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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 2 November 2026

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 2 novembre 2026

The House met at 1015.

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

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I rise this morning to congratulate all the elected and re-elected in last week's municipal elections. In particular, I would like to recognize two familiar faces from Queen's Park who will now serve their communities on city council: Jonathan Stathakos, who worked for the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction, was elected city councillor in Ward 9 in Hamilton; and Sukhman Sangha, who worked for the Minister of Transportation, made history in Brampton as the youngest regional councillor in Ward 9 and 10. I wish them success in this exciting new chapter of public service.

Close to home in Mississauga, I would like to congratulate the new mayor, Alvin Tedjo, and my friend Tom Ellard, a veteran, who was elected as our new councillor in Ward 2.

I also want to extend a heartfelt thank you to my friend the outgoing mayor, Carolyn Parrish, for her leadership, friendship and her productive partnership in delivering for Mississauga, from her leadership in reducing development charges, which set an example for the city across Ontario, to her work as a champion for the pier in Lakeview. I was deeply honoured to receive the key to the city of Mississauga from Carolyn. I will always treasure this honour and her friendship and everything we accomplished together.

Speaker, I look forward to working with the new and returning municipal partners to build a stronger Mississauga, a better future for families across Ontario.

COST OF LIVING

MPP Lisa Gretzky: It's deeply concerning that working people pay taxes, contribute to our economy, support charities and yet are forced to rely on food banks to feed their own families. Across Windsor West and communities throughout Ontario, families are being squeezed by rising grocery prices, unaffordable housing, higher utility bills and wages that simply aren't keeping up with the cost of living. At the same time, workers are facing layoffs, good-paying manufacturing jobs are disappearing and too many people are struggling to find secure, stable employment.

Speaker, let that reality sink in: People are working—sometimes multiple jobs—and still going hungry. This is Doug Ford's Ontario.

Food banks were never intended to become a must-have for employed people, but now they can't afford necessities. More working families are turning to food banks because their paycheques no longer cover the essentials. Nearly 18% of food bank clients report employment as their main source of income, compared to 12% in 2019. And behind every job loss is a family facing uncertainty; a mortgage or rent payment at risk, and a local business feeling the impact.

We need to protect good-paying jobs, strengthen our manufacturing sector, ensure wages keep pace with inflation and make housing and everyday necessities affordable. Workers in Windsor are facing a lot of uncertainty, and they need a Premier who will show up and fight like hell for their jobs, not a Premier who's excusing $120,000 in downtown Toronto hotel stays for his Toronto MPPs or a private luxury jet on the taxpayer dime.

Windsor families deserve so much better that.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: The past week in my riding of Don Valley West has been incredibly difficult, as we have experienced terrible acts of loss and tragedy.

In the Bridle Path neighbourhood, a father, mother and their two daughters were victims of a home invasion and armed robbery. Three were shot, and all four were assaulted with a weapon. I wish them the very best on their road to recovery and that the suspects are apprehended soon.

On October 29, a traffic agent in Thorncliffe Park was struck by a turning truck and pronounced dead at the scene. This is a painful reminder of the risks traffic agents across the province take every day to keep us safe.

These terrible incidents are life-changing in a horrible way. The family whose home was invaded will carry the memory of that night for the rest of their lives, and the loved ones of the traffic agent from Thorncliffe Park are grieving someone who went to work to keep others safe and did not come home. To all those who are shaken and heartbroken, we are deeply saddened and are keeping you and your loved ones in our thoughts.

OAKVILLE MEALS ON WHEELS

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Speaker, I rise today to recognize a remarkable milestone in my community: the 50th anniversary of Oakville Meals on Wheels. Established in 1976, the organization has spent five decades helping seniors and vulnerable residents remain independent while staying connected to the community they call home.

What began as an initiative of the Kiwanis Club of Oakville has grown into a trusted organization that delivers nutritious meals, care, connection and peace of mind. I had the opportunity to join volunteers during champions week and see first-hand the difference they make. For many residents, a meal delivery is also a wellness check, a friendly visit and an important connection to the community.

As they mark the 50th year, the organization has also celebrated the volunteers who make this service possible. It was an honour to recognize Ralph, Jill, Ellen, Christine and Julie through the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards. Their acts of service have touched countless lives across Oakville, with Julie marking an extraordinary 25 years of volunteer service.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Oakville Meals on Wheels on 50 years of service and thanking its staff and volunteers for the care and compassion they provide every day.

IRENE MATHYSSEN

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Speaker, I rise to recognize a formidable, principled and dedicated New Democrat who served her community with vigour, humility and grace. Irene Mathyssen served as an MPP and cabinet minister in this very chamber, as well as an MP in the House of Commons.

Known for her caring nature, quick wit and boundless energy, London reporters lovingly referred to her as the Energizer Bunny, because she simply never quit.

As an English teacher at Saunders and Banting, Irene inspired students and captured imaginations. As an elected official, she captured hearts, never backed down and always stood up for those who needed a voice. Although I never sat in her classroom, I learned from her courage, compassion and unwavering commitment to do what is right. Former colleagues and team members recall her fearlessness and her unshakable loyalty.

We lost Irene after her courageous battle with cancer. Our London community is mourning, with tributes pouring in from across the political spectrum. Irene was an icon and an inspiration.

To my friend, former MP Lindsay Mathyssen, and her father Keith: I hope the outpouring of love and stories of those Irene helped bring comfort to your broken hearts. We are fortunate to have known Irene, and you are especially lucky to have been loved so deeply by her. Lindsay, a piece of your mother lives through you and the example you set for all.

On behalf of official opposition leader Marit Stiles and our entire NDP caucus, rest peacefully, Irene. The world is smaller without you, but all the better because you were here.

Applause.

QUINTE BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: Last week, as part of Small Business Week in Bay of Quinte, we celebrated the 30th annual Quinte Business Achievement Awards, recognizing some of the very best businesses in our area. Congratulations to all of the 2026 Quinte Business Achievement Awards winners, including:

—congratulations to retail business of the year, Fawn Over Market;

—congratulations, hospitality business of the year, Barbacoa Boyz;

—congratulations, tourism business of the year, Black Bear Ridge;

—congratulations to regulated professions business of the year, Diamond Physiotherapy;

—congratulations to specialized services business of the year, Quinte Canine;

—congratulations to trades/construction services business of the year, Crozier Heating;

—congratulations to manufacturing business of the year, Chemelex;

—congratulations to the young entrepreneur of the year, Briana Godden;

—congratulations to new business of the year, Travelling Dental Hygienists;

—congratulations to not-for-profit business of the year, the Children's Safety Village;

—congratulations, tech sector business of the year, IAMSAR;

—congratulations to the business person of the year, Jamie Troke;

—congratulations to agribusiness of the year, the Campbell's Orchards;

—congratulations to health and wellness business of the year, The Studio PEC;

—congratulations to the sustainability award winner, Owl Grove Roses;

—congratulations to the trailblazer award winner, the Bunkie Co.; and

—congratulations to business excellence award winner, Kerr Sprinkler Systems.

Thank you all for the great work that you do in our community.

EVENTS IN SPADINA–FORT YORK

Mr. Chris Glover: All 124 members in this House have the incredible honour of serving every corner of this province, but it's pretty clear to the unbiased observer that the best riding is just down the street there, Spadina–Fort

York. I'll give you an example of all of the anniversaries that we're celebrating down there.

Jumblies Theatre is celebrating their 25th anniversary. I recommend, if you have trouble sleeping, to get involved in their experimental art program called La-la Land, which explores sleep.

Celebrating its 30th anniversary is the Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival, and the opening night movie is Ba's Book, by Ashley Duong; it recounts the escape of her father from Vietnam.

Also celebrating its 30th anniversary is the Contact Photography Festival and An Abundance of Plenty, by Thandiwe Muriu. It's just down the street here, at 460 King Street West. I recommend, if you can walk down there, to check out that Contact photography exhibit.

Celebrating its 100th anniversary, like all Legions across the country, is Legion 344 at Lake Shore Boulevard. I want to give a special shout-out to Mary Keates, who served as the vice-president and president of that Legion for over 30 years and has now passed the torch on to her daughter, Cassandra Anderton. I also want to give a shout-out to my favourite bartender there, Kent.

And celebrating its 150th anniversary is the Ontario College of Art and Design. Be sure to check out their GradEx in the spring.

MEAGHAN DUNN

PAUL MITTON

Mr. Will Bouma: Good morning, Speaker. I rise today to highlight the accomplishments of two outstanding members of the Brantford–Brant community: firefighter Meaghan Dunn and Captain Paul Mitton. Recently both brought home medals from the Firefighter Challenge World Championship held in Las Vegas a few weeks ago.

In Vegas, Meaghan Dunn delivered an extraordinary performance, earning five gold medals, topping a field consisting of firefighters from 21 countries. She also set a new world record by competing the FireFit obstacle course in a time of two minutes and 14 seconds. Meaghan's success represents years of dedication, discipline and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Also representing Brantford–Brant, Captain Paul Mitton won the gold medal in the tandem competition and bronze in a relay competition with other Canadian firefighters.

Speaker, competitions like these are not simply athletic events; they simulate the demanding physical tasks firefighters face when responding to emergencies and protecting our communities.

Meaghan and Paul, thank you for representing our community with such distinction, both in your service as firefighters and in your achievements on the national and international stage. Brantford–Brant is proud of you. Ontario is proud of you. Your accomplishments remind us that the strength of our community has always been found in the people that call it home.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Ric Bresee: Speaker, today I rise, like several of my colleagues, to offer my congratulations to all the newly elected municipal leaders and school board trustees across Hastings–Lennox and Addington. Some of them are stepping into these roles for the first time, while others have dedicated years, even decades, to serving their communities.

I want to recognize every candidate who put their name on the ballot. It takes a commitment and a genuine desire to make a difference to put yourself forward like that, knowing the time and hard work that comes with that public service.

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Regardless of the outcomes, I appreciate everyone who was willing to step up and contribute to building a better and more beautiful place to call home.

To the municipal leaders who have decided to retire this year: I want to thank them for their years of hard work, service and dedication. Their time and effort have helped shape their communities, and I hope that each and every one of them take pride in the difference that they've made.

Here in Hastings–Lennox and Addington, we have 19 different municipalities, each with its own unique charm, priorities and challenges. It's an honour to work alongside every one of those leaders, and I'm continually impressed by their commitment to finding solutions and doing what's best for the people they represent.

Speaker, strong communities are built by people who care enough to get involved and put the work in. I want to say thank you to each and every one of them.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members, we have with us in the Speaker's Gallery today Robert Delaney, who was appointed by the House as the new Ombudsman of Ontario. He is accompanied by his parents, Kieran and Jeanne Delaney, and his brother, Michael Delaney. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests to the Ontario Legislature.

We also have with us in the Speaker's Gallery today interns from the National Assembly of Quebec. They are here to learn about Ontario's Legislature and to meet with their counterparts in the Ontario Legislature Internship Programme. Bienvenue, et je vous souhaite une excellente visite.

And just in time for all the applause, joining us in the members' gallery: Tim Hudak, the member for Niagara South in the 36th Parliament; Erie–Lincoln in the 37th and 38th Parliaments; and Niagara West–Glanbrook in the 39th, 40th and 41st Parliaments. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It gives me great pleasure to introduce students from grades 6, 7 and 8 from the Annunciation of Our Lord Gryphon vocal ensemble.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Monica Ciriello: It is my pleasure to also welcome the Gryphon vocal ensemble and the students who reside in

my riding of Hamilton Mountain, their teachers and their families back for the second time to Queen's Park.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: It is my honour to welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and to Canada the new ambassador of Egypt, His Excellency Khaled Azmi; the commercial attaché, Sherif Erfan; accompanied by members of the Canada Egypt Business Council, Miranda Guirguis.

I would like also to welcome the Ontario Medical Association, OMA, who are visiting Queen's Park today, and particularly a new member to the team of the OMA joining them, my son Dr. David El Sabawy.

Hon. Zee Hamid: I would like to welcome industry leaders from FilmOntario: Cynthia Lynch, Jayson Mosek and Vanessa Steinmetz. Welcome to the House.

Ms. Marit Stiles: We are so pleased to welcome the Ontario Medical Association this morning, including president Dr. Rebecca Hicks, president-elect Dr. Haroon Yousuf, past president Dr. Zainab Abdurrahman, CEO Dr. Andrew Park and board chair Dr. Sharon Bal.

Thank you for joining us, and welcome to your House.

And if I may add one more thing, which is that we missed last week a very important birthday that was celebrated by the member from Humber River–Black Creek. He is now officially old. He is half a century; he is 50. Can you believe it?

Singing of Happy Birthday.

M^me^ Lucille Collard: I would like to wish a warm welcome to the director of the Kingsway Health Centre in Ottawa, and with the Ontario Medical Association, Dr. Alykhan Abdulla. Welcome to your House.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I would like to welcome and introduce to their House from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Chief Margaret Sault; councillors Jesse Herkimer, Jai King-Green, Leslie Maracle, Ashley Sault, Fawn Sault, Larry Sault, Erma Ferrell; as well as Haldimand county Mayor Shelley Ann Bentley. Thank you for coming today for the opening ceremony and reception for the display of Treaty 13 for Treaties Recognition Week 2026.

MPP Billy Denault: It is my pleasure to introduce Sabine Mersmann, president and CEO of Pembroke Regional Hospital—she's here with the Catholic Health Association of Ontario—an incredible advocate for hospital and health care in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I am really appreciative of the really great working relationship I have with her, so join me in welcoming her to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michelle Cooper: I am pleased to welcome Movember global CEO Andrew Little, co-founder Travis Garone and board chair Damien Angus, joining us from Australia, to kick off this year's Movember campaign. Thank you for your leadership in advancing men's mental health and suicide prevention around the world. We're delighted to have you here at Queen's Park.

Hon. Matthew Rae: Today, I'm pleased to introduce Priya Tandon, president of the Ontario Mining Association, and other mining industry leaders to Meet the Miners 2026 advocacy day. As we build the next generation of mines in Ontario, we're working with them to recognize the people and companies that make it happen. I invite all of the members of this place to join them at their reception at the MaRS institute later this evening, Speaker.

I also want to introduce Scott Taylor from McLean Taylor from my riding of Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Mortgage Professionals Canada: Dr. Kuljit Singh, chair of the board of directors; Veronica Love; Jasmine Toor; Sushanta Sen; Leigh Graham; and Mohinder Pal Singh. Thank you. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park the Early Childhood Community Development Centre. Welcome to Queen's Park; I'm looking forward to lunch.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I would like to welcome the Ontario Medical Association: Nikhil Agarwal, Dr. Travis Carpenter, Dr. Anne Fu, Dr. Kathryn Marsilio, Dr. Taryn Keenan and Bobby Hrehoruk who is also from the OMA. Bobby is a community and queer activist and a board member of The 519.

I also want to extend a welcome to the Mortgage Professionals Canada, Mohinder Pal Singh, Alan Ning and my friend Amontaye Mullings.

Hon. Mike Harris: I got some great news from the very good friend of the Legislature this weekend: Barbara Stevens welcomed her first grandson. We're very, very excited for you. Barbara, thank you for tuning in all the time and thank you for keeping us updated on what's going on with your family; it's much appreciated.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Unfortunately, that's all the time we have for introduction of visitors. You may come back at 1 o'clock.

This morning, in the public gallery, we are joined by grades 6, 7 and 8 students from the Annunciation of Our Lord Gryphon vocal ensemble in the riding of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas, who will perform O Canada and God Save the King. Please stand and join them in the singing of our national and royal anthems.

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

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

1040

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning, Speaker. This government is running the largest annual deficit in Ontario's history. A Premier who sells himself as a prudent fiscal manager, a deal maker, a big talker can't manage the change in his pocket, let alone a provincial economy. He has failed to save jobs, health care wait times are through the roof, classrooms are packed like sardines and the province is broke.

Never has a government spent so much and delivered so little for the people of Ontario. If this Premier is going to run historic deficits, I want to ask him: Can he at least

ensure that the people of Ontario are getting some kind of benefit?

Hon. Doug Ford: Well, welcome back. You know, I just can't believe what I'm hearing from the socialist NDP that wants to tax every single person until they don't have money left; who, along with their partners the Liberals, destroyed this province, taxed the people to death.

I'll tell you what we're doing. We're doing reducing taxes by $12 billion each and every single year. We've created one million new jobs as they jointly chased 300,000 jobs out of the province. We've seen over $236 billion of investment—and the reason? Because we've created the climate and the conditions to attract companies by $12 billion—but not just businesses; the people as well.

We eliminated the little licence sticker taxes—over a billion dollars. We eliminated the gas tax—over $3 billion. We've eliminated the tolls that they created.

God forbid—God forbid—they ever had power. They'd tax everyone. They'd tax the cars. They'd tax the tolls. They'd tax everything they could possibly get their hands on—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: This from a Premier and a government who voted against taking the tax off all our groceries. Imagine that.

Let's be very clear: The people of Ontario are not benefiting from better services. They are not benefiting from a thriving economy, because this government and this Premier have mismanaged things so very badly. The only people that are benefiting are his ministers, his developer buddies and himself.

The government is running a historic deficit so that this Premier can buy himself a luxury private jet; so that his ministers can go out and stay in luxury hotel rooms, while regular people are struggling just to put food on the table. Meanwhile, we have patients waiting in hallways for health care and he is firing nurses, Speaker.

So back to the Premier: Why are you handing fistfuls of taxpayer cash over to your friends while patients are stuck on gurneys in hallways?

Hon. Doug Ford: Let's go back in history a little bit. When we first got elected, we had a plan to balance—which we were there. And then, all of a sudden, the pandemic came upon us, and we fulfilled the needs of the people in Ontario. We kept businesses going. In the construction trades, over half a million people were still building, still creating more opportunities. We continued to see investment. They voted no to giving money to anyone.

So as we moved forward through the pandemic, we were on the path to balance, and sure enough, who comes along? President Trump, who tariffed us on every single area we could possibly do. But we committed, and we've already invested over $30 billion to support businesses, to support people, to support communities. They voted no.

So what I hear from you: "Don't support anyone." And God knows you can't support them, because you will never, ever support businesses or cut taxes for people—never. That's—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, let's look at facts. Let's look at today, shall we? This is a Conservative government that is projecting the biggest deficit in Ontario's history.

The NDP in Manitoba have kept their deficit to 0.5% of their nominal GDP—half of Ontario's. And they've done that while hiring thousands of new health care workers, creating a school lunch program, investing in major infrastructure projects, giving people in that province some kind of hope—something that we are sorely lacking in Ontario right now. No private jets, no backroom deals; just an honest NDP government working for the people.

Why is this Premier dumping a historic deficit on Ontarians while he and his ministers treat themselves to private jets and the public purse like it's his personal piggy bank?

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Was anyone around between 1990 and 1995? Do you remember what happened when the NDP were in power? They almost bankrupted this province. It's no surprise that they continue to focus on numbers that just don't add up.

Let's talk about the $3-billion deficit. I don't think, Madam Speaker, that they would have supported—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I apologize to the Minister of Finance.

I will ask members to come to order.

Back to the minister.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I ask members on both sides to come to order—members, including ministers, to come to order.

Back to the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I was saying, this government stood up through the pandemic. We spared no expense to protect lives. And now that our economy is being threatened, we are going to spare no expense to support those steelworkers, those auto workers and all the hard-working people of Ontario.

If they looked in the document—if they took one look—they would have seen that when we took over the economy, the GDP was about $870 billion. Fast-forward to today and it's about $1.3 trillion, Madam Speaker. So, we've seen over $400 billion of economic activity, and while Rome burns, they say, "Oh—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Just this morning, we learned that the Academy of Learning had thousands of OSAP applications coming in from just one single IP address. We also know that the ministry knew this. That means the minister knew this. The same institution was also flagged by the federal government and by Career Colleges Ontario

themselves—red flag after red flag after red flag, and no action from this minister or this government.

I want to ask the Premier: Why is he burying students in this province in debt to hide his own government's failure to manage OSAP?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I guess the Leader of the Opposition wasn't here last week when I clearly articulated we've done over 3,200 OSAP investigations since 2020, Speaker. But we found allegations of third parties completing course work on behalf of students, with some entire courses completed in a single day; final exams that were completed in as little as six minutes; supposed students who could not even identify the institution they attended, the program they enrolled into or the courses they were taking.

We're talking about serious, bad actors here, Speaker. That is why we referred it to the Ontario Provincial Police. That's why we brought in a third-party auditor, KPMG: because the individual inspections realized it was a widespread issue. That is why we have paused all OSAP across all private career colleges.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): A reminder: questions through the Speaker, responses through the Speaker and we do not reference whether someone is in the House or not.

Back to the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, in fact, I was here for every single one of those excuses that he rolled out last week, and they were inadequate and very disappointing.

This government pulled the rug out from under young people when they abruptly slashed OSAP, and they buried our next generation in debt.

The Premier has blamed sustainability. He blamed student fraud. I remember he pointed to TikToks and students who he said were buying expensive watches and cologne, for goodness' sake. It turns out, what he was trying to do was just hide his own government's incompetence again.

A small number of bad actors, private career colleges, are robbing OSAP blind under this government's watch. So I want to ask the Premier again: Enough is enough. When are you going to do the right thing and fire this minister?

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Hon. Nolan Quinn: Apologies. She was here last week; she just doesn't listen.

Speaker, these are serious, serious criminal acts. We're talking about bad actors here that have defrauded the Ontario taxpayer. We brought it forward to the Ontario Provincial Police because a series of bad actors have defrauded the sector.

Speaker, we did individual inspections and investigations, but once we realized that the problem was more widespread than was initially anticipated, we brought forward a third-party auditor and we froze OSAP to private institutions. We had to bring forward the third-party auditor, KPMG, with their enhanced forensic inspection tools, to be able to ensure that all taxpayer dollars are used wisely and they're used for their intended use, Speaker.

But we will not apologize for bringing forward the OPP, the Ontario Provincial Police, as well as the Auditor General to ensure that taxpayer dollars are used for their intended use.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, how many RCMP police investigations do there have to be for a government to admit that they have been incompetent, that they have mismanaged and that they are doing the wrong thing for Ontarians?

Ministers from this government were actually out there celebrating the opening of that particular private career college. I have a photo. I'm going to send it over to the minister and to the Premier after this question, because I think they need to be reminded of why it was that they were brushing this under the rug when they knew perfectly well that this private career college was probably defrauding the people of Ontario. They knew all along, and it's not surprising because hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations were flowing to ministers in this government from those same private career colleges.

The minister said that supporting our students was unsustainable. Do you know what's unsustainable? Keeping this minister who has turned a blind eye on this massive file. So over to the Premier: When are you going to fire this minister?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I'm wondering the same about the Leader of the Opposition and when they're going to fire her, because there's been a couple of elections and they haven't done so well.

Speaker, we're talking about bad actors here. The opposition can trivialize this all they want, but let's remember what happened. The bad actors took advantage of taxpayers. We did inspections; we did investigations. The system was working—a system that is designed to help students with their post-secondary education. But what we have uncovered here over the last two years is predatory and nothing short of criminal, and that is why we brought it forward to the Ontario Provincial Police and the Auditor General.

I need to ensure that I have confidence and assurance in taxpayer dollars flowing to students and going to their intended use, Speaker. Until I have assurances and confidence in the OSAP system—and that is why we're bringing forward legislation this session to bring forward more guardrails, to ensure we have confidence in the entire OSAP system, including at private institutions.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: My question is to the Premier. So, Saturday afternoon, we're in the Dollarama, and there are two kids in front of us. They're like seven and nine, boy and girl, and they're picking chocolate bars. They're pretty excited; it's Halloween. We start up a conversation with their mom. And then the mom says to me, in the middle of the conversation, "Do you remember me?" I didn't.

She says, "My name is Amiya. I was in the class that you visited at Algonquin Careers Academy. I'm studying to be a paralegal." I said, "How's it going?" She said, "Good. We're just waiting. If my OSAP loan doesn't come through, our year is lost."

My question for the Premier is, if it was the Premier in line instead of me, what would he have said to Amiya?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I would have mentioned to her how serious these criminal actions are and how the bad actors have defrauded the OSAP system. But I'm not surprised that the interim third party leader was not remembered by people he just visited. That's why I'm taking no advice from the third party. He doesn't even have confidence in himself to be the full-time leader. Half of that group is trying to be the leader, Speaker.

But let's get back to what we're focusing on here. There are bad actors that defrauded Ontario taxpayers, and that's why we have brought forward enhanced reviews, targeted inspections, and why we eliminated eligibility to certain OSAP career colleges. But we will not rest until we have confidence in the OSAP system, and that is why we're bringing forward legislation this session include more guardrails so that we have confidence and assurances in the OSAP system, so those bad actors can't continue to defraud the Ontario taxpayer.

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

Mr. John Fraser: Speaker, there are thousands and thousands and thousands of hard-working, honest people like Amiya. They have families. They took a risk.

What would the Premier have said to her? Would he have told her that he ignored the Auditor General's report, or that he gave $385 million to seven colleges in just one year—actually, $219 million to three campuses of one college—or would he have told her, "We ignored 220 warnings that came in 2024," or that 8,500 OSAP applications from those same three colleges came from one IP address?

The Premier is ripping the rug out from underneath honest, hard-working people like Amiya.

I'll give the Premier another chance. What would he like to say to Amiya right now?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Again, I won't expect the interim leader of the third party to understand how complex these investigations are. We go in for data; we do enhanced inspections. It sometimes take over a year to be able to gather the information that we need.

In late 2024, we had a growing concern with the amount of OSAP applications to career colleges; in January 2025, Career Colleges Ontario, a third-party agency, had the same concern our ministry officials did as well. In May 2025, the federal government finished their own investigation into private institutions and brought forward information to my ministry, which we took, and then we did enhanced inspections in the summer of July 2025. That's how complex these investigations are.

I don't put it past the leader of the third party to truly understand the complexity of the investigations that are needed. We can't pre-assume somebody is guilty before the investigation takes place. That is why we've done over 3,200 OSAP investigations since 2020.

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

Mr. John Fraser: Speaker, because the Premier can't explain this to Amiya, let's try to do it here.

In 2024-25, three Academy of Learning campuses got $219 million. And we know that from those same three campuses, 8,500 applications came from one IP address. That's 8,500 OSAP recipients who aren't likely real students. It was so obvious that it was advertised on Instagram. Red flags, Premier, don't get much bigger.

Here's the thing: Money continued to flow to these colleges, these bad actors, and money kept coming in to the PC Party every day. So, Amiya, here's why you didn't get your loan: It's because the Premier gave it away.

Speaker, one last time: Can the Premier have something to say to Amiya?

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

Hon. Doug Ford: First of all, Madam Speaker, I have to correct myself about when the Liberals were in power—the $10,000-a-seat dinner that they had was actually $25,000 a seat. That member was out selling $25,000 seats to have access to that member. That's what the fact is.

But let's go to the root cause of why we need private career colleges. Under their administration, they destroyed the health care system—$50 billion; we went up to $101 billion, hiring, registering 100,000 nurses, 20,000 doctors, building 50—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I apologize to the Premier.

The leader of the third party will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order.

Back to the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: I don't want to disturb the bagman for the Liberal Party.

Anyway, going back to what I was saying—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I will ask the member to—

Hon. Doug Ford: I retract. Thank you.

The colleges and universities—the reason we have them right now is to fill the gap, to make sure that they hire thousands and thousands of PSWs we have trained through private career colleges, because they didn't have anything back then—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Speaker, the Premier likes to remind people that he worked in his father's business, but any capable business person would have seen the abuse at

certain OSAP private career colleges for what it was and shut it down.

New court records show that at two Academy of Learning campuses last year, more than half of all OSAP applications came from a single Internet address. It's pretty clear that is fraud. The Minister of Colleges and Universities let the fraud continue. The Minister of Finance did nothing, and the Treasury Board president let the money flow.

Through you to the Premier: How much money have taxpayers lost because of this government's mismanagement?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I don't know how many times I need to say this: These are serious criminal allegations, with bad actors that have defrauded the Ontario taxpayers.

Let's talk about the incredible investments we did make: the $1.7 billion we invested this year in budget 2026 and 70,000 additional in-demand seats across the whole province. That includes 40,200 seats in STEM, 16,100 seats in health care programs, another 7,900 seats in education, as well as 3,800 seats in the trades, as well another 3,000 seats across other programs aligned to local priority needs.

Speaker, these aren't just numbers; these are teachers for our classrooms, nurses for our hospitals, engineers for our mines and more manufacturing for our factories. But the opposition doesn't want to speak about the investments we made, the historic $6.4-billion investment we made, or the 100,000 new seats we brought—

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

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Speaker, it's clear the minister doesn't want to talk about the hundreds of millions of dollars that taxpayers have lost because of his mismanagement.

He had warnings. The minister's own records include complaints that recruiters were filling out student applications and even doing their coursework.

In October 2024, the government told these campuses it was coming to inspect, but then it approved them for another full year of OSAP funding. It took them nearly 10 months to show up. No bank in this country would flag an account as suspicious and wait 10 months to look at it, all the while letting the cash keep flowing, but that's exactly what this government did with taxpayer money.

Speaker, the government knew about the suspicious activity. To the Premier: Why did your government keep the money flowing to campuses surrounded by suspicion?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Speaker, you can't make this up. She's literally reading the investigation from my ministry. That's why we brought forward a third-party auditor: because we realized that the system had widespread issues. The investigations and inspections that we did realized that we needed to bring in the third-party auditor so that we could have confidence and assurances that taxpayer dollars are going to their intended use.

Speaker, this is about the bad actors. If they want to make this about me, that is fine, but we will ensure we're focusing on the bad actors, and that's why we brought forward the Ontario Provincial Police to ensure that the bad actors are held accountable. And if these are predatory and nothing short of criminal, charges will be laid.

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

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Speaker, the minister knew. He's telling us right now he knew about these problems, but he kept the money flowing.

But they froze OSAP funding for thousands of students who did nothing wrong. Students at every private career college in Ontario have had their OSAP paused. They're worried about finishing their studies and struggling to pay their bills. Some are actually thinking about dropping out, and all this government will tell them is, "Just keep waiting."

Ontario students deserve to know when they will get their loan funding. They deserve to know when their funding is coming back.

Speaker, this government's actions are hurting students. So who is this government helping by letting the money keep flowing to these suspicious actors?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: It's interesting, Speaker, when the Liberals worry about affordability, but in their time in power, tuition went up twice the rate of inflation. If they were still in power, tuition would be over $15,000. We are the government that froze tuition and cut it by 10%. That is saving a billion dollars annually for college and university students across the province.

So when they talk a good talk about worrying about affordability, we need to look in the rearview mirror of that minivan to realize that they don't care about affordability. There's not one tax that they don't love to raise, Speaker, and it's well known across Ontario that the Liberals cannot be trusted. That is why they have been sitting in the third party ranks for the last two elections.

Speaker, this is about taxpayer dollars and ensuring that the bad actors are held accountable, and that is exactly what we're doing. We've brought it forward to the Ontario Provincial Police. Regardless of the hot air that's coming out over there, we will continue to ensure that this is—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier.

Late last week we learned that this government was not only ignoring warnings from Career Colleges Ontario and the federal government about suspected OSAP fraud at certain private career colleges; they were also ignoring tips from the public that were flooding in over two and a half years, and processing thousands of OSAP applications that came from a single IP address.

This is beyond incompetence, Speaker. It is negligence and an abuse of taxpayer dollars. What more does the Premier need to know before he fires his Minister of Colleges and Universities?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I'm not too sure how we've ignored the federal government when they reported to us in May 2025. And what did we do? We turned around and did enhanced, targeted inspections that summer, which led to multiple institutions having their OSAP eligibility completely withdrawn this year, Speaker.

To say we've ignored public tips—since 2020, we've done almost 3,300 inspections into OSAP usage across the province. We will continue to do inspections and investigations across the whole sector.

But once we realized it is more widespread, we brought in a third-party auditor, their forensic audit team, to ensure that we have confidence and assurances in taxpayer dollars. I will not flow another taxpayer dollar until I have confidence in the system and confidence that the bad actors have been held accountable, and ensuring that there's no more fraud in the system and it's going towards its intended use.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: This minister waited until February 2026, when he pulled the rug out from every college and university student in Ontario; then in October, upending the lives of career college students.

Again to the Premier: Speaker, no one has any confidence that this minister will do his job. He could have acted on the Auditor General's report in 2021. He could have acted on those hundreds of tips about suspected OSAP abuse. He could have cut off OSAP immediately at the private career colleges that were under suspicion. Instead, he has punished every student in Ontario for his own mismanagement. He has chosen to protect bad-actor career colleges by standing by while hundreds of millions of OSAP dollars have flowed out the door.

Why won't the Premier take some accountability and fire his Minister of Colleges and Universities?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Every single tip is thoroughly investigated, Speaker. That is why we brought forward enhanced reviews, targeted inspections, and why we ultimately eliminated OSAP eligibility from specific career colleges.

But we're talking about serious criminal allegations against bad actors, Speaker. That is why we're bringing forward legislation this session to ensure that we have the appropriate guardrails to have the assurances and confidence to be able to re-release taxpayer dollars for their intended uses towards the students at these private institutions, Speaker. But after months and months and months of individual inspections and investigations into—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I apologize to the minister. Will the Leader of the Opposition please come to order?

Back to the minister.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members on the government side, come to order.

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Thank you, Speaker.

This is why we've referred it to the Ontario Provincial Police and to the Auditor General, because as much as the opposition and the third party will trivialize this day in and day out, this is a serious matter with criminal allegations. That's why the Ontario Provincial Police are looking into it.

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GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

MPP Tyler Watt: My question is for the Premier. You know, this minister's answers are about as weak as this Premier's business acumen and government's fiscal record.

A huge bombshell today in the ongoing OSAP story; every day, this just gets worse: 8,300 applications from just three IP addresses, one per campus.

The minister keeps repeating the same tired talking points over and over and over again. They have known about this since 2023. He let it go on for a year. In 2024, warned again, he let it go on a year. In 2025, he let it go on again. It wasn't until October 2026, when the Canadian Press blew the lid off the story, that suddenly they need to do something about it.

Speaker, through you to the Premier—and I want him to stand up and answer to Ontarians: The minister keeps repeating the same talking points that these are serious allegations, so why did it take the minister three years to take these serious allegations seriously?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I do take these allegations very seriously. It did not need a TikTok from that member for me to take it seriously, Speaker. But I recognize the serious impact this has on good students who are caught up in the bad actors' serious fraud across the system.

Speaker, we brought it forward to the Ontario Provincial Police because we saw inconsistencies right across the whole system that were really concerning for taxpayers. After months and months of individual inspections and investigations into career colleges, we realized it was more widespread than initially thought, and that is why we have frozen all OSAP dollars flowing to students: because we need to ensure we have confidence in the system and that bad actors are not defrauding the Ontario taxpayer. We will ensure that we hold back OSAP dollars until we have confidence and assurances from the third-party auditor and from our government, Speaker.

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

MPP Tyler Watt: Again, the minister just proved my point. He's like a wind-up doll—the same talking points over and over and over again.

There is zero accountability with this government. In 2018, the Premier promised Ontarians transparency, accountability, and we get none of that. I can't believe we have to sit here and just listen to the same non-answers day

in and day out. No wonder people are so tired of this government.

Seriously, Minister and Premier—I hope the Premier is listening—students are suffering because of this government's incompetence, because of this minister lacking to actually control OSAP and what's gone on here.

Here is Shamsuddin from North York: "I've been enrolled since August, continuing a program I was doing for a year, and now, two months in, we are being punished for nothing. I'm about to be evicted this month and have no idea what's next or what to do."

Again, through you, Speaker, to the Premier: Why did it take this minister three years to take these serious accusations seriously?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: The government House leader just reminded me I've been the minister for three years already. Time does fly, Speaker—it's only been two years, but it is what it is.

Ultimately, we've taken every single tip seriously, Speaker. We've done over 3,200 individual OSAP investigations because we take every single tip seriously. Individual tips will lead to multi-investigations into institutions.

The 200 he's referring to was from our own ministry investigations, Speaker. That is the reason why we brought forward a third-party auditor, KPMG: because we realized that the bad actors were more widespread across the whole system. We need to ensure that we have confidence in the OSAP system, and that's why we've referred it to the Ontario Provincial Police. That's why we're working with KPMG, the third-party auditor: to ensure that it's not as widespread as we initially believed, and to ensure that the predatory behaviour of criminal bad actors is looked at and that everyone will be held accountable, Speaker.

HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

MPP Paul Vickers: My question is for the Minister of Transportation.

For people travelling between Parry Sound and Sudbury, Highway 69 connects them to work, medical appointments and family. It is also a vital route for the businesses and industries that keep northern Ontario's economy moving.

Northerners have been calling for completion of this highway for years. They want to see the remaining two-lane sections widened and know that getting this work done is a priority.

Protecting Ontario means ensuring northern communities have the infrastructure they need to grow and succeed. Can the minister explain how our government's recent Highway 69 announcement will help accelerate construction and deliver the safer, more reliable connection northern communities have waited for?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you to the member for that question. We all know how important Highway 69 is for the communities in Parry Sound, all the way to Sudbury. That is why, thanks to the leadership of the Minister of Red Tape Reduction, we've introduced legislation that will reduce the time to build Highway 69 by over five years. We are streamlining the process, and we are going to get shovels in the ground to get results for those communities.

We have invested over $31 billion across this province, and one of those priority areas is the north. Highway 69 is a project that will have all six sections of it under major construction by the end of 2027. That is because this government is investing in the north. It is investing in the safety of highways across this province.

We want to unlock the potential of Sudbury and the communities all across the north and connect them to the rest of Ontario. We're going to continue to get shovels in the ground and get this project built.

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

MPP Paul Vickers: Thank you to the minister for that response. Highway 69 is an important connection between northern and southern Ontario. Completing the four-laning will support the mining, forestry and tourism industries that northern communities depend on, while making travel safer for every one of us who uses these routes.

Our government has been clear: Northern Ontario's economic potential depends on infrastructure that can support this growth. Protecting Ontario means helping businesses reach new markets, attracting investment and creating good-paying jobs so people can build their futures in the communities they call home. Northerners want to see all parties support the work needed to make this happen.

Can the minister tell the House how this proposed legislation would help move construction forward and deliver the benefits of a completed four-lane Highway 69 sooner?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Madam Speaker, 85 kilometres of that widening has already happened. The remainder of it is what we are putting to market and hoping that the members opposite, as the member said, will vote in support of that, whether it's the NDP or Liberals.

I don't have much hope in the Liberals; they considered the north a wasteland. But I hope the members from Sudbury and in the north support this piece of legislation. I know they've talked a big game about Highway 69, but now is their opportunity. Will they support this government's legislation, which will help get Highway 69 built five years faster?

This is about unlocking the potential in the north, from Sudbury to Parry Sound and across this entire province. We know how important this highway will be for the northern communities and for connecting it to the rest of the province.

I look forward to seeing how the members from Sudbury vote on this piece of legislation.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Speaker, the Premier must know that conditions in health care are rapidly deteriorating. This

very minute, as we all sit here, over 2,000 people are right now laying in hospital hallways, and this is happening every single day here in Ontario.

I spoke with Sue, who endured six nights in the hallway at the Hamilton General, and this is just one of thousands of these types of stories. Hamilton Health Sciences is continuing to lay off health care workers. The majority of these are impacting surgeries. These layoffs are out of control, and they are dangerous.

So my question: When will the Premier admit that his bet on privatization is failing and instead commit to properly funding our public hospitals?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: May I take this opportunity to welcome members from the Ontario Medical Association here to Queen's Park? We've been able to do some incredible work with the OMA, and when I hear the member opposite speaking down our world-class health care system and clinicians, it greatly disturbs me. When I see the investments that we've been able to make, working directly with clinicians to improve access to care in the province of Ontario—whether it's through a primary care expansion team that is ensuring that across Ontario, by 2029, we will have everyone connected to a primary care provider in the province of Ontario.

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That's taking action. That's making an impact—whether it's for three years, historic highs, investments in our emergency and hospital partners to ensure that they have the resources that they need to continue to provide world-class care here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question? The member for Hamilton Centre.

MPP Robin Lennox: Like the minister often says, you can have your opinion, but you can't have your own facts. And the fact is that someone with breast cancer today is waiting 33% longer to have their surgery than they were when you took over.

But, Speaker, this past week, a nurse wrote in about her 81-year-old father, who is awaiting a below-knee amputation, which was cancelled three times over five weeks because there wasn't a hospital bed available to him. Under this Premier, surgical wait times have gotten out of control, and at Hamilton Health Sciences, 37 surgical nurses and health care aides have been laid off because of this government's budget cuts.

So my question is to the Premier: Will you commit to funding our hospitals so that they can hire the surgical staff, run operating rooms to full capacity and guarantee that Ontarians like James get the surgeries they need without the wait?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, with the greatest of respect, the member opposite is a little late to the game.

Since 2018, we have invested in our health care system, in our primary care system, in our colleges and universities to train. Over 30,000 nurses right now are training in the province of Ontario. We have licensed over 100,000 nurses to practise in the province of Ontario. We have a brand new medical school, operated by TMU, in their second year in Brampton today, right now, because of this Premier's investments. We are looking forward to welcoming York medical school opening, specifically training primary care physicians.

Those are investments of a government that understands we need to make sure that we can continue to provide world-class care in the province of Ontario.

And I might add: Respectfully, every single one of those investments, when we get an opportunity to vote in this chamber, you vote against.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Ted Hsu: On the ever-growing OSAP scandal, we've heard from real career college students like Katherine, who was only one class away from starting work at her placement as a dental assistant when the Kingston campus of Trillium College was forced to close and lay off staff by this PC government.

There must be some way we could let hard-working people like Katherine finish the training they already started. Many are in a tough place. They just want to work towards a better life and are ready to finish training and fill needed jobs in our economy.

Here's the thing: Trillium just passed their government inspection in August. Couldn't we let colleges which recently passed government inspections at least finish up courses that already started? And if this minister says no, I want to know exactly what it was that this government failed to inspect at this college just a couple of months ago.

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: First off, I do recognize the serious impact this has on students, the good students that are caught up in this. But that is why we are bringing forward legislation this session to add more guardrails, to ensure that online-only courses are not offered anymore through OSAP, as well as ensuring year-over-year growth is capped at career colleges when it comes to OSAP.

Bringing forward this legislation will ensure that we have the appropriate guardrails to be able to release OSAP dollars, taxpayer dollars, back to the students for their intended purposes.

But, Speaker, I need the assurances of KPMG to ensure that we have confidence in taxpayer dollars being flowed out to students, and I will not release taxpayer dollars until I have those assurances both through KPMG and internally.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Follow-up?

Mr. Ted Hsu: This PC government has failed to keep things under control.

Let me tell you what I heard just this weekend: A woman is in her Uber when the driver turns around and asks, "Are you a permanent resident or citizen? Do you need cash? I can help you get money from OSAP. You don't even need to fill out forms or study." How often did such brazen solicitations happen? Because this wasn't some random woman; it was the manager of a private

career college. How many people are in on this scam? Was the driver one of those ghost students who got $500 for referrals to help pay the $3,000 fee for having someone else do their coursework?

Hundreds of millions were stolen from taxpayers, which we're never getting back. This government was warned three years ago. How could they keep hearing these stories, inspect colleges and cut ribbons like nothing was wrong, before triggering their chaotic response to the OSAP scandal only this year and causing so much collateral damage?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: The opposition can trivialize this any way they want, but this is serious. These are bad actors that have defrauded the Ontario taxpayer.

Ultimately, we referred it to the Ontario Provincial Police because we understood that the problem was more widespread across the private institution sector. The Ontario Provincial Police and the Auditor General are referring the matter through them, but the investigations that the ministry officials did are the reason why we are here. The investigations brought forward the third party because we understood how widespread it was. The 3,200 OSAP investigations that we have done since 2020 are the reason why it is now with a third-party auditor, because we need to ensure that taxpayer dollars are well respected.

So the third party can trivialize it all they want, they can make all the TikToks they want, Speaker, but we're going to focus on the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Jeff Beattie: My question is for the Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products.

Speaker, Ontario's forestry sector continues to face significant challenges as constantly changing tariffs and duties create uncertainty for forestry businesses, workers and their communities. For mills across Ontario, these constantly shifting trade measures are creating serious uncertainty, threatening jobs and putting the future of forestry-dependent communities at risk.

In response to these challenges, our government has released A Roadmap to Protecting Ontario's Forest Sector. Since its release, we have continued making strategic investments to modernize operations, strengthen competitiveness and support new opportunities for growth.

Speaker, can the associate minister please provide an update on the progress of our forestry road map and how these investments are helping to protect Ontario's sector and the communities that depend on them?

Hon. Kevin Holland: Thank you to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for the question—and it's so good to see you in that chair.

Speaker, our government understands the challenges facing Ontario's forest sector, and we know that protecting forestry jobs means making strategic investments to build a stronger, more competitive industry.

Since releasing our road map in April, we have announced investments to modernize mills, improve productivity and create new opportunities for growth. This includes $10 million for Georgia-Pacific in Englehart, $5.5 million for Greenwater Technology in Thunder Bay and more than $17 million announced in September to support forestry operations across northern Ontario.

Speaker, these investments are more than just numbers. They represent jobs for hard-working people, opportunities for local businesses and greater economic stability for forestry-dependent communities. Our government will continue delivering on our road map's commitment to defend, adapt and grow Ontario's forest sector.

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

Mr. Jeff Beattie: Thank you to the associate minister for that great response.

Speaker, while the opposition continues to criticize our government's efforts, we know that securing the future of Ontario's forest sector requires working directly with the people and businesses who know the industry best. Our government's forestry road map was developed through extensive consultation with industry leaders, Indigenous communities and municipalities, ensuring their priorities helped shape our long-term plan. Since its release, our government has continued that collaboration through industry committees, export diversification, round tables and discussions with provincial and federal partners.

1130

Can the associate minister explain how these ongoing consultations and partnerships are helping guide the implementation of our road map and identify new opportunities for Ontario's forestry sector?

Hon. Kevin Holland: Thanks again for that question.

Our government knows that the people working in Ontario's forestry sector—the boots on the ground—are essential to finding solutions to the challenges facing our industry. That is why we extensively consulted with industry leaders, communities and First Nations partners when developing the road map, ensuring their input directly shaped our plan and its priorities.

This past Thursday, I joined the Premier; the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade; the Minister of Natural Resources; and the member from York South–Weston at Irving Tissue, where we met with industry leaders from across the province to discuss the challenges facing Ontario's forest sector.

Our government's collaboration continues through our Forest Sector Strategy Committee and Advanced Wood Committee, alongside export diversification round tables and meetings with our provincial and federal forestry counterparts to identify new markets for Ontario wood.

We will continue listening to the people who know the industry best, turning their ideas into meaningful action.

HOUSING

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier. The fall economic statement reveals just how badly this

government is failing on housing. Housing starts now have declined every single year since 2022.

For years, the Conservatives have boasted that their plan to fix the housing crisis is to give big developers and big landlords everything that they want: tax breaks, lower development charges, less rent control. It hasn't worked.

Premier, how many years of declining housing starts will it take before you admit your housing plan is failing?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Rob Flack: It's great to be here today.

We have acknowledged for some time that there's a housing crisis right across this country, and Ontario is not immune to this crisis. That is why we're creating the conditions to get more homes built.

Just think about the uncertainty this economy is facing and the global headwinds we are facing. And what have we done about it? That's the key. What we've done is introduce three bills—17, 60 and 98—to lower the time and the cost to get shovels in the ground.

HST has been reduced for a full 12 years. The Development Charge Reduction Program is in place. Transfer payment agreements are being put into place. It's going to lower the cost of homes significantly—up to $200,000 per home.

I would also say that we reduced the HST on purpose-built rentals in 2023, and we are seeing the biggest amount of purpose-built rentals built—second in the history of Ontario. And guess what, Speaker? Rents are coming down. The price of housing is coming down. Our plan is working.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for University–Rosedale.

Ms. Jessica Bell: The fall economic statement tells a very different story. The plan is not working.

When housing starts go down, it also costs Ontario jobs. We have lost 26,000 jobs in the construction sector in the last year, with women in the trades being hit particularly hard.

We have construction workers who need jobs and people who desperately need affordable homes. That is why we are calling for a public builder to finance and build affordable, non-profit housing at cost and to scale. It is working in the city of Toronto; it can work province-wide.

Premier, will you change course and create a public builder to get affordable homes built and construction workers back to work?

Hon. Rob Flack: While I appreciate the member opposite's approach to having government-owned housing and governments being in the business of housing, we don't agree with that, categorically.

We all know programs like the HST—and by the way, I think I said 12 years; it's 12 months that we reduced it by—and our DCRP, the Development Charge Reduction Program, take time to kick in, and we're seeing good results. It is not easy; we acknowledge that. But for government to be considered the main driver to build homes is a categorical mistake. We will not do that, Speaker.

Sales lead to starts. Sales lead to starts. We're seeing that happen with our HST reduction. We're seeing that happen with our municipal partners through the development charge program: $8.8 billion spread over 10 years, $4.4 billion each from us and the federal government, working closely with the federal government. We're going to negotiate a new national housing strategy. The FPT is on the 12th and 13th of November.

Hon. Greg Rickford: What's an FPT?

Hon. Rob Flack: It is going to work; it's going to work well: the federal-provincial-territorial program, as my honourable minister friend here wants—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Speaker, last week we heard about Alex Schved, a 37-year-old father battling stage 4 melanoma. His doctors have recommended potentially life-saving treatment, tumour-infiltrating therapy, and this government denied him that funding. When the government's denial was challenged in court, the courts concluded that the government's actions were unlawful. And so what was this government's response? They changed the law so that those same actions would now be considered lawful.

So, Speaker, how can this government betray the trust of the Ontario people in such a heartless manner, and how can they be so cold and callous about the life of this individual? Will the Premier show basic decency and investigate the actions of the Minister of Health?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: As I've said many times, these are heartbreaking stories about individuals who are looking everywhere to find options.

I think that the member opposite needs to understand that since 2011, this has been a policy and a practice within the Ministry of Health to assess out-of-country coverage. We codified, through a reg change, a policy that has been in place since 2011. We are ensuring that experts assess these out-of-country requests, not politicians. It is completely inappropriate for politicians of any political stripe to be suggesting that they should insert themselves in these decisions.

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

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Speaker, this isn't politics; this is just basic human decency—and I question how fast this government would have reacted if it had been one of their rich donors.

I get it: Sometimes politicians have to make tough decisions. No program is perfect or fits all. But to purposefully challenge the court ruling when this minister could have just as easily chosen to follow the court order and spare this man's life—this is a new low even for this government.

Ontarians just want a good education and dependable health care. While they struggle, somehow the govern-

ment's millionaire and billionaire friends just keep getting richer.

So, Speaker, will the government do the right thing and spend money on these promising new treatments themselves, rather than the high-priced legal manoeuvring used to deny those treatments for patients?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: How low can you go? You are reinforcing with your question exactly why these need to be—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I apologize to the minister.

Order. We have two minutes left, and I have no problem asking people to leave this chamber. Order on both sides of the House.

I apologize to the minister. Back to the minister.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: You are absolutely reinforcing exactly why we need to ensure that these decisions are made by experts, not by politicians. And to suggest anything other than the fact that since 2011 this has been the procedure for US-based treatment, out-of-country asks, codified now through regulation, is frankly really disappointing. I'm frankly shocked that you have clinicians in your caucus who do not understand how important it is that these need to be made by medical experts, not by political operatives who want to chase political gain.

RED TAPE REDUCTION

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources—and as I look at the clock, I know this will be the toughest question that he faces today.

Our government made a promise to the people of Ontario that we would cut through 15 years of Liberal government red tape and administrative burden. We know, Madam Speaker, that Ontario's natural resources—our forests, minerals and energy—are vital to our communities and our economy. Their responsible development is a key part of our plan to build one of the most competitive economies in all of the G7, but government bureaucracy and piles of paperwork continue to hold us back.

So often, efficiencies can be found simply by changing the status quo and modernizing the way that things have been done for years. Minister, can you tell us what your ministry has done to streamline natural resource permits to help projects move ahead faster and more predictably?

Hon. Mike Harris: Thank you very much to the member from Bay of Quinte—and I'd be happy to.

I'll tell you what: We took a close, close look at permit approval timelines, and we went to work. We went to work to eliminate 13 natural resources permits that are going to save the people of Ontario 13,000 days' worth of paperwork. That works out, colleagues, to 36 years' worth of delay.

The Premier has been clear: We are to reduce red tape here in Ontario, and we are doing that at the Ministry of Natural Resources. It's a pleasure to be able to be the Minister of Natural Resources and doing this good work.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm glad we're done for the day.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Not quite done for the day.

DEFERRED VOTES

BUILDING ONTARIO FASTER ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 VISANT À BÂTIR L'ONTARIO PLUS RAPIDEMENT

Deferred vote on the motion that the question now be put on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 140, An Act to enact two Acts and to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 140, Loi édictant deux lois et modifiant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members, please take your seats.

On October 28, 2026, Ms. Khanjin moved second reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact two Acts and to amend various Acts.

On October 29, 2026, Mr. Clark moved that the question be now put.

All those in favour of Mr. Clark's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Flack, Rob	Pinsonneault, Steve
Anand, Deepak	Ford, Doug	Quinn, Nolan
Babikian, Aris	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Racinsky, Joseph
Bailey, Robert	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Beattie, Jeff	Gualtieri, Silvia	Rickford, Greg
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hamid, Zee	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Hardeman, Ernie	Rosenberg, Bill
Bresee, Ric	Harris, Mike	Sabawy, Sheref
Calandra, Paul	Holland, Kevin	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Sylvia	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Stan	Jones, Trevor	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Ciriello, Monica	Jordan, John	Saunderson, Brian
Clark, Steve	Kanapathi, Logan	Scott, Laurie
Coe, Lorne	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Dave
Cooper, Michelle	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Lahey, Susan	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Laura
Darouze, George	Lecce, Stephen	Surma, Kinga
Denault, Billy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Dixon, Jess	McGregor, Graham	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dowie, Andrew	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Downey, Doug	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dunlop, Jill	Parsa, Michael	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fedeli, Victor	Piccini, David	Vickers, Paul
Firin, Mohamed	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): All those opposed to Mr. Clark's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gilmour, Alexa	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Glover, Chris	Shaban, Fatima
Blais, Stephen	Gretzky, Lisa	Shamji, Adil
Bourgouin, Guy	Hazell, Andrea	Shaw, Sandy
Bowman, Stephanie	Hsu, Ted	Smyth, Stephanie
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Cerjanec, Rob	Lennox, Robin	Tabuns, Peter
Clancy, Aislinn	Mamakwa, Sol	Tsao, Jonathan
Collard, Lucille	McCrimmon, Karen	Vanthof, John
Fairclough, Lee	McKenney, Catherine	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Watt, Tyler
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 75; the nays are 41.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion carried.

Ms. Khanjin has moved second reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact two Acts and to amend various Acts.

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

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1151 to 1152.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): On October 28, 2026, Ms. Khanjin moved second reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact two Acts and to amend various Acts.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Flack, Rob	Pinsonneault, Steve
Anand, Deepak	Ford, Doug	Quinn, Nolan
Babikian, Aris	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Racinsky, Joseph
Bailey, Robert	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Beattie, Jeff	Gualtieri, Silvia	Rickford, Greg
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hamid, Zee	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Hardeman, Ernie	Rosenberg, Bill
Bresee, Ric	Harris, Mike	Sabawy, Sheref
Calandra, Paul	Holland, Kevin	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Sylvia	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Stan	Jones, Trevor	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Ciriello, Monica	Jordan, John	Saunderson, Brian
Clark, Steve	Kanapathi, Logan	Scott, Laurie
Coe, Lorne	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Dave
Cooper, Michelle	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Lahey, Susan	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Laura
Darouze, George	Lecce, Stephen	Surma, Kinga
Denault, Billy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Dixon, Jess	McGregor, Graham	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dowie, Andrew	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Downey, Doug	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dunlop, Jill	Parsa, Michael	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fedeli, Victor	Piccini, David	Vickers, Paul
Firin, Mohamed	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gilmour, Alexa	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Glover, Chris	Shaban, Fatima
Blais, Stephen	Gretzky, Lisa	Shamji, Adil
Bourgouin, Guy	Hazell, Andrea	Shaw, Sandy
Bowman, Stephanie	Hsu, Ted	Smyth, Stephanie
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Cerjanec, Rob	Lennox, Robin	Tabuns, Peter
Clancy, Aislinn	Mamakwa, Sol	Tsao, Jonathan
Collard, Lucille	McCrimmon, Karen	Vanthof, John
Fairclough, Lee	McKenney, Catherine	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Watt, Tyler
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 75; the nays are 41.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Can I have it referred to the Standing Committee on the Interior, please?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The bill is therefore referred to the Standing Committee on the Interior.

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

The House recessed from 1155 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MPP Jamie West: I would like to introduce Dr. Koka, who is here as part of the Ontario Mining Association—or Ontario Medical Association. They're both OMA: Ontario Medical Association and Ontario Mining Association. Dr. Koka is obviously a member of the Ontario Medical Association.

MPP George Darouze: Today I would like to welcome a great doctor from my community, Dr. Alykhan Abdulla, to Queen's Park, here with the OMA to do meetings. It's nice to see him here again today. Welcome to Queen's Park. Welcome to your House.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I just wanted to welcome my constituency staff here today. They do such great work on behalf of us when we're here at the Legislature: Jordana Goncalves, Sophia Wasfy, Ranjit Bassi and Jyotsna Paul. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Mohamed Firin: I would like to welcome the Ontario Medical Association to Queen's Park today. I look forward to having meetings with them this afternoon.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE INTERIOR

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Interior and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Meghan Stenson): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 109, An Act to enact the Farmland Security Act, 2026 and to amend various Acts / Loi édictant la Loi de 2026 visant à protéger l'autonomie alimentaire de l'Ontario et modifiant diverses lois.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SUPPLY CHAIN LEADERS ACT, 2026

MPP Wong-Tam moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr57, An Act respecting the National Institute of Supply Chain Leaders.

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

First reading agreed to.

OPTOMETRY AMENDMENT ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES OPTOMÉTRISTES

Mr. Bouma moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 145, An Act to amend the Optometry Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 145, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les optométristes.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: Absolutely, ma'am.

Colleagues, this is just, in my mind, simple housekeeping for the practice of optometry that brings it into where the whole health system is in the last few years. It will allow optometrists to provide samples and dispense topical medications. It will allow us to independently manage open-angle glaucoma. It will allow us to apply diagnostic ultrasound to perform corneal pachymetry or ocular ultrasonography, and it will allow us to remove foreign bodies from below the surface of the cornea—something that optometrists are well trained and able to do, and I look forward to hopefully seeing it get passed.

PETITIONS

TENANT PROTECTION

MPP Robin Lennox: I rise today to present a petition to ban above-guideline rent increases. Locally, in my riding, this is a very significant issue. One building at 180 Bold Street is facing its second consecutive above-guideline rent increase, and people are having difficulty making ends meet as it is and they don't know if they're going to be able to maintain their housing.

This petition calls on the government to ban above-guideline rent increases to try to ensure that we close the loopholes on rent control and ensure that people can keep their housing.

Thank you very much. It's my pleasure to affix my name to this petition and send it down with Kavin.

UNIVERSITY FUNDING

Mr. Ted Hsu: This petition is entitled "Fund Ontario's Universities." It is signed by people from all across Ontario.

What they are trying to get at here, Madam Speaker, is—it's great the provincial government and the federal government want to give tax incentives for businesses to invest. We know that Canada is behind when it comes to business expenditure on research and development; we're behind other countries. But we can't convert investment into becoming more competitive, becoming more innovative and creating better jobs if we don't have the people to do that. And that's why it's so important to invest in Ontario's universities.

HIGHWAY 69

M^me^ France Gélinas: I would like to present this petition called "Four-Lane Highway 69 Now." I have to thank Heather Cole from Capreol, in my riding, and we are at tens of thousands of people from northern Ontario that have signed that petition.

Basically, what the petition talks about is that since 2018, not a single kilometre of the 68-kilometre, two-lane Highway 69 has been worked on or tendered and no dedicating funding has been allocated. Meanwhile, dozens and dozens of families have suffered devastating and preventable injuries and loss of life on this really dangerous stretch of Highway 69. Every time we bring it forward, there seems to be goodwill, but still no tenders have been issued, no contracts have been signed, and not one shovel has hit the ground.

The people that have signed the petitions are asking this government to put money aside and to be transparent. Let us know how much money. Let us know when the tenders are going to go out. Let us know when the tenders have

been selected. Let us know when the shovels will hit the ground.

People's lives depend on this highway being four-lane—the sooner, the better.

I would like to thank Andrea for bringing the petitions to the Clerk.

EDUCATION FUNDING

MPP Alexa Gilmour: How bad does it have to get when all the parents and teachers and students around the province are gathering tomorrow, November 4, to say the same thing that this petition says: Invest in students, trust educators, restore local voices.

As a parent, we all want what's best for our kids, and we all remember being students in school. And to see that the kids aren't even getting what we got, when what we want for them is better, is devastating.

I want to thank parents like Jessica and Kamin and schools like Annette and Swansea and others in my riding who are coming out to ensure that we actually do invest in our kids: in the staffing ratios that they need, in the spec ed that they need, in the rooms and classrooms that are the temperature that they need—that every child has what they need when they need it.

1310

It is my pleasure, my honour, to affix my name to this stack of signatures of parents from around my riding and to send it down to you with page Kavin.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ted Hsu: I have a petition entitled "Repeal Bill 5."

I think what petitioners are worried about is a government here which, if something goes against them—maybe there's a court ruling against them or there's some law that's in the way of something they want to do—they can just change the law. And if you do that, if you keep doing that, we're going to be living in a society without rule of law, which is something that we've spent centuries trying to build up. So I think this is an important petition, Speaker.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

MPP Lise Vaugeois: This petition is concerning the almost 700 positions across the province that are disappearing as a result of reorganizing the WSIB—that's Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay, Windsor, Waterloo, Guelph, St. Catharines and Kingston.

What is noteworthy is that although the government's says it's arm's length, it was actually the former Minister of Labour who suggested considering eliminating all of these regional offices and roles. It's devastating for our communities, devastating for injured workers, so the petition asks that the Legislative Assembly immediately direct the WSIB to halt these office closures and reduce the planned workforce reductions.

I am happy to sign my signature and I will give this to page Jessica.

PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES IN SCHOOLS

Mr. Ted Hsu: I have a petition here where the undersigned are asking our Legislature to call on the government of Ontario and the Ministry of Education to implement a bell-to-bell phone-free policy in the province's elementary and secondary schools.

I think this is something that many students themselves have thought about and would support, and it's a good idea, really. When you're in school, you have to learn how to learn, learn how to think, and you can't have that distraction of cell phones. It's going to hurt your learning.

EDUCATION FUNDING

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm always proud to rise in this House and to speak on behalf of the good people of Toronto Centre. I'd like to present a petition today that is entitled "Reduce Class Sizes in Our Public Elementary Schools."

To the Ontario Legislative Assembly: Whereas $6.35 billion has been cut from education indication since 2018, and what we've seen as a result of that are larger class sizes, increased violence and inadequate special ed as well as mental health supports for students.

We know that larger class sizes can negatively impact the quality of education. It can also reduce access to teaching resources and, of course, diminish the teacher-student interaction, which is detrimental to students, especially those who need additional supports.

We know that the vast majority of teachers, as well as parents and students, all want to see smaller class sizes because, ultimately, that is the best learning environment for the students. Ontario has an internationally recognized public education system that requires attention and investments, and that's what our students need to be successful.

Therefore, the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit the necessary investments to public education to lower class sizes and increase student supports, and to ensure that students have the schools that they need.

I will proudly sign this petition and return this to centre table with page Kavin.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Ted Hsu: I have a petition entitled "Fix OSAP ASAP." It's amazing how often these petitions keep coming in. I think the petitioners realize that OSAP is broken, this government broke it through their negligence, and they're upset.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Dave Smith: We know that we've just introduced the fall economic statement and we know that small businesses are the job creators all across Ontario, and that in every community all across Ontario, we have these small businesses. We know that they can survive and thrive when things are stable and predictable, and right now, they are not. That's why we need to make sure that we have competitive taxes, modern technology and things that support those small businesses.

They're petitioning the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the fall economic statement as quickly as possible so that they can encourage investment and growth in our province.

I agree with this petition. I will sign my name to it and give it to page Sophie.

HIGHWAY 69

MPP Jamie West: The petition is entitled "Four Lanes—Zero Excuses: Four-Lane Highway 69 Now." This is about the accidents, collisions and deaths that are happening on the two-lane portion of Highway 69.

There has been a lot of talk about this happening, but not much has happened since 2018. There hasn't been anything tendered or moved on this. It seems promising that we'll hopefully be getting shovels in the ground soon.

In the petition, it talks about how the Premier himself, during the 2025 election, had acknowledged that if you're off by two inches, you're gone, and the high risk there. So I'm hoping that will escalate this being built even faster.

This will be supportive for tourism, economic development, but also for the safety of the people travelling back and forth, especially those that have to travel for medical injuries and for work.

They petition the assembly to immediately fund and tender the remaining 68 kilometres of Highway 69 for construction, to begin work without further delay, and establish a clear, public timeline for the completion of the four-laning of Highway 69.

I obviously support this, Speaker. I'll affix my signature and provide it to page Kavin for the table.

CAREGIVERS

Mr. Ted Hsu: This petition is called "Support 24/7 Caregivers." It comes from a constituent in my riding that I will speak about later today during private members' business.

It calls on the Ontario government to support 24/7 family caregivers, including through financial compensation. These are caregivers who are spending a lot of time caring for people so that the public system doesn't have to do that. There's immense leverage, and I think that's why this is a great idea, to give some financial support to 24/7 caregivers.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I have a petition here that's speaking about small businesses. We all know that small businesses are important to all of our ridings across Ontario and that small businesses create a lot of jobs in Ontario.

This particular petition speaks about the creation of jobs. It speaks about how small businesses are finding it difficult to invest and grow in the current environment of tariff uncertainty. It calls upon the government of Ontario to continue taking measures that will strengthen key industries. It calls upon the Legislature of Ontario to continue protecting workers and it calls upon the Legislature of Ontario to help small businesses respond to trade disruptions.

I support this petition. I'll sign it and I'll give it to page Jai here to bring to the Clerks' table.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm proud to rise in this House to present a petition organized and submitted by the Ontario Nurses' Association. The petition is entitled "Stop Privatization and Support Staffing Ratios."

To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: Understaffing is negatively impacting the quality of our public health care system, causing much longer wait times, unreliable access to care, unmanageable workloads, the de-skilling of health care work, and many other issues.

Understaffing of nurses has caused burnout for nurses as well as health care professionals and is literally driving them out of the profession.

Recognizing that having the health care professional staffing ratios will restore our public health care system and ensure quality care across the system, including in home care, long-term care, public health care and hospitals: All of this means that we will have less burnout from nurses, we'll see fewer vacancies, and it will lead to more professional retention.

Therefore, the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to do the following: Mandate staffing ratios for nurses and health care professionals across the Ontario health care system, develop staffing ratios in consultation with nurses and health care professionals through their unions, and, of course, use the health care funding to ensure that Ontarians can access the care that they need within the public system and stop privatizing health care through outsourcing services to private and for-profit corporations.

I'll proudly sign this petition and send this to the table with page Jessica.

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SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Ted Hsu: I have a petition entitled "Petition to Raise Social Assistance." It's very simple: They're asking for us to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

M^me^ France Gélinas: I have this petition called "Hormone Replacement Therapy." I'd like to thank Gillianne Fuller from Brampton for collecting the names on this petition.

Untreated menopause costs the Canadian economy and the Ontario economy billions of dollars—$3.5 billion annually—in lost productivity, increased health care utilization and workforce absenteeism.

Menopausal hormone therapy, including transdermal and micronized progesterone, is a clinically proven treatment. But unfortunately, the Ontario Drug Benefit Program only covers oral estrogen. British Columbia and Manitoba already cover those.

They are asking that the Ministry of Health add clinically proven forms of menopausal hormone therapy, including transdermal and micronized progesterone, to the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary to help the thousands of women who would benefit from those therapies.

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

OPPOSITION DAY

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

RESPONSABILITÉ GOUVERNEMENTALE

Ms. Marit Stiles: I move that, whereas the Ford government's cuts to OSAP while lifting the tuition freeze will leave students buried in long-term debt and unable to build a future after graduation, or force students to reconsider attending college or university; and

Whereas young people in Ontario are facing a dual crisis of sky-high unemployment and rising unaffordability as the cost of tuition, rent, groceries and transportation is rising faster than students' incomes; and

Whereas the government justified cutting the grant share of OSAP from 85% to 25% and reduced eligibility for students attending private career colleges during this affordability crisis, citing unsustainability and misuse of OSAP by students; and

Whereas the government was warned about suspicious activity at career colleges but failed to take timely action, and their failures in oversight resulted in students being locked out of post-secondary education; and

Whereas Conservative members of the House have received over $150,000 in donations from private career college executives while in office; and

Whereas the government had the opportunity to listen to students, families and educators and support the official opposition's motion to reverse cuts to OSAP;

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly calls on the Ford government to provide a plan, within 14 days, for immediate relief for students who have been left to bear the consequences of this government's failure of oversight of private career colleges.

This is addressed to the Premier.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): MPP Stiles has moved opposition day number 1.

I return to the member to start the debate.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to start by acknowledging, in the galleries today, post-secondary students, particularly representatives from the Canadian Federation of Students. Thank you for being here today with all of us. It's very important.

Last February, the Premier stood in front of media, and he attacked the hard-working students of Ontario. He said he'd heard "nightmare stories"—those are the words he used—about students misusing OSAP money—and this is what he said—to "buy watches and cologne." He said, "Stop choosing basket-weaving courses." He said, "That doesn't fly with the taxpayers, I'll tell you that right now."

He scapegoated students. He upended their futures, he cut OSAP, and he turned around and he bought himself a luxury private jet.

Il a accusé les étudiants, a bouleversé leurs futurs, a coupé OSAP, tout en tournant son dos pour s'acheter un avion privé.

Well, here's the thing, Speaker: It didn't fly. It didn't fly with the taxpayers, and he had to return that private jet. He keeps taking flights on private jets, but we made him return that. He learned the hard way, but not before doing a self-pity tour where he blamed voters for forcing him to give that up. Then he spent the rest of the year blaming students and families, telling us that they were responsible for his brutal and callous cuts to OSAP. No wonder he refused to show up and face students when they were gathered outside this building. I was out there, members of our caucus; we were all out there, shaking their hands and listening to their stories.

Meanwhile, the Premier was hiding out in the backrooms at private clubs, exchanging government deals for partisan donations. He lacked the courage to even stand up and face the very students he had disparaged. Safe here in his Queen's Park castle, the Premier is pretty comfortable mouthing off about students and about parents, but when they show up on the front lawn, he is up in his office, peeking out between the drawn curtains, hoping everyone just goes away.

Tout sécuritaire dans son château à Queen's Park, le premier ministre est content de se plaindre des étudiants et des parents. Mais quand ils se rendent devant lui, il se cache dans son bureau en espérant qu'ils s'en vont.

No wonder he was told to get off the doorsteps in Scarborough this summer. Unlike the Premier, when I was on the doorsteps over the past several months, the people of Ontario were inviting me into their home, inviting MPPs here into their homes. And I want to tell you what they told us, because we got many stories—many stories about how this Premier and his OSAP cuts had derailed their futures.

I had one student say to me, "The government is running Protect Ontario ads. Why does it feel like they have no interest in protecting us?"

My caucus, our member for London West, the shadow minister for colleges and universities, and I led the charge

on fighting this Premier's cuts, on challenging this false narrative that the Premier was writing about the people and the students in our province—students who want to build their lives here. Many of them grew up here. They want to learn here. They want to have a future here. These are the people who are going to keep Ontario growing, and they are the answer to growing our economy in such uncertain times.

We have heard from thousands and thousands of students over the past nine months. They responded to our email campaigns. They attended our town halls. They wrote to our constituency offices. They signed our petitions. They answered the door when we knocked. And, yes, they texted us; they texted me directly to ask how we could fight back against this government.

I met a student in Hamilton. Her name is Desiree. She's pursuing a program at Mohawk College. She was already working three jobs. She was, I've got to say, working more jobs than this Premier has ever had in his whole life. And unlike the Premier, she had to work really, really hard to put herself through school, to pay for school, to pay for rent, to pay for food. And now with these cuts to OSAP, she had to move to continuing studies, because even with her three part-time jobs, she can't afford tuition. She can't afford tuition on top of rent, on top of groceries.

I have heard similar stories to that in every corner of this province: Willow in Thunder Bay; Khurram in Mississauga; Kevin from my own riding, who was forced to withdraw from his paramedic program because of this government's cuts to OSAP. And you know what they're saying to me? They're saying, "I did not commit fraud. I did not misuse OSAP funding, so why am I being punished?"

These are hard-working students. These are hard-working people. They are doing exactly what we've always told them to do: Go get an education, get trained. They are trying to support their families. They are trying to set themselves up for a better future. They are playing by the rules. But this Premier never stopped blaming them. A college dropout himself, I will point out—he had the nerve to tell them what classes they should and should not take; a guy born at the top of the ladder telling people how to climb.

And, Speaker, I want you to know this: It was all a fabrication. It was all made up. What we know is that he made it up—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I ask the member to withdraw.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Withdrawn.

The real reason this government attacked students was to try and issue-manage their own incompetence; that's what was going on. The government had been warned time and time again about the shady dealings of some of those private career colleges. They had been told, "Hey, that OSAP money that you're giving them is being misused. There's reason to suspect criminal activity."

And, of course, I want to point out that this is a government, themselves, currently under criminal investigation by the RCMP, and so I guess it just didn't raise any red flags for them, but it should have.

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Instead, this government just thought, "Business as usual. Ignore the red flags," one after the other. We should not be surprised, Speaker. We know how this government operates: "You scratch my back; I'll scratch yours"—or rather, "If you donate to my political party, I'll fill your pockets with taxpayer dollars."

That's what's happened with the private career college system in this province. We know that private career college executives donated over $150,000 to the members opposite. We know that ministerial zoning orders are being bought with cash donations to the PC Party. We know that this government is up for sale by the highest bidder.

The public treasury vault is wide open, and the Premier is sitting at the entrance charging an admission fee for access. No wonder they ignored the red flags. No wonder they didn't want to upset their donor base.

Speaker, what is the price? How much, in political donations, to buy a student's future under this government?

After turning a blind eye to this scandal for years, the government, as often happens, found themselves in a bit of a predicament. Money was being stolen, and they couldn't keep it a secret any longer. So what did they do? Did they share this information with the people of Ontario? No. Did they act quickly to ensure that students weren't left high and dry? No. In fact, what they did was they blamed the students, and then they punished those same students. But do you know what, Speaker? It's all open now. The government is in crisis mode. And we know that this cannot continue.

These bad actors, without doubt, they must be held accountable. Nobody here is ever going to argue against that.

But let's be very clear: The government's current response is one rooted in panic and incompetence. After ignoring the problem, it is finally catching up to them, and now it is students again on the hook, paying the price for this minister's incompetence. The Premier and his government—I want to be very clear with you: this Premier, this government—have zero accountability left on this file, and yet, that minister still has a job. Students have been hung out to dry across this province, and in their panic, the minister and the Premier shut it all down, and anyone caught in the crossfire is just considered collateral damage.

The Premier has said—I want to quote him here—his heart breaks. His heart breaks for the students being left behind. Well, you know what? That's not enough. All he can muster is a shrug and well wishes? "Oh, golly gee, that's awfully tough for all of you out there. Shucks, if only there were someone or some kind of governing body that could do something about this problem." Imagine that.

This, Speaker, is incompetence on a whole other level. They were warned about the iceberg, but they steered us right into it anyway, and now they don't know how to deploy a simple life jacket.

Well, let me say this: It is time to take some action, and that's what this motion is all about. That is why we are calling on this Premier and his minister today to wake up and solve this problem. They have been asleep at the wheel.

Our NDP caucus is very clear: We need a plan, and it needs to be executed in the next 14 days to ensure that the money that is owed to the students is distributed. I will go a step further. We need programs up and running in reputable organizations, in reputable public institutions right now to ensure that we continue to graduate those PSWs, those ECEs, those paramedics that the people of Ontario desperately need right now.

Students attending reputable institutions that are not under investigation, that were not flagged, should not also be prevented from continuing to access these programs. But what's happened under this government is their dreams have been quashed.

I heard the minister stand up earlier today and defend himself. I thought it was shameful. I think the Premier and, frankly, the third party seem to be playing a game of a race to the bottom here. I'm pretty sick of it, and I've got to tell you: People out there are pretty sick of it. We're pretty sick of hearing one government say, "Well, we were more of a pay-to-play government than you guys were." I mean, this is nothing to be competing about. This is nothing to aspire to, surely. That's not what people expect from their government.

Unlike this government, the NDP is not going to sell out students. Unlike this government, we believe in rewarding hard-working students and punishing executives who are acting in bad faith. Unlike this government, and their predecessor, we're not going to make backdoor, behind-closed-doors deals subject to how much money any organization can donate.

They refused to do the right thing last spring when we asked them to. They voted against our motion to restore the OSAP funding to students. They have refused relief for students every single step of the way, and now the clock is ticking.

So vote in favour of our motion today. Vote in favour of a 14-day timeline that ensures that students get the funding they need.

I know it's hard for them. I know the hubris runs deep over there, but this is not the time. Apologize for throwing students under the bus. Admit your mistakes. Take action to protect these students. It is not too late. We can still throw our students a lifeline. We can get the lifeboats in the water.

We in the NDP are prepared to do that work, Speaker. Will the government join us? Will they put aside their pride and do the right thing?

It is time to protect the students of Ontario. It is time to get them back to class. It is time to let students get to work shaping the future of our province.

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

Mr. John Fraser: We'll be supporting this motion. I do want to say, though, that I don't think we need 14 days to get a plan. The plan is pretty simple: The minister needs to take responsibility, step down, number one. Number two, restore the OSAP loans to those people, those honest, hard-working people who are just trying to do right by their kids, by their family, trying to get a better life, that this government has cut off at the knees.

I want everybody to remember we are not talking about grants. We are not talking about bursaries given to people. We are talking about the government saying, "You want to take a risk? You want to get trained? You want to get a better job? Do you know what? We are going to back your loan." And what this government did was, seven weeks in, two months in: "The loan's not coming."

That loan pays for the school, but it pays to feed the kids. It pays the rent. It pays for kids' clothes. Most of these students in career colleges and academies are mature students. Go to a graduation: It's not the parents in the crowd; it's the kids. Many of these people are over 30 years old, with family. They've had another career.

I don't want to go off on a tangent here, but it's not just OSAP loans; it's Better Jobs Ontario. It's the Ontario Job Grant. And I understand there might even be problems with the stay-and-learn program the minister keeps talking about. We're digging into that right now, because I think there is. So all forms of supporting people to grow our economy, to get better, the government has cut off. Why? I don't know exactly why. But I do know that I have never seen something like this, and I've been around for a while. This is a big mess-up.

The other piece is, the third thing that they've got to do is—I know the minister keeps saying KPMG. I'd like to see the statement of work that KPMG has and how far they're engaged, because what you do need to do is ask the Auditor General. We just did that in committee, and you voted it down.

We have an Auditor General that reports to all of us. Why is that important? Because each and every one of us that sit in these seats, we know a story. And if you don't know a story, like the story I told this morning or the stories I told last week, you don't know and you're sitting in one of these seats, you'd better call your constit office. You'd better call them, because there are thousands and thousands of stories just like this, the ones that I told today, about Amiya trying to be a paralegal. She's still going through with it, but she knows that if the loan doesn't come, it's all for naught—thousands and thousands of people.

The fourth thing is, just fix OSAP. You broke it for everybody, for every young person, for every family person, everybody in Ontario who's trying to get an education, trying to get better-skilled, trying to get a better job. You said, "We're turning it upside down." Why? Because this government gave $385 million to seven colleges—think about that—in one year. I think that's more than every student going to university got that year in Ontario. That's incredible.

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There were only three campuses of one college, Academy of Learning, that got $219 million. That's right:

$219 million—a lot of money. Then look at that a little deeper. There were around 8,500 applications for OSAP that came from one Internet address. It's funny/not funny. I don't think you could get a red flag any bigger than that. But the government continued. They were warned. They had 220 warnings. The career college people warned them—I don't know how hard they warned them, though, because it was all inside warnings that the government ignored. Career Colleges Ontario was being run by government insiders.

We had an Auditor General's report that said, basically, "You're not protecting students. We don't know if what's happening in career colleges is going to work. It's a mess. The ministry is not doing its job," in 2022. The government, the minister, took the Auditor General's report and put it on the shelf; it's still there, collecting dust. Do you know what happened—and it's not the current minister; it's the previous minister—after that? Well, the previous minister decided, "Do you know what's important right now? I need a fundraiser for my riding," so they had an industry fundraiser for 150 grand. The Auditor General's report on the shelf; 150 grand in the minister's riding bank account—and then that minister's chief of staff becomes the head of Career Colleges Ontario. Honestly, really, you can't make this stuff up. And then what happened after that? There was a new person in charge: Kate Bartz, the partner of a former minister, Monte McNaughton. There was a fundraiser for the minister's former riding.

The money keeps continuing to flow, not just into the PC Party's bank accounts, but into fraudulent activity the government reasonably should have known about three years ago.

For the life of me, I don't understand how this government can punish honest, hard-working people like Amiya.

Here's a story from Natalie in Ottawa West: "I'm a 50-year-old OSAP recipient trying to better my life by going in a career that I can do. I'm in second year of a two-year program and raising three children of my own. I may have to drop out of the program because we were denied OSAP. I don't know what to do. This year was supposed to be my graduating year." She didn't apply from that one Internet address. She didn't break the law. She's just trying to raise three kids. And that OSAP—it feeds them; it pays the rent. I really don't understand why the minister can't understand this.

Every member here knows of a story—and if you don't know of a story and if it's not driving you crazy, then call your constit.

Just think about what you would do if this was you and how you would feel about having the rug ripped out from underneath you.

This is Ronak from Ottawa West: "I am a single mom with three children. I am already struggling with housing, groceries and every other expense, to keep me and my children surviving."

Genevieve, from the Premier's riding of Etobicoke North: "I have a PSW certification and am paying $12,000 on OSAP right now." So she's paying back a loan. Remember—don't forget—this is all loans. They're going to borrow the money, and they're going to pay it back—the vast majority of them. They're not going to do what happened here with those career colleges. These are real people. This is the Premier's riding. She's paying $12,000 in OSAP right now: "I wanted to continue to" be "a registered practical nurse," go on that pathway program. We need them, right? We all know we need them. "But I can't pursue it right now because there is no OSAP" for me. "Please help students like us who are really in need."

I'll wrap up. We're supporting the motion. I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing it forward. We're not going to stop. I told the Premier that this morning. I made sure he heard me across the hall. It's not over. It's not ending. It's getting worse for these people; it's going to get worse for you—count on it. And if you don't know the stories of the people who are living in your community, hard-working, honest people who are getting punished by this government's desire to look good, to hide what they did, then there's something wrong. You're not doing your job.

I encourage you to support this motion.

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Speaker, I rise in the House today to talk about strengthening the integrity of Ontario's student financial assistance program. We know that our students are ready to take on the good-paying jobs and careers that drive Ontario's economy, and in order to do that, they need to access the world-class education that we have right here in Ontario.

The Ontario Student Assistance Program, or OSAP, was designed to support real students pursuing real educational opportunities. For decades it has played a vital role in breaking down barriers and building our highly skilled workforce. But recently, following nearly two years of targeted investigations and now a sector-wide audit with the support of KPMG, we have uncovered what appears to be a sophisticated, predatory and criminal scheme to take advantage of students and Ontario taxpayers.

It's despicable, and it left our government no choice but to pause all OSAP payments to students at private institutions while we get to the bottom of this.

The members opposite like to distort the narrative of what has happened here, so I'd like to begin by walking through the timeline.

As part of the ministry's regular oversight, we actively monitor OSAP usage, identify irregularities and investigate tips of alleged misuse. In fact, we've investigated over 3,200 OSAP cases since 2020.

In late 2024, we became concerned about the growing volume of OSAP applications across career colleges. In January 2025, we received a letter from Career Colleges Ontario also highlighting many of the concerns that we had internally. These concerns were furthered when we obtained information from the federal government about certain career colleges in May 2025. From that point, we took our existing inspections and investigation process to the next level, launching enhanced, targeted inspections in July 2025. Then, in May 2026, we issued notices of non-

approval of OSAP eligibility to six institutions, cutting them off and barring them from future OSAP for three years based on what we believe to be misuse of OSAP funding.

But we didn't stop there, Speaker. Our investigations continued, and as we uncovered more concerning evidence of misuse, we recognized this issue was widespread, which is why, in August 2026, we brought in a third-party auditor, KPMG, to assess the broader integrity of OSAP at private post-secondary institutions.

In early October, the matter was referred to the Ontario Provincial Police, and the Auditor General was notified.

The opposition may mock this on their social media, but we cannot overstate how serious these allegations are. For example, preliminary audit findings raised concerns about career college partnerships with recruiters and immigration services. We also uncovered possible third parties completing coursework on behalf of the students, with some entire courses completed in a single day and final exams completed in as little as six minutes. We found alleged students who couldn't even identify the institution they attended, the program they enrolled in or the courses they were taking. We have additional concerns about OSAP applications concentrated in particular geographic areas, including outside of Canada.

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While investigations are ongoing, these preliminary findings suggest potential targeted efforts to defraud the OSAP system for personal gain. Faced with this information, our government had no choice but to pause all OSAP payments associated with private post-secondary institutions while the auditors complete their work.

While the audit is ongoing, we are working as quickly as possible to get to the bottom of this, build a stronger system for hard-working students and hold bad actors accountable. Any individual found to be participating in fraudulent activities will face the consequences, including the loss of eligibility, the loss of accreditation, returning the funding and, potentially, criminal charges.

Let me be clear: We will pursue all avenues to get any improperly used funding back, because every OSAP dollar should only be spent on legitimate students pursuing legitimate educational opportunities. It's what students deserve and it's what taxpayers expect. Anything less than that is unacceptable.

Our government will be coming forward this session with a suite of measures to build a stronger OSAP system for good-acting institutions and students. With this legislation, we're looking at capping OSAP-eligible enrolment; removing OSAP eligibility from predominantly online programs; and cracking down on recruiting and co-ownership with immigration firms.

By capping OSAP-eligible enrolment, we would be keeping OSAP funding at private institutions to a manageable rate, deterring those who may be mass-enrolling students through fraudulent means.

By removing OSAP eligibility from predominantly online programs, we would be stopping bad actors at the source, as investigators have uncovered that online programs are especially vulnerable to the misuse of OSAP funding.

By cracking down on recruiting and co-ownership with immigration firms, we would be ensuring all owners are focused solely on training Ontario's future workforce and not misusing our post-secondary system for other means.

In tandem with our new legislation, we are also working on a new verification process for good-faith institutions to access OSAP again. This framework will be stricter, ensuring stronger oversight and better compliance from our students and our institutions so that every dollar is being spent as intended. We will introduce this legislation in the coming weeks and are working as quickly as possible to get the new verification framework in place by the new year.

I understand the impacts our pause has on hard-working, legitimate students. I'm reading every email, answering phone calls and seeing every single post, but as I outlined earlier, what we have found so far, even in the preliminary phase, was so deeply concerning that we cannot in good conscience flow any OSAP funding until we know for certain it will not be misused.

In the meantime, we're working with banks to establish low-interest loan options to support students through this time of transition, and our audit team is working around the clock to investigate each institution, clear the legitimate ones and get hard-working students access to financial aid once again.

It will take time. As I have said, these are very sophisticated, coordinated schemes we are uncovering, and we need to be thorough. This is our opportunity to build a better system for students and hold these predators accountable.

My message to impacted legitimate students today is that we hear you and we are working efficiently and effectively to bring forward a stronger OSAP for all of you. You deserve an education that is free from fraudulent, abusive and malicious actors so that you can get the high-quality, legitimate skills you need to launch successful, fulfilling careers. That is exactly why we are taking the actions I just outlined to strengthen the integrity of our system.

Speaker, strengthening OSAP integrity is one part of our government's work to ensure Ontario continues to have a world-class post-secondary education system.

As part of our historic $6.4-billion investment in Ontario's public post-secondary sector, we are ensuring our colleges, universities and Indigenous institutes can keep training students, not just for today, but for decades to come.

That is also why we invested $1.7 billion to fund 70,000 more seats in the most high-demand programs right across all of Ontario. With each seat we funded through this investment, we created a new opportunity for a student to land a good-paying, in-demand job. That's 70,000 more opportunities for young people across this province.

We're also making investments to break down financial barriers and get more students the support they need to pursue higher education. That is why our government

invests more than $20 million annually in targeted student access and success initiatives.

Through the Ontario Postsecondary Access and Inclusion Program, we invest $11.4 million annually to support initiatives at 45 post-secondary institutions. These initiatives supported more than 300,000 students to access and succeed in post-secondary education. These are real investments in students who are working hard to reach their real potential.

Last year, we invested $10 million in the First Nations Resource Development Scholarship. That scholarship covers eligible direct educational costs for First Nations students pursuing mining and mining-related programs, so that learners can prepare for rewarding careers closer to home.

And through the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant, we are supporting students pursuing in-demand health care careers in communities that need them the most. To date, our government has invested more than $182 million through the grant to fund the education of over 13,300 future nurses, paramedics and medical laboratory technologists in high-need areas of the province. We also have recently expanded the OLSG to family medicine, with a further $220-million investment to cover the educational costs for more than 2,000 future family doctors.

Speaker, every one of those student financial aid programs has something in common: real people training to become the real workers our communities need. From doctors to mining engineers to nurses and lab techs, we're putting our money into these students' future and, in turn, Ontario's future. That is exactly what student financial aid is meant to do. It is not a source of easy money for bad actors seeking to exploit a system built on trust. Sadly, that is exactly what appears to have happened with OSAP in the private post-secondary sector. And our government is putting a stop to it. We're auditing the entire sector, introducing legislation to strengthen oversight, prevent abuse and ensure stricter compliance, and we're establishing a new, tougher verification process to get good actors back into the OSAP system. This work is not easy. And we recognize the critical impact the pause has on hard-working students.

But let me be very clear: This audit and our legislation and the pauses are entirely necessary based on the current situation. We're taking serious action to solve a serious issue. And we will come back with a stronger OSAP system that will be able to keep supporting legitimate students for decades to come. It is what the students, the institutions and the taxpayers ultimately deserve. And I will not rest until the job is properly done. That is the responsible approach, and it is the approach that the people of Ontario expect from their government. And we will get it done.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise today to speak on behalf of the thousands of Ontario students who are being unfairly punished because of this government's mismanagement, incompetence and negligence when it comes to OSAP—students who have watched their dreams of attending post-secondary education slip away because they can't afford to take on a mountain of debt to go to college or university; career college students whose lives have been upended, who made major life decisions to go to school believing that they would get the OSAP they were approved for but are now being told they are out of luck.

1400

This government has failed every student in Ontario. It has failed to protect the integrity of OSAP and allowed bad actors, some of whom were PC donors, to rob the system.

Speaker, warnings from the Auditor General in 2021 about the lack of inspections of private career colleges were ignored. Three years of urgent red flags from Career Colleges Ontario and the federal government were dismissed. Hundreds of tips that flooded in about suspected OSAP fraud over two and a half years were not followed up on, while thousands of OSAP applications that came from a single IP address were processed, no questions asked.

At the same time, Speaker, our public colleges and universities were being starved of funding and our post-secondary system brought to the brink of collapse. When the government finally did act in February of this year, it wasn't to protect OSAP; it was to divert OSAP grant money that should have been going to students in order to fund the revenue hole they had created in the sector. OSAP grants were gutted and students forced to take on huge debts in order to get an education.

The government said OSAP was unsustainable while shovelling hundreds of millions of OSAP dollars to the private career colleges that have proliferated under this government. In a single year, private career colleges received almost $1 billion in OSAP funding. Seven private colleges received $385 million, as much as every public college combined. Yet students were told that they were to blame for rising OSAP costs. Students at our public colleges and universities were the first to take the hit, and then last month, the government pulled the rug from under career college students by suspending their OSAP payments altogether.

Career college students across this province are desperate, frantic with worry about how they will pay the bills. Many left jobs to return to school. They relocated their families. They are single moms, parents of children with special needs, who are now facing eviction. They are people who did everything right to build a better life for themselves and their families as PSWs, dental hygienists, paramedics and more. Now, they are out of pocket for the tuition they paid, forced to withdraw or watch as their program closes down.

Speaker, our motion calls on this government to provide a concrete plan, within 14 days, for immediate relief for students who have been left to bear the consequences of this government's failure of oversight. Maybe providing a plan at some point next year is not enough. OSAP grants must be restored and students who are enrolled in legitimate programs at institutions that are not under

suspicion must receive the OSAP they were promised. Students are not responsible for this problem.

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

MPP Tyler Watt: It's good to be here debating a very important issue. I think this is one of the biggest scandals that we've ever seen from that government, and that is a high feat because there have been many. While the minister is here, I'd encourage him to go and talk to those students up there. I think I see Omar. They have a lot of great ideas. They can actually give you the reality of what is going on on the ground and not just the key points that the government keeps handing you to spew, day in, day out, here.

I will be voting in favour of this motion because students desperately need relief, but I want to be clear that this motion does not go nearly far enough. The motion simply asks the government to come back with a plan after 14 days. Yes, we need a plan. My colleague from Ottawa South told you the things that we need immediately. We need action now. I cannot emphasize enough what has happened to thousands of students across this province.

We started off last February with this government scapegoating students in public colleges and universities. The Premier is saying, "Well, they're wasting their OSAP on fancy watches and cologne, and they're taking basket-weaving courses. OSAP has become unsustainable, so that's why we have to cut your grants. That's why we want you to incur more debt to pursue that education and training that you need."

Well, yes, we know that OSAP was unsustainable, that none of that was true—we know that wasn't true at the time; it was a ridiculous statement by the Premier. But the program was unsustainable because of this government. They created a loophole for these bad actors in the private college sector to completely abuse and defraud OSAP and this government and taxpayers. They've known about this for years. In 2023, they were warned about it multiple times, in 2024, warned about it again, and in 2025, warned about it again.

The minister keeps repeating, "These are very serious allegations." Yes, they are very serious. So why did it take him three years to act? Why did it take the Premier three years to finally say something about this? The Premier talks a big game about being a great businessman. You'd think if you were losing hundreds of millions of dollars to fraud that you would do something about it.

I guess it's tough because we never sit here. We were gone for five months. I've been talking about this scandal for months. And we knew when we found out in October just how bad it is, and every single day it gets worse and worse and worse.

We need the government to reverse its cuts, restore assistance to innocent students and take responsibility for what happened. They talk a big game about being accountable to Ontarians, the taxpayers and students. There's no accountability here. Your feelings don't put food on their tables. Your feelings and your concern don't pay their rent. Your feelings don't pay their tuition. Speaker, this minister and this government's actions have completely thrown the lives of thousands of students into complete chaos.

I want to remind the minister that in estimates, just days before this sweeping change to the private colleges all getting cut off from OSAP, I asked—this is before we knew the story—"Why is there so much money in grants going to private colleges?" And the minister said, "We've changed it to loans." Okay, I accepted that. That was Thursday. The story from Canadian Press comes out that day, after estimates.

Monday, I hold a press conference with some of those students up there to highlight how their lives have been affected by these disastrous, chaotic changes of OSAP, and we brought attention to the story in the Canadian Press, which, to me, blew the lid off of just how egregious this scandal is. The following day, the minister comes out and says he's referred it to the OPP.

So what changed from Thursday to Tuesday? What changed, especially knowing that he knew about this for years? If they were that serious of allegations that he keeps saying—and they were; they are very serious allegations—what took years to act? At best, this is incompetence—at best.

And who are suffering the consequences of this? Students—students in the public sector suffering the consequences, taking on more debt. I have countless stories, by the way, of how many people have actually lost money on their OSAP loan. So not only do they lose their grants, they're losing their loan. Young people are having to decide if it's even worth pursuing post-secondary education because of all the debt that they're going to incur.

Students at private institutions who I've met are mostly millennials, are mostly people who are going into, possibly, their second careers, trying to better their lives, trying to better the lives of their family, of their kids. These are 30-year-olds, 40-year-olds, some 50-year-olds who are going to try to become a PSW, an early childhood educator, paralegals, dental hygienists, lab techs. We need these people working. They were seven weeks into their program when this government took a sledgehammer to the program, now citing systemic fraud. Why did this government let it go on this long?

Let's recap: They created the loophole. Other provinces have closed that loophole. I get it: We needed it during COVID, when post-secondary and education needed to move online during those uncertain times. Other provinces have closed that loophole. This government didn't. So much for respect for the taxpayers, eh? We're just seeing hundreds of millions just funnelling out to a handful of private career colleges. That, again, I must repeat, this government was aware of; was repeatedly told, "There is potential fraud. Do something about it."

1410

After they ignored these calls from the actual private sector in 2023—I believe there were four times when they tried to let them know something was going on—in 2024, the sector said, "Call the police. This is serious fraud." Police weren't called until October 2026. So, Speaker,

you'll have to excuse me that I'm not buying what this minister is trying to sell.

It's truly a shame that today we gave this government an opportunity to actually be transparent and accountable with taxpayers, with students, and they voted down our motion. In public accounts, my colleague MPP Fairclough put forward a motion to the committee, who could get the Auditor General to do a full audit and investigation of this OSAP scandal. I debated before the NDP debated. The Conservative member straight up said, "We're voting it down," and gave me a list of reasons, which I already had predicted that they were going to say. How does that go to show that this government cares about being accountable? They don't. How does that go to show that they respect taxpayer dollars? They don't. Time and time again, they have truly shown us their incompetence, at best. It's astonishing.

I want to say that this is not just about the private career college scandal. It is about a government that has systematically made post-secondary education less affordable and much less accessible. Let's not forget that for eight years they were starving public colleges and universities of funding, to the point where 10,000 staff members were laid off in colleges across Ontario, to the point where hundreds of programs were being shut down. They came in last minute with a welcome funding injection, but it was too late. One of Algonquin's campuses in Perth already shut down—hundreds of programs still gone, people unable to complete programs they were halfway through.

A student that I spoke to in Ottawa, she was in the paralegal program at Algonquin College, a public college. That program got cancelled. Where did she go? And I think this was by design, by the way, because we know this government absolutely loves to privatize everything. Her only other option to pursue the paralegal career was to go to the private career college in Ottawa. Seven weeks into her program, guess what happened? OSAP, gone.

This government told them, "We will give you that loan." They waited for seven weeks. They learned from the media that their OSAP was getting cut off—so much for respect for Ontarians. It's disgraceful. What is that person supposed to do? That's why we need action now. We needed it yesterday. We needed it years ago, when this government was first warned that there was fraud happening in the OSAP system.

I am perplexed as to why it took so long to get here and it is painfully obvious to me that this government is trying to sweep this all under the rug. Their key message and narrative is to focus on the bad actors. They're always putting blame elsewhere. It's always someone else's fault. It's time that they take accountability and it's time that they actually fix OSAP, because students should not be suffering the consequences of this government's action—they shouldn't.

They talk a big game about making jobs and getting people into good-paying jobs. This is throwing thousands of students out of that. This is throwing thousands of students into chaos and literally ripping the rug from underneath them so they can no longer pursue that job. It's ironic, right? This minister gets to completely screw up this program under his watch. He gets to keep his job. These students don't even have an opportunity to get a job anymore, thousands and thousands of students. This situation is so dire and it should have been dealt with a long time ago.

This government has created two crises with this: an accountability crisis involving potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in questionable OSAP spending at private career colleges, and an affordability and access crisis affecting students at private and public colleges and universities, who are being made to pay for this government's failures. This motion acknowledges both crises. I will support it, but I cannot urge enough how much more needs to be done for students now.

These people can't afford to wait. They can't. I've heard a story about someone who is living in her car with her son and her dogs. Think about that. Is this the Ontario that you're proud of? This was a direct result of what you did to OSAP. I have received so many emails, I can't even count, so many direct messages on social media, people just sharing their absolute heartbreaking stories.

I just don't understand how members from this side aren't being more vocal about it. I get that it's a massive screw-up, but do something about it. Take accountability. Make things right for these students. Make things right for these families. There are people who were depending on this OSAP loan so they could go to school and still provide for their families, so they could still put food on the table, so they could pay their rent. A lot of them are facing eviction, have been evicted, are now facing homelessness. This is a generational mess-up, and I don't know how we recover from this. The thing is, it's November 2 now. Many have already dropped out. A lot of this is just too late. They can't afford to wait until January 2027 for whatever this plan is going to be.

I hope that the plan will be collaborative. I hope that it will include students that are up there. I hope that it's actually going to talk to people that are on the ground and figure out what we can do to improve OSAP. It's long overdue for an actual revamp. I'm not going to hold my breath on that one, but that's what I would like to see.

The point that I need to keep repeating so I can combat the point that they keep repeating is, why did it take so long to escalate these concerns? Someone tells you you're being robbed; you call the police. It took them years.

Today's Canadian Press revelations make this timeline even more absurd and concerning. According to newly filed court documents, the ministry recorded more than 220 tips, complaints, referrals and investigations relating to three Academy of Learning campuses since January 2024. It is nearly three years later, and we're just dealing with this now? These included allegations that recruiters were completing OSAP applications on behalf of students, uploading documents, completing coursework for students, in some cases allegedly using OSAP as a marketing and recruitment tool. I've seen the posts online. It's absurd.

I have a very hard time believing that that didn't make its way to the ministry. These were not simply isolated

concerns; they were repeated allegations involving potentially serious misuse of public money. The ministry was receiving warnings from multiple sources over an extended period of time, so how many warnings does a government need before it finally takes action?

In January and May 2025, we had more warnings. January 15: Career Colleges Ontario identified 10 schools with significant issues in OSAP usage. May: The feds raised concerns. By this point, the ministry had received warnings from the sector, complaints about individual institutions and concerns from federal officials, and the government cannot reasonably claim it had no warning that something was wrong.

When they want to act fast, they've proven they can do it, so what took so long with this? That's just what I don't understand, and that is why they should have voted in support of our motion today to get the Auditor General to investigate this.

1420

There are so many questions. I get that the government wants to protect themselves, but at the end of the day, someone needs to be accountable, and more importantly, we need to fix this mess. We need to make these students whole again—those that have been thrown into chaos, those that can't pay their rent, those that can't pursue their education to get trained for a job that they were trying to work at so they could improve their lives and their families' lives.

We owe it to them. That's why we were elected to come here, to improve people's lives—not to cause life-changing issues, to improve their lives. They have done the opposite. So take accountability, apologize, atone, actually do something now to start addressing those issues. They're dealing with costs of living. They're dealing with all the issues that people are facing, but they didn't expect to have the rug pulled out from underneath them this way.

They were promised OSAP in the summer. They were enrolled and then abandoned by this government. I don't know how you can do that to people. You had examples like in Kingston, where Trillium College had just passed an inspection in the summer. So why are they getting cut off? Why are those students suffering the consequences? You're painting everyone with the same brush.

Was there a problem with the inspections? Again, was this incompetence, or was it something bigger? We deserve answers. Ontarians deserve answers. And I sincerely hope that we fix this because students can't wait. They cannot afford to wait.

So I will be voting in favour of this motion. I thank my colleagues for bringing this forward, for bringing attention to this very serious story.

We need students to know that this government, that their elected officials have their backs, because they have abandoned them. We are here fighting for them, and they deserve to be made whole. They deserve a government that listens to them, that fights for them, that improves their lives, not one that gets in the way of them just trying to better their life.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: When discussing the issue we are today, it's important to note that the Auditor General was informed of this issue weeks ago.

Speaker, when our government was elected for a historic third mandate, we were elected to fulfill a promise: a promise to protect Ontario. Because just a few weeks prior to that election, our world experienced what we now know was the start of the largest trade disruption we've seen in decades. And with every threat that was launched at Canada came a threat against Ontario's workers, families and businesses, and that is something our government simply could not accept.

Since we have come into office, we've stood shoulder to shoulder with Ontario workers, businesses and hard-working families. We've stood toe to toe against bullies, we've stood up for our homeland and we've stood steadfast in the face of adversity because that's what needs to be done to protect jobs, protect communities and protect everything that makes our great province an incredible place to live.

Speaker, our support for Ontario's world-class colleges, universities and Indigenous institutes has been no different—absolutely no different. When federal changes to international student policy launched Canada's post-secondary sector into unprecedented instability, threatening the system's ability to deliver high-quality education and build Ontario's talent pipeline, we were there for our institutions—like Ontario Tech, Trent Durham and Durham College—and students, investing $1.3 billion to stabilize the sector and ensure they can continue delivering a world-class education.

And when the federal Liberal government destabilized the sector yet again with further policy changes in 2025, we stepped up with nearly $1 billion to expand enrolment in critical, economy-driving sectors like the region of Durham, the largest upper-tier area in the province of Ontario. Because we know, in order to protect Ontario, to protect our students, our workers, our businesses and communities like Whitby and the seven other cities and towns that comprise the region of Durham, we must protect our colleges, universities and Indigenous institutes as well.

Clearly, our post-secondary institutions are the pipeline that builds our future workforce. It is these schools that are educating the next life-saving surgeon, entrepreneur and skilled worker who will drive our economy in their future careers.

If we want Ontario to have a competitive workforce tomorrow, we need to ensure that Ontario's learners, like my granddaughters, Sophia and Annette, can continue to access high-quality post-secondary education for generations to come. That's exactly what our government is doing.

For example, up in northeastern Ontario, the Ontario government has invested $60 million to fund 2,946 additional seats at Algoma University, Nipissing University, Collège Boréal, Sault College, Northern College,

Canadore College, Cambrian College and the Université de Hearst to connect students to good-paying, in-demand careers.

Some of the university presidents had this to say about that level of investment:

"Algoma University welcomes this important investment in new funded post-secondary space. For Algoma University, targeted growth funding will support our ability to expand access and build capacity in high-demand programs across the communities we serve. We also see significant opportunity for continued investment across a wider range of disciplines.... We thank Minister Quinn and his team for their leadership and partnership."

Another quote from Dr. Kevin Wamsley, who's the president and vice-chancellor of Nipissing University:

"We are grateful to the government of Ontario for this significant investment in post-secondary education and workforce development. At Nipissing University, these funded seats will help us expand opportunities in high-demand fields such as nursing and education, supporting the preparation of the next generation of health care professionals and teachers who are essential to the well-being and success of our communities. This investment strengthens our ability to provide students with a high-quality, personalized learning experience while helping address critical workforce needs across northern Ontario and the province."

There's more on that, but our work is not done.

Speaker, in 2018, the Ontario Auditor General warned that changes introduced by the previous Liberal government to OSAP were financially unsustainable and would cause program costs to double. That was a clear warning about the long-term sustainability of student financial assistance in Ontario, and it's a warning that cannot be ignored if we want to protect access to post-secondary education for future generations.

That's why, in February 2026, our government announced a comprehensive package of reforms to place Ontario's post-secondary sector on a sustainable footing for decades to come. Our government invested a historic $6.4 billion, investing in colleges, universities and Indigenous institutes—the largest investment in post-secondary education in Ontario and, yes, Canadian history—a modernized funding model, an updated tuition framework, and stronger OSAP. Our government's objective was clear: to protect access to world-class post-secondary education for students while ensuring the system remains financially sustainable for future generations—my granddaughters, other people's granddaughters, and young people pursuing academic aspirations.

Speaker, sustainability is not an abstract concept—and I know that you appreciate that. Sustainability means ensuring that today's students can receive assistance without jeopardizing the ability of future students to do the same. We all aspire to that. Sustainability means making sure financial aid continues to exist, not just next year, but 10, 20 and 30 years from now. Sustainability means recognizing when a program has drifted away from its original purpose and taking responsibility to right the ship—that's why we informed the Auditor General of this issue weeks ago—and that is exactly what our government is doing.

1430

When announcing our new funding model in February, our government noted that Ontario was facing multiple pressures simultaneously. Federal decisions had significantly reduced international student revenues. And post-secondary institutions, like Ontario Tech, Trent Durham and Durham College in the region of Durham, were experiencing increasing demand for costly, high-quality programs. At the same time, our OSAP program had become increasingly out of step with other jurisdictions across Canada. Ignoring these realities would have been easy; leadership required confronting them.

Speaker, consider the scale of the challenge: Changes to federal international student policies have resulted in an estimated $2 billion in lost annual revenue for Ontario's post-secondary institutions. And the pressures on student financial assistance were just as significant. With increasing demand for OSAP, combined with federal changes to career college grants, the program was facing $2.3 billion in financial pressures for fall 2026 alone. And without action, those pressures were projected to grow to $2.7 billion in the years ahead. Those are not small numbers. That is billions of dollars in additional pressure on a program that generations of students depend on. Doing nothing was simply not an option.

And let's remember how we got here. For years, under the previous Liberal government, Ontario's OSAP framework provided up to 15% of assistance through grants, with the remaining 85% provided through loans. But in 2017, the Wynne government dramatically changed that ratio. And just one year later, the Auditor General warned that these changes were financially unsustainable. It's clear that the members opposite may want to forget that history, the legacy of the Liberals, propped up by the NDP—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Order in the House. I cannot hear the member's presentation.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker.

Students and taxpayers deserve to know the facts. Our government inherited a system that was increasingly out of step with the rest of Canada. And rather than continue down that same unsustainable path, we made the responsible decision to act.

Our new framework brings Ontario more closely in line with other jurisdictions, including the federal government's approach to student financial assistance. In doing so, we are ensuring assistance remains available for future generations while encouraging a reasonable personal investment in education, similar to the approaches used elsewhere across Canada.

Part of this announcement also included establishing the enhanced Student Access Guarantee. This program ensures that no qualified student is kept from pursuing higher education due to financial need. And I'm pleased to say that this program is already in place and supporting

students at institutions across the province. That is on top of our other student financial aid programs, like the First Nations Resource Development Scholarship and the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant, which is supporting future nurses, lab techs, paramedics and, recently, family doctors throughout Ontario.

Speaker, responsible government means making decisions for the future. Our changes in February have three key pillars in mind: (1) preparing students for rewarding, in-demand careers that students want and Ontario needs; (2) preserving access to high-quality post-secondary education while supporting students and making an appropriate investment in their own future; and (3) ensuring long-term sustainability for the entire post-secondary sector.

Taken together, these principles reflect a simple but important reality: Student financial assistance does not exist in isolation, does it? It's part of a much broader system. A sustainable OSAP program sustains our colleges and universities. Sustainable institutions produce skilled graduates. Skilled graduates strengthen Ontario's economy. A stronger economy creates the foundation for continued investments in education and support for future generations of students.

Let's be clear that this is not a series of disconnected policies. It's an integrated strategy. That strategy includes funding institutions responsibly: Ontario Tech University, Trent University, Durham College. It includes creating more seats in high-demand programs. It includes maintaining one of the lowest tuition-increase frameworks in Canada. It includes strengthening the Student Access Guarantee for low-income students. And it includes ensuring that OSAP remains financially viable for generations to come.

Speaker, these reforms strengthened the long-term sustainability of OSAP and ensured it continues to support students for generations to come. This government chose responsibility. It chose sustainability because we believe in a future for these students, one with real potential, not false hope.

1440

The February reforms were not the final step; they were the first step. They laid the foundation for a stronger and more sustainable OSAP system. They underscored the principle that every public dollar must deliver value. They recognized that financial assistance must be available not only for today's students but also for future generations. And they reflected an understanding that protecting access requires protecting sustainability.

We owe it to students, hard-working families and taxpayers to have the best post-secondary system in the world. That means supporting students, that means funding institutions and that means making responsible decisions when reform is needed. That is exactly what our government did in February 2026.

Those actions demonstrated foresight and responsibility to ensuring that OSAP remains sustainable—as it should—for generations to come.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: This Premier turned the lives of so many people upside down when he cut OSAP, even going so far as to blame students for fraud. But now it is clear that the real bad actors were fraudulent private career colleges. So many people have had their lives thrown into crisis by this government's decision to suspend OSAP.

In Hamilton, Leanne owned her own business. She closed it to go back to school and was halfway through with her program. She has three children. Since the government suspended her OSAP, she could no longer afford school and she's now working contract part-time to try and make ends meet.

Antonio is a single father raising two daughters. He began the addiction and mental health worker program with a dream of helping others. Now he is left without OSAP funds to finish his education.

The Auditor General warned you that you were not protecting students, that you were not doing your job. Now you've taken OSAP away from thousands of students like these hard-working Hamiltonians. Meanwhile, Ontario's PCs have received hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations from leaders of the private career colleges who are most connected to the OSAP abuse. Surprised?

Why are students and families paying the price for your incompetence, or perhaps your inside deals? These families are in a terrible situation through no fault of their own—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Can I remind the member to please speak through the Chair?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The Minister of Education says he has nothing to apologize for—seriously. This mess is entirely the minister's fault—through the Speaker. So I say apologize, return those donations and pass our motion today. Students deserve so much better than this minister.

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

Mr. Ted Hsu: Well, here we are debating what to do with this ever-deepening OSAP failure by this government. We're discovering how extensive this is. There's a network of recruiters, consultants, internationally organized scammers and a pyramid scheme with ghost students then paid to solicit and refer more students. It feels like more than just a criminal ring; it feels like the PC government let a whole underground OSAP economy develop.

We're going to talk about the short term today, but in the long term, I think we need to publicly uncover how this OSAP economy works. That is why I'm proud of my colleague MPP Lee Fairclough for moving a motion in her public accounts committee for the Auditor General to investigate and then report publicly. I know the government is getting KPMG to report, but that's not going to be public. Unfortunately, the government members voted down this motion in committee. I think they're just afraid of what the Auditor General is going to uncover with the powers that the Auditor General has.

In the short term, about what we're debating this afternoon, I want to help this government help hard-working

people who just want to get trained, take up a job and get ahead by filling a needed job in our economy. I want to help, so I won't call for this minister to resign today. One reason is because he's already the replacement. Because this government's knowledge of this ever-expanding OSAP scandal started before August 16, 2024, under the previous minister.

What I'm going to do today is make suggestions for what the government could do right now. We don't need, I think, to call on the government to come up with a plan in 14 days, like the motion that the NDP has brought up, because I think that we can just tell them what they can do starting today.

If you talk to managers at private career college campuses, you'll discover many ideas to protect the real students, because there are instructors and administrators who care about the students, who want to see their students succeed. So here's what this government could do. Number one: Ask how the college verifies the identity of each student and whether they maintain regular progress reports for each student. Do they report to the OSAP inspection and compliance unit when they detect a student who doesn't seem to be studying but who got OSAP?

All of the students should be interviewed individually. Because teachers, by interviewing them individually, should get to know the students well enough so that when they hand in homework, the teacher is able to say, "Hmm, this homework doesn't sound like you. Did you really do that homework?" Because a teacher who cares is going to do that. That should be part of best practices.

The government should do some interviews. If they find fake students, then suspend the colleges who didn't detect them. Stop just those colleges from being eligible for OSAP. OSAP already does some random checks, so this is not a new thing.

Some colleges do check their students' ID. They did report fake students. They did report students who dropped out right after or stopped working very hard right after the halfway mark, which is the point at which you don't have to return your OSAP grants. This should be part of best practices.

Talk to students and make students show that they know how to log on to their OSAP account, the National Student Loans Service Centre account, because workers at a college I spoke to have found that many did not even know how to do that, which is evidence that maybe they didn't put in their own application for OSAP. Checking each student for that knowledge should be a best practice.

Here's something else that you could do—we don't need to wait 14 days for a plan: Ask if colleges have internal IT controls. For example, one college used template files that are coded with hidden codes to check for students who are just copying files and sending them in as their homework. Ask if they have a person on the staff who can do things like find out if different students are logging in from the same IP address or whether ChatGPT is being used. Some colleges have this capacity, and it should be a part of best practices.

Finally, the inspection of colleges in apparently in good standing should be prioritized. I asked one of the colleges in my riding whether KPMG has contacted them yet. The answer is no, even though KPMG has been contracted by the government to investigate. Because if some colleges could be cleared more quickly or more easily, then more students could go back to completing their course work and contributing to the economy and making a better life for themselves.

You know, maybe KPMG could even investigate the government's own inspection process. Because this morning, the minister could not tell me, for Trillium College in Kingston, why, if they passed an inspection only a couple of months ago, they still couldn't have OSAP funding to let their students finish their studies.

These are just some suggestions, Speaker, and I'll leave the last five minutes for my colleague from Ajax.

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

1450

MPP Robin Lennox: Speaker, it's my honour to rise on behalf of the people of Hamilton Centre, many of whom have been devastated by this government's reckless changes to OSAP.

The Minister of Colleges and Universities knew that there was suspicious activity at some career colleges that demanded urgent investigation. They received hundreds of tips alerting them to suspected fraud, including thousands of OSAP applications coming from just one IP address. But instead of acting quickly, this government let this suspicious activity continue, grew the problem into a disaster, and then cut thousands of students off OSAP without any warning. The lack of remorse and accountability from this minister is truly astonishing. He refuses to resign, despite hundreds of millions of public dollars having been potentially misused and thousands of students' lives and careers disrupted. I'd like to know why the minister feels that he should be able to keep his job while students in Hamilton are contemplating dropping out of school because of this government's failures.

I think it's important that you hear the stories of real people who have been impacted.

Naveed is a massage therapy student with one year left in his program, but with two children at home and the rising cost of living, he may have to drop out because of the lack of OSAP.

Dhelia is a mother of a young child with autism, who chose to pursue a community social service work program because she wanted to provide more stability for her family and to help other families in the future. She has maintained a 97% GPA, but she is now facing financial hardship because of something completely out of her control.

Mark is a full-time youth pastor studying part-time at McMaster Divinity College. Because this minister has lumped all private institutions together, Mark now faces a $4,000 shortfall that his family can't possibly absorb.

Mark, Dhelia, Naveed and thousands of others deserve better, which is why we are calling on the government to

vote in favour of our motion for an immediate plan to support students impacted by this government's reckless mismanagement of OSAP.

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

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I rise to speak in support of this motion today.

Quite frankly, this government made an absolute mess of OSAP, and now they're leaving students behind all across the province. Students shouldn't have to bear the cost of this government's failure to do its job.

The average age of a career college student is about 34 years old. So we're not talking about students who have decided to go to college or university right out of high school. We're talking about people who have decided that they want to start a new career or improve their skills so that they can get a promotion. They enrolled in a program, and they made a plan for their future based on the funding that they were told that they would receive. They were approved, they were enrolled, and now they are abandoned by this government. They're wondering whether they can finish school, whether they can pay for their rent or their groceries. In this House, we've heard so many stories of mature students from all across this province who just wanted to do a little bit better for themselves and are now wondering how they're going to be able to take care of their kids and their families and whether everything that they've worked towards is about to disappear. They deserve answers and help now—not in 14 days, but right now.

The government wants to talk about protecting the system and protecting taxpayer dollars, but this was their job all along—regulating schools, following up on warnings. The sector's own association, Career Colleges Ontario, began raising concerns way back in 2023. In 2024, it asked the government to involve police. Well, the current minister has been in his position since 2024. He had time to do something. The government had time to do something. They knew that there were concerns. They had opportunities to act. And yet, the money kept on flowing like a never-ending waterfall. This simply did not come out of nowhere. Either people turned a blind eye or, quite frankly, are incompetent.

In one year, we know that seven career colleges accounted for $385 million in provincial OSAP grants. And 95% of the increase in provincial student grants went to private career college students. Early last week, the member for Don Valley West—an accountant, a banker, somebody who has worked in finance—remarked that the Minister of Finance worked on Bay Street and the Treasury Board Secretariat approved the money going out the door. And yet that money kept on flowing to campuses that were under suspicion. Those numbers, that reality, should have demanded suspicion. Instead, this government told students that OSAP was unsustainable in February of this year, and in doing so they blamed international students, they blamed the federal government and they blamed everyone else but themselves.

And those same institutions—and we're talking about public colleges and universities for one second—were the ones that were sending out the acceptance letters; those were the ones that this government knew were doing that and, at the end of the day, students ended up paying the price, going from a system of grants now back to loans. But here at the private college sector, now we're just talking about loans; we're talking about loans for students who want to be able to go and get ahead.

So we know that there are bad actors in the career college sector. I agree with the government: They should be investigated, they should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. But the government and the minister failed to do that when they were warned, and now it's too late, so that's why I'm calling for the Minister of Colleges and Universities to resign.

A student attending a school that has done everything right should not lose their education because this government failed them. Some students are months away from finishing; some are training for a new career; some are parents, trying to build a better life for their kids, just like my mom was after I was born. She was a waitress and, after I was born, she decided, "I don't want to continue being a waitress, working in a restaurant with irregular hours." So she went out and studied at a private career college to become a legal secretary, and she's been a legal secretary now for more years than I can even count. It's those students that were let down by this government today; it's those students that this government should be answering to, that they should be apologizing to and they should've been doing everything possible to make it right by those students—the ones who are just working hard and want to get ahead a little bit.

So, yes, Speaker, this is on the Minister of Colleges and Universities, because the government could've stopped this. They were warned. And, failing all of that, even just in May of this year, they should've had a plan going into the new school year, but they didn't. In early October, I spoke to one degree-granting institution. Those students were left in the dark. They expected an OSAP letter on August 1, and it never came.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to welcome the members of the Canadian Federation of Students, some of whom I met today.

If somebody steals $10 from you, you might not notice. If somebody steals $100 from you, you'll probably notice. If somebody steals $1,000 from you, you're going to call the police. So what is the trigger point for the Conservative government here? How much has to be stolen from them before they wake up and realize, "Hey, maybe we should do something about this"?

Well, the trigger point for this government, apparently, is $1 billion. And not $1 billion overall: $1 billion in OSAP handed out to private career colleges in a single year. That was their trigger point before they decided to call the police. In fact, not only was it the accountants that should have found this, they got 220 tips from all kinds of

people, including Career Colleges Ontario and the federal government, warning that you are getting ripped off—that the taxpayers of Ontario are being ripped off.

So why did they ignore all of these warnings? Well, it could be that the government received $150,000 in donations—the Conservative Party, $150,000 in donations—from private career college executives. And even the transport minister, Prabmeet Sarkaria, and MPP Sandhu attended an opening of the Academy of Learning Career College and that private career college—their executives donated $8,000 to the Conservative Party, and they got $219 million in OSAP. That's a 2,737,000% return on investment. So for every dollar that they donated to the Conservative Party, the Conservative Party gave them 2.7-million taxpayer dollars back.

To the students of Ontario: You are being ripped off. You need to stand up. On November 5, there's a student strike; be sure to participate.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: The Ontario NDP is calling on the Ford government to restore OSAP and provide an urgent plan to deliver relief for students who are paying the price for his failure to weed out predatory private career colleges.

Earlier this year, the Premier and his post-secondary minister took a hatchet to OSAP, forcing Ontario students to choose between their future and a lifetime of debt.

1500

The Premier accused students of wasting OSAP funds while his government ignored signs of corruption in the private college system raised year after year since 2022. In the meantime, the Conservative government received $150,000 in donations from sketchy private career colleges.

Is there a connection? Well, what is without question is that the government is punishing all students at all private colleges for the government's failures. This includes paramedics, PSWs, ECEs, dental hygienists—all blocked from continuing their education.

Ontario has the lowest per-student funding in Canada for post-secondary education, about $6,000 less per student than in other provinces, and this is the result of years of cuts by both Liberal and Conservative governments.

And let's be clear: This government does not protect taxpayer dollars. They reward their own members, who have defrauded the government with false expense claims. Remember COVID? They excused 14,000 ineligible businesses that defrauded the government of taxpayer money. They've committed $2.2 billion taxpayer dollars for a private luxury spa. They have the most bloated and expensive bureaucracy in the history of the province of Ontario, and let's not forget the Premier's private luxury jet.

The shameful waste of taxpayer dollars by this government is glaringly obvious. So let's call this draconian decision to freeze all OSAP for all students at private career colleges what it is: a grand performance to cover up what you were told to clean up years ago.

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

MPP Wayne Gates: I certainly support the motion on OSAP. I like to listen to these debates and then kind of figure out what I'm going to say. But let's say that in 2023 they knew about this issue; in 2024, they knew about the issue; in 2025, they knew about the issue. And what did they do? Look up there. You guys have got time; look over there: Here's who we're talking about, these students, and back here. I can only see the front here.

Let's talk about it. What did they do? They blamed the kids for running out and buying—

Interjection.

MPP Wayne Gates: —cologne. Think about that. I love cologne; I buy it all the time, by the way. But I'm sure they're not using their OSAP for it.

What else did they do? The same donors that gave you the big cheques were going to your breakfasts for $1,000 a plate. I don't know what you're serving for $1,000 a plate, but it must be awfully good. Then they're doing $1,500 for dinner—the same ones being rewarded.

And who's being hurt? Our kids, our grandkids, that's who's being hurt here, some of them through no fault of their own. What have I got, 30 seconds? Okay, I've got 30 seconds—through no fault of their own. They want to make their life better. They want to go and get a diploma so they can go and become a hairdresser, which is a skilled trade. What are we doing? Why are we always doing that?

To your point, my colleague just said it's funny that you said, "Well, we have to do it," yet you had money for a $30-million jet; you had money for some of you to go and party in hotel rooms in Toronto. Yet you can't take care of the most important thing we have and that's our kids, our grandkids and people who want a hand up.

Congratulations to all the students here who are sitting through this. It's hard to sit through this. Trust me, I do it all the time. Thank you for staying here.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: This government had literally hundreds of opportunities in multiple years to deal with bad actors in the private college sector who were robbing the system. They received more than 200 tips about illegal behaviour by just three private career colleges.

In 2021 and again in 2023, the Auditor General said that there was insufficient oversight of private colleges, including inspection failures. In January 2023 and January 2025, Career Colleges Ontario warned they were concerned about OSAP fraud. Civil servants raised concerns about the rapid growth of OSAP in private colleges. In May 2025, the federal government told Ontario there were issues with several schools, and they took action.

But none of that led to any action from this Conservative government. Instead, they blamed students and pulled the rug out from under them by cutting off OSAP completely. It does beg the question why, after so many warnings, they would go after students rather than the colleges they were being warned about, Speaker.

Is it the over $150,000 they received in donations from the career college executives? Is it sheer incompetence? You really have to wonder, Speaker.

But there is no doubt about the impact on students—students like my constituent, who is a father and a husband. He's behind on rent. He can't pay for groceries or textbooks. He applied for school and for OSAP in good faith and now has no idea how he's going to pay his bills. He shouldn't be paying the price for this government's incompetence. The government needs to do better. I encourage all members of this House to vote for this motion calling on the government to table a solution immediately. Students shouldn't pay the price for this government's failures.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Ça me fait plaisir de parler de la motion de ma cheffe. C'était—j'étais pour dire que c'est écoeurant; ce n'est pas un mot que je devrais dire en Chambre. On entend le gouvernement qui dit, tu sais, que c'est une décision de crève-coeur qu'on a dû faire, mais je peux vous dire que c'est une décision sans-coeur qu'ils ont faite, là. Ils n'ont pris aucune considération pour les étudiants. Mais ce ne sont pas juste des jeunes étudiants; ce sont des mères, des pères de famille, ce sont tous des gens qui cherchent à s'améliorer.

Dans le Nord, on est obligé de se déplacer, on est obligé de prendre des—on doit dépenser plus d'argent parce qu'on n'a pas le choix de se déplacer pour avoir de l'éducation. Puis on sait que ça fait trois ans qu'ils le savent, trois ans qu'ils savent qu'il y a de la corruption dans le système. La vérificatrice générale vous a dit à maintes reprises de vérifier là-dedans, qu'il y a quelque chose qui ne sent pas bon dans votre système. Qu'est-ce qu'ils ont fait? Ils l'ont tabletté. Pourquoi? Peut-être que c'est comme tous mes collègues et tous ceux qu'on entend sur ce bord ici de la Chambre parler des 150 000 piastres de donations qu'ils ont eues de ces collèges privés-là. C'est un gouvernement qui est obsédé avec le privé. Ils vont tout faire pour le privé, puis ils vont tout prendre l'argent qui vient du privé au détriment des étudiants qui sont assis là, au détriment de jouer avec la vie du monde.

Qu'ils se disent qu'on fait des décisions de crève-coeur—c'est une décision sans-coeur que vous avez faite. C'est une vraie honte pour vous autres, puis le ministre devrait démissionner. Le premier ministre devrait se mettre à faire sa job et faire certain qu'on protège les étudiants.

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

Ms. Fatima Shaban: Speaker, what does the Premier have to say to Stacy, a mother in my riding of Scarborough Southwest who was counting on the OSAP funding and is now facing a $6,300 tuition bill? Stacy is raising a toddler while studying to become a community service worker. She trusted that the funding she was counting on would be there.

Speaker, she's not alone. Across Ontario, students have made life-altering decisions. Some left their jobs to pursue an education, others took on financial commitments, believing that the assistance they were promised would be there. They planned their futures around commitments from their government.

This government has a responsibility to investigate fraud and protect public funds, of course, but it also has a responsibility to the students who relied on its funding. Those responsibilities are not mutually exclusive. You can investigate bad actors without leaving legitimate students in a financial crisis. You can protect taxpayers without abandoning the very people who follow the rules. Because if Ontarians cannot trust their own government, who can they trust?

So my question to the Premier is simple: Will this government commit to our plan to provide emergency financial relief within 14 days, restore OSAP funding and give students clear timelines for when their money will arrive? Speaker, Stacy in my riding has a deadline. It's time that this government had one too.

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

M^me^ France Gélinas: On est ici aujourd'hui pour débattre d'une motion qui vraiment n'aurait jamais dû en arriver là. Qu'est-ce qu'on a en Ontario? On a un gouvernement qui a décidé de couper les bourses et de donner des prêts parce que les montants, dans les régimes de prêts et bourses, avaient augmenté de près de 1 milliard de dollars.

Mais, si tu regardes pourquoi ça a augmenté de près de 1 milliard de dollars, c'est parce qu'on avait, vraiment, sept collèges privés qui on fait exploser les coûts.

1510

La vérificatrice générale nous l'a dit en 2021. Elle l'a répété en 2023. Il y a des centaines de personnes qui sont allées dire au gouvernement en 2023, 2024, 2025 qu'il y avait de l'abus qui se passait, qu'il y avait de la corruption dans certains collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel. Mais le gouvernement n'était pas intéressé à entendre rien de ça. Ce qui les intéresse, c'est de punir tous les étudiants, incluant les étudiants du Nord, leur dire : « Vous n'aurez plus de bourses. Vous allez avoir des prêts, parce que ça coûte trop cher. »

Maintenant, on est rendu à un point où tous ceux qui vont dans les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel n'ont plus droit au régime de prêts et bourses du tout. Ça veut dire que pour des milliers d'entre elles et d'entre eux, ils ne sont plus capables d'aller à l'école. Ils ne sont plus capables d'avoir une éducation.

La force de l'Ontario, c'est qu'on a une population éduquée, et le gouvernement est en train de changer tout ça pour le pire. Ça n'a pas de bon sens. Quand tu regardes pourquoi ils font ça, bien la raison numéro un—la seule raison, vraiment, qu'on peut trouver—c'est qu'ils ont reçu plus de 150 000 $ de dons de ces collèges-là, les mêmes collèges où la vérificatrice générale nous parle de corruption, les mêmes collèges où on voit les augmentations.

Ça doit changer. Les étudiants et étudiantes ont besoin de prêts et de bourses pour aller à l'école. La motion qu'on a mise de l'avant les aiderait à faire ça. L'éducation passe avant tout.

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

MPP Jamie West: Post-secondary students and families are struggling to make ends meet, and then suddenly the Premier pulls the rug out from under them by cutting OSAP. The Premier tried blaming students for OSAP fraud, and it turns out it was the Conservative government's incompetence and their failure to reel in private career college bad actors who were robbing the system. Now students across the province are left as collateral damage, with more debt, more uncertainty about their future and no OSAP.

The Ontario NDP is calling on the Conservative government to restore OSAP and provide an urgent plan to deliver relief for students who are paying the price for the Conservatives' failure to weed out predatory private career colleges.

Let me tell you about some of these families, Speaker. I want to tell you first about Sophia Lisi. She paid about $10,000 for tuition, not with OSAP, but her program was cancelled because of their incompetence. She's not sure if she will get her money back or if she will have a career in the future or anything that's going to happen because they don't know what they're doing.

Tabitha is a single mom of three. She planned the finances for her young family around the funding she was approved for at the beginning of her course. She was midway into her course when that was ripped away. Now, she's not only worried about finishing her program but about how she's going to pay the bills and support her kids without the financial supports that she already qualified for.

Kiara enrolled in a medical office administration program at CTS. She understands investigating institutions or individuals suspected of OSAP fraud—we all do—but she can't understand why students who have done nothing wrong are having their funding suspended while the investigation occurs.

Nancy is incredibly worried about the anxiety and hardship this has caused her son. She wrote to me. She said, "My son has been attending class for an entire month, dedicated to his education and building his future.

"Having his OSAP funding frozen mid-semester has completely pulled the rug out from under him, leaving him with zero financial support for essential living expenses, rent, groceries, or tuition.

"Punishing every student across Ontario with a blanket sector-wide funding freeze—when compliant schools and honest students have done nothing wrong—inflicts severe, unnecessary hardship and emotional anxiety on young people who acted in good faith."

Adrian is enrolled in the primary care paramedic program. He decided to change the direction of his life through education and going back to school. He's responsible for all of his schooling costs, but without the promised funding, Adrian fears he won't be able to continue his studies if he's not able to afford his basic needs.

This list goes on and on, Speaker. It's a shame that the Conservative government can't see what a mess they made and won't fix it. I really support the leader of the official opposition, Marit Stiles, and the NDP proposal to restore OSAP and provide an urgent plan to provide relief as soon as possible.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: First of all, I want to start by thanking my colleagues for their deeply impassioned speeches and contributions to this debate, and for bringing the voices of so many students and so many families into this chamber, because those are the voices that this government needs to listen to.

I have to say, it was deeply disappointing to hear the comments from the government members and from this minister in particular, once again defending, really, the indefensible—a government that pulled the rug out from under so many students that were undeserving of that treatment and then blamed those students when they knew perfectly well who the bad actors were, and they were just green-lighting them all along, even though they knew. So it is students who are paying the price—literally paying the price right now—and this government could do something about it right now. They could vote in favour of this motion. They could do the right thing, but they're choosing not to.

Instead, they throw around insults and attacks. And you know what? I can take it. I'm not afraid. I've stood up to bigger bullies than that. But I'll tell you what: Every one of us in this room, we're standing up because we know that those students, they deserve better from this government, and they had every right to expect better from their government. And what has happened? They have been let down again and again and again, every single time. We have the lowest-funded post-secondary system in the country—the bottom 20%. I mean, my goodness, a province like Ontario. We are letting down a whole generation of young people who do not believe they see a future in this province.

I meet people every week. I met a young woman just a couple of days ago, Rebecca. She and her husband, they've just given up on the idea of ever owning a home. But you know what? Tragically, a couple of days ago they had a conversation and they said, "You know what? We can't even have a child. We're going to make that decision. We can't have a child." That is where young people, where people in this province are at under this government, under their watch.

They have an opportunity to do something good here: to bring back hope to the people of Ontario. For goodness' sakes, reverses those OSAP cuts, undo the damage that you've created, properly fund our post-secondary institutions.

Do better. The people of Ontario are counting on it.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): MPP Stiles has moved opposition day motion number 1. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1517 to 1527.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): MPP Stiles has moved opposition day motion 1.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gilmour, Alexa	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Glover, Chris	Shaban, Fatima
Blais, Stephen	Gretzky, Lisa	Shamji, Adil
Bourgouin, Guy	Hsu, Ted	Shaw, Sandy
Bowman, Stephanie	Kernaghan, Terence	Smyth, Stephanie
Burch, Jeff	Lennox, Robin	Stiles, Marit
Cerjanec, Rob	Mamakwa, Sol	Tabuns, Peter
Clancy, Aislinn	McCrimmon, Karen	Vanthof, John
Collard, Lucille	McKenney, Catherine	Vaugeois, Lise
Fairclough, Lee	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Watt, Tyler
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy	

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Allsopp, Tyler	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pirie, George
Anand, Deepak	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Quinn, Nolan
Bailey, Robert	Gualtieri, Silvia	Racinsky, Joseph
Beattie, Jeff	Hamid, Zee	Rae, Matthew
Bouma, Will	Hardeman, Ernie	Rickford, Greg
Bresee, Ric	Harris, Mike	Riddell, Brian
Calandra, Paul	Holland, Kevin	Rosenberg, Bill
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Trevor	Sabawy, Sheref
Ciriello, Monica	Jordan, John	Sandhu, Amarjot
Clark, Steve	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Coe, Lorne	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Cooper, Michelle	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Crawford, Stephen	Lahey, Susan	Smith, Dave
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Darouze, George	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Denault, Billy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Dixon, Jess	McGregor, Graham	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dowie, Andrew	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Downey, Doug	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dunlop, Jill	Parsa, Michael	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fedeli, Victor	Piccini, David	Vickers, Paul
Firin, Mohamed	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.
Flack, Rob	Pinsonneault, Steve	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 38; the nays are 68.

1530

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I now declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PLAN TO PROTECT ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2026 (NO. 2)

LOI DE 2026 SUR LE PLAN POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES) (NO 2)

Mr. Crawford, on behalf of Mr. Bethlenfalvy, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 143, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 143, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the minister to lead off the debate.

Hon. Stephen Crawford: Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity. I will share my time with the Minister of Finance and the Solicitor General as well in the 60-minute speaking engagement today.

I am pleased to rise today to speak about the support for our government's 2026 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review: A Plan to Protect Ontario. I want to begin by thanking my colleague the Minister of Finance and his team and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance and congratulate them on delivering the fall economic statement, reflecting the realities of today's economy and the opportunities that lie ahead for Ontario, all while providing a clear and practical road map for navigating a period of considerable economic uncertainty.

At a time when businesses, workers and families continue to watch developments beyond our borders with understandable concern, our government is focused on the things that we can control: creating the right conditions for growth, supporting investment, strengthening key infrastructure and ensuring Ontario remains a place where people can build successful futures.

One of the themes running through this fall economic statement is the importance of preparedness. No government can prevent or predict any external challenge. No jurisdiction can completely shield itself from economic volatility abroad. But governments do have a responsibility to make decisions that leave their economies better positioned to withstand those pressures, to adapt to changing circumstances and seize new opportunities when they emerge.

That is precisely what the fall economic statement is accomplishing. It is why our government continues to support investments in infrastructure. It is why we remain focused on improving Ontario's competitiveness. And it is why we are taking tangible steps to strengthen supply chains, modernize service delivery and invest in the digital foundations that will increasingly support economic growth in the years ahead.

I am proud of the work being carried out by my ministry and how it contributes directly to those objectives. Whether it's through the Buy Ontario Act, the modernization of ServiceOntario, the introduction of digital credentials or

investments that support digital sovereignty, our focus is fundamentally the same: ensuring that Ontario is prepared for the future and that government services keep pace with the needs of the people and businesses we serve.

Speaker, a key measure highlighted in this fall economic statement is our government's Buy Ontario Act. That legislation reflects an important reality about today's economy: Strong supply chains are no longer merely an operational concern; instead, they have become a strategic priority. For years, discussions about procurement largely focused on administrative considerations. Governments acquired goods and services, contracts were awarded and the conversation understandably centred on price and value for money. Those considerations will always be important because taxpayers rightfully expect governments to spend public dollars responsibly, and they should.

But the economic landscape is changing, and governments must be prepared to adapt accordingly. Increasingly, decision-makers are paying closer attention to questions of reliability, availability and capacity. They are asking whether domestic suppliers are positioned to meet demand. They are considering how supply chain disruptions can affect essential services, and they are recognizing that procurement decisions have broader economic consequences beyond the immediate contract itself. That is the context in which the Buy Ontario Act was developed, Speaker.

Ontario's broader public sector purchases approximately $30 billion worth of goods and services every single year. That represents significant purchasing power, and with that purchasing power comes an even greater opportunity to support economic activity right here at home. The Buy Ontario Act mandates that public sector organizations prioritize Ontario and Canadian goods and services whenever it's feasible and appropriate, and it recognizes that strong domestic supply chains provide benefits that extend well beyond a single transaction. They support workers, they create opportunities for businesses, they help build expertise and industrial capacity and they contribute to a stronger economy overall.

I have had the opportunity to speak with businesses, manufacturers and procurement professionals across the province, Speaker, and their message is clear and consistent: They want greater opportunities to compete and invest, they want to expand and they want confidence that Ontario remains committed to fostering an environment where local businesses can succeed. The Buy Ontario Act helps advance those objectives directly. It recognizes that procurement can play a constructive role in supporting economic development by addressing the fact that capacity does not appear overnight. Businesses invest when they see demand, and sustained demand often creates the conditions for expansion, innovation and job creation.

This is one of the reasons that the Buy Ontario Act aligns so naturally with the broader goals of the fall economic statement. At a time when jurisdictions around the world are examining how to strengthen their economic foundations, Ontario is taking practical action. We are using the tools available to support workers, strengthen businesses and build the kind of economic capacity that will serve our province for years to come.

Of course, a competitive economy depends on more than just strong supply chains alone. It also depends on effective public services and governments that can respond to people's needs efficiently. Equally so, it depends on service delivery that reflects the realities of how people live and work today, which brings me to another important point of our work.

Speaker, this fall economic statement highlights our government's work to introduce secure and optional digital credentials to the people of Ontario. I believe this initiative represents an important next step in a broader effort to modernize how people interact with government services.

1540

Let me be clear: Digital credentials are not a standalone initiative; they are part of a larger transformation that has been under way for several years through ServiceOntario and through our continued efforts to make government services more accessible, convenient and responsive to the needs of the people of Ontario.

When people talk about economic competitiveness, they often think of major infrastructure projects, industrial developments, or private sector investment. Those things matter a lot, as people know, but competitiveness can also be influenced by what may appear to be simpler interactions: How long does it take to access a public service? How many forms need to be completed? How many times does someone need to provide the same information over and over again? How much time do individuals and businesses spend navigating administrative processes that could be made easier?

Those questions matter because time matters. Convenience matters. Efficiency matters. Modern service delivery has a meaningful impact on people's day-to-day lives, Speaker. Every single day, Ontarians are counting on ServiceOntario to meet their personal or business needs.

To put a number behind it, ServiceOntario facilitates approximately 64.7 million public-facing transactions and interactions on a yearly basis, and that number is growing. That scale alone demonstrates why continuous improvement is so critically important.

Even relatively small service enhancements can benefit a tremendous number of people. That is precisely why, over the past several years, our government has worked to expand online services, improve customer experiences and provide people with more options for accessing government services.

More than 1.6 million people have created ServiceOntario online accounts. Online transactions continue to grow. New digital tools have simplified processes for residents and businesses alike, and we continue to explore ways to make services easier to access while maintaining strong standards for privacy and security.

Our work has also extended beyond traditional service counters. Mobile ServiceOntario continues to bring services directly to rural, northern and Indigenous commun-

ities, helping ensure that residents have access to important government services regardless of where they live.

Initiatives such as the digital dealership registration and other modernization efforts are helping simplify interactions with government while reducing unnecessary administrative burdens.

Digital credentials build upon that progress, not by replacing existing options, but by providing additional ones. Ontarians who wish to continue using the physical credentials and physical cards will be able to continue doing that. That commitment is clear and remains unchanged. Digital credentials are being introduced as a secure and voluntary option that can offer convenience in situations where people choose to use them.

As we continue this work, one principle will remain central, and that is trust. Innovation succeeds when people have confidence in it. They must understand how the system works, they must know that appropriate safeguards are in place, and they must trust that government is handling personal information responsibly and transparently. That is why our approach to digital credentials is focused not only on innovation but also on accountability, privacy and choice. Those principles are not obstacles to modernization; they are what make modernization possible in the first place.

The initiatives led by my ministry are an important part of that story. Through the Buy Ontario Act, we are supporting Ontario businesses and strengthening supply chains. Through ServiceOntario modernization and digital credentials, we are improving how people access government services while maintaining trust, choice and accountability. Through investments in digital sovereignty and infrastructure such as the Guelph data centre, we are helping ensure Ontario is prepared for the opportunities and challenges of an increasingly digital future.

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Taken together, these initiatives are about building capacity, strengthening confidence and ensuring Ontario remains well positioned for the years ahead. They also reflect a broader understanding that government has a responsibility not only to respond to challenges as they arise but to anticipate them.

Whether we are strengthening domestic supply chains, modernizing public services or investing in critical digital infrastructure, the objective is the same: to ensure Ontario remains strong, competitive and prepared for the future. The decisions we make today will help shape the economy Ontarians inherit tomorrow. That is why our government continues to focus on practical measures that support workers, create opportunities for businesses and improve services for the people who rely on them every single day.

At its core, Speaker, the fall economic statement is about ensuring Ontario is equipped to succeed in a rapidly changing world, while continuing to deliver the stability, opportunity and confidence that families and businesses expect from their government.

For those reasons, I am proud to support the 2026 fall economic statement. I think Ontario is well positioned, more than any subnational jurisdiction in North America, to weather the political and economic volatility that we see.

With that, Speaker, I will cede my time.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the Minister for Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member for Oakville for leading us off there. I'm very pleased to rise to speak to Bill 143, Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2026.

This past year, Ontario has seen significant changes not only here at home, but around the globe. Economies have faced growing uncertainty. Global economic and trade tensions with the US, disrupted supply chains and shifting market dynamics have created uncertainty around the world. The world has changed, and Ontario is not immune from these changes.

Thanks to our government's prudent fiscal management, we are able to respond to the changing needs of families, individuals, workers and businesses across the province. We will not sit idly by.

Madam Speaker, the impact of US tariffs—which have hit, among others, our steel, our auto and manufacturing sectors—and global conflicts such as the Strait of Hormuz, impacting our energy prices, have led to a world awash in a sea of instability. These impacts are felt in every corner of our province by our workers, our families, our communities and our businesses. We need to look no further than the price of gas, the rising cost of goods due to tariffs and the impact of uncertainty on investment and employment. And we know that people are feeling uncertain about the economy as a result.

Across the country, fellow Canadians are experiencing the effects that tariffs and global conflicts—the impacts that they're having on their lives. Madam Speaker, while some provinces have resorted to cutting services or raising taxes, Ontario has a different approach. Our government has a plan—a plan that we started on day one; a plan that is working.

Our plan to protect Ontario is to fortify our industrial base, including our auto, our steel, our forestry, our manufacturing sectors, in order to unleash the growth-ready sectors of the future, including nuclear energy, critical minerals, artificial intelligence, defence, advanced manufacturing, life sciences and the agri-food sector.

Madam Speaker, our plan starts with discipline and responsible fiscal management. We outlined our strong fiscal position in our recently released fall economic statement. Several fiscal indicators demonstrate that we are in a strong financial position, especially when compared to other jurisdictions in the G7.

Our net debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to be 37.4%, which is an improvement from the 2026 budget, which was projected at 37.7%. And Ontario's net debt-to-revenue for this fiscal year has also improved when compared to the 2026 budget.

Madam Speaker, I know deficits are not desirable in the long run, but they are necessary in the current environment. While we continue to invest in long-term economic growth, we must also respond to the economic realities we

are living in. We have increased the contingency fund by an additional $3.8 billion in 2026-27, as well as increasing the reserve to provide greater fiscal flexibility and to help manage risks. These figures are a true reflection of our responsible approach to managing the province's finances. Because of our fiscal stewardship, our government has also received two credit rating upgrades for the first time in two decades and maintained AA ratings with all four major rating agencies. These are signs that Ontario remains resilient and continues to move in the right direction.

Madam Speaker, while uncertainty remains, our government is continuing to invest to grow our economy and create good-paying jobs. In fact, since the 2026 budget, we have created 81,000 new jobs, the highest number of new jobs created compared to the other provinces—and, I might add, that is notwithstanding the headwinds that we are facing, because Ontarian workers, Ontario families and Ontario businesses, they are resilient. This shows our plan to support workers, create the conditions for businesses to grow and ensure the people of Ontario continue to find good-paying jobs is working.

Even amid global trade tensions and economic challenges, our government has maintained a measured approach to fiscal planning while cutting taxes and keeping costs down for families. In fact, this year alone, Ontario is providing over $12.5 billion in support for families and individuals. Every time you fill up your car, you're saving through our cuts to gas and fuel taxes, putting over $2.3 billion back into the pockets of families and businesses. And when you buy a new home, you're saving 13% on the HST, delivering up to $130,000 in savings for eligible homebuyers. That's real money. When you hop on transit, you're saving $1,600 every year through One Fare.

We're also cutting taxes to support businesses. We cut the small business tax rate by over 37%, providing over $5,000 in tax relief for small businesses across the province every year. Our government is taking further action by lowering the cost of capital investment for businesses through the Ontario Competitiveness Tax Cut. This will lower the cost of business investment in Ontario by providing $8 billion in provincial tax relief by allowing businesses to immediately write off 100% of the costs on a wide range of assets, which is estimated to support the creation of 30,000 new jobs. Combined with the accelerated write-off measures announced earlier this year, that would bring the total provincial tax support for business investment to more than $12 billion over the next five years.

Madam Speaker, we are taking action to strengthen Ontario's competitiveness and position our economy for long-term growth. We are doing this by cutting red tape, streamlining processes and making it easier to invest and expand while also investing in our key sectors and services, because for too long, major projects were delayed by unnecessary red tape and fragmented approval processes.

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Since coming into office, we have passed 15 red tape reduction bills, saving businesses 1.8 million hours and billions of dollars. And we are cutting the time that provinces spend processing permits by nearly 220,000 days. This means more shovels in the ground, more good paying jobs and prosperity for all Ontarians.

We aren't stopping there, with innovations like the red tape shot clock—boy, I like that one—where a time limit is put in place to get an answer on an application, and if the government doesn't give you the answer by the time limit, the answer is yes.

Madam Speaker, Ontario is also leading the country in removing interprovincial trade barriers. We were the first to remove all party-specific exemptions, leading to greater free trade in Canada.

Just this past July, we announced that we are joining the Canadian passport system. The Canadian securities passport system is one of the best systems around, and we are joining it. For two decades, Ontario has been urged by other provinces to take this step, and this year we answered the call.

By breaking down these barriers, we are making it easier for businesses to operate across provincial borders, reach new customers and expand into new markets. Reducing these barriers means more opportunities for businesses to grow, greater flexibility for workers and a stronger and more connected Canadian economy. It has the potential to unlock up to $200 billion of GDP every year for economic growth in Canada.

Building a resilient economy means planning for the future. It means ensuring Ontario has the infrastructure to compete and to thrive, not just today but for decades to come. Through our $210-billion capital plan, the largest in Ontario's history, we're building transit, we're building highways, we're building hospitals and we are building schools. We are building for the future.

And we couldn't do it without our world-class workforce. To make sure they have the skills they need, we are investing over $2 billion in training and reskilling. But wait for it: There's more. We're also investing an additional $6.4 billion in our colleges and universities, including $1.7 billion to support an additional 70,000 seats in STEM—science, technology, engineering and math—fields, AI, health care, education, skilled trades, labour.

Overall, Ontario's world-class workforce will add more than 125,000 graduates in STEM and artificial intelligence every single year.

Interjection.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I appreciate the support of the Minister of Colleges and Universities in that regard.

By investing in talent, we are positioning our youth for the jobs of tomorrow. These are the building blocks of a greater and stronger economy. That is why Ontario continues to make record investments to support growth, strengthen our competitiveness and secure our long-term prosperity.

Just recently, under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, we announced, alongside the federal government,

nearly $9 billion to support automotive, steel, critical mineral and energy industries to strengthen strategic industries, support workers and businesses impacted by US tariffs and drive long-term economic growth.

In addition, since April 2025, Ontario has announced nearly $30 billion in tariff relief and support, including measures to build long-term economic resiliency and prosperity.

Madam Speaker, we acted early to help employers weather uncertainty. We acted early to support communities facing economic pressures, and we acted early to protect good-paying jobs across the province. We did not sit idly by. Our supports have been expanded and are available for businesses right now. This includes taking action to deliver immediate financial relief, helping businesses manage cash flow and navigate economic uncertainty. Programs like the Ontario Together Trade Fund, our Trade-Impacted Communities Program and the Protect Ontario Financing Program—these actions are helping businesses adapt, attract investment, create good-paying jobs and strengthen Ontario's resilience. This is how we're helping businesses protect jobs and workers.

Madam Speaker, we know that tariffs create real challenges for businesses across the province. The effects extend well beyond individual businesses, touching workers, families and communities across the region. That is why we are pairing immediate relief with investments that will strengthen and fortify Ontario's economy over the long term. As outlined in the 2026 fall economic statement, we are providing immediate support to businesses facing these pressures while continuing to invest in the critical infrastructure and strategic industries that will drive Ontario's future prosperity because protecting our economy today is about more than weathering current challenges. It is about ensuring Ontario is well-positioned to attract investment, create good-paying jobs and seize new opportunities as the global economy evolves. It is about preparing for the opportunities for tomorrow. It is about ensuring that businesses have the confidence to invest, the flexibility to grow and the conditions needed to succeed, because when businesses succeed, they create jobs, they support families and they strengthen the communities they call home. When we make it easier for businesses to invest, innovate and expand, we help create an economy that can withstand uncertainty and adapt to a changing global landscape.

Madam Speaker, we cannot control every challenge beyond our borders, but we can control how we respond. We will continue to take action where it is needed, make responsible decisions and do everything we can to protect Ontario. That is why our approach brings together immediate support and long-term planning. Through this bill, we are helping families, we are helping workers, we are helping businesses and we are helping communities navigate the pressures they face today while strengthening the foundations for future growth. We have everything we need right here at home to build the most competitive, resilient and self-reliant economy in the G7, supporting good-paying jobs for Ontario workers and keeping Canada's future in Canadian hands.

Our government will continue implementing our plan to protect Ontario, leveraging our province's incredible resources, expertise and world-class workforce to support workers and families in every corner of the province, whether it's in York, or whether it's in Grimsby, Niagara, Oxford, Mississauga, Owen Sound, Perth, Wellington, Vaughan, Ottawa, Renfrew, Essex—right across this great province to the north, the east, the south, the west. We will continue to support everybody in every corner in this province, and we'll continue to implement our plan to protect Ontario, leveraging our province's incredible resources because, Madam Speaker, I believe in Ontarians and I believe in Canadians. We are a resilient people. We will come out of this better and stronger in Ontario, making for a better and stronger Canada.

I ask all members of this Legislature to support these measures in Bill 143, the Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2026 (No. 2), as we continue working to secure Ontario's great economic future. With your support, we will continue to build Ontario for all Ontarians, for all Canadians, I stand proud.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the Solicitor General.

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Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I'm delighted to stand and talk on Bill 143, the fall economic statement, and to thank our incredible Minister of Finance for his stewardship, for his steadfastness, and most importantly, his love of province.

I want to say, Madam Speaker, that the times find us. Nobody in any Parliament in the world is immune from a disaster that may happen that is not by their making or by their choosing. The Minister of Finance has spoken in this place many times about the times that find us, and Ontario continues to face significant economic uncertainty driven by the US tariffs. We know that we can't control what President Trump is going to say or do on any given day or moment, and we hope very much that Canada and the US will strike a deal that is fair to Canada as well, because Canada recognizes that the US is its closest friend and ally. We fought in wars together, we have cross-border conversation and friendships, and we do it because the Americans are our next of kin. And I hope that Prime Minister Carney and President Trump will arrive at this deal with dispatch and in fairness to both countries.

Despite these challenges, despite the ongoing trade tensions and trade actions, Ontario's leadership, led by our government, by Premier Ford and the finance minister, have been absolute in its objectives, and that is to protect our province, to protect Ontario. I've listened in this chamber many times, understanding that when we utter the words, "Protect Ontario," it's to protect us economically, so that we have something to leave our children and future generations. It's to protect us making sure that we have the finest health care accessible to everyone.

Our government, thanks to the Premier and the Minister of Finance, have made record investments. We've trans-

formed our health care system just in the time we have been in office. I point to my hospital in York Centre, the Humber River hospital, one of the first digital hospitals ever built, and it's led by a world-class CEO. I can't shout her out enough—Barb Collins—for her incredible stewardship. I want to thank and acknowledge the Hennick family that saw fit to make a transformational donation, and that's why the Humber River hospital is now called the Hennick Humber Hospital. Thanks to them and the leadership in our province, that will be a model that other hospitals will follow.

Given so many external factors that we can't control, we look, as Premier Ford has spoken, as the Minister of Finance has spoken, as the President of the Treasury Board—an incredible person that I am glad and honoured to sit on the Treasury Board because it is an incredible opportunity to make a concrete difference in where the future of Ontario goes by understanding where our spending is. Our government's fiscal plan is realistic because we must maintain the financial flexibility to address what we don't know today, and the Minister of Finance in his statement last Thursday spoke about it.

We hope things improve. I'm an optimist. Optimism is not only reliant if you sit on the government benches. We should all be optimistic in our province and in our future. That's something that is inherent when we get elected, even when we sit on the other side. Through fiscal stewardship, we have to make sure that we still have a capacity to make the investments that will leave, as I've said many times, an asset on our balance sheet. Not just for us, in our generation, but for tomorrow, and the fall economic statement goes a long way.

Let me digress for a minute, Madam Speaker, and bring in something that's been very personal to me. I've had the privilege of seeing 8,000 people go through the Ontario Police College, as the member from Chatham-Kent–Leamington did many years ago. He served, with a career of distinction, as an Ontario provincial police officer, and we are so lucky to have him here in our Parliament.

He and I were part of this class of 2022 that came here fired up, ready to go to work, ready to serve our constituents. I say when I go to see these classes come forward as our newest police officers that the duty of a police officer is to understand the truth—to understand there is righteousness when we come to find the truth.

And do you know what? It's the same obligation we have here in this Parliament, because we are part of a tapestry of fine individuals that had the courage to put our name on a ballot and to find our way here—one of less than 2,000 people in the history of Ontario that have ever served in this place. And my number, Madam Speaker, is 1,947. That number will stick with me, as will the numbers that you have been given from the times you have been here. That number is yours; it will never be taken away from you, because you earned that right to claim that number.

What does it mean to be given a number that we served in the Ontario Legislature? It means that we have to meet the moment that finds us. It means that we can't run and hide. It means that we have to be bold. Yes, we have to be collegial and respectful to each other's opinions. I think this Parliament actually does a lot of good, understanding that we have to be good listeners.

I said when I ran in 2022 in the riding of York Centre—a constituency, a community that my family has proudly called home for 30 years, where my wife and I have raised our three children, where we've played in the park, where we've sent them to school, where we have worshipped, where we have shopped, we have made our community our home—that there's not one day, in the time that I have been elected since June 2022, one of the highest honours of my life, that I have not felt that I have listened to my constituents that sent me here. And today they're scared.

There are a lot of unknowns in the world. It's not only the geopolitical conflict that I wish, in so many theatres in the world, would end and let peace reign. Let peace reign in Iran. Let people be free in Iran. They deserve to be free. I said in front of 10,000 people on University Avenue, "Let freedom reign."

Democracy is something so incredible. We enjoy it here in Canada, but we can't take it for granted either. We can't control the world conflicts. We can control what we do here as a provincial government in the four corners of our province. I've had the greatest privilege of a lifetime, at the Premier's behest, to travel from Cornwall to Pigeon River, and I owe the next stop, Fort Frances, a visit. I owe the great people in Kenora a visit. But do you know what? Our province is large. Being representatives in this Legislature gives us an opportunity to travel and to acknowledge how big it is.

And the concentration of industry and manufacturing, of service, of health care is representative of the size of our province. We have to make sure that there's prosperity everywhere. Our Minister of Finance has done wonders in recognizing that we as a province do not prosper unless all of the province prospers, and we will work without limitations to make sure that happens.

I said at the Ontario Police College, "Understand that everyone has a right to belong and to succeed and to contribute in this province." Madam Speaker, that means succeeding economically too. It means that the youngest among us have a right to go to colleges and universities and become tradespeople and lawyers and doctors and professionals. They have a right to live out their dreams.

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And in our province, we have to recognize that the small businesses are the engine of our province and they have a right to succeed. Let me speak about entrepreneurship, since I had a little life's chapter myself in that field: Entrepreneurs have a right to innovate and to come forward in science and in medicine, in high tech, in technology. The accelerators of tomorrow must be successful because the government laid the foundation for them to succeed. We can't do it when we have a weak economy, and that's why this bill speaks to the fact that we're looking at our province pragmatically.

We're looking at our province, understanding that while we face great uncertainty—let me parallel: At a period of

time in the past, the Minister of Finance has spoken to our debt towards our current GDP, to what the size of our economy is today. But let me take you back to 1991, when the budget deficit on a roughly $50-billion budget was 20%. The budget deficit for the years that the NDP were here represented approximately $10 billion a year on a $50-billion-a-year budget. And that's why in the period that Bob Rae was Premier, our debt—not our deficit, which was at a record for five years—doubled. From the time we became a nation to 1991—1991 to 1995, it had doubled.

Our Minister of Finance and our Premier are stewards of understanding that we can't go down that rabbit hole. And in the time that Premier McGuinty and Premier Wynne led our province—they were fine individuals in their day, but they didn't add anything to our balance sheet. There wasn't a road, there wasn't a subway, there wasn't a bridge, there wasn't a hospital and there certainly weren't many other assets that we found, when Premier Ford came to office, that they left us on a balance sheet.

The investments that we have made, the investments that we are committed to making—the highways and the subways and the hospitals, billions and billions of dollars—is not only for us; it's for our children and, one day, grandchildren. It is an asset that belongs to them, and I'm proud that I long advocated to the minister and the Treasury Board and here in the Legislature that investment is worth making the expenditure today. It's something that other people will enjoy.

When it comes to our public safety, this bill speaks about strengthening our border security by investing $32.5 million to expand border enforcement capacity. Again, I travelled east, west, almost 2,400 kilometres—admitting that I haven't been to Fort Frances. But when you go from Cornwall through Niagara and southwest Ontario and Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay, you cross the unprotected borders with the US.

Thank you to the Minister of Finance—recognizing that by allowing police services to acquire the assets and technology and personnel that are responsible for communities along the US border, along maritime borders—it's essential that they're equipped to keep us safe.

We also said that we would expand our correctional capacity. I've sat here for four and a half years. I've waited for somebody on the other side to say they did a wonderful job when they were in office for 15 years. They don't talk about their record, but I will: closed eight jails. By the way, I'm trying very hard to have one day soon the Brantford jail reopened, because it should never have been closed in the first place. The member from Brantford–Brant has been there with me not once but twice to see for himself that as soon as this jail was closed, what did the prior Ontario Liberal government do? They renovated it. They put in new roofs. They put in new electrical. It wonders why they made a decision to close it.

I went up to Walkerton, and again, that was another Liberal disaster. They closed the Walkerton jail, understanding that geographically, it was so important, but they didn't care.

We said we would open new beds; we would be transparent; we would tell everyone where the spaces would come online, that we would bring up our capacity to send a message across Ontario that we're ready for the people who decide they can't live within the norms of our province—the societal norms of respecting everyone. When a person breaks the law, we need to be tough on crime. We have to send a message of deterrence, and that's what we have done under the leadership of Premier Ford. And we've done so unapologetically, relentlessly and with a fierce commitment that we have responded to the concerns of Ontarians—someone needs to be on their side.

I spoke earlier today, Madam Speaker, at a news conference, as we kicked off Crime Prevention Week—and the stories of a few days ago, when a group of thugs knocked down somebody's door at 3:30 in the morning in the member's riding of Don Valley, and they harmed the family who was sleeping. It was unbelievable what had transpired there afterwards. And I said at the news conference that I want people to know that we will not stop when it comes to making sure that public safety is a priority. This fall economic statement speaks to that.

We will do what it takes, we'll do what's hard and we will do, at times, what people don't expect us to do but know it's the right thing to do. Governing in a time of uncertainty is difficult. Standing up to your constituents, and listening to them, as I do, waiting for the emails to come in and the phone calls to come in—I listen, and I agree, and I disagree.

But what I do is share my enthusiasm to them of something that goes back a long time, when I was a very little kid—as the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane born in the same year as the member from Haliburton-Brock—she was born that same year—and others. When we go back to when we were little kids in 1967, Premier John Robarts commissioned a song that spoke to the future of our province. We have to be "a place to stand" and "a place to grow."

I don't think people then, in 1967, could believe what we would do from June 2018 to the present. It's not only the one million-plus jobs. It's not only over $100 billion of investment that was attracted here. It was not only how we view the north as an integral component of our success. It's not only understanding that the Ring of Fire will be instrumental in reinventing and reimagining our economy and being the leader of things that, in 1967, nobody knew existed.

But it's more: It's understanding the role that our First Nation partners play as well. Perhaps, of all the privileges I have been given in my last four years and almost six months, coming there early next year, it's understanding just how special it has been—a privilege of a lifetime—to go to our First Nations communities and listen and learn. I feel so incredibly proud that I can go and listen. And when I was presented by the grand chief, not that long ago, on Manitoulin Island, an eagle feather, I treat that as one of my most sacred possessions because an eagle feather reminds us to be bound by the truth.

It's no different than what I said at the Ontario Police College: Run, I said to the graduates, to find the truth. The truth is that in our province, our diversity has always been our greatest strength. No matter the language we speak—one of over 100. No matter the religion that we practise—and there are many, and they're all welcome equally. No matter where our families one day in the past came from—because our families had to come from somewhere that allowed us to live here today. No matter anything—it's one of equalness, that our province is a common denominator where we all are equal. And I champion that every single day.

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The fall economic statement reminds us that we all do belong, that we all have a right to succeed, that we all have a right to contribute. The fall economic statement is a prudent opportunity for us to take a breath and thank the great stewardship of the Premier and the Minister of Finance and the President of the Treasury Board and the members of the Legislature.

We're inviting the opposition to come together and to understand that these are uncertain times. I've been pragmatic about it. I've thanked our federal government when they needed to be thanked. When they came forward with making bail reform a priority, I said thank you. And when the Prime Minister stood up and said, "I will always protect our country, because it's ours," and helped us unleash patriotism and pride like never before, I said thank you. It's up to us to come together, because I don't know when this time will come again, and maybe future governments will not live in the moments that our government did—a pandemic, an economic crisis, geopolitical crises. We've come together because we understand this is our province.

C'est notre terre : le vrai Nord, fort et libre. It's absolutely true. This land is the true north, it's our land, and it's where we can succeed and be free.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Minister of Finance.

In this fall economic statement and in previous announcements, we've seen the government move ahead with creating funds for big business to access, loans for big business to access. My question is, what kind of guarantees has the government put in place to ensure that money that's going to these businesses actually helps workers? And what I'm specifically asking you is, are you bringing in job guarantees for the Protect Ontario fund and the Protect Ontario financing fund?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: What I can guarantee you is that we're not going to rest until we get through this challenge right now. We're there for all the workers in Ontario, be it in the steel industry, be it in the auto sector, be it in the manufacturing sector. We're providing liquidity loans and we're providing reinvestment capital loans so that they can reinvest and retool; so that they can expand to new markets, be it domestic or international; so that they can modernize. We announced the almost $9-billion partnership with the federal government to do just that. We've unleashed a number of other programs that are being accessed today, that have been expanded, all for the benefit of the workers and their families and the businesses who create the jobs in this great province.

In addition, cutting red tape like we've been doing, cutting interprovincial barriers so we can do more business together, faster permitting—these are the types of things that are helping all workers right across Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you to everyone who spoke for the government.

Madam Speaker, we know that this fall economic statement confirms that the budget deficit this year will be the largest in the last 20. We know that the government has failed to approach even its targets on returning to balance—the current projection is: not before the end of the decade.

Ottawa residents know that this government has continued to fail to invest in our city. The major projects that the government is investing in in Ottawa are either behind schedule, over budget or were not significant enough to mention in the fall economic statement.

So I'm wondering, Madam Speaker, for all this record debt that this government is incurring, what exactly is it that Ottawa residents have to show for it?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Madam Speaker, every corner of this province is being supported, including the Ottawa region. Without question, it is this government that had the vision to support the Ottawa civic hospital there. That is going forward, but it also is helping children with the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. I know, in my very first budget that I had the privilege to table, we put in additional investments to help our children, our pediatric care units, the great work that they do at CHEO, and all the front-line workers, the health care workers, the social workers and the mental health and addiction workers who are helping those who need help the most. Madam Speaker, it also continues. I remember putting in a budget, a couple of budgets ago, helping McDonald house, when we put some money there to help the McDonald's Ottawa house—the faces of all the people there who were the recipients of the money—so that they could expand a McDonald's house to support our most needy children.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: One of the things that I think is so important for every government is fiscal responsibility and ensuring that we don't burden future generations with increased levels of debt. I was fascinated and, I think, encouraged to hear the minister speak about how under this government we have seen consistently declining debt-to-GDP ratios and how this document continues that legacy, ensuring that we're able to invest in important projects and also continue a path to fiscal responsibility.

I'm wondering if the minister can speak more about why this is such an incredibly important barometer also to keep our borrowing costs down, to ensure that we have a

sustainable set of books here in the province, and why we saw the Liberals when they were in office continually get downgraded under their credit ratings, and what kind of credit ratings we've received here since coming to office.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Madam Speaker, deficits, I've said many times, are not desirable, but they were necessary through the pandemic because we took the position that we are going to protect lives, and we were able to provide the support necessary to protect people through the toughest times through the pandemic.

Now we're facing tariffs and global uncertainty and rising energy prices, and we're able again to use our fiscal firepower to protect Ontario, protect the economy, protect workers in this environment. That's why, for example, I mentioned the almost $9 billion of support between the federal government and ourselves to support auto workers to the tune of $2.5 billion, to support steelworkers in Hamilton and in Sault Ste. Marie to the tune of $5 billion, Madam Speaker.

It's true that the debt-to-GDP came down from—we said it in the budget—37.7% to 37.4%. But we're not going to rest while the seas are turbulent around us. We're going to continue to make the investments necessary to protect people, to protect the economy, to protect Ontario.

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

MPP Catherine McKenney: I wonder if the minister could address the lack of any serious funding for housing and homelessness in this budget. If we want to talk about fiscal responsibility, it costs less than half to actually house someone rather than to let them stay unhoused and in shelter. But when I look at this budget, the only mention of supportive housing is 900 units, yet we've got 85,000 people who are unhoused in the province. That 900 to 85,000 is quite a gap.

I wonder if you can explain why you wouldn't want to invest in the type of housing that would actually meet people's human right to a place to live but also fill that gap between 85,000 people unhoused and only 900 units that your government is looking to support through this next budget.

1640

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Madam Speaker, through you: Thank you to the member opposite for that important question. I'm sure she's well aware of, for example, the Building Ontario Fund, which we launched about three years ago, whose purpose was to get things built that otherwise the private sector couldn't get built.

I remember standing in Scarborough at the Scarborough Junction, where we announced another investment through the Building Ontario Fund, of which of all the units there, 25% are going to be affordable.

I remember standing on the steps of Toronto Metropolitan University announcing 1,400 student housing units, which provides homes for the students and obviously takes pressure off the surrounding areas to create housing.

We continue to invest in long-term-care housing—all types of housing—to help the most vulnerable and needy in society, and our seniors, who deserve to be taken care of, as they built this province. We're building all types of housing: supportive housing, affordable housing, housing for families, front-door, back-door, high-density, right across to student housing. We'll continue to do that for all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Last week in committee, the infrastructure minister confirmed that the price of the Ottawa Hospital expansion is five times the original estimate. He blamed that, in committee, on municipal development charges. This morning, the Minister of Finance was on CBC Radio blaming geopolitical uncertainty for a five-times increase in the cost of constructing the Ottawa Hospital.

I'm wondering, Madam Speaker: Can he confirm today, as the finance minister of Ontario, that Ottawa property taxpayers will not see a five-times increase in the local share in order to pay for this government's mismanagement of the Ottawa Hospital?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Well, Madam Speaker, through you to the member opposite: I'm sure the member doesn't live underneath a rock not to know that supply chains and labour and raw materials and components for infrastructure-building right across not just Ontario, not just in Canada, but right around the globe, the cost pressures have increased. That being said, we continue to invest in all forms of hospitals, not just in Ottawa but right across the province: some $64 billion of investments in hospitals, some $50 billion of capital grants.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: I will be sharing my time with the member for Ottawa West–Nepean—

Interjections.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Are you really clapping for me? I'm flattered. Here we are, debating the fall economic statement—

Hon. Steve Clark: Reciprocate.

Ms. Jessica Bell: You've got to do something good, then.

We've just listened to the Conservatives present their very rosy-tinted-glasses view of the government and the economy, but I think what we're seeing outside, when we walk out those doors and I have a look in my neighbourhood and have a look at what's happening in Toronto, tells a very different story, because this fall economic statement is being released at a time when over 700,000 people in Ontario do not have a job.

In the two weeks that we've been in this Legislature, we've already heard some very concerning numbers. We've heard about Hamilton Health Sciences, the Ottawa Hospital, Algoma, General Motors, Stelco—hundreds, sometimes thousands of workers being laid off. I think about all the workers in our colleges and universities who have lost their job because of the cuts and the declining enrolment with international students.

I also think about affordability. I was hoping when I opened up this document that I'd see some important, bold

initiatives to make things more affordable for people in Ontario. I didn't see it.

There are a lot of people who woke up today and they do not know how they're going to afford all the bills they have, the expenses they have; maybe they've got children, the cost of going to the grocery store and buying essentials, the cost of a mortgage or rent, the cost of transportation. Daily, I meet people who say, "I honestly do not know how I'm making it work. I don't know, and I'm scared." I was hoping the fall economic statement would have some relief for those people. It did not.

I think about our affordability crisis, I think about our jobs crisis and I also think about poverty. Recently, we saw some latest numbers about the rise in food bank use. It is shocking—it is shocking.

When I walk down College Street, we have one of the largest food banks in Ontario. It's the Spadina–Fort York food bank. Every time I go by, the line is so long. And when I speak to the staff that work at the Fort York Food Bank, they tell me that it's not just people who are on social assistance, Ontario Works or Ontario disability; it's seniors who live nearby. It's also workers—a lot of workers living on minimum wage—and a lot of families. Not good—it's not good.

I would hope that, given the consequential times that we are in, that we would see some real and significant proposals to address some of these challenges, but what we've seen from this government is a lot of scandal, a lot of waste and a lot of mismanagement. The list keeps going on. Every week it seems like there's a new scandal, so I'm just going to mention a few.

There was the private plane that the Premier bought and then sold, but only after he got caught—only after he got caught. There must be some people on the other side of the House right now who thought that was a really dumb idea. I know it.

In the last few weeks, we've been dealing with this issue of private career colleges—very concerning. And why it's so concerning is that these private career colleges gave Conservative Party MPPs and Conservative riding associations thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars to help you win an election, and then, at the same time, some of these bad-actor private career colleges were turning around and taking advantage of the OSAP system and robbing the government of money.

Instead of properly providing oversight over the private career college industry, it's looking like this government just looked the other way. Even though there were tip-offs coming in saying, "Look, this is a concern;" even though the federal government was saying, "Hey, this is an issue: It seems that these private career colleges are taking advantage of the OSAP system," this government chose to look the other way. And that is hard to stomach. If I was a student watching the news right now and seeing these private career colleges and how much money they allegedly have taken from the system—if I was a student right now, I'd be feeling pretty angry. Because if you're a student going to a private career college, your OSAP has just been taken away; it's now on pause. And you have no idea when you're going to be eligible to access OSAP again—you've got no idea. The minister opposite is saying it might happen after the audit is completed, and we're hearing the audit might take a year. Has there been any communication with these students about that? Because they've put their training on hold.

College is expensive. You can't just switch to another degree. It doesn't work like that in this environment. It's very concerning. And if you're a student at a university, you used to be able to get a grant, and now you get a loan that you have to pay back with interest. I can imagine you're watching the news right now or scrolling and seeing this private career college scandal, and you're thinking, "Wow, how did they get away with it when I have to pay so much just to get ahead, get some training, get a job."

And then what we have here also is the government's response to these consequential times, which is the fall economic statement. I'm going to spend some time going through what I have seen in the fall economic statement, and then I'm going to go through the act, as well, and identify some of the things which might be of note to the people listening.

Now, I would have liked to have seen a fall economic statement that invests wisely in public infrastructure, in jobs and in public services like health care and education. That's the Ontario government's job. I would also have liked to have seen practical measures to make life more affordable, such as removing taxes on all groceries or bringing in a rent freeze or real rent control.

This is what we got instead. Let's go sector by sector.

The first thing I noticed when I was going through the fall economic statement was what this government has planned for housing—not good. Housing starts continue to decline, and the fall economic statement is predicting that there will be just 64,700 starts in 2026. That is well below what is needed to meet our housing shortage targets—well below. I am pretty concerned, and my hope is that you're the kind of people that look at your track record and you correct and change course. That is my hope. You got into this job to make a difference. My hope is that you correct and change course.

1650

Well, I have seen over the last eight years what this government has done on housing. They've taken meetings with big developers, and they've taken meetings with big landlords and they've said, "What do you want?" These very same people have said, "We want you to bring in tax cuts. We want development charge reductions. We want less rent control. We want carte blanche. Oh, and we want access to the greenbelt." The Conservatives have given them everything they've wanted, and yet it's not working.

Housing starts have declined every single year since 2022. I hear the minister opposite say, "We're in a trade war. We're in an economic recession. It's not our fault—don't blame us." Well, when you look at other provinces, they seem to be doing pretty well when it comes to housing starts, so you can't just make that argument anymore.

My hope—what I would like to see in this fall economic statement, what we would bring in a fall economic state-

ment is a public builder that is responsible for building and financing the construction of 30,000 affordable and non-market homes, working with for-profit, non-profit and municipalities to get those homes built. Because by doing that, we can create jobs and we can address some of the biggest issues that we're facing as a province: mental health and addiction, homelessness, the high cost of housing. It's the right thing to do, and it's good for the economy.

I was also shocked to see in this fall economic statement very little mention about homelessness and very little mention about the need to build supportive housing. This is a very important thing to talk about right now because it's getting cold. Soon we're going to be in December, and there's going to be a lot of people sleeping on the street. In Toronto right now, it's about 11,000 people sleeping on the street. This is the time to make announcements about how you're going to house people when the weather gets tough. I didn't see anything of the sort.

We saw a big tax cut to big business, but we didn't see anything in here that would move the needle on addressing supportive housing and affordable housing. And why this is so important is because this is a problem that can be fixed.

We recently had an announcement in the west end of Toronto. There was the creation of a supportive housing facility called Dunn House. Dunn House is really an example that we need to replicate. What Dunn House is, it's supportive housing in partnership with a hospital, UHN, and they made a decision to reach out to the individuals—almost all of them were homeless—who were visiting the emergency room day in and day out. They were the frequent flyers—the very, very, very expensive patients.

Well, it turns out if you provide homes to these people—not just shelters where they have to move out every day but provide homes to these people so that they have a permanent place to call their own—the number of times they visit the emergency rooms plummets. It plummets. They get healthier. Some of them turn their lives around, get jobs, rebuild. It's win-win.

Now, we hear that there is an interest at the federal government level and at the city level to move forward and build more Dunn Houses so we can really tackle these issues. But what we've found—what I'm hearing through conversations—is that the province is nowhere to be seen when it comes to providing the necessary funding on the health care side and the housing construction side so that we can really address these issues of mental health and addiction and homelessness. I really would have liked to have seen those kinds of announcements in this fall economic statement today. And they're not here. They're not here.

I want to give a shout-out to StepStones. StepStones is an organization in my riding. It's located on Markham Street, and they work with youth that are aging out of the child protection system and the foster care system. They provide them with support, networks, access to social workers, sometimes housing, so that they can begin their lives. They're starting, clearly, with a disadvantage, and they need extra help. One of StepStones's jobs is to provide them with extra help.

One of the reasons why I am bringing up StepStones is because they are doing something which is pretty innovative when it comes to addressing homelessness. They are sitting down with these young people and they are saying, "What can we do? Who can we talk to in your broad network? Maybe it's a former foster parent. Maybe it's an aunt that you've lost contact with. Let's have a conversation to see if we can connect you with them so that we can see if we can get you housed instead of you ending up homeless"—because a lot of people that go through the child protection system, they end up homeless. It is about—I have the numbers right here—500 to 600 young people age out of care in Ontario and within just 10 days of them aging out, a quarter of them are homeless.

The reason why I bring up this example is because it's just another example of the kind of policies, the kind of funding, the kind of programs that could be in this fall economic statement to address some of the biggest issues we face in Ontario, the biggest issues—helping young people get ahead, making it so that people aren't sleeping on the street at night, health care.

I hear the Minister of Health talk a lot about how she's doing everything on health care. Well, the numbers don't add up when we look at health care. I want to start with some numbers: Overall, health care spending is projected to increase from $97.5 billion to $100 billion. That's an increase of about 3.3%. Okay. At first blush, you might look at that and think, "Huh, that's not so bad." But when you look into the details, you realize that it will lead to cuts in health care quality and cuts in health care service. The reason why is because this is not enough money to maintain existing service levels, given rising costs, inflation and population growth. I'm not making this up; the Financial Accountability Office does the deep dive into the government's numbers. They calculate what the increase needs to be when it comes to health care spending to maintain existing service levels, and it is higher than 3.3%. What that means is that the issues we are seeing in our health care system now are going to continue and they're going to get worse.

I want to recognize a few of the issues that we are hearing about right now. I am getting calls through my office about people who are scared and frustrated with what they are experiencing when they're going down to the emergency room—really long wait times. They're coming down in pain. They're scared. They don't know what it is, and they're told to sit there and wait and wait and wait. No one wants to wait in an emergency room. No one wants to wait.

We're also getting calls from people who have real difficulty in accessing cancer treatment, exceptional cases, and this is going to be a growing issue, because developments in cancer treatment—it's growing in leaps and bounds. It's astronomical, what's happening when it comes to cancer treatment. People are coming in and they're saying, "Look, this treatment exists in other countries and

there's some red tape that's stopping us from accessing this kind of treatment here in Ontario and we need help in accessing this." Can you imagine? Can you imagine seeing a treatment that could be available to you and knowing that you are not able to access it because of red tape?

I think about Sabrina Apitz-Grossman. She is a 31-year-old woman with a rare and aggressive cancer. We have met with Sabrina. We have written letters to the Minister of Health. We have communicated with the Minister of Health directly. She is very scared because she has a rare and aggressive cancer that is in remission and if she gets a certain kind of treatment—it's a new kind of treatment—it could prolong her life considerably. She is so young. But she's being denied.

It's not the only example. I hear of Alex Shved, a 37-year-old father of two with stage 4 melanoma. He took the government to court after OHIP refused to cover his cancer treatment in the United States. He won his court challenge, but the government denied him coverage again.

The reason why I'm going into these specifics right now is because there is so much waste and mismanagement on the government side when we have people who are asking for medically necessary, life-saving cancer treatment who are being told, "No. There's not money for you. There's money for a private jet, there's money for private career colleges, there's money for a fantasy tunnel under the 401, but there's no money for you and the cancer treatment that is available to you so that you can lead a good life." I can imagine there would be a lot of people who'd be pretty frustrated by that right now.

1700

Public education—now this one really cuts to my core. I've mentioned this many times. I have two kids who are students in the public school system, so I regularly walk into schools, I hear from my kids what is happening and my blood pressure just goes up. It just goes up. The fall economic statement projects that base education funding this year is going to go up by less than 1%, well below projected inflation of 2.3%. What that means is that schools are dealing with a massive 6.3% cut, approximately, in funding, and now they're going to get an additional cut in funding because the amount of money that's going into our school system is not keeping up with inflation. It's not keeping up with population growth. It's going to mean more cuts.

We are already seeing a lot of cuts in our school systems in Toronto. I want to give you a few examples. It's actually very tough to get information about what is happening in our school system right now because the TDSB and the Toronto Catholic District School Board are under supervision, which means we have an individual earning an obscene amount of money who won't even respond to an email from parents, from myself, from school board trustees about what is happening in the school system. It is very tough to get information.

Regardless, parents, teachers, people are doing their own research and we're finding out a lot. We have found out that teachers are being laid off in low-income schools—schools that serve the most needy. Over 150 teachers have been laid off. Talk about denying kids opportunity.

We are hearing about class sizes that are incredibly large. There's just one class—just one example: in a school near me in Palmerston, we have a grade 1 class with 24 kids, which is well above the maximum allowed under the Education Act, and it's well above the 10% increase that the Education Act allows, just in case you need to get a few more kids into that classroom. It's also above that.

Parents talk to me about—their kid comes home from school. Parents call me up and they tell me that their kid cannot concentrate in class because it is so loud. It's so loud, kids are coming home with headaches. "She's distressed. She doesn't know what to do."

It's heartbreaking when your kid comes home from a day in school and tells you they didn't learn anything; they're upset; they have headaches; no one supervised them over lunch; they didn't even eat their lunch. This is common. And that learning is not happening, because the teacher is completely overwhelmed. We can do better than that.

I think about the Grove school. These are other parents that have reached out to me. They have a school there. They have a 4-5-6, the triple split. The triple split was only meant to be used in exceptional circumstances. Now we're finding that the triple split is becoming a little bit more common. So you have kids coming in from grade 4, grade 5 and grade 6, and you're expecting a teacher to provide three different learning plans to kids with a huge differential in how much they know, and how much they need to learn. You've got kids reading chapter books with other kids who might be struggling to learn how to read. How can a teacher manage that? It seems like it's by design. It's very concerning.

With that Grove school, the parents told me that 40% of those 27 kids in that class of 4-5-6, 40% of them are on individual education plans and need tailored help. My God, that is not a recipe for success.

We also hear about the school cafeterias and the pools and the outdoor education centres that have been closed. We hear about the kindergarten classes for high-needs kids that have been shuttered, which means kids that need support are going into the mainstream classroom, impacting learning for everyone and falling behind. That's not how it should be working. And as no surprise to any of us, kids are not meeting the benchmark standard. They're not meeting the benchmark standard.

Colleges, universities, and student financial assistance—we're not even trying with this sector. Funding for post-secondary education is hemorrhaging. Spending on colleges, universities, and student financial assistance is falling by $1.2 billion, from $13.9 billion to $12.7 billion. What this means, if you are a parent who has a kid—maybe they're 14 or 15, they're starting to think about college or university—is there are going to be less places for your kids to get that absolutely critical education so they can have a career in Ontario. There are going to be less places available, and there are going to be less jobs.

That will have an impact on the economic health of Ontario, and it will affect our kids' lives.

Jobs and the economy: This is where the government has really put all their eggs in one basket here. They have announced the centerpiece of the fall economic statement, I would say, is the government's new Ontario Competitiveness Tax Cut, which will permit businesses to write off the cost of some new capital equipment purchased after September 2026. It is a very large corporate tax cut.

We know for sure that a corporate tax cut will certainly increase corporate profit—no questions there. But what we don't know—and there's very little evidence to demonstrate this—is if those CEOs are going to turn around and hire more people, upgrade their factory and invest in Ontario, like we are expecting them to do. There is not a lot of evidence to support trickle-down theory.

We have been calling, when it comes to the kind of investments this government is making for industry—because investment in industry is essential—we have been calling for this government to bring in guarantees. If you are going to give a company a huge amount of money, like Algoma, then there need to be guarantees: no executive bonuses, so the money flows in and flows out, like it did with for-profit long-term care during COVID; and job guarantees.

If you're a worker in that company and you hear that your company is going to be receiving aid from the government, you should feel confident, knowing that your job is not going to disappear in the following week because you're hoping the government has your back. And I have asked the minister again and again and again on this question: Are you mandating job guarantees? And the minister refuses to answer the question, and we know why: It's because there are no job guarantees.

I'll give you an example: Algoma Steel received $100 million from this government as a part of the Protect Ontario financing or fund—you've changed the name a few times—and just a few months after they've received that money, they turned around and fired 1,000 workers. At the same time, over this same period, while they're firing workers and taking a whole lot of aid, they gave their outgoing CEO a $6-million bonus. That's the Conservative government's approach to protecting workers and helping our economy: help the rich; good luck to everybody else. I don't love that.

When we're talking about protecting the economy, we would like to see this government focus more on keeping workers employed and in creating more jobs, because unemployment is really, really high. It's at 7% and it's much higher for young people.

What that would look like: It would mean bringing in stronger buy-Ontario and build-Ontario rules so that government contracts to buy goods and services go to Ontario businesses first, go to Canadian businesses first, so we don't have all this crazy business where we're spending money just giving it to Staples to provide rip-off prices to teachers who just want to buy some paper and some pens and some stuff to help their kids. Why would you sign a contract with a US giant in the middle of a trade war in order to rip off teachers? I don't know. I really don't know.

We would like to see stronger buy-Ontario and build-Ontario rules because I have taken a look at the very weak regulations that this government has written on this and they are they are so weak—nothing for food. They're weak. I'd like to see something a lot stronger.

1710

And what I'd also like to see—real strings attached; build-Ontario, buy-Ontario rules—I'd like to see more investment in our public services and our public infrastructure. AI data centres create jobs. But guess what? Building a hospital creates jobs too. Hiring workers to work in our college system and our university system creates jobs too. When I look at how much we're spending on health care and education, I see cuts. When times are tough and we are in economically turbulent times, that's the time to step in and invest in things that are going to help people, create jobs, improve services, improve infrastructure. That's what I'd like to see.

In my final two minutes, I'd like to talk a little bit about the debt and the deficit. You've been avoiding this problem for a very long time. The media has been letting you get away with it. But every year, it's looking uglier and uglier for this government. You ran on a promise of fiscal discipline, but the latest numbers show that Ontario's deficit and debt continues to grow. The deficit for the coming year is $16.9 billion. That's a lot of money. And the government is on track to have a total debt of half a trillion dollars. That is an obscene amount of money that will have to be paid back sometime, with interest. I'm worried about what that means for our kids, and I'm worried about what that means for our economy.

If I have one piece of advice for you when it comes to managing the debt—I have two. The first one is, do what you're legally required to do and come up with an honest and credible debt-management and debt-reduction plan. Come up with a plan. The second thing that I really, really want you to do is just quit with the waste—the private career colleges, the private jets, Ontario Place, the fantasy tunnel under the 401, the obsession with private health care that costs so much more than public health care and delivers less.

That's all the time I have to share about the fall economic statement today. We'll have more to say in future days and future weeks.

Now I'd like to hand my time over to the member for Ottawa West–Nepean.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'm happy to share the thoughts of my constituents in Ottawa West–Nepean on Bill 143, the government's fall economic statement. I have to say, the government had 21 weeks to get this right, to come up with solutions to the challenges that people are facing across the province. And it's pretty terrifying that this is what they came up with in the span of 21 weeks—this mediocre reinforcement of the status quo. People are really struggling across the province. They're definitely strug-

gling in Ottawa. They can't afford groceries and gas and housing. There are cuts to health care happening across the province when wait times are already high. Our kids are in crumbling schools where they can't get help, and their teachers and education workers are being fired. The government has cut off thousands of students from OSAP after already making thousands go from grants to loans, even though the cost of tuition is going up. Across the province, there are 700,000 people who don't have a job, and the government has no jobs plan to help these people find a way to make a living and to make ends meet for their family. Speaker, 21 weeks—and this document is the best that the government can come up with? That's pathetic.

We need a government that's actually going to take the challenges people are facing seriously and put forward solutions, because we know that the solutions are there.

And then, for the people of Ottawa—I mean, my goodness, what another slap in the face this is, on top of the slap in the face that we got this summer, when the Premier and his ministers couldn't even be bothered to show up in Ottawa after 7,500 homes were flooded. People were cleaning out their homes for weeks by themselves. They're tens of thousands of dollars in the hole. And yet, the government couldn't even be bothered to come just to listen to them for one afternoon. It's incredible.

And then they table this fall economic statement where the Minister of Finance didn't even mention Ottawa. He listed off a whole bunch of communities around the province, including—and I don't hold this against my seatmate—Sudbury, twice, but he didn't even mention the second-largest city in the province once, a city of a million people. And that's despite the fact that there are some very big challenges in Ottawa and some commitments that this government has made that they haven't followed through on, like the funding for the LRT upload or the 176 upload. There's nothing for the Ottawa Hospital cost overruns that risk making Ottawa pay millions of dollars for this hospital that the government keeps bragging about, but that we still don't have and won't have for years to come. It's like we just don't exist, and it is one among so many examples where we just don't seem to exist for this government, Speaker. It is incredibly frustrating as an Ottawa resident.

I want to give you some examples of things that this government could have and should have addressed in this fall economic statement for Ottawa residents, for people in Ottawa West–Nepean. That starts with funding for the Queensway Carleton Hospital, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. It's a fantastic hospital. We're very grateful to have it and the dedicated health care workers and nurses and physicians who work there.

It's already not the right size to serve our community, Speaker. It was built to serve 100,000 people 50 years ago. Now it's serving a community of 500,000. It's not the right size for that, and it's not funded properly in order to do that. And because of the funding shortfall, this summer the Queensway Carleton Hospital laid off 87 nurses, seven housekeepers and four emergency department personal care aides in July. They've cut 119 staff in total since January 2025. That's in a situation in which people are already waiting incredibly long times for care.

So what do you think happens, Speaker? The very obvious thing happened, which is that wait times have increased. So in August, the average wait time for a patient to see a doctor for the first time, the first assessment by a doctor in the Queensway Carleton emergency department, was 4.7 hours—the highest of any emergency department in the province, which is the inevitable outcome of cuts. It's nothing against the hard-working staff in the emergency department, who come in and want to do their best every single day. But when we cut personnel, that is the outcome. There are less resources, less capacity to deliver care. And despite these cuts, the Queensway Carleton is still dealing with a deficit of $1 million, so we risk seeing further cuts when we need more investments in care, not less.

The hospital has a plan in place, ready to build, ready to start rightsizing the hospital immediately once the funding is committed. And it's a good plan. It will not only build the space that we need, but it will invest in local jobs in construction and the trades. It will provide the capacity to hire additional nurses and health care workers and physicians—shovel-ready as soon as the government commits the money. But this has been several years now, where the Queensway Carleton has this plan ready to go and the government has not made any commitment, not even any mention of the need for health care for the population of half of Ottawa. That's the extent to which we don't count, that they will not even make investments so that people in half of Ottawa have timely access to hospital care.

There was a story just this weekend in my riding, Speaker, that was really heartbreaking: residents reaching out about a person named Robert, who was living in a self-constructed shelter at Mud Lake. He lost everything. They came in, they destroyed the shelter, but they took away all of his belongings alongside it. And of course, people in the community were really upset that somebody who already had so little could lose everything in one fell swoop.

So they reached out to ask what kind of support had been offered to Robert. Why was his home taken away? Why were his belongings taken away with no alternative? And the answer came back that city staff had visited Robert and made an offer to connect him to social services, but there was no housing to offer Robert. He could have an appointment with somebody who could talk about the fact that he didn't have housing, but there was no home to offer to Robert. There was no alternative except an already overcapacity shelter when shelters are already having people sit in chairs throughout the night because there is no space. What somebody like Robert needs is a home. I don't think Robert wants to live at Mud Lake, but there's no home available for him.

In Ottawa, there's over 16,300 households who are on the affordable housing wait-list who could end up in that scenario of living on the street or who are living in shelters themselves. We know that, as of June, there were 664 families in Ottawa who were living in the shelter system—

that's a 76% increase in just the last three years—and the average stay of those families is 327 days.

1720

Just imagine you're a kid living with your family in one, maybe two rooms in a shelter, trying to sleep there every night and get up and go to school in the morning for nearly a year. What does that do to your childhood? What does that do to your capacity to succeed at school?

What this fall economic statement reveals is that this government has given big developers and big landlords everything that they have asked for. They have had housing bill after housing bill, giveaway after giveaway, and yet it has not worked to jump-start construction. Their housing targets have been dropped once again for 2026 and 2027. Their housing starts have fallen continually since 2022, and they've basically, finally, all but admitted that their overall goal of building homes has just fallen by the wayside. It is not going to be a reality in Ontario.

The problem is that then puts all of us at risk. There was a survey just last week in Ottawa that said more than half of people in Ottawa know someone they believe is at risk of homelessness. Half of people know someone who is at risk of becoming homeless. It's time that we actually take action.

And what's frustrating about this government's admission of failure, year after year after year, is that it's not like we don't know what works. There's a reason why we were able to build the homes that we needed after World War II. There's a reason why we were building the homes we needed up until the 1990s, when governments got out of the business of building homes. Governments need to be a partner in building housing, and they certainly need to be a partner in building the deeply affordable housing that people like Robert need.

This fall economic statement also fails to do anything about the fact that people in Ontario can't afford food. The cost of groceries is skyrocketing. Already, in Ottawa, one in four households is experiencing food insecurity, and food bank use has doubled since 2019—it's doubled. There are twice as many people under this government going to use a food bank, and the number of seniors—seniors who should be living in a dignified retirement in this province—has gone up 90%.

There are solutions that we can implement here as well, Speaker. We could remove the tax on groceries. We could crack down on surveillance pricing and other forms of price gouging. This government has refused to do that. They voted against NDP motions that would have done that. Apparently, they like people who are experiencing food insecurity having to pay taxes on their groceries.

That's what a government that was actually serious about addressing the cost-of-living crisis would do. That's what this fall economic statement has been an abject failure on.

I want to turn now to education, because if we want to talk about challenges, there are some really serious challenges in our education system in Ontario, and this fall economic statement is like whistling in the dark. You would have no idea that there is even anything challenging in our education system based on this fall economic statement. It is status quo in the face of significant challenges.

Earlier this year, the Financial Accountability Officer—and I'll just remind people, because the Minister of Education has made it clear he does not care for the Financial Accountability Officer and does not see his advice as useful, that the Financial Accountability Officer is a non-partisan officer of the Legislature. He exists to provide information that Ontarians can trust is free of partisan spin and bias; facts that help people to transparently understand government decisions and hold them accountable.

What the Financial Accountability Officer said is that the funding that is being provided for education is not keeping up with the actual costs of delivering education or with enrolment. According to the FAO, the spending for the elementary and secondary program this year is increasing by 0.6%. But the FAO says, if we don't want to have service cuts—which, let's be clear, in the case of education, that means fewer teachers and education workers, fewer programs in the schools, fewer resources like paper and pencils in our schools. If we don't want to see less of that, then we need to see an increase in funding of at least 2.6%.

So the government's spending in the budget was off by two full percentage points—0.6% versus the 2.6% the FAO said was necessary to avoid cuts. They had a chance to get it right here in the fall economic statement, finally, and they didn't take it. They left the funding the way it was. There is still a very low increase that falls so far below the rate of inflation.

I do, however, just want to point out quickly that the minister also said that there was no way that the FAO knew what he was talking about because there was no way that the FAO could know what he was planning to spend in future years. But I will just point out that it very clearly says on page 9 of the fall economic statement what the government is planning to spend on education each year for the next four years, just like it said on page 9 of the budget.

This is the government's spending plan for education, and it does not involve investment increases in education, so I don't think it's the FAO who is unaware of what's going on. Because we're seeing these cuts year after year—$6.5 billion in cuts over the past eight years—we have seen massive cuts to the number of teachers and education workers and principals in our schools this year.

This year alone, there have been 2,594 teacher, education worker and principal positions that were cut that we know about, that were publicly reported on. And it's important to remember what that means for our kids. It means larger class sizes. It means fewer resource teachers and EAs when kids are struggling academically or when they are struggling and need a little bit of help with behaviour or self-regulation in the classroom. It means there are fewer ECEs and CYWs to support our kids and make sure that all of them are safe in school and have all of their needs met. It means that there are fewer trades and maintenance workers like custodians who are ensuring

that our schools are safe for every student and every worker who works there as well.

Because of these cuts, even the minister's hand-picked supervisors who were selected by him and given the sole mandate of getting rid of the deficits in the eight school boards where they have been imposed—even those hand-picked supervisors, despite the deep cuts that they made, could not get rid of the deficits in those boards. Every single board under a supervisor is still running a deficit this year to the tune of $136 million, and that's despite the fact that those supervisors together cut a combined 1,623 teachers and education workers.

There is no way that we get out of this crisis in education without providing adequate funding. The FAO has been very clear: We are going to see more teachers and education workers fired; we are going to see more kids without the supports that they need if we don't increase investment in education. And this government is flatly refusing to do that.

There is no area of education where kids are being harmed more by these cuts than special education. The Auditor General released a report this spring which confirmed what parents have been saying for years, along with trustees, teachers and education workers, which is that there is a shortfall of hundreds of millions of dollars in spending on special education. Boards are spending hundreds of millions of dollars more than what they're getting, and that is for a system that is barely even able to keep kids safe when they go to school, let alone support them in their learning in any way. The devastating consequences of that underfunding have been laid out pretty clearly by Community Living and by the Ontario Autism Coalition.

In addition to this issue of safety when kids are at school, one of the biggest consequences is just the capacity of our kids to be at school. One in four kids with a disability is not able to attend school full-time in Ontario. Whether that's that they don't attend school the full day or whether they're not allowed to attend school the full week, we are excluding one in four kids with a disability from fully participating in school.

And that's not even the worst, Speaker. There are 21,000 kids in Ontario who are not able to go to school at all. That's 21,000 kids who are sitting at home simply because they have a disability, and this government won't come up with the funding so that they can go to school safely and participate, just like every other child in the province has the right to.

The Auditor General also highlighted the number of kids who are waiting more than a year for a specialist assessment to get the help that they need at school. In fact, at two of the three boards that she looked at, one third of the students are waiting more than a year to receive a specialist assessment.

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And shortly after—just days after—the AG released this report, the Minister of Education made his core funding announcement, and there was a cut in per-student funding for special education teachers, EAs, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists and psychologists. It went from $928 per student last year to $927 per student this year.

The Minister of Education would have been given an advanced copy of the AG report, because his response to her recommendations were included in the report, and he chose to cut funding, not increase it.

Well, there was an opportunity here in the fall economic statement to make that right, to actually fill that shortfall, to make sure that we were allowing every child in the province to attend school, to make sure that kids weren't waiting a year or more just to get a specialist assessment, and the government chose not to seize that opportunity.

Because let's be clear: That is a deliberate choice to abandon those children, to not provide the funding that would allow them to be at school on the same terms as any other child, to decide not to provide the funding that would allow them to get the help and the support and the therapy that they need to be at school, even though every single year those kids are falling farther and farther behind, and they might fall behind to the point where they never catch up. That's not fair for the future of these kids, it's not fair to their families, and it's not fair for us as a province, who lose out on what those kids might have been able to bring if we were willing to invest in them and support them.

Mental health is another area where our students are really, really struggling, and funding this year did not even increase a single penny. Nine out of 10 principals say that they need more help with special education than what they're getting. Only one in 10 schools in Ontario has regularly scheduled access to a mental health professional, and half have no access at all. Yet there's been no increase in mental health spending whatsoever.

I had a child and youth worker reach out to my office to say that her board used to have a program that was called "promoting mentally healthy schools." This program provided evidence-based strategies and programs for all grades. It taught healthy relationships, strategies for addressing stress and self-regulation. It offered support groups, like Self Esteem and Rainbows. And rather than spread these child and youth workers across all kinds of duties, they were actually deliberately made available during break times, which was when students would have the opportunity to actually approach them or to participate in a group.

But budget cuts at her board meant that this program got axed, so there's no proactive support for any of these children anymore. The child and youth workers are also not being made available during break times when the kids could come up to them and say that they're struggling, because now they're just running around the school, putting out fires like all of the other teachers and education workers across the province.

And this matters more than ever, Speaker, because just this year, the Minister of Education implemented a new requirement for attendance, so when students aren't in class, that affects their grades for high school students. Yet he didn't make a single investment to actually ensure that kids would be at school. And when I pointed this out in committee, that made him very, very angry. In fact, he had

some pretty unparliamentary accusations to make about that.

But that's not me who said that. These are teachers, education workers and social workers who are coming to me to express concerns, saying that we are failing our kids on mental health. We're not providing them with support when they say that they need help. And then when they're not able to be at school because they have these mental health challenges, we're punishing them, even though we know that creates a cycle. We're being punished for it, knowing that their grades are going down because their mental health is experiencing challenges. That makes them sink further into depression or anxiety, which makes it harder for them to show up again.

I had a teacher reach out to me to say that, after a meeting on school achievement planning, it was recognized that every single student they identified with serious attendance challenges was a student with a mental health concern. She said to me, "We have been flagging these kids for years, working with their families, and there is no mental health professional to support them at school."

The Ontario Association of Social Workers reached out to me to express this concern that there are so many schools that don't have a mental health professional who is able to work with these kids to provide the support that they need for them.

This idea, Speaker, that somehow these kids are all going to have a diagnosis, that they're going to go to their parents so that they can get a sick note saying, "I have depression," "I have anxiety," "I can't be in class," "This is an excused absence"—I think that is to fundamentally misunderstand how mental health concerns work.

I just want to share one story from a family that I know, Speaker, with a child who was struggling with some pretty serious anxiety. The student had a very good relationship with their parents, so the parents were aware, were working with the child on strategies. But in one class, the student had a teacher say something that really triggered that anxiety, and so the student did not want to go to that particular class because of that level of anxiety, but the anxiety did not make them feel comfortable discussing it with their parents either. The parents only found out later that the student was going to the bathroom to hide during that class. They were going to school every morning and they were attending every other class, but they were hiding in the bathroom during that class. So the parents might have been perfectly willing to make a phone call for an excused absence, but they didn't know.

We can't put kids in a place where they are doing whatever they can as a strategy to make them feel safe if we're not going to provide the support that would actually allow them to feel safe, to allow them to go to school, to have those conversations with teachers and with caregivers. If we're not going to do that, then it's not fair to punish them. So it is incredibly frustrating and really infuriating to see that there's not a single increase to education funding here that would provide that support for kids who are dealing with mental health challenges.

I also need to take some time, Speaker, to talk about this deal with Staples for school resources because, clearly, this government has a problem getting resources into classrooms. There is no doubt about that. But it was never the process that was broken; what was broken was the lack of funding. There simply was not enough money to make sure that schools had the paper, the pencils, the books, the art supplies and the gym supplies that they needed.

The problem was never the system about how you ordered it. In fact, I would say I heard from many teachers and education workers and administrators who were going above and beyond and taking their very small budgets and being very innovative and finding the best possible deals that they could to maximize the amount of money that they were using. And what the government did was to take that system and completely break it while also giving our education dollars from Ontario to a large American corporation, while they're busy talking about "buy Ontario" in a trade war.

We heard the Solicitor General just talking earlier about how important it was that we invest in the Ontario economy, that we buy Ontario, and yet they are signing deals in the middle of that with large American corporations that flow our profits out. In fact, Staples took no time whatsoever to see the opportunity here to jack up prices and gouge teachers compared to what they would spend if they just went across the street to a local Staples store.

There are so many ways in which this deal has simply broken school procurement. This is just one example of price gouging from Staples. A teacher shared with me that she was ordering desk plates for students' desks. It has their name, and it's a thin piece of cardstock that can stick to the desk. Already, a thin piece of cardstock that can stick to the desk—Staples was charging $9.92. It should be available in a pack of 30, but Staples was trying to charge $9.92 for every single one of those 30 nameplates. Can you imagine?

And then there are the delays for supplies. I've heard some pretty crazy stories, Speaker, including a teacher who was told that her 12-pack of highlighters—a single 12-pack of highlighters—was delayed until January. An office supply company can't deliver a 12-pack of highlighters to a teacher within a three-month window, Speaker? Why on earth did we give this same company a $60-million contract for funds to flow into the pockets of American shareholders?

An art teacher who said her school would normally order boxes of paint for the whole school in the spring couldn't do that this year because of the program changes, so the teacher had to order her own paint. Two weeks after she placed the order, she had received a box with a single bottle of paint. So she is not able to do painting with her art class because Staples is unable to deliver paint to an art teacher.

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Even for teachers who are able to get the supplies without waiting three or four months for them to arrive, they are spending so much more time trying to track down and order their own supplies to try to deal with these delays

and backlogs. One teacher wrote to me, and I'm going to quote this at length, Speaker:

"The process has taken me many hours longer than other years. Our office is full of plastic bags and boxes every day, and our custodians or secretaries are taking time away from their work to sort and deliver. I've had several things on backorder. The invoices are confusing and often inaccurate, but I have so many other things to do that aren't taking an inventory of incoming mail. I heard that there's a customer support number, but in the last month, I haven't had time away from teaching, preparing lessons or marking classwork to even look up the number while the line is open."

Well, Speaker, I can tell you that another teacher did have time to call the support number, and she said when she did, she got someone in the Philippines. How is this a buy-Ontario contract when we're giving our education dollars to a large American company who is outsourcing their communications support to the Philippines? Could we not find anybody in Ontario who could answer the phone to explain why they can't deliver a 12-pack of highlighters in less than three months?

It's absolutely ludicrous that this government is claiming fiscal competence when this is the kind of thing that they're spending money on at the same time that they're parading around saying that they're the heroes of Ontario's economy promoting local procurement. It's absolutely insane, Speaker. That's the only word I can come up with to describe it.

There are so many more areas where I could talk about the failure to invest in education and the impact that it's having on our kids. The fact that we know that a third of our school buildings are not in a state of good repair and the FAO says it will be 75% within the next seven years if they don't increase funding, and they haven't increased funding by a single dollar—in fact, it hasn't increased by a single dollar since 2018; eight years, not a single dollar increase. What a lost opportunity this was.

We know that kids are in larger and larger class sizes. I heard from a TDSB teacher who had 52 students in a single class for the first three weeks of this year—52 students in a single class. This is a board that laid off hundreds of teachers and education workers. This is what systematic failure of our children looks like, Speaker. This was an opportunity to actually provide the investments that they need. The government didn't take it, and shame on them.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: The times that find us are serious. We have a threat against our province that is without precedent and now is the time when we look at a prudent way that our government has acted to come forward with a fall economic statement to make sure that we're there to do one thing: Protect Ontario.

The member opposite, in my opinion, has ignored the things that we have done to buy from Ontario, and while we can't do everything, we are doing a lot. We're going to do more. That's why we have a plan, as we've said, that we must—municipalities and everywhere possible—buy from Ontario.

Does the member opposite agree that, in the absence of having a government policy to buy Ontario, we will never get there?

Ms. Jessica Bell: It's good that we agree on the goal: Ontario should be buying more products and services from Ontario businesses and Canadian businesses. We agree with the goal.

I have looked at what the minister has put forward. I have read the regulations on build Ontario, buy Ontario, and they're so flimsy. They're so flimsy. They basically include car manufacturing—good thing—but that's about it. I would love to see really significant and firm, strong buy-Ontario policies so that we are hiring Ontario workers to build our hospitals, to build our public transit, to provide teachers with crayons and highlighters in a short period of time. Yes, they're the facts.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

M. Guy Bourgouin: J'écoutais ma collègue parler de l'éducation. Dans l'énoncé économique de l'automne, je peux vous dire qu'on est resté sur notre appétit, pas à peu près, et vous avez très bien démontré ça dans votre présentation.

Mais dans le Nord, j'ai un grand-père qui est très concerné. Il a un enfant autiste. Il est très concerné par les services. Il y a tellement peu de services pour les enfants du spectre de l'autisme dans le nord de l'Ontario. j'aimerais vous entendre là-dessus. Qu'est-ce que l'opportunité qu'ils ont manquée pour aider la famille de—je sais que c'est Jean-Roch [*inaudible*] qui m'a posé la question. Je le connais ça fait longtemps; il m'a vu grandir. Il dit : « Guy, on a tellement peu de services. » Il est très concerné par son petit-fils.

J'aimerais vous entendre sur cet énoncé économique. Qu'est-ce que le gouvernement aurait dû faire pour aider des personnes dans les régions isolées comme le Nord, comme dans mon coin à Kapuskasing, Hearst, Mattice—comment il aurait pu faire beaucoup mieux pour desservir la population, mais surtout les étudiants en besoin?

M^me^ Chandra Pasma: Merci à mon collègue de Mushkegowuk–Baie James pour la question. C'est très important.

Il y a, bien sûr, un manque de services pour tous nos enfants qui ont des besoins spéciaux partout dans la province, qu'ils soient des anglophones ou des francophones. Mais c'est vrai qu'il y a une pire pénurie dans le nord de l'Ontario et surtout en français. Et donc, il faut vraiment avoir une stratégie : l'intention d'assurer que tous les enfants aient accès aux services dont ils ont besoin, d'investir pour assurer l'accès aux spécialistes, aux thérapies, même si ça veut dire que peut-être il faut aider la famille à voyager pour avoir des services.

Mais le gouvernement ne fait rien, et ça va avoir un impact pour tout le reste de la vie de ces jeunes enfants. Ça, ce n'est pas juste, tout simplement parce qu'ils habitent dans le Nord.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

MPP Stephanie Smyth: We all know that the Ontario fall economic update is warning of really bleak times ahead—rising unemployment, weaker job creation, slower growth—as we all know, driven by those US tariffs. But we also know that the unemployment rate has risen for nine straight quarters, and that's long before the US tariffs began.

Youth unemployment, as we all know and have been discussing, is at an all-time high. Young people are losing confidence in their future. We know Ontario needs a real jobs plan that supports training, innovation etc. And yet, instead of investing in workers, this government continues to underfund colleges and universities.

I guess I can ask the member for Ottawa or the member for University–Rosedale about the importance—as we feel, as Liberals—in growing the economy by investing in people and how they're missing the mark so completely on this.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Toronto–St. Paul's. I've been shocked by how high youth unemployment is. It's 15%. We just did a jobs round table where we had young people talk about how difficult it is to get a job right now. Engineering students doing PhDs saying, "I don't even know if I'm going to get a job." That's really worrying.

What we see in this fall economic statement is very large tax cuts that will help some, but what we're not seeing is serious investment in colleges and universities to make going to university and college affordable, so people can get into their chosen profession; as well as economic stimulus programs and job creation programs, so people can move here, stay here, have a life here and have a career here. We're not seeing it, and we're missing out on that opportunity. Young people are missing out on that opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you very much, Speaker. I really appreciate it, and I appreciate the presentations by the members of the opposition this afternoon.

I'm a little confused, though, Speaker. For so many years, the previous government taxed and taxed and taxed, spent and spent and spent, ran deficits and did it during a time of, I'll say, relative stability in the economy; whereas this government has gone through COVID and is going through Trump and has found ways to save the average person so much money. We're talking about $12.5 billion in supports for the common person in Ontario, lowering the price of housing by up to $200,000, the One Fare program to save $1,600 for people using transit.

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My question to the members opposite is, how can they justify complaining about the savings—the cost savings—that we're providing to the people of this province?

Ms. Jessica Bell: My gosh—my gosh. The Conservatives have put us on track to have a debt of $500 billion, and you're telling us that you're managing the government and the economy well? That doesn't even make sense.

And this year, in the fall economic statement, we have a deficit of nearly $17 billion. That's astronomical—astronomical. It's honestly astonishing.

I'm not going to give them a free pass because the deficit and the debt have been increasing year in and year out. This government has had bad times, but you've also had good times, and the deficit was significant in the good times as well.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Question?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: We talk about health care and we're talking about affordability, and I want to raise one of my constituents, Sydney Gesualdi. She's been fighting for treatment under the health care of Ontario. It was told to her that the health care is there, and she had to access out-of-country care and was denied. If the care was there, she should be able to get it. The government keeps saying it's there.

Her father, this summer, had to go on a marathon from London to Toronto to raise money to pay for the out-of-country care that she needs. I'm going to say that I'm so happy that they raised $500,000 so that Sydney could actually get her out-of-country care.

So I want to know from one of my colleagues—I know they raised this out-of-country care—why is this government failing the everyday Ontarian and denying coverage in our province but then making them pay for their own out-of-country care?

Ms. Jessica Bell: As I mentioned in my speech, we've made incredible advancements in care that can be provided to people who are facing debilitating, life-threatening illnesses. Because of red tape, some of this care is not available to Ontarians, and it should be.

The issues that you're seeing with your constituents are issues that we're also seeing with constituents in University–Rosedale as well. They include Sabrina Apitz-Grossman and Alex Shved, and my heart goes out to them. My hope is that this government can find a resolution and can solve the very tough predicament these people are in.

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

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: It's an honour to rise in the House on behalf of the residents of Don Valley West and as our party's finance and trade critic to speak to Bill 143, the plan to protect Ontario. I will be sharing my time with the member for Don Valley East, the member for Beaches–East York, the member for Scarborough–Guildwood and the member for Ottawa South.

You know, Speaker, it's the fifth time that I've had the honour to speak about this government's fall economic statement, so I guess it's an anniversary of sorts. But, sadly, there's not much to celebrate because it's also the government's seventh anniversary of delaying its own promise to balance the books. We heard it here earlier: This government—yes, they've had some challenging times, as do all governments, but they've also had some

pretty rich times. Yet, still, they have not been able to table a balanced budget and have kicked the can down the road once again of balancing the books.

I'm thinking about the finance minister; that he must be getting tired of giving yet another update with yet another delay in the path to balance. He's part of this fiscally irresponsible Doug Ford Conservative government and, sadly, he has not been able to convince them to get their books in order. Ontario can do so much better.

The government is not being realistic and they're not being transparent with the people of Ontario. It's gotten to the point where I'm waiting for the finance minister to say, "No, really, I'm serious this time. I'm really going to balance the books."

During an affordability crisis, a health care crisis, a housing crisis, a homelessness crisis, an unemployment crisis, this government is failing the people of Ontario. Job growth is down 13,000 jobs from what they projected just six months ago, and there will be 16,000 fewer housing starts.

Speaker, the Premier talked last week about the Bank of Canada, so I feel compelled—I must do the same here, today, but in a different way. The Bank of Canada interest rate is the same across the country, yet Ontario is lagging other provinces in housing starts. Other provinces like Alberta, Quebec, BC are building homes at a rate one and a half to two times faster than the province of Ontario. All that means in the affordability crisis is that the cost of housing is getting worse under this government.

I think the government needs to take some accountability for that. Again, they point to the Bank of Canada, they point to other levels of government, they point to builders. Who else is there to blame? They need to take some accountability for the mess that they have made of the housing file and the fact that so many young people are leaving this province because they can't afford to buy a home. Do you know, Speaker, the average age of a first-time homebuyer here in Ontario is now 40 years old? No wonder young people are discouraged and leaving our province.

But do you know what, Speaker? Spending on downtown hotels: check; spending on private nursing agencies: check; self-promoting ads: check; private career college scams: check; and, of course, the unfair Skills Development Fund that's taking money from the services—all of these things are taking money from the services that the people of Ontario need, like health care and education.

We also know that the province is dangerously close to blowing past its own fiscal sustainability targets. One has already been surpassed, and in the government's own slow-growth scenario—and again, we know that they're talking about all the risk in the economy from the President, who they actually wanted to be elected, but that's a whole other discussion—all of their guardrails will be tripped. Debt servicing will soon be competing for the third-largest item in the budget. Interest expense—that's what that is, Speaker—will soon be competing for the third-largest expense in the budget. That's money on interest, not people.

So it is no wonder that the government says they don't have the money to treat those very few people who need access to life-saving treatment in the US. It's a real shame. Think about those families, Speaker, what they are going through tonight as they worry about their loved ones.

So what does this fall economic statement do for families today? Very little. The government's words say one thing, but its spending says another. They talk about food security, but agriculture spending is going down. They talk about safer streets, but justice spending is going down. They cut education. They've cut emergency preparedness and firefighting and post-secondary education. But they did find money to increase that unfair Skills Development Fund, that helps their friends—no new money for families who are struggling.

They call this the most ambitious infrastructure plan, yet municipal infrastructure funding falls from roughly $1.2 billion to $600 million—so almost in half, Speaker; federal-provincial programs also cut in half.

And then there's the so-called tariff relief. Now, that is something that's teeny-tiny. An Ontario Together Trade Fund for $150 million: They've gotten less than $5 million out the door. A $5-billion Protect Ontario Account: only $140 million out the door. We've got cost overruns on the Ottawa Hospital civic campus and the Ontario Line that will cost us tens of billions of dollars more, but we're getting the same result, Speaker. Never has a government spent so much to deliver so little—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): It is now 6 p.m.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): This House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, November 3, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du troisième parti
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Président Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Cerjanec, Rob (LIB)	Ajax	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Ciriello, Monica (PC)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire du troisième parti
Cooper, Hon. / L'hon. Michelle (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associée délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances
Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	Oakville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises et de l'Approvisionnement
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Darouze, George (PC)	Carleton	
Denault, Billy (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence
Fairclough, Lee (LIB)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Firin, Mohamed (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	
Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Leader, Third Party / Chef du troisième parti
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gilmour, Alexa (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Gualtieri, Silvia (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Hamid, Hon. / L'hon. Zee (PC)	Milton	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Jeux
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé des Forêts et des Produits forestiers
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Lahey, Susan (PC)	York—Simcoe	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines
Lennox, Robin (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Artificial Intelligence Adoption / Ministre associé de l'Adoption de l'intelligence artificielle
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Attorney General / Procureur général associé
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Tsao, Jonathan (LIB)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Vickers, Paul (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Watt, Tyler (LIB)	Nepean	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	