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Mercredi 18 novembre 2026

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

VIOLENCE LINK TRAINING

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I move that, in the opinion of the House, the government of Ontario should ensure that crown attorneys and crown counsel in Ontario are educated on the connection between animal cruelty and gender-based and family violence.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for their presentation.

I recognize the member.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I rise today to speak to my private member's motion that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should ensure that crown attorneys and crown counsel in Ontario are educated on the connection between animal cruelty and gender-based and family violence.

Speaker, this motion addresses a connection that researchers have documented and front-line organizations understand, but one that requires greater awareness and more consistent action. I'll note it is particularly timely as November is recognized in Ontario as Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

At its heart is what experts call the "violence link," the relationship between cruelty toward animals and violence against people. Animal abuse can be a warning sign of a broader pattern of intimidation, coercive control and escalating violence within a household. An abuser may threaten or harm a beloved companion animal or a family pet to frighten a partner, prevent them from leaving or force them to remain silent.

If victims have nowhere safe to take their companion animals or pets, leaving an abusive relationship can feel impossible. Some delay leaving or return to an abusive household because they fear for their animal's safety. This is a form of family violence we cannot afford to ignore.

The research is compelling. The FBI's Law Enforcement Bulletin reports that 75% of abused women with companion animals say their intimate partner has threatened or intentionally harmed their pet. In more than 90% of those cases, children were present and witnessed the violence.

Canadian research led by University of Windsor professor Amy Fitzgerald found that approximately 89% of women with pets in abusive relationships reported that their partner had mistreated their animal. The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses found that 53% of women surveyed had delayed leaving an abusive relationship because they were concerned about their pets. And SafePet Ontario, drawing on Professor Fitzgerald's research, reports that 47% of survivors delay leaving or do not leave when they cannot take their pets with them.

These figures show how abusers can exploit the bond between a person and their pet to maintain control. Children too may witness animal cruelty as part of the wider atmosphere of violence in their home. This is why recognizing that violence link matters and why education within our justice system is so important.

Ontario has taken important steps to strengthen protections for people and animals. In January 2020, our government passed the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, or PAWS Act. It established a dedicated provincial animal welfare enforcement system with stronger inspection powers, new offences and tougher penalties.

We are seeing the results. According to the 2025 Animal Welfare Services Annual Report, animal cruelty charges increased from 296 in the year 2023 to 737 in the year 2025, an increase of 149%. Inspections and investigations increased by approximately 26%, while the number of animals removed or seized rose by 82%.

The Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act, 2026, further strengthened protections for animals working alongside peace officers by doubling the minimum fine to $50,000 and increasing the maximum fine for individuals to $260,000. These tougher penalties send a clear message that harming an animal that serves and protects our communities will carry serious consequences.

But animal welfare legislation is only part of the picture. An animal cruelty investigation may reveal a broader pattern of intimidation or controlling behaviour that puts other household members at risk. Recognizing that context can make a difference in how a case is investigated and prosecuted.

Another important precedent is Keira's Law, which originated from my own private member's motion in 2022 and was later incorporated into the government's Bill 102, the Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, 2023. Keira's Law recognized the importance of educating judges and justices of the peace about intimate partner violence and coercive control so that decisions properly take into account victims' safety and circumstances.

This motion builds on that same principle. If education can help judges and justices of the peace understand intimate partner violence, it can also help crown attorneys and crown counsel recognize how animal cruelty may form part of those same patterns of abuse. Crown professionals assess and prosecute cases, consider evidence and make decisions with significant consequences for victims, families and communities. They need to understand the broader circumstances that may be relevant to assessing risk and responding appropriately.

Speaker, this motion also builds on the important work of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and its study of intimate partner violence. My colleague the member for Kitchener South–Hespeler played an important role in this work. The committee's December 2025 report examined prevention, justice reform, risk assessment, Family Court and victim supports.

Importantly, section 7 is devoted to animal cruelty and its connection to intimate partner violence. The report describes animal cruelty as "an empirically substantiated risk factor for future interpersonal violence." It also identifies gaps in risk identification, crown screening practices, information-sharing and consideration of animal safety in related proceedings. The research exists, but its findings have not yet been consistently embedded throughout our justice system.

Education can help address that gap. The animal abuse and interpersonal violence research group at the University of Windsor has spent more than two decades examining the relationship between animal maltreatment and violence against people. Its work has helped highlight the association between animal abuse, increased risk of intimate partner violence and delays in leaving abusive relationships.

This does not mean everyone who mistreats an animal will also commit violence against a person, nor should animal cruelty alone be treated as proof of another offence. Rather, it can be an important warning sign when it occurs as part of a broader pattern of coercion, intimidation or violence. A threat against a companion animal or family pet may seem unrelated to an allegation of intimate partner violence, but to the victim receiving the threat, its meaning is unmistakable: The abuser knows what they love and is prepared to exploit that attachment to maintain control. Recognizing these dynamics does not mean prejudging a case; it means ensuring relevant evidence is recognized and decisions are informed by an understanding of the relationship between different forms of violence.

Speaker, the Ministry of the Attorney General is taking steps in this direction. Crown prosecutors receive training on IPV. In 2025, the criminal law division delivered specialized education on animal cruelty prosecutions and their connection to intimate partner violence, gender-based violence and human trafficking. This is encouraging progress on which to build.

This motion seeks a more consistent and sustained approach to crown education, helping ensure crown attorneys and crown counsel understand the violence link, recognize the potential significance of animal cruelty in family violence cases and consider that context in carrying out their responsibilities.

1810

Speaker, before I conclude, I want to recognize and thank the people whose research, professional experience and advocacy have helped inform this motion. I'm grateful to Kerri Thomson, manager of justice and legislative affairs of Humane Canada; Karen Moffatt, board chair of SafePet Ontario; Kyle Resendes, public health educator, and Silvia Samsa, executive director with SAVIS of Halton; Marlene Ham, executive director of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses; and Professor Amy J. Fitzgerald of the University of Windsor. Each has contributed valuable perspectives and insight, including through quotations that have helped bring this issue to the attention of the Legislature.

At the centre of this issue are people and families experiencing violence behind closed doors. For someone living with an abusive partner, a companion animal or beloved pet may be a source of comfort and stability. The threat of losing that animal can become another barrier to seeking help and finding safety. Our justice system must understand that reality.

We have an opportunity to build on the work already done through Keira's Law, the PAWS Act and the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. This motion asks for a focused, practical step: ensuring crown attorneys and crown counsel are educated on the violence link and the connection between animal cruelty and gender-based and family violence. By doing so, we can help ensure warning signs of escalated violence are identified, the broader context of abuse is not overlooked, and our justice system is better equipped to respond.

Protecting animals and protecting people are not separate responsibilities; they are deeply connected. When we recognize that connection, we strengthen our ability to identify risk, support victims and protect families and their animals.

I urge all members of the House to support this motion. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to thank the member from Oakville North–Burlington for bringing this forward to the House. It opens a door for a broader conversation about intimate partner violence and the epidemic that we are facing here in Ontario and across Canada.

I do want to say that survivors of IPV, gender-based violence and companion animals have been harmed because Canadian law did not fully recognize the connection between animal abuse and human violence. We now have this information. It is well-documented, and therefore we have a responsibility to act.

A study out of the University of Guelph found that out of "86 residents at 16 domestic violence shelters in Canada ... concern for a pet's safety is a significant factor in decisions about when to leave an abusive relationship." It goes on to say that among the findings from, now, evidence and research, there was a "recognition that animal

maltreatment can be linked to intimate partner violence, child maltreatment, coercive control and broader community safety concerns."

In the voice of one survivor of domestic violence: "If you're willing to kick a dog or throw a cat against a wall, you'll also punch a woman."

It's a harsh reality that we have to deal with in this House, and this connection between violence against animals and violence against women and children has to be acknowledged. This is a piece of research and evidence that can no longer be ignored.

We do know that researchers have spent decades studying what is termed as the violence link, a pattern in which animal maltreatment, abuse, cruelty, neglect and violence directed toward humans occur together.

So I applaud the member from Oakville North–Burlington for bringing it forward. I hope that this House can take what we are learning here today, and the harshness of the debate and the harshness of the evidence, and turn it into action.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Ms. Jess Dixon: I'll note I'll be sharing my time with the members from Newmarket–Aurora, Thornhill and Burlington.

I want to say a huge thank you to the member from Oakville North–Burlington for her constant championship of this issue, and for looking at the IPV report as a source for these types of motions, and all of her commitment to Keira's Law and to other things. I'm so proud to rise in support about this. It was an honour to be able to write about it in the IPV report.

As many know, before I was elected, I was a crown, but even before that, when I was an articling student, this issue found me. It was a case called Breezy, which many in Ottawa will probably remember. It was not too long after Parliament had changed animal cruelty from simply a summary offence to a hybrid offence, allowing the crown to proceed by indictment. A very violent young man who had been given a puppy. He got angry at his mother for not allowing him in the house due to his abuse of her, and he brought the puppy out to the picture window of the unit and proceeded to beat her violently and mercilessly with a large construction shovel and his steel-toed boots. Several bystanders attempted to intervene and he turned the weapons on them.

Miraculously, Breezy did not die. She survived and it became the first case in Canada where the crown proceeded by indictment. And a huge credit to an Ottawa crown, Tara Dobec, who has become, really, Ontario's expertise on prosecuting these cases. But when you look at his conduct after that case, that man went on to continue to offend violently against his family, against women and against animals again. It's that pattern that makes it why it's so important that we actually talk about this and that we train crowns.

I can tell you from experience that these are difficult cases to prosecute. They're very complex. They involve toxicology reports, necropsies. They are sophisticated cases. But also, from the crown perspective, you can get quite a lot of both public pressure, but also internal pressure, where at times you might actually be judged for zealously prosecuting that offence, as though, "Why you would give the animal the time?" or at the same time there are some people that don't understand why, with a heavy pile of cases, you would focus on an animal case versus another case.

When we think about Breezy and the pattern that my colleague has illustrated, this is the reason why. It's because this behaviour is a predictor and people that hurt animals will often, if not always, go on to hurt people had they not done so before.

It will be an absolute honour to support this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

M^me^ Dawn Gallagher Murphy: It's an honour to rise today in support of motion 86. I would like to thank the member from Oakville North–Burlington for putting this motion forward.

On Sunday, November 1, in Aurora, I had the opportunity to participate in the Yellow Brick House's 10 years of the Break the Silence, Step in My Shoes Walk. I started chatting with a lady who was walking by herself. She told me that this was her second year doing this walk. The last year, she didn't speak with anyone; she kept quiet and to herself. This year, she had me walking alongside her. Z was her name. We had a good chat about the importance of the walk and the good work that the Yellow Brick House was doing for women escaping domestic violence. Z told me that it took a long time for her to break her silence. Z said that she knew that she had to break away from her domestic situation, that it took many years, but she did it and now has found her way to talk about it.

I was honoured that Z opened up to me. Yes, she knew who I was. I took the opportunity to tell her about the motion that my colleague had tabled and that I was looking forward to speaking to the motion, when she told me about her son, specifically his horse and how the horse reacted when her husband was around. I asked her if I could reference her story in my remarks, and she said yes, I could—thank you, Z. Z told me how the horse would become agitated around her husband. I thought that was interesting, as horses are such big animals.

When I returned home, I spoke to my husband about Z's comments. My husband, the certified equine massage therapist who owned many horses before he met me, right away said to me, "Yes, for sure, horses have a keen sense of humans." And I asked him to explain.

"All prey animals are sensitive to threats near them, especially from predators. Human beings are predators and horses can sense if there's ill will felt by that person." My husband witnessed horses reacting quite negatively towards people, male or female, who have anger issues. Converse to that, horses also respond positively to those that are gentle. It is about trust. Even other predators can sense who's trustworthy. Cats and dogs are also a good barometer for sensing who might have violence in them.

1820

I mention this scenario as here is a woman who has lived in this domestic abusive situation. Their pet was a horse that doesn't even live in the home where the abuse is actually happening, yet this animal sensed the harm.

Understanding the signs, the link between animal cruelty and human violence is real. This motion, if passed, would allow crown members to gain the tools needed, and this could put us one step closer to assessing risk earlier, supporting victims more effectively and strengthening public safety outcomes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Mr. Chris Glover: It's an honour. I want to thank the member from Oakville North–Burlington for bringing forward this motion.

Before this motion I actually wasn't aware of this connection, but it's an important motion. The goal of this motion is to ensure that crown attorneys and crown counsel are educated on the connection between animal cruelty and gender-based and family violence. This is an important area, because it can be an indicator and it can provide an opportunity for police and other law enforcement and the justice system to intervene and prevent some people's abuse.

The research shows that people who are cruel to animals are often violent toward people, and they often commit acts of child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse. One study showed animal abusers are five times as likely to harm other people.

The standing committee here at the Legislature had a report on this connection between intimate partner violence and animal abuse. They said that animal cruelty can be part of a broader pattern of coercive control, intimidation and abuse, and that abusers may threaten or harm companion animals to punish, intimidate or control their partners. Survivors may delay leaving abusive relationships because they fear for their pets' safety or cannot find somewhere safe to take them.

There's a number of statistics that came out in that report, including that 47% of abused women surveyed delayed leaving an abusive relationship because they could not bring their animals with them; 60% left their animals behind. Only 30% of Ontario violence-against-women shelters accommodate pets in some form.

So there are some things we need to address here and some directions that we need to take because, ultimately, we all want to end all kinds of violence, including intimate partner violence, and we need to declare it.

I'll just make one more call for this. Out of the Renfrew inquest, the first recommendation was to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. We need to do that, so we can take the action to bring an end to intimate partner violence in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

M^me^ Lucille Collard: I'm glad to have the opportunity to rise tonight and speak in support of motion 86, which calls on the government of Ontario to ensure that crown attorneys and crown counsel are educated on the connection between animal cruelty and gender-based and family violence.

I want to commend my colleague from Oakville North–Burlington for putting forward a motion on this important but often underdiscussed issue. At first glance, one may question why we are even discussing animal cruelty in the context of gender-based violence. These are often treated as separate issues, addressed by different professionals through different legal frameworks; however, the evidence is clear and convincing: Violence very rarely happens in isolation, and for many survivors of IPV, control and coercion often extend to their pets.

While I knew of some stories, I learned that this situation is actually backed up by a mountain of evidence, with a recent report highlighting that 89% of domestic violence survivors had their pets threatened, harmed or killed. This statistic is made worse when you know that nearly half of domestic violence survivors chose to stay in a relationship if it meant leaving their pet behind.

I have two pets at home, and my kids love them dearly, so I understand that pets truly become a part of your family.

That's why this motion is so important. By building on recent federal law in Bill C-16, the Protecting Victims Act, which already helped officially recognize animals as victims and tools of coercion in intimate partner violence, this motion can help ensure that law becomes practice.

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy has conducted an extensive study on intimate partner violence, and their report made clear that threats against a family pet are not simply threats against an animal; they can be threats against a person's emotional well-being and their ability to leave an abusive relationship altogether.

Now, if I compare the recommendations of the committee on this issue and the motion we are debating tonight, I must note that the motion doesn't go quite far enough, and I don't really understand why. The education piece is definitely important, but the report goes further by also recommending a greater coordination between police, animal welfare inspectors, child protection agencies, prosecutors and the judiciary. Also, another part of the recommendation is assigning responsibility for animal cruelty policy to the domestic violence team within the crown law office, ensuring that these files can be directed to prosecutors with relevant expertise.

These two additional components are, in my view, essential to a comprehensive overhaul of the system. Because animal cruelty as an indicator of broader interpersonal violence can be complex to detect, making sure all connected partners work together and having a dedicated team to review the files would ensure that our response extends beyond just educating the crown attorneys themselves.

Now, when we think of pets, we typically consider cats and dogs. In northern and rural communities, we also need to consider farm animals like horses—like my colleague mentioned—sheep and cows and more.

We need a system that ensures that the information gathered by police is understood by prosecutors, in which animal welfare investigators know when and how to refer cases, and in which the courts have the appropriate tools to recognize and respond to these circumstances.

This brings me to the more underlying concern, which I believe deserves attention: the actual ability of our justice system to even implement the measures proposed in this motion. Speaker, we can provide crown attorneys with all the training in the world. We can update manuals, establish new protocols and develop specialized policies. But none of that will mean very much if the people responsible for putting those policies into practice simply do not have the time or resources to do so. Instead, we risk simply creating expertise without actually improving the system as a whole. The standing committee's report speaks directly to these structural limitations. We cannot continue to introduce new responsibilities into an already strained system without ensuring the necessary capacity exists to carry them out.

Further research is needed to determine whether and how the lack of structured training on animal cruelty cases has contributed to inconsistent charging decisions, the underuse of prohibition orders and missed opportunities to assess and respond to risk when handling these cases.

Education will have limited tangible impact if not paired with long-term institutional changes. What will actually be done to put knowledge into practice? The government cannot only just be focused on acknowledgement; we need movement towards concrete implementation.

For survivors, a delay is not simply an administrative problem; instead, it can mean months or years of uncertainty and waiting for accountability. And for those trying to leave abusive relationships, the availability of timely and effective support can make an enormous difference in their willingness and ability to leave the situations which are putting them at risk.

1830

Too often, our response to intimate partner violence is focused on what happens after an incident has occurred, not before. We respond when someone has already been harmed and charges have already been laid, but the evidence surrounding the link between animal cruelty and intimate partner violence reminds us that there may be warning signs long before violence reaches a dangerous point. Animal cruelty, particularly when used as a means of intimidation or coercive control, can be one of those warning signs, and recognizing it earlier creates more opportunities for intervention.

Because this motion takes up one part of one recommendation of the report on intimate partner violence that was authored by the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler—who I think did a fantastic job on this colossal work—and it followed extensive work that actually involved having survivors, front-line workers and experts coming forward, I want to speak about the importance of taking real action. Experts gave their time and victims accepted to share difficult experiences so that Ontario could improve how it prevents and responds to intimate partner violence. To some extent, the exercise helped answer concerns about whether or not the government was taking the issue seriously, but Ontarians will only be reassured if the government actually implements the important recommendations in the report.

I will acknowledge that some actions have trickled in from the inclusion of provisions into bills like Bill 119, which makes restraining orders from other provinces enforceable in Ontario, and Bill 148, which we are debating now and which proposes civil remedies for intimate image abuse. These are good, but so much more needs to be done to protect those suffering under violence in Ontario.

The government has the road map and recommendations needed to help end IPV in Canada; they just need to commit to implementing them. Reports are not produced to sit on a shelf. In fact, standing order 38(f) provides that within 120 calendar days of the presentation of a committee report, the government shall, upon the request of the committee, table a comprehensive response. The committee expressly requested this comprehensive response when the report was tabled on December 9.

The action the government needs to take to provide this overdue comprehensive response is to table a public recommendation-by-recommendation implementation plan. Tell this House which recommendations the government accepts, which ministry is responsible for each one, what funding is committed and when survivors and front-line agencies can expect changes. Bring forward legislation where the law needs to change, and act through training, policy and funding where ministries already have the authority. Without that follow-through, all the hard work and effort and expertise that went into drafting the report will be wasting on a shelf. The people who gave their time and trusted this committee with their experiences deserve to see real action.

Now, I don't want my friend from Oakville North–Burlington to get nervous. I did tell her that I would support her motion, and I will.

Ultimately, my point is that what we need is more than just an improved training regime. We need to ensure that our institutions are equipped to recognize violence in all forms and that the warning signs of escalating violence are not dismissed simply because they do not fit neatly into the categories through which our institutions have traditionally understood abuse.

People who harm animals do not stop with just animals. This motion is a needed starting point, but it cannot serve as the end point. It is time to implement the changes needed to protect Ontario's vulnerable.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Ms. Laura Smith: It's my great honour to speak on this motion and this very significant issue that truly deserves to be a conversation in this Legislature, and I applaud the member from Oakville North–Burlington for bringing this to light. I'm going to be sharing my time with the member from Burlington as well.

There are no more vulnerable members of our community than our children and the families who suffer through the waves of pain, including our four-legged friends, when we discuss gender-based violence. But what we really need to talk about—and I'm so glad we're doing that in this House—is the connection between animal cruelty and gender-based violence.

Years ago, before I was elected, I worked under the child protection act. That was a bittersweet journey. I've seen many files that were very disturbing. Part of that work led to my work on Bill 138, the Change of Name Amendment Act, which stops heinous criminals under Christopher's Law from making a legal application to change their name—individuals so vile they would prey on our children and our most vulnerable citizens. I was proud that bill was enacted into law. So much research went into that bill, and I was very grateful for the partners across the province, including numerous law enforcement agencies across this province.

But to put it simply, and I think it's been said before, people, sometimes people who hurt animals do not stop with animals.

In a recent article penned by Dr. Shane Bateman, professor in the department of clinical studies at the Ontario Veterinary College, he cited a study: 86 residents at 16 shelters across Canada found that a concern for a pet's safety was a strong factor when a decision was made to leave an abusive relationship. This is very sad, and it also explains why an abusive partner may threaten, injure or, in some circumstances, actually kill the animals, sometimes family pets: to intimidate and use this as a control mechanism against the other members of the household.

The report produced by the Standing Committee on Justice Policy also linked animal maltreatment with intimate partner violence. This finding should not be ignored. I want to thank the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler for the solid work on that committee. I know how hard she worked. It's very relevant.

We have a duty as legislators to identify these key issues and know that education is key to sometimes ignored connections. Crown attorneys, crown counsel must be more informed on these links between animal cruelty and gender-based violence. It's a possible pattern of behaviour that will provide better insight to a child's and family's environment. I hope you will join me in supporting this motion because education is key.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

M^me^ France Gélinas: I'm happy to have a few minutes to talk to the motion brought forward by the member from Oakville North–Burlington. This is something that I'm happy to support.

The statistics sort of speak for themselves:

—75% of abused women who have companion animals report a history of their companion animal being threatened or intentionally harmed by their intimate partner, with children being present and witnessing the violence over 90% of the time;

—89% of women staying at violence-against-women shelters indicate that their partner has abused their pet. More broadly, 50% of women in violent relationships report that their partner has hurt or killed one of their pets;

—48% of domestic violence survivors delay leaving abusive homes because they fear for their pet's safety; and

—the majority of intimate partner violence victims who report co-occurring animal cruelty are also concerned the abuser eventually will kill them and should be considered at extremely high risk of suffering severe injury or death.

There's nothing good in that, but the motion that the member has brought forward would be a step in the right direction so that everybody knows. We all know, Speaker, that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy report on intimate partner violence devoted an entire section on the connection between animal abuse, intimate partner violence, child abuse, coercive control and homicide, stating that "animal cruelty is an empirically substantiated risk factor for future interpersonal violence."

The research has been done, the data is there, and the member is putting forward something to address it.

I would like to suggest at the same time that petitions that I have tabled in this House a number of times ask that we establish a mandatory, publicly accessible Ontario animal abuser registry that would keep the names of the people for 10 years. It would be available so that everybody—whether you're a breeder, the shelter, the rescue, the private seller, the private citizen—would know prior to the sale, the transfer, the adoption or the temporary care of an animal who they are dealing with and avoid sending a pet to a person who has been known to abuse them.

1840

Right now, there are some laws in Ontario for people who have been found guilty. It is extremely hard to have access to that information. Other jurisdictions have put in place this basically publicly accessible abuser registry—we're talking about people who have abused animals—and it has made a huge difference. The fact that their name is publicly accessible, people can identify who they are, they have been found guilty of abusing animals—the more we know about who the abusers are, the safer we all will be.

Intimate partner violence is something that we've asked for a long time to be declared an epidemic. We continue to stand behind this. More needs to be done to prevent and help. This is a tiny step, but it is a step in the right direction, so it's something that I will be happy to support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Ms. Natalie Pierre: It's an honour to rise today as the MPP for Burlington in support of the motion brought forward by my colleague the MPP and member for Oakville North–Burlington. I want to thank my colleague for introducing this important motion, recognizing a reality that survivors, researchers and front-line service providers have understood for years: that violence against animals is often connected to violence against people. My colleague's motion asks that crown attorneys and crown

counsel receive education on the connection between animal cruelty, gender-based and family violence.

Speaker, we've heard the evidence in this chamber this evening that in Canada, 89% of women in domestic violence shelters report that their partner abused or threatened to abuse a family pet. It's important to note that children are often present for this violence more than 90% of the time, and we also know that witnessing violence against animals can have devastating and long-lasting effects on children, impacting their emotional, psychological and physical well-being.

Currently, our justice system addresses animal abuse and intimate partner violence as separate issues, and my colleague's motion asks us to consider this violence with a broader lens and to consider the connection that exists between them. Crown attorneys and crown counsel play a vital role in identifying patterns of violence and ensuring that victims receive appropriate protection and support. By increasing education and awareness of the connection between animal cruelty, coercive control and gender-based violence, we can strengthen our prevention efforts, improve interventions and better support survivors and their families.

This motion is about building safer communities, strengthening our justice system and helping break cycles of violence. I'm proud to support my colleague, and I'm proud to support this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm honoured to rise to participate in this debate, and I want to thank the member for Oakville North–Burlington for bringing this motion forward. As has been stated, there is a significant body of research that demonstrates the co-occurrence of animal abuse and intimate partner violence, and many members have talked about that statistic: 89% of domestic violence cases where some form of animal abuse was also present.

Certainly, Speaker, that has led some domestic violence shelters in Ontario to introduce pet services for women who are fleeing intimate partner or gender-based violence. In Ontario, there are 54 shelters with some pet services, but only nine of those shelters allow pets to actually stay in the shelter.

Anova in London is one of them. Anova, like many shelters, is experiencing rising demand for services from women and children who are fleeing abuse. They get about a thousand calls a month on their crisis line, but they are having to turn away four to five women a day, and they are seeing women staying longer because of a shortage of affordable housing in our community.

So you can understand, Speaker, that spending money to provide places for pets to stay is challenging in the fiscal context that shelters operate. However, Anova was able to proceed with a $22,000 grant from PetSmart Charities of Canada. They added a dog run to one of the facilities. They made upgrades to make the shelters pet-friendly, because they recognized the barrier—that fear about what was going to happen to the pet—meant that women weren't accessing shelter services, so they made this a priority.

That leads me to my request to the member and to the government: We need more than training for crowns. We need training for all professionals who are involved in intimate partner violence: family law professionals, mediators, prosecutors, as well as the judiciary. But we also need sustained and consistent core funding for shelters so that shelters can become more pet-inclusive and so that survivors feel comfortable leaving unsafe situations, knowing that they can take their pets. We also need to ensure that that link is understood so that we can keep women and children safe in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate?

Mr. Adil Shamji: I wanted to reflect on "at home." I have a lovely seven-year-old half-golden retriever, half-cocker spaniel. Her name is Petunia Wigglebottom. She does not have a mean bone in her body, and I cannot imagine anyone who would want to inflict any kind of harm on her.

But the reality is that I know there are people like that—I've treated them before—who have done unspeakable things to animals out of pure joy. And because I know their criminal records, I know that they don't just inflict that cruelty on animals alone; they do it to the people around them.

In the medical community, we have long recognized that there is a link between a disregard and a pattern of violence against animals as well as individuals. And in conduct disorder, which is something that is identified in children and is oftentimes considered a precursor to antisocial personality disorder, which is colloquially known as psychopathy—even though we don't like to say that, because it adds to stigma—we know, in fact, that there is, as criteria, cruelty to animals and humans.

My only humble suggestion to the member across is that the motion asks for crown attorneys to recognize the link between cruelty to animals and gender-based violence and intimate partner violence. The reality is that that link exists between animals and all humans.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Further debate? Seeing none, the member has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: This motion is an important step toward ensuring that crown attorneys and crown counsel understand the connection between animal cruelty and gender-based and family violence. Recognizing these warning signs can help strengthen our response to violence and better protect those who are vulnerable and at risk.

I want to acknowledge the representatives of Halton Women's Place, SafePet Ontario, Humane Canada, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, the animal abuse and interpersonal violence research group at the University of Windsor, SAVIS of Halton and Shifra Homes, who have joined us in the members' gallery this evening.

I'm also pleased to welcome Paul Henderson and Flo Bellman, and I want to take a moment to recognize the tragic loss they have endured. Their daughter, 25-year-old Darian Henderson-Bellman, was shot and killed in July

2020, by an individual with a history of abuse and repeated breaches of no-contact orders. At the time, the Peel police chief described the circumstances as a complete failure of our justice system to protect her.

Paul and Flo have since become strong advocates, raising awareness about intimate partner violence. I want to really acknowledge the fact they're here tonight and their courage—thank you for being here with us to be able to share with us the ordeal that you went through—but the vindication that took place in court very, very recently.

To all of our guests: Thank you for your expertise, your advocacy and the important work you do every day to support survivors, protect animals, advance research and make our communities safer.

And finally, thank you to all of my colleagues. If the Speaker would let me mention everyone by your riding, I'll do that. Thank you to all of my colleagues for your support this evening for this motion: the members for Kitchener South–Hespeler, Newmarket–Aurora, Thornhill, Burlington, Waterloo, Spadina–Fort York, Nickel Belt, Ottawa–Vanier and Don Valley West. Your sincere contributions to this debate are really very much appreciated.

This motion is about awareness, education and prevention. By recognizing the violence link, we can help ensure that warning signs are not missed and that our justice system is better equipped to protect people and animals alike.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Ms. Triantafilopoulos has moved private member's notice of motion number 86. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, November 19 at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1852.

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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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
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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
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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	

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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
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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	
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McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	

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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
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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

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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	