Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

No. 88B

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Nº 88B

1st Session
44th Parliament

Thursday
5 November 2026

1re session
44e législature

Jeudi
5 novembre 2026

Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly
Greffier : Trevor Day

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

https://www.ola.org/

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

Hansard Publications and Language Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Journal des débats et services linguistiques
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 5 November 2026 / Jeudi 5 novembre 2026

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

Romanian Heritage Week Act, 2026, Bill 122, Mr. Cuzzetto; Mr. Kanapathi / Loi de 2026 sur la Semaine du patrimoine roumain, projet de loi 122, M. Cuzzetto; M. Kanapathi

Mr. Logan Kanapathi 5489
Ms. Peggy Sattler 5490
Mr. Jonathan Tsao 5491
Hon. Michael A. Tibollo 5492
Mr. Tom Rakocevic 5493
Mr. Rob Cerjanec 5494
Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto 5495
Second reading agreed to 5496

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 5 November 2026

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 5 novembre 2026

Report continued from volume A.

1800

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

ROMANIAN HERITAGE WEEK ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 SUR LA SEMAINE DU PATRIMOINE ROUMAIN

Mr. Kanapathi moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 122, An Act to proclaim Romanian Heritage Week / Projet de loi 122, Loi proclamant la Semaine du patrimoine roumain.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: It is an honour and privilege to rise today and speak in support of Bill 122, the Romanian Heritage Week Act, 2026.

I would first like to thank my colleague and friend the member for Vaughan–Woodbridge, the Associate Attorney General, for his continued support of the Romanian Canadian community. Thank you for your passion on this bill.

I would also like to thank my colleague and friend the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore, MPP Rudy Cuzzetto, for co-sponsoring this bill. I thank him for his continued support of the Romanian community in Ontario.

I would also like to recognize the many community leaders, cultural organizations, faith leaders, volunteers and families who have worked tirelessly to preserve and promote Romanian heritage throughout Ontario.

We have with us here today incredible representatives of the Romanian community, including the consul general of Romania to Toronto, Oana-Raluca Gherghe. We are happy to welcome Dumitru Popescu, editor and publisher of Observatorul, a Canadian Romanian magazine; Rev. Father Petruţă Busuioc, administrative vicar of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada; Raul Dudnic, producer and host of a Romanian-language television program broadcast on OMNI Television; Peter Săndică from my riding of Markham–Thornhill, president of the Romanian Board of Trade Toronto; Gabriela Covaci, president of the Arts4People Movement; Emil Caraghin, president of the Association of Romanian Engineers in Canada; Radu Secășan, president of the Association of Romanians in the Golden Triangle; and Marin Liţoiu, president of the Romanian Academic Association of Canada.

These organizations represent different generations, different professions and different regions of Ontario. They represent artists, professionals, cultural leaders, faith communities, volunteers and families. While they may serve different parts of the community, they are united in their belief that Romanian heritage deserves recognition and celebration. We welcome you to the House. We are very excited to have you here. Thank you.

Madam Speaker, by passing this bill, we officially recognize Romanian Heritage Week here in Ontario in the first week of December of each year. This important recognition celebrates the rich culture, history and contributions of Romanian Canadians across the province and Canada and beyond.

Ontario is stronger because of its diversity. People from all over the world have chosen this beautiful province as their home, bringing with them their talents, traditions, values and dreams for a better future. Through their hard work and perseverance, they have helped build the strong, prosperous province that we know today. Their achievements have strengthened our communities, enriched our province and helped build a better Ontario for all.

The Romanian Canadian experience is, in many ways, an Ontario story. It is a story of determination, sacrifice and opportunity. Beginning with the first wave of immigration more than a century ago, Romanian families chose Canada as a place where they could build new lives, raise families and create opportunities.

Madam Speaker, as many members in this House know, I came to Canada from Sri Lanka, a war-torn country, as a refugee. I left behind everything in fear of persecution for my life, and for a better life. I understand what it means to start over in a new country. I understand the importance of preserving one's heritage while embracing the opportunities available in Canada.

Many Romanian Canadian families share a similar journey. They came here with the hopes and dreams for a better future. They worked hard, built successful lives and contributed meaningfully to the community they call home. At the same time, they preserved their culture, tradition, language and heritage, ensuring that future generations would remain connected to their roots.

This balance is one of the greatest strengths of Ontario. We are able to celebrate our heritage while fully participating in our shared future. We can be proud of where we came from and proud of the province we have helped build together.

Madam Speaker, it is important that young people understand their history, heritage and the sacrifices of those who came before them. This fosters a strong sense of identity, belonging and pride. Romanian Heritage Week would provide an opportunity to learn about Romanian culture and history while inspiring future generations to continue contributing to Ontario's success. By helping young people connect with their roots, we ensure that values of hard work, perseverance, community service and cultural pride are passed on to the future generations.

Romania is a country with a rich and remarkable history, shaped by centuries of resilience, creativity and cultural achievement. That rich cultural legacy continues here in Ontario through the vibrant Romanian Canadian community that continues to celebrate and preserve and share its heritage. Whether through the cultural festivals, community events, educational programs or artistic performances, Romanian Canadians continue to enrich the cultural life of our beautiful province.

The importance of preserving their heritage can be seen in the work of community organizations that have served generations of Romanian Canadians. Organizations such as Graiul Romanesc in Windsor and the Romanian Cultural Association-Hamilton have played an important role in preserving Romanian language and traditions, while helping families remain connected to their heritage.

Madam Speaker, this legislation would proclaim the first full week of December in each year as Romanian Heritage Week in Ontario. If passed, it would encourage awareness, education and celebration throughout Ontario. I would encourage the people to learn more about Romanian history and culture while creating opportunities for communities to come together and celebrate the contributions of Romanian Canadians.

The relationship between Ontario and Romania extends beyond culture and heritage; it is also reflected in growing economic commercial ties. This growing relationship shows that the connection between Ontario and Romania is not only rooted in history but also focused on the future.

According to the 2021 census, more than 215,000 Canadians identify as having Romanian heritage. Many have chosen Ontario as their home. Their success reflects the values of hard work, education, perseverance and service that continues to strengthen our province today.

This legislation is also a practical initiative. It is also a no-cost initiative. It doesn't create a new government program, doesn't create new bureaucracy and doesn't impose additional obligations on municipalities, schools or community organizations. The participation would be entirely voluntary. The purpose of this bill is straightforward: It is to recognize, it is to educate and it's just to celebrate.

Madam Speaker, Ontario's strength comes from its people. The Romanian Canadian community has made important contributions to the social, economic and cultural fabric of Ontario. Their story is one of perseverance, achievement and success.

1810

Their contributions deserve recognition, and their heritage deserves recognition. Bill 122 provides this Legislature with an opportunity to formally acknowledge those contributions and celebrate a community that has helped shape Ontario for generations.

I'm so proud to sponsor and support Bill 122, the Romanian Heritage Week Act, 2026. I encourage all members of this House to join me in supporting this important legislation. Let us recognize Romanian heritage. Let us celebrate Romanian culture. Let us honour the many contributions Romanian Canadians have made and continue to make to the province of Ontario.

Thank you. Mulțumesc.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Before I begin my remarks, I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the Remembrance Day ceremonies that all MPPs will be attending next week to reflect, honour and renew our promise to never forget the sacrifices of our veterans. We remember those who died in the line of duty or returned home forever changed. and express our deepest gratitude for the courage and selflessness of the women and men who defend our freedoms, safeguard our democracy and serve our country at home and abroad.

In London, our community will come together on November 11 at the Manor Park cenotaph, the Victoria Park cenotaph and Fanshawe College. Homes and schools and workplaces will pause at 11 a.m. for two minutes of silence. Families with loved ones in Parkwood's Veterans Care Program will gather for a special Remembrance Day service in the afternoon. Many will drop by the new Byron Springbank veterans' memorial or join with friends at the Byron Legion. Honouring our veterans is a solemn and important obligation for all of us. Lest we forget.

Speaker, I am delighted to rise in support of this private member's bill, the Romanian Heritage Week Act. I want to thank my colleagues the member for Markham–Thornhill and the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore for bringing this bill forward.

Our heritage is an important part of who we are as individuals and as Ontarians. As MPPs, we all bring our own personal experiences, our family histories, our ethnic and cultural backgrounds to the work that we do in this place. PMBs like this one allow us to recognize and celebrate the diversity of the people who call this province home, often choosing to settle here to seek a better life, who make significant contributions to our local and provincial economies and enrich our communities and quality of life.

The bill before us today will proclaim the first full week of December as Romanian Heritage Week, and its passage will be particularly meaningful for the 150,000 Romanian Canadians who live in our province. I am proud to be one of them, and I wanted to share a bit about my family's story. My father was born in a little village of 900 people in Transylvania, in western Romania, called Ideciu de Jos, which he called Niedereidisch. His ancestors were German-speaking Saxons, who, at the time my father was born, made up about 8% of the population of Transylvania.

The largest minority were the Hungarians, who represented almost one third of the population, choosing to remain in Transylvania following its transfer from Hungary to Romania after the First World War. In 1940, Transylvania was taken back by Hungary until it was returned to Romania in 1947.

My aunt—my father's sister—was born during that time, in the same house as my father, but her birthplace was Hungary while his was Romania. But I did not think of my father's family as either Romanian or Hungarian; I thought that we were German, and so it came as a great surprise to me when I learned of my Romanian roots.

My father's family fled the village in 1945, when the Russians came at the end of the war, and became displaced persons, making their way to Austria, where they lived in a US army barracks until immigrating to Canada in 1954. Along with several other families from Niedereidisch, they settled in Dundas, Ontario, and built a successful life for themselves and for future generations—myself, my sister and our children.

My father's village was located in the area of Transylvania they called Siebenbürgen, which means "seven cities" or "seven citadels" and refers to the fortified medieval towns that surrounded the area, built in the 12th century. In 2012, my sister and I and our two daughters took my father back to his village and had a wonderful, unforgettable trip. It was the first time he had been back to what his family called the old country since World War II.

We visited two of Siebenbürgen's fortified cities: Braşov, the location of Bran Castle, one of the most famous medieval castles in the world and the home of Vlad the Impaler, who is the inspiration for Romania's most famous resident, Count Dracula.

We visited Sighişoara, home of one of the only inhabited medieval fortresses in Europe and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1999.

We visited Ursu and experienced the world's largest heliothermal lake, where water temperatures can reach over 35 degrees in summer.

We ate delicious food: cabbage rolls, cabbage soup, pork stew, goulash, polenta. We saw women in beautiful traditional embroidered folk blouses and colourful head scarves. We brought home wonderful folk art as souvenirs: wood carvings, pottery, painted eggs. We purchased braided onions and garlic from the vendors who lined the highways and marvelled at the wonderful, beautiful scenery.

As I mentioned, I had always thought of myself as German, but it was after that visit that I have embraced my Romanian identity. I was interested to learn that Romania's president from 2014 to 2025 was also a Transylvanian Saxon, the first to ever hold that office.

So again, I want to say thank you to the members across the way for bringing forward this bill. It will provide us with an annual opportunity to highlight some of the remarkable Romanian Ontarians who call this province home, who have made significant contributions across sports, entertainment, arts, music, literature, business, politics, academia and more.

As a film buff, Speaker, I do want to mention the Romanian New Wave cinema, which I think is one of Romania's most appreciated gifts to the world. This emerged in 2004. It explores themes of freedom and resilience, follows the transition from communism to democracy.

We often get the opportunity to see some of these incredible films at TIFF. In London, I just saw Fjord at the Forest City Film Festival. It was directed by the founder of Romanian New Wave cinema, Cristian Mungiu.

In closing, I just want to say thanks again for this bill. I hope that all members will support it, and I look forward to celebrating my Romanian heritage and the contributions of all Romanian Ontarians in the first week of December in the coming years.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the people of Don Valley North in support of Bill 122, the Romanian Heritage Week Act. I want to thank my honourable colleagues from Markham–Thornhill and Mississauga–Lakeshore for introducing this bill.

1820

Speaker, at its heart, this bill speaks to something very human: the importance of seeing your family's history, your culture and your community's contributions recognized in the place that you call home. Romanian Canadians have contributed to our province over multiple generations through business, education, science, the arts, sport, public service and community leadership. Behind those contributions are people: people who came to Ontario looking for opportunity and stability, parents who worked hard to build a better future for their children, and grandparents who carried with them their language, traditions, faith, food, music and memories of home.

Starting again in a new country takes courage. Learning a new language, finding work, navigating unfamiliar systems and helping children find their place in a new community can be difficult. At the same time, there is another challenge: making sure that while you are building a new life in a new home, you do not lose the heritage and identity that shaped you. That is why recognition like Romanian Heritage Week matters.

Speaker, Ontario is one of the most diverse places in the world, and that diversity is one of our greatest strengths. But multiculturalism is about more than simply having people from different backgrounds living beside one another. It's about belonging. It's about making sure people feel that they do not have to leave their culture at the door. It means understanding that someone can be proudly Romanian and proudly Canadian at the same time. It means recognizing that the cultures, traditions and histories people bring with them do not divide us; rather, they enrich our shared identity as Ontarians and as Canadians.

In Don Valley North, this is something that we see every single day. Our community is home to people from many different backgrounds, languages and faiths; families that have come from all over the world and have made our neighbourhood stronger through the businesses they

open, the community organizations they build, the places of worship they attend and the traditions they pass down to their children.

We come together from different backgrounds, but ultimately, we all want to feel like we belong. When a child sees their family's heritage recognized and represented, it tells them that their story matters. When that child's parents and grandparents see the culture they worked so hard to preserve being celebrated, it tells them that those efforts were worthwhile.

Keeping heritage alive takes care and it takes effort: moms and dads making the time to teach their children the language; volunteers gathering after a long day of work to organize community celebrations; elders sharing a recipe, a song or a story that a younger generation will carry forward. These everyday acts give heritage its life, and they deserve our appreciation, so I want to take the time to recognize the parents, the grandparents, the elders, community volunteers and youth who have helped preserve Romanian culture here in Ontario and in my riding of Don Valley North.

Heritage weeks give us an opportunity not only to celebrate the people and the communities that have shaped Ontario but also to educate the broader community. They're occasions for our schools, libraries, cultural organizations and community groups to share Romanian history, literature, music, food and traditions with people who may know very little about them. That learning is important, Speaker, because inclusion starts with understanding. The more we know about our neighbours, the harder it becomes to see one another only through stereotypes or differences. Instead, we begin to recognize the experiences, the hopes and the values that we share.

December is also a meaningful time for this recognition, with Romania's national day celebrated on December 1. It provides a natural opportunity for Romanian Canadians to celebrate their history and culture while inviting all Ontarians to participate and learn.

As legislators, one of the simplest but most meaningful things we can do is make sure the communities we represent see themselves reflected in this House and in what we do for Ontario. To all Romanian Canadians in Don Valley North and across the province: Thank you for the talents you share, the communities you strengthen and the traditions you continue to pass down from one generation to the next. Your history is part of Ontario's history, your culture is part of Ontario's culture and your future is part of our shared future. That is the spirit of multiculturalism; not simply living alongside one another, but building a province together where every community feels respected, included and proud to call Ontario home.

So, Speaker, I am proud to support Bill 122 and I encourage all members of this House to do the same.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'm honoured to rise in the House tonight in support of declaring the first week of December as Romanian Heritage Week in Ontario. This recognition is about more than setting aside a week on our calendar; it's about celebrating a proud people, honoring their history and traditions and recognizing the extraordinary contributions Romanian Canadians have made to Ontario, to Canada and the world.

Speaker, I've had the privilege of travelling to Romania, visiting both its capital, Bucharest, and the historic city of Constanţa on the Black Sea. Those visits left a lasting impression on me. In Bucharest, I witnessed a city rich in history, magnificent architecture and national pride. In Constanţa, I experienced a historic port city shaped by centuries of commerce and cultural exchange. But what impressed me most was the character of the Romanian people: their warmth, hospitality, devotion to family, pride in their heritage and remarkable resilience. These are qualities I also admire in the Romanian Canadian community here in Ontario.

Speaker, Romania's history is one of perseverance through extraordinary adversity. The Romanian people have endured war, political oppression and decades of communist dictatorship, yet they never abandoned their language, their culture, faith or aspirations for freedom. The Romanian Revolution of December 1989 stands as a powerful testament to their courage. Ordinary citizens risked and sacrificed their lives in pursuit of democracy, freedom and human dignity. The Romanian philosopher Petre Ţuţea, who himself suffered imprisonment under communist rule, is often quoted saying, "Democracy is the only system compatible with human dignity and freedom."

Speaker, those words capture the principles for so many Romanians, their struggles and their sacrifices. They remind us that democracy demands respect for every individual and protection of fundamental freedoms; values that unite Romania and Canada and must never be taken for granted.

It's particularly fitting that Romanian Heritage Week be recognized during the first week of December. December 1 is Romania's national day, commemorating the great union of 1918, a defining moment in Romanian history. December also marks the anniversary of the 1989 revolution, when Romanians courageously brought an end to communist dictatorship.

Speaker, the story of Romania is also the story of its remarkable diaspora. Across generations, Romanians have travelled throughout the world seeking opportunity, security and a better future for their families. Wherever they've settled, they've brought determination, ingenuity, resilience and pride in their heritage.

Here in Ontario, Romanian Canadians have become an integral part of our economic, social and cultural success. They're entrepreneurs, creating businesses and jobs; physicians, nurses, engineers, scientists and researchers, advancing innovation and improving lives. They're educators, skilled tradespeople, artists and community leaders enriching our province. And, above all, they're parents, grandparents and volunteers who strengthen our neighbourhoods through their generosity, their hard work and their dedication.

Speaker, not every great contribution is measured by public recognition. Often, the greatest contributions are found in the sacrifices made for family, opportunities created

for the next generation and everyday acts of service that build stronger communities. Through churches, cultural associations, language schools and community organizations, the Romanian diaspora has preserved its traditions while building bridges with other communities. They have demonstrated that preserving one's heritage and embracing one's Canadian identity enrich one another.

1830

Speaker, Romanian contributions extend well beyond our borders. Consider Constantin Brâncuși, whose pioneering sculptures transformed modern art; George Enescu, whose musical genius brought Romanian culture to the world; and Henri Coandă, whose contributions advanced our understanding of aerodynamics. And of course, who can forget Nadia Comăneci, whose historic perfect 10 at the 1976 Montreal Olympics inspired generations of athletes—not just Romanian, but from around the world. These individuals demonstrate that a nation's influence is measured not by its size, but by the accomplishments of its people.

Speaker, Romanian Heritage Week is not simply about remembering the past. It's also about inspiring future generations. It is about encouraging young Romanian Canadians to take pride in their roots, preserve their traditions, and appreciate the sacrifices of those who came before them. It's also an opportunity for all Ontarians to discover Romania's rich cultural heritage.

One of Ontario's greatest strengths is that people who come here do not have to abandon their heritage to belong here; instead, they weave their cultures and traditions into the very fabric of our province. The Romanian community has done that, and they've done it really well.

Having visited Romania myself, I recognize the importance of the bonds of friendship between our countries. That relationship is strengthened through trade, education, cultural exchange and shared democratic values, but above all, it's strengthened through people—through families, friendships, and the Romanian diaspora connecting our two countries.

In particular, I want to thank Consul General Oana-Raluca Gherghe for her work in building lasting bridges between our province and the Republic of Romania.

By declaring the first week of December as Romanian Heritage Week, this Legislature has an opportunity to send a meaningful message to Romanian Canadians throughout Ontario: We recognize you. We recognize your history. We celebrate your heritage. We value your contributions. And we're proud that you call Ontario home. This recognition will honour previous generations while inspiring those who follow. It will celebrate the enduring friendship between Romania and Canada and acknowledge the important place Romanian Canadians hold in our shared provincial identity.

Speaker, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Romanian Canadian community. To those who came here seeking a better life, who worked tirelessly to build their families and communities, and who preserve Romanian heritage for future generations: Your accomplishments are Ontario's accomplishments. Your success is our collective success. And your heritage is an important part of who we are as a province.

I'm proud to support this initiative, and I encourage all members of this House to do the same.

Remarks in Romanian.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I'm honoured to stand today in support of establishing Romanian Heritage Week here in Ontario. I want to thank my colleagues from Markham–Thornhill and Mississauga–Lakeshore. And I want to say welcome to all of those who are here in the gallery to support this important recognition. Welcome to the many holy fathers, the consul general, the community leaders and volunteers, and all who are here. I see people of all ages here in support, and it's amazing to see that. Welcome.

The Romanian people are a proud people, a strong people. They stood against empires and huge regional powers, and all the while they preserved their identity, their culture and their faith.

Speaker, Romanian Canadians have brought that strength, that courage and that resilience here. Like so many others, they crossed an ocean, often with nothing in their pockets, to build a life here. And as they built their own lives and grew their families, they gave back tenfold to the country that became their new home.

Speaker, Romanian Canadians have left a mark in Ontario. They have enriched our great province in so many ways—through entrepreneurship, education, sports, the arts, science, public service and leadership, and so much more.

Now I want to briefly touch on the tremendous faith of the Romanian people. Like many other people in the region, the Romanian people endured centuries of foreign rule. And throughout those times, the Romanian Orthodox Church played a central and foundational role in maintaining their history, their language and culture, their national identity and, of course, their faith. They carried that faith from generation to generation, and it was something that no one could take away. And when Romanians came to Canada, that faith came with them. The church became their home—a home for their traditions, a gathering place for newcomers, a place to gather and pray in their own language, a place to keep traditions alive and to celebrate as their parents and grandparents did, whether it was lighting a candle or singing Christmas carols. The church became a welcoming beacon to Romanian Canadians looking for community and belonging in their new home. For many, the church was a place where newcomers could walk in as strangers and leave as family.

In Ontario, we now celebrate Orthodox Christian Week each year, and the Romanian Orthodox Church played a big part in making that happen. There were many who helped, but I want to take a moment to personally thank Father Petre Busuioc, who is here today. He was there right from the start in establishing Orthodox Christian Week in Ontario, and he has been a part of the planning

committee each year. Thank you to him and to all members of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

To conclude, I am so proud to stand with the Romanian people today to honour their proud heritage and their incredible contributions in Ontario by establishing Romanian Heritage Week. Long live the Romanian people here in Canada, in Romania and across the world.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I'm pleased to rise today to speak in support of Bill 122, the Romanian Heritage Week Act.

Speaker, Ontario's greatest strength, in my view, has always been our diversity, and I'm thankful that people all across the world have chosen to call Ontario their home.

In my riding of Ajax, I'm proud to see the different cultures that make Ajax a great place to raise a family and build a life for themselves, including members of the Romanian community.

This country has been built by generations of people from different ends of the world, bringing food, culture, traditions and languages with them. These experiences create a stronger Ontario, and I am so thankful that all of us here get to call Ontario our home. Each community has helped shape the Ontario that we know today, and Romanian Canadians are an important part of that story.

With over 100,000 Romanian Canadians calling Ontario home, Romanian Heritage Week will provide an opportunity to recognize their history and teach the younger generations what it means to be Romanian Canadian.

Speaker, we know that Romanian immigration to Canada stretches back more than a century, with the first major arrivals beginning in the late 19th century, with another wave following the Second World War, like many members of my family coming from other parts of Europe during that time—coming here to Ontario to escape war, to escape hardship, and to work to build a better life for themselves, their family and future generations.

Like many immigrant communities, Romanian Canadians work hard in this province while maintaining connections to their identity, a theme common in so many of the communities here. They started businesses, raised families and became active members of their communities. And throughout that journey, they established organizations that helped preserve their language, culture and traditions, because we know that as the next generation comes, it is harder and harder to do that.

As someone who is Croatian, I'm becoming more and more in touch with my Croatian side, because I didn't grow up necessarily being involved in all the cultures and traditions of my own. So to recognize a week in the province that provides more opportunities within our province for different cultures, for different folks from all around the world to do that is a very wonderful thing.

1840

Organizations such as the Romanian Voice, which was established in Windsor in 1929—that's a long time ago—and the Romanian Cultural Association, founded in Hamilton in 1957, are examples of some community organizations that are larger than histories and are about building stronger and connected communities.

But sometimes that gathering is in the kitchen of someone's home, where extended family members or friends come to visit, almost acting as sometimes a de facto cultural community centre for folks, because it's nice sometimes to be around folks where you share those traditions and cultures.

Speaker, Romanian Canadians have contributed to Ontario in countless ways. Whether it's entrepreneurship and small businesses to education, science, athletics, the arts, their contributions can be seen across the province, and you've heard from some of my colleagues about some of that today. But the contributions of a community cannot just be measured necessarily through economic activity alone. They're reflected in the volunteers who spend time in their communities, the families who support one another, and the cultural organizations that do the same; and they're reflected in the everyday contributions of Romanian Canadians who have helped make Ontario a place where people from different backgrounds can build a future together.

Recognizing Romanian Heritage Week will create a sense of belonging for the younger generation. Parents and grandparents want their kids to understand where their families came from, the challenges that previous generations overcame, and the traditions that have been passed down, so this cultural recognition matters.

I'd like to thank the member from Markham–Thornhill for bringing this bill forward, as it will provide an opportunity for schools and community organizations and families and cultural associations to share their history and traditions, so young Romanians can take pride in their heritage while helping Ontarians from other backgrounds learn more about Romanian culture and, of course, food. And when young people see their culture and history recognized by the province that they call home, it reinforces an important message: that multiculturalism is part of Ontario's story.

Not too long ago, I was at a reception organized by the German consulate, and I had the opportunity to meet the Romanian consul general at that event. And this year, I find it quite fitting that we will be debating and, I think, passing this bill once it goes through—if I may be so bold to say that, given the comments of my colleagues here.

Speaker, Ontario's multiculturalism is not only about the many different places that people come from; it's about the communities who build together and the contributions that each generation makes to create a stronger Ontario. So I want to extend my appreciation to Romanian Canadians who are in the gallery—I know there are a bunch behind me; they can't see me, necessarily, right now—for the contributions that you've made and continue to make to our province, so that all of us can feel at home in Canada and across our great province.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It's an honour to rise this afternoon in support of Bill 122, the Romanian Heritage Week

Act, which I'm proud to co-sponsor with my colleague and friend the member from Markham–Thornhill. I want to thank him for his leadership on this important legislation, and for recognizing the contributions of Romanian Canadians to our great province.

Speaker, as the bill says, Ontario is home to about 150,000 Romanian Canadians, who have helped build our province through their contributions in business, arts, culture, and public service. Romanian immigration to Canada began in the late 19th century, with many more arriving after the Second World War, and others coming to Canada to escape Communist oppression. Their contributions include public service at the highest levels. One example is Corneliu Chișu, who emigrated from Romania; served in the Canadian Armed Forces, including in Bosnia and Afghanistan; and became the first Romanian-born MP in Canada, elected as a Conservative in 2011.

I've been fortunate to build many friendships within the Romanian community, in Mississauga and across the province, and I want to welcome many of them who have joined us here today in the gallery.

Father Corneliu from Windsor was not able to come here today, unfortunately, but I want to thank him for his contribution on this bill.

As well, I would like to thank His Grace Bishop Ioan Casian and Father Lucian Azoitei for a special service with the congregation of St. Andrew Romanian Orthodox church. After a devastating fire at their church, the congregation has found a temporary home at the Canadian Coptic Centre. Their resilience and the generosity of the Coptic community is a great example of the strength and compassion of the people of Mississauga, and Ontario.

Speaker, before I start here, I'd like to thank my executive assistant, Codruta Rosca, for facilitating meetings in Romania in February, when I met with members of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate in the Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest, one of the heaviest buildings in the world. Every year, this building sinks two inches into the ground.

I also met with Romania's minister of energy at the time, Bogdan Ivan, to discuss energy security, affordability and nuclear co-operation. Romania already generates about 20% of its electricity using Canadian-designed Candu reactors. We talked about opportunities to work more closely on the refurbishment and expansion of their Candu plant and about Romanian small modular reactors.

The Romanian people's incredible hospitality made me feel truly welcome, and the Romanian food was incredible.

Romania's history also reminds us of the importance of freedom. After over 40 years of communism in Romania, the Romanian people won back their freedom in 1989. Today, Romania is an important NATO ally, working with Canada and our partners to support Ukraine against Russia's invasion. Our countries signed a new defence agreement in 2024, strengthening our shared commitment to security and freedom.

Speaker, December 1 is Romania's National Day, recognizing the Great Union of 1918. Bill 122 would recognize the first full week of December as Romanian Heritage Week. I want to thank the Romanian people for being—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. I am so sorry to interrupt the member.

The member from Markham–Thornhill has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to my colleagues for their kind words. It's truly inspirational.

I'd like to thank Michael Tibollo, the member from Woodbridge and Associate Attorney General, and my colleague Rudy Cuzzetto for their remarks.

Also, I'd like to thank the member from London West. I found out today that she is from Romania and she has Romanian heritage. Thank you for your remarks.

To the member from Humber River–Black Creek, thank you for your kind remarks as well.

To my colleague from the other side, a good colleague and friend, the member from Don Valley North: Thank you for your kind remarks.

Also, to the member from Ajax: Thank you for your wonderful remarks.

Speaker, this is truly a celebration of what we are achieving together as Ontarians. I thank all members of this House. This is a symbol of democracy. I thank all the members of the Romanian community from all over the GTA—maybe across Ontario or Canada—for being here.

I'll invite everyone to the reception at the legislative library event hall.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Mr. Kanapathi has moved second reading of Bill 122, An Act to proclaim Romanian Heritage Week.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 100(h), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House, unless—the member for Markham–Thornhill.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Madam Speaker, the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy? Agreed. The bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

To all of the members who have joined us here tonight: Thank you for keeping us company.

With that, all matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until Monday, November 16, 2026, at 10:15 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1850.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, OOnt
Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Donna Skelly
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day
Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong
Temporary Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes par intérim: Jeffrey Haskins

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Allsopp, Tyler (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Beattie, Jeff (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe 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	