are over 1,045 temporary work agencies in this province as a result of this government's policies.

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In fact, Sara Mojtehedzadeh reports in a newspaper article on May 10, 2015, "The province's employment services sector earned $5.7 billion in revenue in 2012, a near 72% jump from 2002." That's about 10 years. That's a 72% increase in profit. To continue the quote: "Temporary agencies account for an estimated 60% of that industry's total revenue." What that means is this colossal increase, this exponential growth in profit is directly as a result of this government's leadership over the past decade.

It's this government that has created the circumstances where people are struggling to get full-time employment. It's this government that has allowed for the proliferation of these temporary job agencies. It's this government that has created this plight in Ontario. While I commend the member for bringing forward the bill, it's this government's policies that have created the conditions that made her bill necessary in the first place. It's this government that has created the conditions in which people are now struggling to get full-time work in this province. It's this government that has created the problem, and I doubt that this government can find the solution.

Now, if you look at the reality of temporary employment, one of the realities is that temporary and precarious employment means that people are going to earn less. That's a reality. When you earn less, you're more likely to fall into poverty. That's just one of the many negative impacts of precarious employment. So one of them is that people who don't have full-time work, people who have precarious employment are more likely going to fall into poverty, are more likely struggling to make ends meet.

In addition to that, there are far greater implications, far worse implications. Not only do you suffer poverty, which is one of the worst things, but people have less engagement in society. People are less likely to be engaged in civics. According to the United Way and McMaster report, people are even less likely to want to attend parent-teacher conferences because having employment, having a job gives you a sense of self-worth. Without having permanent employment, people feel that they don't have any value in society, so people are even less likely to engage in their civic responsibilities, their civic duties, and be able to assist in their child's upbringing, because they don't feel they have any sense

of value, any sense of worth. This is such a pernicious problem and has such a devastating impact on our society that we really need to look at its severe impact to understand how important it is for us to address it.

Now, an issue has come up about the reality that the temporary workers have to face. The circumstances are such that if you work in a precarious employment position, if you work through a temporary agency, often the agency can take a huge portion of what you're earning. A company may provide a salary of $20 an hour, which is a very livable salary, but the temporary agency can take up to 40% of that, sometimes even half of that, so you're left with just a minimum wage job. Now, putting in a condition that limits that is a great step, but why is it that the same worker working the exact same job, with the same level of experience, the same time on the job, whether they're permanent or temporary, should be paid any differently at all?

Why should it be the case that a temporary worker gets paid less than a permanent worker? Why shouldn't it be the case that the temporary work agency can take a finder's fee, can take a fee, but the fee is from the employer directly? It doesn't come out of the wage of the employee. Why does it have to come out of the wage of the employee? I think we need to think beyond this. Why is it the case that, under the current law, under this current government's regime, it's harder to employ someone in a permanent job position and it's easier to hire them through a temporary agency? Why is that the case? Shouldn't it be easier to hire someone permanently? Shouldn't it be easier to give someone a permanent job? Wouldn't we want to encourage that? That's not the case right now in Ontario.

Right now, in Ontario, if someone is working through an agency, you have to pay a penalty fee. The employer needs to pay a penalty fee to be able to hire that temporary worker. That's outrageous. The fact that that's the law in this province is outlandish. It's unacceptable. How could that exist, Mr. Speaker? This is simply unfair. This is unjust and it needs to end.

While we absolutely need to do something about the current plight, the current condition faced by temporary workers in this province, we also need to acknowledge that it's under this government that we've gotten to this point. We have to acknowledge that it's this government that's created these conditions. This government has created the laws which have allowed these temporary agencies to proliferate. It's this government that's created the conditions where this industry has enjoyed such colossal profits. They're only profiting because this government allowed them to do so. I don't blame the temporary job agencies as much as I blame the government that allowed these policies to exist. If there's a market that's available, people are going to move into that market and try to make some money. But if the government doesn't protect the workers, if the government doesn't stand up for workers' rights, then it's the government's responsibility to make sure that they stand up for those workers.

We've talked about some of the far-reaching impacts of precarious employment. The additional reality is that, right now, in this province, precarious work and temporary work is the new reality. It's the new norm. People are finding it harder and harder to find full-time employment, to the point that we consider precarious employment as the norm, that to get a job, you need to work through an agency.

We were talking this week about a very serious and sensitive topic, an issue around violence against women. One of the issues that's been raised by other people who have far more experience than I do in this field, but I want to also add my voice to it: The root causes of violence against women—many of those roots lie in the inequity and the imbalance of power. One of those issues is the inequities in pay and the disparity in terms of those who are able to access resources and those who cannot. Often it's women who face this unfairness more than men. If we want to address the power imbalance in society, we also have to factor in that precarious employment impacts racialized people and women far more than anyone else. If we really want to get at some of the root causes of this power imbalance, we have to address the reality that precarious employment is impacting racialized people and it impacts women. If we don't address it, it's women and racialized people who are going to suffer the brunt of this issue.

While work needs to be done—and again, I want to commend the member for bringing forward this bill—we also have to realize that there's a lot more that this government needs to do. I would have loved to have seen this as a government bill—to see that the government had some initiative behind this, that the government stands up for this issue. Though we see the member has definitely shown her interest, I'd like to see the government come forward and support a government bill to make sure that this change happens.

I'd like to see more widespread and sweeping reforms so that temporary agencies are curtailed and that we can see more permanent employment becoming the norm, and that it becomes easier to employ someone in a permanent fashion instead of the current circumstances.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have enjoyed my time. I, again, thank the member for bringing forward this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Before I begin, I want to introduce my new executive assistant, D.J. Bhat. He is new to government and he's here to watch the proceedings today to get a bit of a flavour of what we do here. So D.J., welcome.

Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to speak on this bill, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, Bill 143, with respect to temporary help agencies. I want to congratulate my colleague the member from Brampton–Springdale for bringing this very important bill in front of the House that affects so many of our constituents.

This issue is very near and dear to me because since I became an elected member of this House, I've been

working on this issue and our government's been working on this issue. In fact, this was one of my first acts as an MPP, bringing the issue forward from my riding. I remember sitting in a committee meeting. I was new; I didn't know how to approach the bureaucracy with respect to the different issues that come up. There were some people from the Ministry of Labour, and this was the first action I took as a government member with respect to the various issues and especially this one. This is a very, very important issue in my riding; in fact, not just in my riding but in the 905, the region of Peel area.

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Temporary agencies, I believe, are necessary, but ones that operate under the rules, and there are many good ones. Our government is not saying that temporary agencies should be banned, because we do need them for certain types of businesses. For example, I remember that when I was a teenager, that there was a company in my riding called Carlton Cards; I think the House and people watching can recall this name. They predominantly make greeting cards such as the Christmas cards we send each other at this time of the year.

Many people in my riding worked there. I know that some of my family and friends—my friends' mothers—worked there. It was a yearly thing, and they got paid well, they got benefits and they got all the things a regular full-time employee would get. Those are the types of temporary agencies or businesses which work under the temporary agency name that we need.

This becomes a problem when you have these fly-by-night operators that have not much more than a cellphone and a contact at a few companies, that all of a sudden call themselves temp agencies. As far as I'm concerned, a lot of their practices are questionable. Some of the bigger concerns with these people are that they at times do not pay even the legal minimum wage; don't pay for holidays, vacation or overtime; and you can't even talk about benefits when we're speaking about these people.

I feel so strongly against these types of people. I think it's so un-Canadian. That's not what we're known for across the world. We're known as people who look after one another, people who are compassionate and people who have a standard of living. We're a society that stands up to maintain that standard of living. This goes totally against what we as Canadians are all about.

These fly-by-night operators are literally pinning people against the wall financially, and it's definitely not right. We as a government take many initiatives to help people with a hand up, in terms of different types of benefits. We increased funding for health care and education; we increased the minimum wage so that people can have a sustainable standard of living. These folks do everything to go against that.

This bill brings two very important changes that I feel are needed. The first one is to ensure that temp employees receive at least 80% of what the temp agency receives from the employer. This is very important. In my experience, I rarely hear of temp agency employees earning a decent wage. Usually, it's right at the legal minimum wage mark, and this is not right. People are making incredible amounts of profit at the hands of these people, who often are new immigrants.

Immigrants come to this country for a better future. They don't have the time or resources to wait or to look for a job that pays them well—that's a permanent job. They take any job they can get, because they have pressures just like any other person. They have kids that are young, they have to pay for their education, they have to rent or buy a place and there are all kinds of bills to pay. So these people are sort of backed into a corner, and it creates a very unfortunate situation.

One small thing before I end is that I want to talk about the second aspect of this bill, which I think is very, very relevant in terms of tackling this problem. It is that no more than 25% of the total workforce can be temp workers. This is very important, because I have seen many, many companies who have totally transformed their workforce. What I mean by that is that they have taken the entire full-time workforce and have gotten rid of them and brought in totally new people, who obviously cost them less, but there's a bigger cost; that is an issue on its own. But they have totally replaced their entire staffs with temporary workers just for the sake of saving money.

I know the MPP from Mississauga–Springdale—

Interjection.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Mississauga–Erindale—I've taken a little bit of his time, and I apologize—I know that he has some very important remarks to make.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm hoping that we can get support from all sides of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to say that I think we had three very good bills today and we had a great discussion. I think nobody has a monopoly on ideas, and when the good bills come, we should all support them.

I'm going to talk about Bill 143, but I want to say something about Bill 152. I think Bill 152 is a very good bill. I had the opportunity to actually introduce the first trial on that. I think what this government is all about, what we should be all about, is providing good customer service, convenient to the people, and this bill does exactly that.

The other thing is, whenever you make any changes, there are always some challenges, but that's why you look at them in the first place and see that you can address them.

Talking about this bill, Mr. Speaker, there are three issues with this bill, or three main segments of this bill. One is that the temporary agencies need to be regulated. This bill does that.

The second thing this bill talks about is that fair wages should be paid to the people. This bill does that to a very large extent by saying that 80% of the wages that the temporary agencies charge to the employer should be paid to the employee. So it does that.

The third thing is the issue about what "temporary" is. We have seen that in some cases, the temporary workers

last for years and years. That is not temporary. That is actually permanent. What this bill does, is it takes into account the total number of hours worked in an organization, and the temporary workers should work only 25% in total.

Our government has done a lot. The law has been changed several times. My colleagues from Brampton–Springdale and from Brampton West have done a lot of work on this. I had introduced almost the same bill in the last Parliament. I really want to say congratulations to both the members from Brampton who have done a lot of work on this.

This bill is a good bill. What it does is, it basically puts a defence around the issues that are really bothering us. It is one thing to stand up in the House and criticize every time, but the other thing is to actually put some constructive suggestions that make some sense. I think today what we have seen is there are some good bills that have come forward, and this is one of those good bills. I think this needs to be supported.

I want to say I actually started in a temporary job when I came to Canada. That temporary job then became a permanent job and it gave me the experience that I needed to be successful in life. Then, for almost the next 20 years, I held very senior jobs in finance and in business, and that has helped me and has helped the economy.

What this bill does is strike a good balance between the employer's needs and the employee's needs. We need temporary agencies, but we also need to look after the interests of the business people. We understand that sometimes business people need flexibility. That's why this bill also gives an exemption to small business people whenever there's an increase in the workload of the business as well.

It's a good bill. It strikes a good balance. It addresses the issues that need to be addressed. The purpose of a bill is always to bring in and address the issues that are facing the community, and I'm very pleased that this bill does exactly that.

Temporary workers come in several forms: They are seasonal, they're casual, they're contract workers, and sometimes we call them by other names. The temporary help agencies also serve a very good purpose, because when new people come to this country, sometimes their experience doesn't get recognized and the temporary help agencies give them a chance to be employed and seek for them some employment. So they serve a good purpose.

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But, at the same time, what we want to make sure is that temporary workers are treated fairly and are treated the way our society wants to treat the people who actually work in our workforce. So it addresses all these issues.

I am very, very glad to support it and I'm very glad to support Bill 152, as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? I now return to the member from Brampton–Springdale—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's always good to speak in the House. I want to commend the member from Brampton–Springdale for bringing this forward. But really, really, I've been here—I'm in my ninth year now. This is the second time a bill like this has come forward. How long does it take, Mr. Speaker? Twelve years for a government to act on a pretty obvious problem in the employment field?

Let's just put this in perspective. This is against a background where only one out of 100 employers ever gets a visit from the Ministry of Labour—one in 100 ever gets seen. I have people complaining in my constituency office that they don't get paid. They just don't get paid. That's how bad it is in employment in Ontario. We have almost half of our workforce working in precarious contract, temporary work—almost half—and one employer in 100 ever sees an enforcement officer.

So, guess what? We're going to do the revolutionary act here of forcing a temporary agency to get a licence. Whoop-de-do. Really? They're going to hang a piece of paper on their wall. They're never going to see anyone from the Ministry of Labour, just like every other employer out there in Ontario, and this government is going to pretend that they've actually done something to address this problem.

So, yes, thank you, Brampton–Springdale, for bringing it forward. Would it be that the corner office and your cabinet would listen to you, because they're clearly not. That is the situation of employment in this province. It's horrendous. This is a thumb in the dam of the overflow of the nightmare of employment, and I guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, it won't make a difference.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Brampton–Springdale, you have two minutes.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Thank you to the member from Sarnia–Lambton for your remarks and the members from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Mississauga–Erindale, Brampton West and Parkdale–High Park.

We do understand the need, as the member from Sarnia–Lambton acknowledged, for a review. As you know, the ministry is undergoing a Changing Workplaces Review to continue to look at the bigger and more broader issues. This is a specific issue that I did want to bring light to. I do appreciate your comments.

As a former school board trustee, I completely understand where the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton is coming from and how the whole family unit is impacted by the socio-economic status of a family. I understand the need for secure employment. I understand the need for a stable income for families and for children to be healthy, and I respect that. That's why we need to have ways to protect our vulnerable workers and our communities that are most in need.

I want to thank my colleague from Mississauga–Erindale for his support through bringing this bill forward and the bill that he has brought forward in the past, as well as

my colleague from Brampton West. As he pointed out, newcomers are the people who are most affected by this.

My colleagues across the floor must understand that over the past decade many newcomers have entered the workforce and there have been many changes in the workforce, and we're trying to address those changes. This is just a start to addressing those changes, and our ministry will continue to work towards addressing those changes.

Unfortunately, although we may believe that the government alone controls the economy, the reality is that we don't. We are here to establish regulations to protect our citizens, and this is exactly what this bill does.

I want to thank everybody for speaking to my bill today and I look forward to your support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (CONTRAVENTIONS CAUSING DEATH OR SERIOUS BODILY HARM), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (CONTRAVENTIONS AYANT CAUSÉ UN DÉCÈS OU DES BLESSURES CORPORELLES GRAVES)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 9, standing in the name of Mr. Gates.

Mr. Gates has moved second reading of Bill 154, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to create an offence of contravention causing death or serious bodily harm.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—the member from Niagara Falls?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Legislative Assembly, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to Legislative Assembly. Agreed? Agreed.

CUTTING RED TAPE FOR MOTOR VEHICLE DEALERS ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 ALLÉGEANT LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES POUR LES COMMERÇANTS DE VÉHICULES AUTOMOBILES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Clark has moved second reading of Bill 152, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—the member from Leeds–Grenville?

Mr. Steve Clark: The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has referred the bill to Legislative Assembly. Agreed? Agreed.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT (TEMPORARY HELP AGENCIES), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI (AGENCES DE PLACEMENT TEMPORAIRE)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Malhi has moved second reading of Bill 143, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to temporary help agencies.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—the member from Brampton–Springdale?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Justice—social justice.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to—

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Justice policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): —to justice policy. Agreed? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT ACTION PLAN ACT (SUPPORTING SURVIVORS AND CHALLENGING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT), 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE PLAN D'ACTION CONTRE LA VIOLENCE ET LE HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS (EN SOUTIEN AUX SURVIVANTS ET EN OPPOSITION À LA VIOLENCE ET AU HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 2, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters / Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la violence

sexuelle, le harcèlement sexuel, la violence familiale et des questions connexes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I recognize the member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: When I left off yesterday, I was just about to turn to schedule 4 of Bill 132. That is the section of the act that deals with workplace sexual harassment.

The amendments that are set out in Bill 132 to deal with workplace sexual harassment are certainly welcome. However, one of the frustrations of many worker advocates is that there are already existing provisions to protect workers from workplace sexual harassment that have been, frankly, ignored. However, the new amendments that are proposed address some of the weaknesses in Bill 168. Members will recall that those were the amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act that were introduced in 2010 to add explicit reference to workplace violence and workplace harassment following the murders of Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont. Bill 168 clarified that workplace harassment is a hazard covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, but it did not explicitly require employers to take reasonable precautions to prevent harassment and to investigate complaints.

Currently, we have an Occupational Health and Safety Act in which the only thing that inspectors are empowered to do is to check to see if employers have a policy to address violence and harassment. Inspectors have no power, no authority to look at how effective the policy is: Is it a good policy? Will it actually protect workers? They also have no authority to order employers to investigate complaints properly, and to carry through on the results of the investigations. This is a big gap that we heard about frequently at the select committee.

Despite the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code, which already protects workers against sexual harassment, and despite the protections of Bill 168, we know that sexual harassment and violence is the reality in many workplaces across Ontario, which is why we have these amendments before us today.

Before I go into detail on schedule 4, I do want to read from the It's Never Okay action plan. On page 25 of the plan, it says that the government will be introducing legislation that would "include an obligation for employers to make every reasonable effort to protect workers from harassment, including sexual harassment, in the workplace." Unfortunately, however, schedule 4 does not include this obligation for employers. What it does include is a new definition of workplace sexual harassment which is added to the act, and that definition is similar to what is contained in the Human Rights Code. It also clarifies that workplace sexual harassment does fall within the existing definition of workplace harassment, just in case there was any confusion.

1640

As I indicated, under Bill 168, the obligation of employers to protect workers from workplace harassment and violence only applies to their having a program and a policy in place. They do not have the obligation to investigate and address complaints that arise. Bill 132 addresses this gap by requiring employers to investigate and address workplace harassment, including sexual harassment, and it also sets out a process that employers are supposed to use to deal with incidents or complaints of workplace harassment. Employers are required to take the following actions in order to protect workers from sexual harassment: They must investigate and address sexual harassment incidents and complaints; they must inform the parties in writing of the results of the investigation and the corrective actions taken; and they must review their workplace harassment program at least once a year to ensure that it adequately implements the policy they have.

I want to point out that the proposed amendments identify both incidents and complaints. This means that employers have an obligation to investigate not only when a worker complains, but also when the employer becomes aware of incidents of possible harassment. So it will be very important that employers and managers be trained in not only how to conduct an investigation, but also when to conduct an investigation.

One of the most important changes proposed in schedule 4 is the ability for inspectors to order an employer to retain an impartial third party, at the employer's expense, to conduct an investigation into alleged incidents of workplace harassment. The legislation is unclear right now on the circumstances that could trigger such an investigation, but some possible circumstances could include: an employer failing to do an investigation; an employer doing an inadequate or improper investigation; also, a Ministry of Labour blitz uncovering some problems within a workplace, in which case this power could be triggered, for an inspector to order an investigation.

There is no question that the Ministry of Labour will need to hire more inspectors to deal with these new provisions of the act. These new inspectors will also need comprehensive training so that they understand what workplace sexual harassment is, what the unique dynamics around sexual harassment in the workplace are; and also that they have the cultural competence training they would need in order to be able to investigate and enforce.

Speaker, there are a number of areas in this schedule of the act that we believe offer opportunities to strengthen and improve this legislation. Many of these issues were identified during the presentations that the select committee received.

First, as I indicated, the act does not include an obligation for employers to make every reasonable effort to protect workers from workplace harassment and sexual harassment. We would like to see the act amended so that it follows the model of Saskatchewan, which explicitly requires employers to prevent exposure to violence or harassment.

Second, there currently is no right in the schedule for workers to refuse work that exposes them to harassment. The current act does allow workers to refuse unsafe work

if they believe that workplace violence is likely to endanger them, but it is not extending this right to refuse unsafe work to conditions of sexual harassment. This is a particular concern for workplaces that tend to have higher levels of harassment, like the hospitality industry. We know of young women who work in bars, specifically, who may be frequently subject to sexual harassment and will not have the right to refuse work that exposes them to this kind of harassment. Many of these kinds of workplaces—the hospitality sector, for example—tend to employ a lot of low-wage, precarious workers who are particularly vulnerable because they feel that they have no option but to put up with the sexual harassment they're experiencing if they want to keep their job.

Another issue, Speaker, is that the amendments do not address the critical role of joint health and safety committees in addressing issues related to overall workplace culture. We believe that employers should be obligated to consult with the joint health and safety committee when they are developing their workplace harassment and sexual harassment policy, and they should also be required to notify joint health and safety committees of the incidents and complaints of workplace harassment that they investigate. This would be important so that the committees can make recommendations about ways that the employer can reduce exposure to violence and harassment in the workplace, and protections for workers can be improved.

Another issue: There's no requirement for employers to inform workers about customers, students, patients, clients etc. who may have a history of harassment in that particular workplace. Informing workers about this potential exposure would allow workers to take preventive action to protect themselves in advance. They could arrange to have a co-worker present with them when they have to work with this problem customer or client.

Another issue: The amendments do not include reprisal protections, so workers could be subject to discipline for making a complaint about harassment at work.

There is currently an exclusion under the Occupational Health and Safety Act for domestic workers. This is not addressed, again, in schedule 4. This is a problem, because we know that domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to harassment, sexual harassment and sexual violence. The 2010 expert panel review of Ontario's prevention system recommended already that the exclusion of domestic workers from the Occupational Health and Safety Act be addressed so that they receive that kind of coverage as well.

Another issue: Schedule 4 does not address the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, which does not allow WSIB claims for gradual onset psychological injuries due to chronic harassment, including sexual harassment. What it does allow is physical injuries. To discriminate against psychological injuries versus physical injuries has already been found to violate Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is a very significant omission. It violates the rights of workers to receive compensation for the injuries that they experience in their workplaces. Saskatchewan has already shown leadership in addressing this in its occupational health and safety legislation, and Ontario should do that, too.

A final issue, Speaker, concerns domestic violence in the workplace. This was the whole reason that the amendments in Bill 168 came forward in the first place. Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont were both workers who carried their domestic violence with them into their workplace. We know that domestic violence does not stay at home. It follows women into their workplaces and has a very significant impact on the workplace.

1650

There was a recent national research study that found over 40% of women who experience domestic violence at home talk about it, most often with a co-worker. They talk about it in their workplace. So there is a very important moment when a co-worker, if they are trained to recognize the signs of domestic violence, can intervene and refer that woman who is experiencing domestic violence at home to an appropriate support service or intervention.

Bill 168 requires employers to provide information about domestic violence in the workplace, but we know from the national study I just mentioned that there are fewer than a third of workplaces in Ontario that are actually providing this information, even though they're obligated to.

The Ontario government funded a really robust education tool for workplaces to use, to raise awareness about recognizing the signs of domestic violence—it's called Make It Our Business—but we heard during the select committee that only 1% of Ontario employers are accessing this training tool that was funded by the government to educate workplaces about how to recognize the signs of domestic violence. So we believe that schedule 4 should include a provision to make education of employers, managers, supervisors and employees about domestic violence mandatory in the workplace instead of voluntary. We see such an incredibly low rate of pickup of this voluntary program that we need to do something to get that education into Ontario workplaces.

Finally, there is a need—we would have liked to see in this legislation new provisions to allow victims of domestic violence to take paid leave. Again, the government of Manitoba has shown some leadership on this issue; Ontario should do the same.

The last schedule of the bill, schedule 6, amends the Residential Tenancies Act to shorten the time required to end a lease or tenancy agreement when there is sexual violence or domestic violence. This will make it easier for survivors to flee abuse. It will remove a barrier for people who feel trapped in a housing situation and feel they have no other choice but to stay in a potentially dangerous relationship. This is good. No question: We support it.

However, we need to remember that the housing needs of women fleeing sexual violence or domestic violence go far beyond being able to break their lease. They need access to affordable housing, emergency housing,

second-stage housing. They may have very limited income with which to pay for new rental accommodations: to pay the damage deposit, to pay first and last month's rent, to pay moving expenses. Many times in abusive relationships, the abuser controls the bank account, so the person who is being abused may not have access to credit cards or any kind of financial assets that she will need in order to start in a new housing situation.

Just this week, we saw the Toronto Board of Health pass an action plan on intimate partner violence. That plan urged the provincial government to provide capital and operational funding dedicated to increasing the availability of affordable housing, emergency housing and transitional supportive housing to those affected by intimate partner violence for exactly the reasons I just spoke about.

I want to just highlight several themes that run through all six schedules in this legislation. We saw that schedules 1, 2 and 6 make explicit reference to both sexual violence and domestic violence. I've already highlighted where domestic violence was not addressed in schedules 3, 4 and 5 but should have been. We heard over and over again at the select committee that the artificial separation between sexual violence and domestic violence has to stop. The consequences—the same guilt, fear and shame—are carried with the victim for years, whether it is sexual assault in an intimate partner relationship or whether it is a domestic violence relationship that involves sexual abuse.

We know that in cases reported to the police, 80% of sexual assault survivors knew their abusers. We also know that 38% of sexually assaulted women were assaulted by their husbands, common-law partners or boyfriends.

Regardless of these statistics, what we have seen over the last decade and a half is siloed funding for sexual violence and domestic violence that really limits the ability of community agencies to coordinate and integrate services on the ground. This must change, Speaker. We need to have a much more integrated and coordinated approach, more generally, across ministries.

Secondly—and this is an issue I have spoken about on numerous occasions—we need to look at other ways to hold perpetrators accountable for their violence. Currently, the only way we have to do that is through the justice system. But we know from statistics I shared already that most women do not report, so the abusers do not go through the justice system. Even when there is a conviction, we can't lock perpetrators up forever. So we need to find a way to change the abusive behaviours.

That's why programs like the Partner Assault Response Program are so important and why they must be a critical part of a sexual violence action plan. The Partner Assault Response Program is the only government-funded program designed to change abusive behaviours, and we have seen the Liberal government, basically, throw that program into chaos. Currently, the only way that abusers can access is it is through a court order. Abusers who don't like their abusive behaviour, who want to change, do not have a way to voluntarily participate in the program. We saw the government arbitrarily reduce the length of the program from 16 weeks to 12 weeks, which was completely contrary to all of the advice that they received from experts, from frontline agencies, from Partner Assault Response Program provider organizations, from community leaders across the sector. They all said to the government, "Don't do that." We need a full and comprehensive review of the Partner Assault Response Program so that there are differentiated responses depending on the level of risk of the perpetrator and so that it is available for voluntary access.

Speaker, we welcome the amendments in Bill 132, but we are going to be pushing for a much more integrated, much more coordinated response to violence against women, sexual violence and domestic violence in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Questions or comments?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: First, I want to thank the member from London West for her comments. I had an opportunity to listen to them today and yesterday. After working with the member on the select committee, I want to say that I know the member made a number of references to what we learned from our deputations during the select committee. I completely value the work that we did as a committee. I understand how hard it was. It was very traumatic for a lot of us. There were a lot of sensitivities involved.

As I said yesterday when we spoke to this, what we learned during our select committee will not be undervalued. We will be taking those considerations as we move forward. We will continue to take some of that feedback to look at this. We will use it as a piece of information that is going to help us shape this plan even further. We're open to advice, we're open to taking that advice, we're open to listening to what the committee heard and to looking at the committee's recommendations as they come out on December 10.

This legislation is focused on sexual violence and harassment, not as much on the domestic aspect of it. We are specifically focusing on the four items on sexual violence and harassment, so we want to continue to keep that focus throughout this, because this is what we outlined in our plan as we started in March, when we started It's Never Okay.

When it comes to housing, we understand that there are affordability concerns. We understand there are underlying concerns. But what this does is, it gets the survivor out of a situation where they're not safe. It provides them with safety and security, and it also provides them with confidentiality. That's why it's going to be effective for those people.

Once again, I will say that all of your comments are well-taken. We will respect the work of the select committee and we will move forward, looking at that work and helping it inform our decisions going forward. I want to thank you for your remarks.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Laurie Scott: It is a pleasure to comment on my colleague from London West, who also sat on the select committee with us. We spent many months listening to people, travelling some of the province. I know that she was able to do 40 minutes yesterday and 20 minutes today. That's hard to do, so well done—a lot of very, very valid points. She has been a great asset to our committee, listening to the details, her past background and bringing that forward.

I certainly do appreciate a lot of the suggestions she has made to change the existing piece of legislation that's here before us today, which is Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. She touched on so many subjects, but I will do a couple of things.

The community agencies: I mentioned yesterday in my comments about the community hubs, so that's one place for these survivors to go to, to be able to navigate the support systems that do exist there now. So an integrated system is, for sure, what we heard is needed; and there are best practices that are out there.

She's correct about the ministry silos and funding. We can do a much better job of that, so that the money flows faster to the survivor, which will help. Of course, we always want to help increase the resources from the government for the best use to the survivors.

I want to compliment her on her work on the Partner Assault Response Program. That is a program that we've heard a lot of positive things about. Right now, it's court-mandated, and the fact is that the government has, really, thrown that program into chaos by reducing it from 16 weeks to 12 weeks for a supposed wait-list that we can't even find proof existed. There are still vacancies for that program. But also what we heard is that a lot of men are willing to go into it. Right now, you can only get into it if you're court-mandated. So I think we should look at that program, because we do want to change abusive behaviour.

Thank you to the member for the select committee and your comments today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's a real honour to be able to respond to the comments by my colleague the member for London West. I had the honour, as well, to sit on the select committee with some of my colleagues. I learned so much. We were certainly touched and affected by what we heard from those very brave deputants who came before us to share their stories and, also, to offer us guidance and advice and counsel on how we can make this province a better place and a safer place for victims and survivors of sexual assault, sexual violence and harassment.

My colleague, I would say, is certainly a leader in terms of addressing this specific issue. She showed leadership; she continues to do so just in the fact she has explained this bill, the nuances, so effectively and offered, again, some suggestions.

Particularly, I'd like to point out the shortfalls when it comes to protections under the Employment Standards Act and under workplace safety provisions. It is, in effect, akin to us not applying those universal precautionary provisions that we do with all other workplace safety issues. We treat them as though we should be taking universal precautions and offer every legislative protection that we can to ensure workers do not get harmed when they go to work. We should look at sexual violence and sexual harassment in the workplace through the same lens and offer, again, those same types of protections and safeguards and supports to prevent that from happening.

We see leadership, as my colleague mentioned, from provinces like Saskatchewan, who have made that a provision under their workplace safety regime, where mental strain and disabilities are viewed as such. We also see leadership coming from Manitoba in similar regards. So there is a road map for us.

I'm really proud to have joined my colleagues, and I look forward to continuing to strengthen the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further questions or comments?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm very pleased to support Bill 132. It's a very important piece of legislation which sends a very strong message that sexual violence and harassment is unacceptable anywhere in the province of Ontario. The overall intent of the bill is to have safer campuses, safer housing and safer workplaces. Parents and students will be so pleased to know that they will have peace of mind, knowing that there are stand-alone sexual violence policies in place and there is information available when they need it.

Similarly, it's very important to have safe workplaces to increase productivity, have improved health of employees and improved health of the community at large.

Mr. Speaker, it's very, very important that the community knows that the government is working for them, and it is one of our government's commitments to stop sexual violence and harassment.

I'm very pleased to share with this House that the post-secondary sector applauds this policy and has support for the government. Similarly, all the workers and all the tenants have it.

I appreciate the perspective from the members from London West, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Brampton–Springdale and Essex. Having listened to their perspectives, what I would say is that this piece of legislation is very essential, it is vital and it's a building block for an equitable society. This is a change that we should all support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair now recognizes the member from London West for the wrap-up.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank the members for Brampton–Springdale, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Essex and Mississauga–Brampton South.

It is somewhat ironic to me that at the same time that we are talking about this legislation, Bill 132, which is no

doubt strong—it could be stronger, but as I said when I spoke to it yesterday, it's a good bill. However, we're dealing with it at the same time that the Partner Assault Response Program has been thrown into utter crisis. The Liberals are refusing to acknowledge the need for an integrated, coordinated approach that addresses both domestic violence and sexual violence.

The member for Brampton–Springdale talked about how the government wanted to totally separate domestic violence and sexual violence and only deal with sexual violence, but schedules 1, 2 and 6 deal with domestic violence. They recognize that domestic violence and sexual violence are very similar in terms of the impact on the survivor, the impact on the person who experiences these horrific crimes.

There are opportunities in the other sections of the act to do that same kind of integration—on the post-secondary side, schedules 3 and 5. We know that for post-secondary students, the majority of the sexual violence they experience on campus is in an intimate partner relationship. There should be provisions included in that bill to talk about intimate partner violence, not just sexual violence on campus.

I mentioned already the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Domestic violence is very present in workplaces in this province. We need to address that, too.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further debate?

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to share my time with the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the member from Beaches–East York and member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

First, let me recognize that this is a big problem. This is a big, hidden societal problem. I want to applaud the Premier for putting it on the front burner and making sure the government understands and everybody in this province understands that it's a big problem that is looking for a solution.

I also want to applaud the minister responsible for women's issues. She has worked long and hard in providing the leadership in her ministry to deliver, hopefully, some of the solutions to this problem.

I'm very fortunate that I was appointed to the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment; and through, I'd say, almost a year of working on the committee with members across the floor, I got valuable experience to travel across the province and listen to people from all sectors coming forward to tell us their stories. Sometimes it is unbelievable when they show you some of the stats. Now, we know what's happening on our campuses, what's happening in our workplaces, and that this bill is providing, if passed, some of the solutions. I think there is an urgency for the government to act on it.

1710

In my own riding of Trinity–Spadina, I visited a rape crisis centre and spoke to staff working there and they were telling me what's needed. What they were also telling me is that they were very happy that our government is actually looking into it and providing real action. They also mentioned our sex education in our schools is providing a big role to teach kids what's okay, what's not okay, and starting the culture of consent. I think that is very, very important.

I believe that this bill covers a very important area, which is safer campuses. It requires our universities and colleges to come up with policies, with the help of students, to deal with, for example, training, prevention, complaint procedures and response protocols. I think that's very, very forward-looking.

I remember when I was in university. One night—I think it was like 1 o'clock in the morning—I got a call from a good friend of mine and she said, "I'm in trouble. Could you please come and see me?" When I got there, there were a couple of other friends. Unfortunately, she was a victim of sexual assault. She didn't know what to do. There was no information provided to her. She was here in Canada alone by herself. I didn't know what to do because we were never taught how to deal with these kinds of situations. There was no policy; there was no reaction plan established at the time. So we called the police. The police showed up and they took their report. All we could do was just stand there and provide support. We've all seen how hurtful and how harmful this is to any young woman's life. Fortunately, she was able to recover and walk out of that terrible, terrible experience.

As a parent, I'm very pleased to see the action the government is taking, and also the social media, the new tools that are available to us. We know that it got tremendous hits across the world. Now we're seen as the world leader on dealing with sexual violence and harassment. So I'm very pleased to support this bill and I urge the members of this House all to come together and support this initiative, because we know these actions are badly needed and we need these actions right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm also pleased to join my colleagues the MPP for Trinity–Spadina, who spoke so eloquently, the MPP for Scarborough–Agincourt and the MPP for Beaches–East York, with whom I will be sharing my time on Bill 132, titled Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015.

Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree that over the past year, sexual assault and harassment have made headlines here in Ontario, in Canada and around the world. Public dialogue on this issue through mainstream and social media has elevated it to a level that far exceeds any point in our recent memory. I think the overwhelming message is that this behaviour has no place in our society and cannot be tolerated anymore.

This message was brought home to me in a really interesting way very recently. Like some of you in the Legislature, I like to watch Scandal. I don't know how many of you watch the show Scandal. It's something that I watch with my daughter. She's 17 years old, and that is our mother-daughter time together. We watch Scandal together. I always wait until the weekend and we watch it together.

Recently, in one of the episodes, my daughter said to me, "Mom, that's sexual assault." It just stopped me, because I thought that at her age, when I was 17, with that same scene on the TV show, I wouldn't have given it that connotation because I hadn't been socialized that way. It was so empowering to see my daughter at the age of 17 actually feel empowered enough and self-aware enough. She said to me, "No means no."

I think that message is getting through to our kids and I think we can take a lot of comfort in the fact that the message is getting out, but we must do more, and that's what this bill is about. This bill is about moving from the education part into the legislative framework to say that sexual harassment is never okay. It is in that spirit that I hope we can all support this bill.

In summary, what this bill tries to do is send a strong, positive message that asserts that sexual violence and sexual harassment are unacceptable everywhere, including workplaces. There is no limit to what we can achieve together. Building safer workplaces is a goal that I think we can all support. The legislative proposals would enhance employer requirements regarding workplace harassment programs and add specific new employer duties to protect workers from harassment in the workplace, including sexual harassment, and the duty to ensure that incidents and complaints are appropriately investigated.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this bill is really about showing leadership. I think it captures the essence of the ad that I think we've all seen and that has been such a successful educational tool, It's Never Okay. It really captures the spirit of what we're trying to do with this bill, which is that it is really never okay; sexual harassment is never okay.

I'm very pleased with and want to applaud the post-secondary sector, which has conveyed their support for these amendments and has already provided great leadership. We know that, if passed, this legislation would give many parents, including myself—my daughter is in grade 12 right now and will soon hopefully be off to university or college—peace of mind, knowing that stand-alone sexual violence policies are in place, help is on hand and information is readily available.

Thank you so much for your time. I'm pleased to share the rest of my time with my colleague MPP Potts.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair recognizes the member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm delighted to be able to stand in the House today and speak on behalf of my constituency on this bill, because as the minister just talked about, it is never okay.

I'm absolutely proud to be part of a government that has come forward with an action plan that is recognizing the severity of the issues that we are facing in society, in the workplace and on campuses, and dealing with them directly.

This is, in a sense, the next major frontier that we are addressing as a society. I'm absolutely delighted that we're trying to do it in a way that I'm seeing is so much less partisan—non-political—by engaging all members of the House in the select action committee to do the rounds across the province, hear from the stakeholders and get a better sense so we could come forward—and we've heard the member from Kitchener Centre—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: London West.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Sorry, you're London West. My apologies—London West, an unbelievably articulate, informed—I take such umbrage at the fact that you're understanding it in a way that, in a sense, I never will.

I come—I think I've said it before—from a labour relations background, HR. I have a master's degree from Queen's. I used to actually go into corporations and teach HR policies on a regular basis. I would often see, so typically, that the HR policies that were being presented at corporate levels were coming forward from women, women consultants. It often used to take people a bit aback that I, as a male, would be there, deciding these policies. It shouldn't have been, but that is part of the disconnect that we so often see.

As a male, I need as good a position to present and articulate a policy of why behaviour in the workplace is not okay. Men in workplaces who have come up and been acclimatized in an environment where they didn't recognize what they were doing was wrong; sometimes it's better to hear it from one of their own type.

1720

I had a lot of success going into corporations and was able to help them articulate a serious policy on sexual harassment in the workplace. That's what I want to focus on mostly in my remarks on this bill. I think it's very important that we're codifying, in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, behaviour which typically would have been in the purview of a corporate policy; basically, often viewed as way of protecting a corporation from civil litigation. It's the right thing to do in the workplace, but it wasn't codified in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, as it will be now.

I think this goes a long way to normalizing why sexual harassment policies are absolutely critical and not simply a sign of a good, progressive employer, but an absolute necessity for all employers. As you get into a workplace, to have a written policy for sexual harassment is as important as having one for safety. To have it recognized under the Occupational Health and Safety Act—where there are expectations, opportunities for investigations, and fines and enforcement—reinforces that message why this is absolutely necessary across the board for all organizations, a written policy that is well communicated.

As caucus members, we've recently had an opportunity to have an expert come in and talk us to about the kinds of behaviours that we should be concerned about in our own workplaces, be it our constituency office or amongst our fellows in committees and all of the members of this House. It was a very important discussion that we would be, again, acclimatized. I'd like to think that for most of us, because we are progressive, socially conscious people, it may not have been as necessary as it may be in other workplaces, but, having said that, it's a great reminder for all of us to take care.

Having a good communication policy around your written policy so people can go out in the workplace and understand that certain behaviours may seem all right to you but may not be well received by someone else was critically important. That takes place in the context of workplace training, as it does with safety.

As I said earlier, this is a bit of a frontier, not unlike the frontier we were at four years ago when we were combating racist policies in the workplace and in society in general. In a sense, when you see people marching down dark laneways in my community taking back the night to provide safety for women in our community—it's not unlike the kinds of demonstrations we saw from Rosa Parks in the Deep South, getting on a bus and refusing to move to the back of the bus—taking a stand to normalize what should be behaviour that we all accept as a matter of fundamental human respect for all of us, regardless of our gender, our sex, our colour, our religion, our creed. It's that measure of respect that I think is being codified back into this bill, which I'm extremely proud about.

I used to have the opportunity at Seneca College, while I was teaching students in the HRPA program before them becoming professionals—we would have a chance to discuss all these different pieces of legislation. Back then, I wouldn't have been able to talk about sexual harassment policy within the Occupational Health and Safety Act because it didn't exist, but it will be there now and it will be part of that indoctrination that students in the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario policy will be getting in good measure.

By taking away the two-year limitation—this is so important. I know that the police have some discretion, that they work with victims of sexual assault in order to say, "You're not 100% sure about what happened. You're not comfortable because it may have been someone you know. If you want, we can put a warning, a notice on their record, and if there's a repeating behaviour, we'll see this repeating record and it will trigger an action," which allows them to go back and lay charges two or three years later, which is important, so that there's some flexibility in how we respond to people who are victims of assault.

Keeping the opportunity for civil liability open longer is a healthy thing to do so that, as people have an opportunity, when they become more healthy, to deal with the issues affecting them, they then can come forward and take the appropriate measures.

With that, I will stop my remarks and leave it to my great friend from Scarborough–Agincourt to speak further on the subject.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair recognizes the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon in support of Bill 132. I heard my colleagues from Beaches–East York and Trinity–Spadina and the associate minister speak passionately about this bill.

Let me pay tribute to Minister MacCharles, the minister responsible for bringing this bill, as well as my colleague from Brampton-Springdale as her parliamentary assistant. At the end of the day, we need leadership to bring this kind of progressive legislation to this Legislature. I want to thank also our colleagues opposite in terms of participation on the select committee—they've done fabulous work and I'm looking forward to seeing their final report—as well as all the witnesses who came forward. I know they shared some very personal stories and they exhibited courage throughout their testimony.

There are six schedules for Bill 132. I want to highlight, specifically, schedule 3, because the associate minister talked about her own daughter, and other members have daughters right now who are recent graduates of universities or colleges or about to enter that particular post-secondary education, and I come from a riding in Scarborough–Agincourt with a number of keen, young students heading off to university very shortly. If this bill gets passed before the end of our session, it will have some meaningful effect on our young people.

Schedule 3 targets specifically amending the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act. It requires all colleges and universities to have a sexual violence policy. This policy cannot be developed without input from the students. This is critically important. This is a policy about students, so it's very important that the students have an active voice in this particular legislation.

More importantly, schedule 3 also requires every university and college to have disclosure of information: the number of incidents and complaints about sexual violence as well as reports by the students and information that's gathered need to be shared. We know that young students, when they are choosing different colleges and universities, will go the university website or the college website and they will be looking at different data before determining which college or which university to register at.

The other piece of the legislation is in respect to the regulations. Under section 9 of schedule 3, it does allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations with respect to sexual violence involving students. That way, different regulations can be introduced from time to time to reflect the needs of that community across our post-secondary school communities.

At the end of the day, this legislation, if passed, will ensure comprehensive delivery of the issue of sexual violence and harassment, both in the workplace and in post-secondary institutions. As a former nursing professor before I came here to the House—just recently I visited Humber College. I want to shout out to those students; I know they're getting ready for exams. This legislation is about them. I'm looking forward to when this legislation goes to second reading and we get some witnesses coming forward from different colleges and universities, and we hear their input, especially pertaining to schedule 3.

The other piece of the legislation is about ensuring some implementation, ensuring some educational awareness. The bill sets forth that, if this legislation is passed, it will take effect six months after royal assent, allowing

the minister to work with post-secondary institutions to have some education and awareness campaigns so that there will be transitional, informational and training pieces. At the end of the day, you don't want to pass legislation and put it into force the next day. I think this is a very, very important piece of legislation for protecting young people but also ensuring that our campuses are safe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Questions or comments?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I think four members spoke. I know, obviously, that the member from Scarborough–Agincourt just spoke, the member from Trinity–Spadina spoke, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care spoke, and the minister from—

Mr. Arthur Potts: Minister?

Interjection: Beaches–East York.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Oh, I'm promoting you. The member from Beaches–East York.

First of all, thank you all for speaking to Bill 132, the action plan that was introduced by the government. I appreciate the fact that some of the members were on the select committee and some subbed into the select committee at times. I appreciate their input and what they heard.

The bill encompasses a lot of pieces of legislation and many spoke to it. My former nursing colleague, as we were both nurses in our previous lives, certainly spoke about amending the act for training, colleges and universities, and having input from the students, and the training that's involved in building up a plan. I have to tell you that the colleges were right there—I think almost on the first or second day of hearings—with a comprehensive template for a plan for all of their colleges, and I thank them for that. The universities have certainly come on board. We've heard from colleges and universities, as well as their associations, before the committee, with their recommendations—and student involvement in all of them. We really appreciate that because we need to do a lot better on our college and university campuses.

1730

I know a lot has been said about the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and I think those are going to be positive steps. We're going to consult widely—I was assured when we went for the ministerial briefing—with businesses to make sure we all get on the same page and it's a co-operative arrangement in the training that needs to occur; the changes to define sexual harassment separately that this piece of legislation does affect.

Mr. Speaker, there are lots of pieces to this legislation. I'm happy the government brought it forward, and I'm happy that they're accepting some of our proposed amendments, in theory anyway, so far.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Questions or comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise, on behalf of the people I represent in London West, to make some comments on the remarks that were given to us by the members on the government side.

In particular, I wanted to focus on the comments from the member for Scarborough–Agincourt and also the member for Beaches–East York. Both of them, in their speeches, talked about the need for training. Certainly, on the post-secondary side, we know that there are going to be new obligations for post-secondary institutions to address incidents of sexual violence on campus but also to adequately support the victim. This is going to require training and also resources. I think it's very important that the new requirements that are set out in Bill 132 are properly resourced by the government—resources for implementation, but also resources to enable institutions to do the training that's necessary.

The member for Beaches–East York focused more on the Occupational Health and Safety Act amendments. I want to go back to what I said in my speech. We have to remember that Bill 168—the previous set of amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act—was introduced because of domestic violence that followed workers into the workplace. We need to introduce some amendments to schedule 4 in Bill 132 to recognize that domestic violence in the workplace has an impact on worker productivity, on worker health and on safety risks for other workers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair recognizes the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It really is an honour to rise to make some comments on Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Plan Act, and to comment on the remarks from the member from Trinity–Spadina, the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and the members from Beaches–East York, Scarborough–Agincourt, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and London West. And the member for London West certainly spoke very eloquently this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, as a son, as a husband, as the father of a young daughter, this is so incredibly important—and I'm truly honoured to be part of a body where all members of the Legislature have come together on this issue. This is not a political issue. This is a human issue about the women and men throughout Ontario and the support we're going to give them.

As the father of a young daughter, I look forward to the fact that she and her friends, male and female, as they grow up, will be inoculated, to an extent, to understand what is truly appropriate and inappropriate behaviour; to be able to identify when there is sexually improper language or conduct directed at them or their friends. That's going to make for a much healthier environment for them to learn in, to live in and work in. I think this shift in our society to really address this, to do it openly and honestly, and say that there is no tolerance for sexual harassment or assault in any venue, be it at home, at work, or at school.

This is a good thing. I think this will go down as one of the proudest moments of all members of this Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further questions and comments? The Chair recognizes the member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you very much, and may I say, Mr. Speaker, you look very good in that chair. I hope you don't take it in the wrong way, considering that we're colleagues and this is our workplace.

We're hearing a lot today about sexual violence and harassment and assault, and the discussion tends to be focused on women. I think that we recognize that it is a serious issue for women. Today we are recognizing and commemorating—I think December 6, actually, is the day that 14 women were murdered at École Polytechnique: engineering students, strong women, smart women, capable women, and they were gunned down for exactly those reasons. But there is a violence and harassment and assault against men, whether it's by other men, whether it's by women, whether it's employers, whether it's in class. They cannot be forgotten as well. They are victims as well.

As the member opposite just said, it's about—he used the word "inoculating," I believe—empowering our kids. When I look at the pages who are here working with us and working together, boys and girls, co-operating, and the way they sort of whisper and signal to each other to be co-operative, I think that this is actually one of the best training grounds for youth. If we could only get every student in Ontario to come down and do this program, wouldn't it be amazing for them?

I can just see the way you are respectful to each other, and at that age, so often—certainly when I was a kid—the girls would have been all sitting on one side and the boys on the other, and we wouldn't have been interacting as nicely as you are. So I really want to applaud you. I hope you're listening today to this discussion, because I think that this is something that—if you get to go back and talk to your classmates and your friends and your family about something that you learned in the Legislature, that you were able to understand, I think this is it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The wrap-up comments. The member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to do the final wrap-up on this particular round of debate. I want to thank the members from Trinity–Spadina, Beaches–East York, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, London West, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, and Thornhill. I want to thank all the members, because as the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore said earlier, this particular piece of legislation is for the entire province, regardless of gender.

I think the member from Thornhill hit it on the nail, because it's not just about women being sexually harassed and sexual violence against women. We heard last year, when we were doing pre-budget consultations, that some men have been sexually harassed and there was violence against them as well.

I know the member from London West's comment and concern about the whole issue of training—I want to refer to schedule 3, subsection (9), (d) and (e). They make reference to the fact that colleges and universities will require appropriate support services and accommodations. I think that whole issue about training and support is really critical. It's actually clearly stated in sections (d) and (e) of the proposed legislation.

I totally agree with her comments with regard to the whole issue of training and support, because as a former nurse—and my colleague opposite will know what I'm talking about—when you have a victim who has been traumatized, has been severely affected by a critical incident, immediate support is critical.

At the end of the day, I believe the proposed legislation is a first step, but follow-up to the legislation's programs and services must be there to support that victim, but also the support of family, whether it is classroom students or the peers amongst them.

I think this is very important legislation and I hope it gets to committee soon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further debate?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Right off the get-go, I'd like to indicate that I'm going to be sharing my time with the member from Thornhill.

Hon. James J. Bradley: You should get a question.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Well, certainly. The minister suggests I get a question—maybe on Monday.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to add my voice to Bill 132, the sexual harassment plan, 2015. This is a very important topic we are discussing, one that impacts every riding and community in our great province.

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In my riding, there are a number of very important resources in the community for survivors of sexual violence and harassment. I would like to begin my comments today by recognizing the tremendous impact they make in our community. Organizations such as the Family Counselling Centre, the Sexual Assault Survivors' Centre, Victim Services of Sarnia-Lambton, Family Law Education for Women, the Assaulted Women's Helpline, the Ontario Network for Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres, our police service, and the Women's Interval Home all play a very significant role in supporting survivors of sexual violence, but more can be done.

Recently in Sarnia, there was a very high-profile murder trial that dealt with these very issues of sexual violence and harassment and establishing safety for survivors. What transpired in Sarnia should never have happened. I support any work by this Legislature, by any member, to try to address these issues head-on.

As such, I would like to thank the minister responsible for women's issues for introducing Bill 132. This bill is a step in the right direction for our government and our province and reflective of the very important work that the Legislature has been doing on the issue of sexual violence and harassment.

I would like to take the time to recognize all the members of this Legislature and support staff who sat as members of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment this past spring as it travelled around the province, discussing the very subject of this bill.

I would also like to pay special tribute to my colleague the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, who moved an opposition day motion in this Legislature on November 26, 2014, calling on this Legislature to establish a select committee to travel the province and study the issue of sexual violence and harassment. That motion was, of course, debated and carried unanimously, which led to the great work that this committee completed earlier this year.

I had the opportunity and privilege to sit on this committee as it travelled to southwestern Ontario and held meetings in Windsor. I learned a lot about sexual violence and harassment and many of the contributing factors from my time on that committee. Even before the committee sat, I was confronted with the realization that the issue is far more widespread than one might assume. The briefing package that the Committee Clerk sent over in advance of the meeting in Windsor referenced dozens of media stories from around that time, detailing various accusations of sexual assault and charges brought against individuals—some, I might add, in professional positions in the very communities that the committee was visiting.

One of the primary topics of discussion at the committee hearings was the emerging issue of human trafficking in Ontario. Human trafficking, often described as a form of modern-day slavery, is a violation of human rights and affects men, women and children. It is a very unique crime in that the commodity, the victim, can be trafficked over and over again over many years.

This province, I'm ashamed to say, is home to the largest number of domestic human trafficking cases, where victims are born and raised right here in Ontario. These victims are manipulated by their traffickers and removed from their normal life. We always think of people who are victims of this sexual slavery as probably being new immigrants or people new to this country, but a number of them are born and raised here—second and third generation.

Typically, by forcing victims to perform sexual services, traffickers earn between $500 and $1,000 per day, keeping all of those proceeds. Victims of human trafficking often suffer physical or psychological abuse and live and work in horrific conditions. They may also face fatal consequences if they attempt to escape.

According to the RCMP, 11 police agencies in Ontario collectively laid human trafficking-specific charges in 78 cases between 2007 and 2014. The majority of these cases, of course, were from the greater Toronto area, the GTA: approximately 75%; in the Golden Horseshoe, 15%. Peel region and the city of Toronto are the most common regions within the GTA to which victims were moved. Unlike the fight to combat child exploitation and gang violence, there is no coordinated, provincially funded network of officers, prosecutors and courtrooms dedicated exclusively to combat human trafficking.

No local statistics are currently available regarding the prevalence of human trafficking activities in Sarnia–Lambton, but anecdotal evidence collected by local agencies like the Sarnia police and the Sarnia-Lambton Committee Against the Trafficking of Women and Children show that this is happening locally. The Sarnia Police Service has taken proactive measures and already has officers on the force trained to identify the signs of someone who may be involved in this growing problem.

We spend a lot of time, Mr. Speaker, in this Legislature discussing issues that, while important, pale in comparison to the seriousness of the growth of something as reprehensible as human trafficking in our province.

I was looking through my records in my riding recently and found a statement that I made in this House in 2010 on a local group from my community that was rallying to draw awareness to this issue. I certainly hope that as we are discussing this issue today, in another five years, we will have perhaps erased this scourge and this shameful practice, educated the public and stopped this sort of practice from happening in the first place.

As such, I look forward to the recommendations from the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, which will be reporting on December 10.

I know that our caucus, as well as the third party, has a number of amendments that we would like to see included in the bill in some form. I'm sure that, as I say, the third party also has amendments that could improve this legislation.

Part of the bill will require universities to seek student input on policy development as we try to institute programs at universities and educational institutions. As the minister noted in her comments, campus life is supposed to be a special and enjoyed occasion in a student's life. It shouldn't be spent in fear or apprehension.

Bill 132 will also amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include a definition of "workplace sexual harassment." It will require employers to address all complaints of workplace harassment, including sexual harassment, and make reasonable efforts to ensure that the workplace is harassment-free at all times. It would amend the Private Career Colleges Act to make sure that these organizations also create a sexual violence policy.

Finally, Bill 132 will also amend the Residential Tenancies Act to shorten the notice period to 28 days to terminate a lease where the tenant or a child with whom the tenant resides is fleeing domestic or sexual violence.

Again, I commend the minister for the changes that have been included in Bill 132 to the various pieces of legislation. As the bill passes through various stages, I believe there are many amendments that can be made to bolster and make an impact on this legislation.

First and foremost, I believe that this government should move to implement the motion put forward by the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock to form a provincial anti-human trafficking task force. As I mentioned earlier, the issue of human trafficking is one that has been growing in our communities for the last number of years. In my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, the Sarnia Police Service has already trained officers to better recognize the signs of human trafficking. Furthermore, the Sarnia-Lambton Committee Against the

Trafficking of Women and Children has held a number of conferences to help raise awareness of the presence of this issue in our community.

Right now, statistics on the prevalence of human trafficking are hard to come by because the signs aren't always clear. Police interacting with individuals involved with human trafficking may focus charges on many of the activities that go along with human trafficking, such as assaults, weapons charges or drug trafficking.

However, at the select committee hearings earlier this year, the committee heard ample testimony about the violent and often hidden reality of human trafficking in Ontario. Legal Assistance of Windsor presented testimony—and I'll just go over a little bit of it—about how the web of human trafficking is everywhere. This is included on page 11 of the interim report:

"She was recruited by a friend over Facebook at 16 years old. She was told by a girlfriend that she had met in a group home that the girl's boyfriend's friend liked her pictures and that he wanted to meet her. After texts and phone calls with the young man, she agreed to meet him. For over two months, she was forced to prostitute in cities across our province and service between seven and 10 men a day...."

It is truly disturbing to know that this is happening across Ontario as we speak here today. Something needs to be done, and I believe the amendments in this bill support the work, and they're a great place to start. We need to establish a human trafficking advisory committee and a help line, enact legislative changes to protect victims of human trafficking and create a task force to address trafficking, as put forward by MPP Laurie Scott.

Moreover, the PC caucus would like to see the government adopt an amendment that would restore the Partner Assault Response Program back to a 16-week model and provide more funding to eliminate the wait-lists for PAR.

PAR aims to help offenders take responsibility and ownership of their behaviour. The program aims at improving victim safety. Unfortunately, the government made the decision to cut the length of this program from 16 weeks to 12 because of the current backlog of offenders on the wait-list. Many involved with the program are concerned that the changes will serve to water down the program, effectively putting victims of sexual violence at greater risk rather than increasing their safety. Our caucus would like to see this changed.

1750

In addition, my caucus colleagues also mentioned the need for the government to look at what can be done to better monitor high-risk offenders from further victimizing the survivors of sexual violence and harassment. The stats say that Ontario's 800 probation and parole officers deal with over 51,000 offenders. Simple math says that this is 64 parolees for each officer, and it's not tenable. The government needs to review whether it is reasonable to expect one officer to manage that number of individuals, especially if they have a high number of high-risk individuals on their caseload.

If the government is going to convince survivors of sexual violence and harassment to come forward and tell their stories so that offenders can be held accountable, then this government needs to do more to ensure that survivors can be protected from their attackers when they are released from custody. My caucus colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has introduced Bill 130, An Act to amend the Ministry of Correctional Services Act in respect of parole, in order to address shortfalls in the way the government currently allocates resources to monitor high-risk offenders. Bill 130 should be passed by this government.

In conclusion, Bill 132 is a good start by this government, and I commend the minister for bringing this legislation forward, but there are additional improvements that can be made and should be made to further protect Ontarians from sexual violence and harassment. I hope that the government will be open to suggestions from the opposition and those by the third party, especially those brought forward by our critic for women's issues, the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. She has done a tremendous amount of work on these issues, as all members of this committee have, and has many good ideas that could be incorporated into Bill 132 at the committee stage.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair recognizes the member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. I just want to mention, once again, that today we are commemorating violence against women because December 6 is the anniversary of 14 women who were murdered at École Polytechnique just because they were women. This year it's the 26th anniversary. It sometimes gets harder to commemorate, but for those of us from Montreal—I remember it well. It was just before I moved here, and it's still a troublesome memory for me.

I'm going to tell a little story here that was printed in the Toronto Star on November 7, 2014. Deborah was a 39-year-old single mother. She took a job tending a bar in Ajax. It wasn't long before the 66-year-old owner began to express a romantic interest in her and asking her out on dates and commenting about her looks and her dress and touching her and making suggestive and—I guess "lewd advances" to her would be the correct term.

It's hard to understand how people can feel comfortable treating another human being this way. We are all, after all, human beings. It doesn't matter our gender; it doesn't matter our age, what sexual orientation we have, what culture, what background, where we were born, what languages we speak. We are all human beings, and sometimes I think that people have more respect for animals in our society than they do for fellow human beings.

It's very disheartening when you hear stories of people who say they don't want to take public transit because they've had such bad experiences. I've had a few bad

experiences myself on public transit, and I'm very cautious and very alert and often not that comfortable, to tell you the truth. But we do want to encourage the public to take public transit and we cannot see the results that we need if people aren't comfortable.

We too often ignore that there's a relationship between sexual harassment—maybe it starts with just a little bullying and teasing, and escalates. It's often in a grey zone of what some people would call fun. I don't want people to be overly sensitive. I don't think I'm an overly sensitive person. I can certainly handle some jokes, but I think that there is a line that too often is crossed. If we ignore sexual harassment—and that's something that we really didn't touch on this afternoon. If we ignore, things can escalate, just as we hear oftentimes that people who have murdered a human being have killed animals. So we must recognize that we have to condition our children from an early age; we have to make them aware. We have to ensure that newcomers to our country, to our society, are aware of our values and that everyone feels comfortable—not just to go on public transit, but to say something if they've had a bad experience.

We can't make everybody comfortable everywhere. There are going to be people who are not going to necessarily follow the rules. We can pass laws, we can pass legislation here in the House, but unfortunately, too often people do not recognize the importance of the laws, they might not even be aware of the laws, and maybe they don't have the strong enough ethics and moral fibre to uphold the laws.

We cannot ensure, as I said, that these incidents don't happen, but it's for us to ensure not just that the victims are comfortable to go to police—because that's really the end of the line—but that people feel comfortable to turn to the perpetrator and say, no. And too often, people do not. We say afterwards—as we've all experienced times where somebody was difficult to us or we felt pressured or bullied somehow—when we're in our car or later at night, we say, "Oh, I should have said this. I have such a great comeback," after the fact. But when you're in that emotional turmoil, that heated situation, it's very hard to have that comeback.

Maybe we have to teach our kids when they're young, at home, at school, to say no. Even if they say no to their parents sometimes—I'm a parent; it's hard to accept when your child says no to you. But do you know what? I was always glad and I'm glad today when my kids stand up to me and say "No, I'm not doing that. I'm changing my course. I'm changing my job," and they stand up for themselves. Of course, initially, I find that a little difficult, but I know that I'm doing the right thing when my children are able to say no to their parents, say no to their friends, and maybe say no to their employers if they have to, and their colleagues and their teachers.

It's the end of the day, and we've heard a lot about sexual harassment and sexual violence, and I think that we do have support here in the House to ensure that there is very strong legislation, to ensure that everyone feels safe at school, at work, on our streets, on our public transit and, yes, we want people to be safe in their homes as well.

We want everyone to feel safe: women, men—no matter what your sexual orientation or identity may be. We want everyone to feel welcomed, to feel valued and to feel comfortable, and to be able to advocate for themselves. Because there aren't enough police officers, there aren't enough counsellors, there aren't enough legislators to take care of everybody on a one-to-one basis. We have to ensure we're giving people the skills and the ability to deal with some of the things themselves.

I'm just going to mention a very quick story, on a personal note: When I was in optometry school and I was graduating—I was only 22 years old—I was told by a professor who has since departed—he was a great professor, but let's just say that he was from another generation, or two or three or four. He said to me, "You know, I hope you don't get your hopes up too high and don't be too disappointed because I don't think many people are going to want to go to see a female optometrist. They'll prefer a male optometrist." Well, Mr. Speaker, if somebody would have hit me, it would have been easier to take. It was very hard to take. I have to credit my parents for raising me to be tough; I didn't get disheartened by his words. I remember seeing him at a reunion and saying, "Dr. Whatever, I have news for you: I'm one of the busiest from the graduating class."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and everybody have a safe ride home.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement pour exiger a cessation de l'utilisation du charbon pour produire de l'électricité dans les installations de production.

An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act / Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

An Act to strengthen and improve government by amending or repealing various Acts / Loi visant à renforcer et à améliorer la gestion publique en modifiant ou en abrogeant diverses lois.

An Act to amend the Condominium Act, 1998, to enact the Condominium Management Services Act, 2015

and to amend other Acts with respect to condominiums / Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur les condominiums, édictant la Loi de 2015 sur les services de gestion de condominiums et modifiant d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les condominiums.

An Act to amend the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2010 sur la protection des consommateurs d'énergie et la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

An Act respecting police record checks / Loi concernant les vérifications de dossiers de police.

An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act / Loi édictant la Loi de 2015 sur la représentation électorale, abrogeant la Loi de 2005 sur la représentation électorale et modifiant la Loi électorale, la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you. It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until December 7 at 10:30.

The House adjourned at 1802.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac
Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Whitby–Oshawa	

STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Jim McDonell, Eleanor McMahon
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Steve Clark
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Norm Miller
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment / Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère sexuel

Chair / Présidente: Daiene Vernile
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Sylvia Jones
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
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