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CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 19 November 2026 / Jeudi 19 novembre 2026

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Protect Ontario Families and Communities Act, 2026, Bill 148, Mr. Parsa / Loi de 2026 visant à protéger les familles et les collectivités en Ontario, projet de loi 148, M. Parsa
Mr. Adil Shamji 5663
Mr. Anthony Leardi 5664
MPP Robin Lennox 5664
MPP George Darouze 5665
Hon. Charmaine A. Williams 5665
Mme France Gélinas 5666
Mme Lucille Collard 5666
MPP George Darouze 5667
Mr. Chris Glover 5667
Mr. Logan Kanapathi 5667
Ms. Chandra Pasma 5668
Mr. Anthony Leardi 5669
Mr. Chris Glover 5670
MPP Paul Vickers 5670
Ms. Sandy Shaw 5670
Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy 5671
Mme Lucille Collard 5671
Mr. Joseph Racinsky 5672
Mme France Gélinas 5672
Mrs. Karen McCrimmon 5673
Mr. Anthony Leardi 5673
Second reading debate deemed adjourned 5673

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

Georgetown Hospital Foundation gala
Mr. Joseph Racinsky 5673
Women in politics
Ms. Catherine Fife 5674
Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I
Mr. Jonathan Tsao 5674
Community safety
Mr. Lorne Coe 5674
Services en français
Mme France Gélinas 5674
Hitachi Rail
Mr. Aris Babikian 5675
Movember
MPP Wayne Gates 5675
Veterans
MPP Billy Denault 5675
Malton Sting Basketball Club
Mr. Deepak Anand 5676

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

MPP Lise Vaugeois 5676
Mr. Deepak Anand 5676
MPP Wayne Gates 5676
Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos 5676
Mr. Anthony Leardi 5676
Ms. Jessica Bell 5676
MPP Robin Lennox 5676
Mme France Gélinas 5676
Mr. Adil Shamji 5676
Hon. Brian Saunderson 5676
Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria 5676
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam 5676
MPP Catherine McKenney 5676
Mr. Andrew Dowie 5676
Ms. Peggy Sattler 5676
Mr. Terence Kernaghan 5676
Mr. John Jordan 5677
Mr. Rob Cerjanec 5677
Trans Day of Remembrance
Hon. Steve Clark 5677

QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS

Education funding
Ms. Marit Stiles 5677
Hon. Paul Calandra 5677
Health care funding
Ms. Marit Stiles 5678
Hon. Sylvia Jones 5678
Government accountability
Mr. John Fraser 5679
Hon. Nolan Quinn 5679
Government accountability
Mr. John Fraser 5680
Hon. Nolan Quinn 5680
Health care funding
MPP Robin Lennox 5681
Hon. Sylvia Jones 5681
Government accountability
Mr. Ted Hsu 5682
Hon. Nolan Quinn 5682

Skills training
MPP Monica Ciriello 5682
Hon. Trevor Jones 5682
Affordable housing
MPP Catherine McKenney 5683
Hon. Rob Flack 5683
Public safety
Mr. Stephen Blais 5683
Hon. Michael S. Kerzner 5684
Ontario economy
MPP Billy Denault 5684
Hon. Stephen Crawford 5684
Immigrants' skills
MPP Fatima Shaban 5685
Hon. Trevor Jones 5685
Hospital funding
Mr. Rob Cerjanec 5685
Hon. Sylvia Jones 5686
Energy policies
MPP Susan Lahey 5686
Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto 5686
Visitor
Mr. John Fraser 5687
Business of the House
Hon. Steve Clark 5687

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly) 5687
Mr. Dave Smith 5687
MPP Tyler Watt 5687
Mr. Deepak Anand 5687
Request to Integrity Commissioner
The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly) 5687

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DE COMITÉS

Standing Committee on Government Agencies
The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly) 5687
Report deemed adopted 5688
Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
Hon. Ernie Hardeman 5688
Report deemed received 5688
Standing Committee on the Interior
Mr. Aris Babikian 5688
Report deemed received 5688
Standing Committee on Social Policy
Mr. Brian Riddell 5688
Report deemed received 5688
Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy
MPP Tyler Watt 5688
Report deemed received 5688
Standing Committee on Justice Policy
Mr. Lorne Coe 5688
Report deemed received 5689

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Early Age Onset Cancer Awareness Day Act, 2026, Bill 154, Mme Gélinas; MPP Lennox; Mr. Rakocevic / Loi de 2026 sur la Journée de sensibilisation aux cancers précoces, projet de loi 154, Mme Gélinas; MPP Lennox; M. Rakocevic
First reading agreed to 5689
Mr. Tom Rakocevic 5689

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Trans Day of Remembrance / Journée du souvenir trans
Mr. Ric Bresee 5689
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam 5690
Mme Lucille Collard 5690
Ms. Aislinn Clancy 5691

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Protection for workers
MPP Jamie West 5691
Transportation infrastructure
Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady 5691
Student assistance
MPP Tyler Watt 5692
Student assistance
Ms. Jessica Bell 5692
Land use planning
Mr. Mike Schreiner 5692
Student assistance
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam 5692
Education funding
Mr. Adil Shamji 5692
Land use planning
Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady 5693
Red tape reduction
Mr. Anthony Leardi 5693
Environmental protection
Mr. John Vanthof 5693
School closure
Mme France Gélinas 5693

Student assistance
Mr. Tom Rakocevic 5693
Student assistance
MPP Alexa Gilmour..... 5694

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Protect Ontario Families and Communities Act, 2026, Bill 148, Mr. Parsa / Loi de 2026 visant à protéger les familles et les collectivités en Ontario, projet de loi 148, M. Parsa
Mr. Anthony Leardi 5694
Mr. Adil Shamji 5695
MPP Wayne Gates 5695
Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon 5695
Hon. Mike Harris 5695
MPP Alexa Gilmour..... 5696
MPP Catherine McKenney 5696
Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon 5697
Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy 5698
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam 5698
MPP George Darouze..... 5698
MPP Alexa Gilmour..... 5698
MPP Stephanie Smyth..... 5698
MPP Jamie West 5700
Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon 5700
Mr. Anthony Leardi..... 5700
Mr. Steve Clark 5701
Vote deferred..... 5701
Public safety / Sécurité publique
Hon. Michael S. Kerzner..... 5701
MPP Mohamed Firin..... 5705
MPP Billy Denault 5708
MPP Jamie West 5709
MPP Robin Lennox..... 5715
Mme Lucille Collard 5719
Mr. Adil Shamji 5721
Mr. John Fraser 5724
Hon. Matthew Rae..... 5726
Hon. Steve Clark 5728
Debate deemed adjourned 5729

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 19 November 2026

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 19 novembre 2026

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers / Prières.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECT ONTARIO FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 VISANT À PROTÉGER LES FAMILLES ET LES COLLECTIVITÉS EN ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 18, 2026, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act to enact the Intimate Images Protection Act, 2026 and to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 148, Loi édictant la Loi de 2026 sur la protection des images intimes et modifiant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Mr. Adil Shamji: Yesterday when we left off, I was making the argument that Bill 148 really tinkers around the edges of the transformational changes that we need to be seeing in health care. I had just finished explaining how schedule 1, which addresses the expansion of scope of practice for audiologists, focuses merely on the application of a prescribed form of energy, which is ultrasound, but not the ordering of that prescribed form of energy and, more importantly, doesn't allow audiologists and speech-language pathologists to order the real tests that they need to be able to order, which is videofluoroscopy, or swallowing studies.

That theme continues into the other schedules related to expanded scope of practice, such as schedule 3, which addresses the work of chiropractors and specifically allows them to apply prescribed forms of energy, or ultrasound. Essentially, what this will mean is, they're able to perform bedside ultrasound. As written, if they have a sports medicine practice, it does not allow them to be able to order ultrasound tests, and I think many people have argued that that would be a productive expansion in their scope of practice. That is not present in this legislation.

Next, schedule 4 addresses scope of practice for dental hygienists and specifically the ability for dental hygienists to be able to perform injections in the performance of their duties. It doesn't specify this in the legislation, but most often, when hygienists in other jurisdictions perform injections, it is for the purpose of delivering local anaesthetic so that they can perform deep cleaning. This would not be a revolutionary addition here to the scope of practice for dental hygienists in Ontario—it's done in other provinces—but I will say the reality is that, even in other provinces where it is permitted by law, many hygienists opt not to do that and instead defer to the dentist, if there is another one at the clinic, to perform that local anaesthetic, and then they proceed with deep cleaning—again, underscoring the fact that while there is nothing offensive about this change, it's unlikely to make a significant difference if it's implemented as it is in other provinces.

Schedule 5 addresses expanded scope of practice for denturists and specifically their ability now to be able to install removable or implant-supported dentures. Honestly, colleagues, the reality is that I was surprised that they're not already able to provide removable or implant-supported dentures. Again, it's really a little bit of a cleanup. I'm certainly not expecting to see anything that is going to dramatically transform our health care system.

Schedule 6 addresses some changes in long-term care. We can all get behind the fact that we have an aging population here in Ontario and that a risk factor for aging—not a normal part of aging—is cognitive impairment and dementia. We need to do more. This government, unfortunately, has failed—since it came in nearly nine years ago—to deliver the kind of care that older seniors need delivered. But asking for an organized program of dementia care is a reasonable thing. That's fine.

One thing that I'd note is that there is now the movement from a medical director to a clinical director, to allow for not just a physician but potentially also a nurse practitioner to be able to perform the duties of a medical director, with the new title of clinical director. I don't have a problem with this. But the most interesting thing about this section of the legislation is around the Minister of Long-Term Care's comments yesterday, which were, quite frankly, a tell for why she's doing this. It's not, actually, because she supports nurse practitioners. She acknowledged yesterday that long-term-care homes, particularly in rural and northern parts of our province, can't find doctors to do the job. This is against the backdrop of a government that proclaims every day that it's making strides in delivering primary care for Ontarians, that says it has connected 500,000 people to primary care and says it will connect 1.8 million by 2029, but always neglects the fact that its own data shows that three million people will lose their family doctor over roughly the same period. And here, the Minister of Long-

Term Care has confirmed for us that she is aware of just how dire the shortage of physicians in the north is. In any case, I have no problem with nurse practitioners fulfilling the role of clinical director in a long-term-care home.

I have very limited time, so I'm going to jump ahead to the changes to the Health Protection and Promotion Act. Health boards across the province will now come under supervision, according to this legislation, by people who do not have any requirement to be a physician, to have any sort of clinical or health promotion background or any health background whatsoever. And to my colleagues in the House who say, "Don't worry. It's okay. Of course the minister is going to appoint great people," the real tell of the fact that this government is worried that they're going to screw this up is the fact that they've instituted an indemnity clause. This is not something that you do if you are confident in the direction that you're going in. Now that they're placing health boards under supervision and giving them the full scope of responsibility of every member on that health board and they're creating no requirement for them to have any sort of clinical background or experience or expertise—perhaps except for the fact that they may be donors of this government—they are implementing that indemnity clause. And that indemnity clause appears over and over and over again in previous pieces of legislation and elsewhere in this one.

I'll skip ahead to the changes to the career colleges. Since at least 2023, the government has been getting repeated warnings about impropriety in the private career colleges sector. The Minister of Colleges and Universities—the current one and the one before him have repeatedly ignored their warnings, ignored investigations, ignored appeals, even from Career Colleges Ontario, and when they were called out on it a short while ago by my colleagues here in the Ontario Liberal caucus, only then did they scramble to move and to act. Now they have thrown the entire career college sector into a state of disarray, have created a health human resource crisis, because those career colleges are training the people who are being given an expanded scope of practice right now, and essentially caused students to drop out of good-faith and good-actor career colleges. And all of this is with the background of the dramatic changes to OSAP that have taken place under this government over the past year; for example, when grants were cut from 85% to 25%.

This is a government that has a disdain for education, has a disdain for students, has a disdain for health care workers, and that loves to tinker around the edges and make it look as though they're doing something but always fails to deliver on the things that matter to Ontarians. Bill 148 is nothing but the same.

0910

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I appreciate the opportunity to start the questions on today's debate.

I request that the member who just spoke turn his attention to schedule 10 of the bill that's before us today. This schedule is a very important schedule. As I say, in my words, it establishes a right to privacy with regard to intimate images. We all know terrible examples of intimate images that have been retained in the possession of certain individuals, and then those certain individuals have done nefarious things with those intimate images, and there was no recourse under the law for people to protect their privacy and to take recourse and get protection under the law. This bill will establish a right to privacy and provide recourse—legal recourse—for people to protect themselves, and I invite the member to comment on this very important section of this bill.

Mr. Adil Shamji: Thank you to the PA for health.

It is true that the unauthorized release of intimate images is a problem, and there does need to be recourse for those individuals so that they can seek justice. But I find it ironic that this government member speaks about recourse when there are so many other elements of this bill which do not give Ontarians recourse for injustices that occur through the actions of ministers and government members. For example, if a public health board is placed under supervision, someone who is done wrong by that decision has no recourse. A student who is done wrong by the changes in the career colleges act has no recourse because this government chooses to indemnify itself, and it's done so in other pieces of legislation. So I would encourage the member across to apply that same principle of access to justice to all the other elements of this bill and other bills and remove the indemnification clauses.

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

MPP Robin Lennox: I appreciate the debate on this issue, and you mentioned the indemnity clause that's included here. It does seem to be a pattern, that this government tries to retroactively change the law to absolve themselves of any potential wrongdoing.

Why do you see that this indemnity clause is likely included here? What do you think that indicates about this government's conduct?

Mr. Adil Shamji: It reveals a number of things. Number one, it reveals the fact that the government expects that it is going to screw up in at least two sections of the changes it's proposing. But I think it actually speaks to something deeper. A fundamental democratic principle is the principle of rule of law. Rule of law means that no one—not even politicians, not government members, not ministers, not the Premier—is above the law. And every time we see one of these indemnification clauses, it essentially says that ministers and the Premier think they are above the law.

These indemnity clauses are not the only example in which they have thought that they are above the law. We saw recently the freedom-of-information changes, which were essentially installed for one reason and one reason only: so that the Premier would not have to follow the court order to release his cellphone records. It's a recurring pattern.

The final thing that I'll say, and I never even got to speak about this, is the changes to HSARB, the Health Services Appeal and Review Board. I didn't even get a chance to talk about that. That has been used—unfortu-

nately, because changes are required, there are patients who require out-of-country treatments that are not getting it under this minister.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Quick question?

MPP George Darouze: Career colleges play an important role in preparing students for rewarding careers, and many provide valuable training to meet Ontario's workforce needs. But students invest their time and money in their education, and they deserve to know that the institution they attend is operating responsibly. That is why we're proposing stronger oversight of relationships with the recruiters—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

A quick response.

Mr. Adil Shamji: The proposals for stronger oversight were required three years ago. In fact, when the government had the opportunity for that oversight, when they were warned repeatedly by Career Colleges Ontario, when Career Colleges Ontario proposed going to the police, when the minister was warned, this government did not exercise its oversight.

All of this is just an exercise in rewriting history and making it look as though this is a government that actually cares about this issue.

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

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: Good morning, Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to speak about an issue that affects far too many women, children, families and communities across our province: gender-based violence and intimate partner violence. As the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity, I have the privilege of meeting with women from every corner of our province. I hear from survivors, I hear from mothers trying to rebuild their lives after abuse, I hear from front-line workers who dedicate themselves every day to helping women and children find safety and I hear from community organizations that remind us that behind every statistic is a person, is a family, is a story.

The reality is that intimate partner violence and gender-based violence can impact anyone. It does not discriminate based on age, income, culture, faith or geography. It affects women in large urban centres and small rural communities. It affects newcomers and long-time residents. It affects children who witness violence in their homes and carry that trauma with them for a long time after the violence has occurred and has ended.

That is why our government has taken a comprehensive approach to addressing this issue. We understand that prevention matters. We understand that support services matter, we understand that accountability matters and we understand that laws must evolve to keep pace with the challenges that people face today. That's why I am proud to support Bill 148, Protect Ontario Families and Communities Act, 2026. This legislation contains important measures that strengthen protections for vulnerable individuals. It supports children and families and addresses emerging forms of abuse that are increasingly being used to control, intimidate and victimize people.

One of the most significant aspects of this legislation is the creation of stronger protections against intimate image abuse. For many years, when people thought about intimate partner violence, they often thought only about the physical violence. But because of the endemic nature of gender-based violence and this deep-rooted nature of the violence, we know the reality is so much broader. Abuse can be emotional, it can be physical, it can be financial and, increasingly, it can be digital.

Technology has created incredible opportunities to connect with each other, but it has also created new tools for abusers. The non-consensual sharing of intimate images is one of those tools; the threat to share intimate images is another. Now, with advances in artificial intelligence, individuals can become victims even when the images themselves are entirely fabricated. Deepfake technology can generate sexually explicit images that appear real. These images can be distributed online in minutes and shared across multiple platforms before a victim even becomes aware that it has happened.

The consequences can be devastating. Victims can experience anxiety, depression and trauma. They can lose employment opportunities. They can withdraw from school, and they can become isolated from family and friends. In many cases, these images are weaponized by abusers as a means of coercion and control.

That's why the measures proposed in Bill 148 are so important. The legislation would introduce new civil remedies for victims of intimate image abuse and make it easier to remove harmful content, prevent its continued spread and hold the perpetrators accountable.

This is about ensuring that victims have meaningful tools available to them when their privacy, dignity and safety have been violated. It's about recognizing that intimate image abuse is not a harmless prank. It is not simply poor judgment. It is a serious form of abuse, and it deserves a serious response.

0920

These changes send a clear message that Ontario stands with the victims, and the individuals who engage in this harmful conduct should be held accountable for the harms that they cause.

Speaker, these protections are especially important for young people. Many youth today live much of their lives online. Their friendships, education and social interactions increasingly occur through digital platforms. Unfortunately, this also means they are vulnerable to online exploitation, harassment and abuse. When intimate images are shared without consent, the impacts can be immediate and long-lasting, and the damage can extend far beyond a single moment that can affect a young person's confidence, educational experience and mental health for years.

I have three teenage daughters, and from the time they were 12 or 13, they refused to be in pictures with me because they know when those pictures are shared on my Instagram pages, other people can see it, and their friends can see it. I respect their privacy and don't share it, however, we as parents can make mistakes.

I will tell a little story. Remember grade 9 day where all the grade 9 students came to visit and watch their parents and come to work with them? My twins came, and while they were in the House, I snapped a little picture of my daughter over there—I know; don't let Bruno know. Her eyes were closed and she looked like she was falling asleep. I was chuckling, and I sent it to my friend and I said, "Oh, my daughters are having a great time here."

My daughters have a friend who's close to my friend and they're in the same social group, and so my friend showed it to her daughter. Unbeknownst to her, her daughter took the picture and shared it with her friends and, in minutes, that picture showed up in their Snapchat group with all their friends in school. My daughter was like, "Mom, (1), you took a picture of me, and (2), you sent it to your friend." I said, "That was never intended to be shared at all." But it happened so quickly.

Being a parent that takes this seriously, I apologized profusely to my daughter. My daughter is kind of like me, so she was like, "It's not a big deal," but still. My friend spoke to her daughter and told her it was not okay for that picture to be shared at all and look at how quickly that harmful image was shared amongst their peer group.

My friend's daughter also apologized profusely, but it was such a profound teaching moment for all of us—parents and our kids—that these images can be shared so fast. A seemingly harmless picture that was for us to laugh at internally became a laugh for their whole social group in a Snapchat group. It's a strong reminder.

That's why we need to strengthen these protections. By strengthening protections against intimate image abuse, our government is helping create safer environments for our youth, both online and offline.

But our work does not stop there. Bill 148 also includes measures designed to strengthen supports for children and families throughout Ontario. For example, the legislation would improve information-sharing and dispute resolution processes within the child welfare system and strengthen governance and accountability measures for children's aid societies. These changes may seem separate from the conversations about gender-based violence but, in reality, they are very deeply connected.

When violence occurs at home in a family, children are often significantly impacted. When a mother is trying to escape abuse, she needs strong community supports. When families are facing challenges, they need systems that are responsive, transparent and focused on outcomes. Strong families and strong communities are critical components of violence prevention, and that's why our government's approach is rooted in supporting people across every stage of their journey.

Madam Speaker, the measures before us today reflect many principles. They recognize that violence can take many forms, they recognize that technology can be used as a weapon and they recognize that government has the responsibility to act when new threats emerge. Know that our government is committed to continuing the work necessary to support our families and protect our future generations from experiencing the same harm.

I do want to thank all the players involved that got us to this point: the members of the social policy and justice policy committees, the Attorney General, the minister of MCCSS.

I encourage all members in this House to support Bill 148 and the important protections it would provide for women, children and families.

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

M^me^ France Gélinas: I was happy to listen to the member, who spent a big part of her time talking about intimate partner violence. Yes, there are two sections of the bill that will make steps in the right direction for intimate partner violence, but there are many, many other steps that need to be taken.

You will remember, Speaker, that the NDP put out a dissenting report with 121 recommendations as to how we end intimate partner violence in Ontario. The call for declaring intimate partner violence an epidemic so that we take the numerous steps that need to be taken to finally end intimate partner violence has been tabled many time.

Is the member satisfied with those two tiny steps, or does she believe that we need more?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I actually appreciate the sincerity of that question. As a person who worked almost 20 years in children's mental health, working with many victims and survivors of violence, there's always more we can do.

But we also have to remember that gender-based violence—violence against women—is not a new issue; it has been around for decades. That's why we had declared that endemic nature of violence, because it's not something that is going to go away unless we address the deep-rooted driving factors that are causing violence to happen against women.

So these are some measures that we have taken around intimate images, and they're steps in a long process of things that we need to address and change.

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

M^me^ Lucille Collard: Thank you for your remarks on intimate images. I think this is a very important protection that this bill is bringing forward.

Last night, we debated another measure that is related to intimate partner violence, which was recognizing animal cruelty as having a link with intimate partner violence.

It gave me the occasion to go back to the IPV report, which contained some 121 recommendations. We're seeing bits and pieces coming through in some of the legislation your government is putting forward. Why are you not going further and coming up with a comprehensive response to this study and all the recommendations contained therein?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: If we look back at the track record—remember in 2021, actually, before I was elected, the FPT made a decision that we need to look at a national strategy. In 2022, all provinces signed the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

We took that strategy back to our provinces, and in Ontario, we released Ontario-STANDS, which is Ontario's strategy to end gender-based violence. We committed $1.4 billion to that strategy and focused on a number of parts to ensure that we are addressing violence holistically and supporting organizations that are doing the great work. Many of the pieces of the recommendations are things we know we need to address.

I appreciate that the committee came together to put it all together. It shows us the magnitude of the issue that we're dealing with and how many pieces we need to be addressing.

I don't want anybody to think that once the report is passed, we're done with it. We know there are pieces that we need to keep bringing forward, and that's what we're going to continue to do as we build out more legislation to—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Question?

MPP George Darouze: Ontarians deserve to feel safe and respected when accessing services and support from professionals. Protecting people from abuse and ensuring meaningful accountability when professional boundaries are violated must remain a priority.

0930

Through you, Speaker: Can the associate minister explain how our government is strengthening accountability and reinforcing protections for Ontarians through the Protect Ontario Families and Communities Act, 2026?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I want to thank the member from Carleton for all of your work. You're the parliamentary assistant to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. We've had many meetings with community members in the Ottawa area and across the province, talking about ways that we need to strengthen protections for individuals, especially for kids who are in care. So thank you for your input.

This bill is addressing accountability measures. We want to make sure that if you're a bad actor who has taken an oath to protect children and you are breaking that oath, you are being held accountable and you are being removed from doing the job.

Let's make sure that those who are committed to helping children are the ones who are working in these sectors to help families and children in their community.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to thank the member for your comments this morning, particularly around intimate images, particularly of women. You talked about a relatively innocent incident with your own daughter, but obviously these things get very serious. That is one important part of this bill that we in the opposition would like to support, but we don't get to vote on one section of the bill; we either vote for the whole bill or not for the bill. This bill also indemnifies the Minister of Colleges and Universities, to prevent students from suing him for all of the screw-ups that he has made with OSAP.

One of the rhetorical games that's played in the House here is that the Conservatives will say, "Oh, the opposition voted against this thing"—and it was one wedge issue in a particular bill.

Will you speak to your caucus and say that intimate partner images are too sensitive an issue and that they should not be part of a rhetorical game where the Conservatives accuse the opposition of voting against a bill to protect women in this way?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I appreciate the question. However, I think in this House, games are played by everyone—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Oh, come on. Oh, my God.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: And I honestly think, when we really look at the severity of intimate partner violence and how we need to depoliticize it, it's an issue that impacts women on a whole—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Oh, my God.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I'm being heckled because I think the reality is hitting us hard.

We also have to remember that there are victims and people behind these statistics. So when we do things like write another report in opposition to a report that was created after members from your party did not show up to the committee to participate in the report—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes, a report written by AI.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: —those are games being played as well. So if we're really going to take it seriously and all come to the table and make sure that we're putting women and children first—it's all of us who need to be doing that as well.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock.

The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas will come to order. Can we proceed? Thank you.

Further questions?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to the minister for her remarks.

Minister, public safety and support for victims are important concerns of constituents, especially in ridings like Markham–Thornhill and in the city of Markham. It's the most ethnically diverse riding—people don't even know how gender-based violence and sexual violence are working in our community. Sexual violence can have a devastating and long-lasting impact on survivors and victims, and intimate image abuse is no exception.

Through the Protect Ontario Families and Communities Act, 2026, our government is building on our efforts to protect victims and proposing new measures for intimate image abuse. Can the minister please share more information about this legislation and what these proposed measures mean for victims of intimate image abuse?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: Thank you so much to my colleague for asking that question.

This part of the bill is so extremely important because we're seeing how fast technology is evolving, and there are real harms. We in Ontario know we need to hold these offenders accountable and have measures to have the images removed quickly, and also to make sure that we're providing the supports necessary to those who have been impacted.

Intimate partner violence—I'm really happy that our government has taken such a serious approach to it; $1.4 billion is a huge contribution to community organizations that are helping keep women safe. Also, we've enhanced our crisis lines in Ontario so that people have one point of access to call when abuses happen or when there's the threat of abuses happening. I always say the number: 1-866-863-0511.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'm rising on behalf of the residents of Ottawa West–Nepean to speak to Bill 148, another omnibus bill tabled by this government, which their AI generator for Orwellian titles has named Protect Ontario Families and Communities Act.

Speaker, I just want to provide a bit of context that we were, of course, adjourned for 21 weeks over the summer while there were incredibly important issues to be addressed in Ontario. Now, we're three weeks into this super-short session and the government has only tabled three bills, but collectively these bills total 188 pages. So they are doing everything that they can to limit debate on the proposals that they are bringing forward by ensuring that we only have a few hours to debate all kinds of things that have been crammed together in a single bill.

This bill, for instance, has 18 schedules that cover hearing aids, dentures, X-rays, chiropractors, dental hygienists, optometrists, social workers, health insurance, personal health information, long-term-care homes, retirement homes, distribution of intimate images, children's aid societies and—oh, yeah—career colleges, which of course is something that we've been hearing a lot about.

The Minister of Colleges and Universities accuses the opposition of trivializing the situation every time we talk about the thousands of lives that have been completely upended, the people who can't afford rent and groceries right now. When we ask where the plan is to help these people, the minister calls that trivializing, and yet they included the only changes that they have brought forward on career colleges in an 18-schedule bill that is about things like hearing aids and dentures. I don't know what that is, Speaker, if that's not trivializing this.

It's a government that's not serious about democracy, not serious about bringing forward real proposals to address the issues that are affecting people right now. What they're trying to do is flood the zone to distract from their own scandals. What this bill fails to do, despite its 18 schedules, is to fix problems of the government's own making.

I want to start with the example of the children's aid societies, because we're talking really about our most vulnerable children in society here. These are children, oftentimes with complex needs, whose parents or guardians were not able to continue to care for them, and in some cases, we know that's because the government has failed to provide services that parents can access within their communities, whether that's autism care, respite care or behavioural supports. Parents are literally relinquishing their children to the province in hopes that they are finally able to get their child some support that way.

But we know that children's aid societies are woefully underfunded, and so children are being kept in motel rooms and office buildings. We're seeing a large number of children who are actually dying in the government's care. But instead of actually funding the children's aid societies, the Premier went out and railed against Taj Mahal headquarters.

But the government finally released, after two years, their own audit of children's aid societies, which showed that that wasn't true, that the problem was in fact a problem of underfunding, and that it is the government that is failing children and letting children with complex needs fall through the cracks. They're not doing anything to prevent children in their care from dying.

When children are in the care of the province, the province is their legal guardian. The province is playing the role of parent for these children. If the province truly were a parent, they are failing so badly that the children's aid society would be taking these children out of the government's care.

We learned just last week of an incredibly shocking story about a child who is living in a storage shed in Ontario, where the parents and the child had begged for help multiple times, and help did not come—which is how this child ended up in this storage shed.

0940

No child—no person of any age, but definitely no child—in Ontario should be living in a storage shed, Speaker. But this bill has no plan to assure that every child has appropriate care and appropriate housing. There's no plan to stop children from dying in the government's care.

Another area where this government has offered no solution to a problem of the government's own making is with OSAP and career colleges. The government has literally ignored hundreds of warnings over multiple years. The Auditor General warned in 2021 that we did not have sufficient governance oversight of career colleges. The government did nothing. In 2023, Career Colleges Ontario came themselves to the government to say, "We think there are instances of fraud happening here." The government did nothing. They received over 200 warnings from the public. They did nothing, Speaker.

And, finally, when they were confronted with irrefutable evidence of fraud within the system, what did they do? They cut off every single student who had applied in good faith for OSAP to attend a private college or university in Ontario. They cut off their OSAP mid-semester, when people already had commitments—they had rent to pay, they had groceries and other bills that they needed to pay, and the government just swept the rug out from under their feet.

This bill has no plan to help those students, to support those students, to ensure they continue their education, to ensure they're not evicted from their homes.

But what the bill does have is liability provisions for the government who has created this problem through years of ignoring warnings. This is something that we've seen before because Bill 101, which was about K-to-12 education, introduced liability provisions for cabinet ministers that the education minister tried to claim were routine but the Canadian Civil Liberties Association said were "fundamentally incompatible with the rule of law's requirement that government be answerable for its actions" and "dangerously close to insulating provincial decision-making from all meaningful legal accountability."

Apparently, that was just the beginning for this government because now they're moving these liability provisions into the area of post-secondary education. I think, Speaker, when we live in a democracy, people deserve accountability from their government. They deserve to have the people who are making decisions that are so incredibly impactful to their lives to be accountable to them for those decisions.

I don't think a government that is making decisions in the best interests of their public needs to provide themselves with sweeping liability protections to ensure that nobody can hold them accountable.

I want to talk about who is being hurt by this government's incompetence, Speaker. I've had many, many students from private colleges and universities reach out to me to share their stories, and I only have time to share a couple. One of them is a father and a husband who drives an Uber while attending classes full-time, who is now behind on rent and worried about losing housing for his family. He can't afford groceries, transportation, textbooks, and he is deep into debt on a credit card and relying on friends to support him financially. He has no idea what they are going to do and how they can get out of these circumstances.

There's a student at Anderson College in Ottawa who wrote to share that their program has been paused, so their education and their future is in jeopardy, but so are their classmates who actually moved to Ontario to participate in this program. They upended their lives to come to this province to invest in their futures, and this province—the welcome that we gave them was to cut them off in the middle of a semester and make it impossible for them to continue their education. The program is paused, so even if they could find an alternative source of funding, the program is not happening. They cannot learn right now.

There's a student who's in a dental hygienist program whose spouse works a minimum wage job. They can't afford to pay tuition and pay rent and groceries if they don't have OSAP. Do you know what, Speaker? We desperately need dental hygienists in Ontario. We need people like this student to be completing their program so that they can get to work in our dental offices, supporting us. And that's who else this incompetence is hurting: It's all of us in the province.

Just to give a couple of examples: Career colleges graduate 86% of personal support workers in the province and we desperately need personal support workers. They are crucial to our home care and our long-term-care system. Many of us depend on them at different points in our lives. Many of these colleges have continuous enrolment, which means they are graduating cohorts every eight weeks or so. So we are going to be at the point soon, already, where there is not a cohort graduating that our workforce depends on.

There are also students who have gone to private career colleges because the public colleges have closed their programs because of the underfunding of public colleges and universities in Ontario.

I've heard from many people in Ottawa who are studying hairstyling and aesthetics because Algonquin closed its hairstyling and aesthetics program. It's an in-demand skilled trade for women, but you can't study it at a public college anymore, and now it's incredibly difficult, if not impossible, for you to study it at a private college as well.

Dental assistants: They've have also closed programs at public colleges.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I invite the member who just spoke to turn her attention to schedule 4. She did make some reference to it during her remarks. Schedule 4 of this bill deals with the Dental Hygiene Act. I happen to think that oral hygiene is extremely important. I think that we know when you exercise proper oral hygiene you actually increase your health remarkably and actually take steps to prevent oral cancer—which is something that, by the way, dentists check for when you go for your regular checkup.

Under changes to the Dental Hygiene Act, this present bill will permit a change which will allow administering by injection a substance designated in the regulations. That's an important addition to the authority of dental hygienists to act and assist people in maintaining oral health. I would like to know if the member agrees and if she would like to elaborate on that.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'm very glad to hear of the member's support for oral health care. I hope that means that the member will advocate within his own government that we continue the coordination of benefits from the province with the Canadian dental care program, which has been incredibly successful in providing health care to people.

But you know, when the dentists were here just recently, they raised concerns about their ability to provide care because there aren't enough dental assistants and dental hygienists. They applied for funding through the Skills Development Fund to keep training assistants because public colleges are closing their programs. They were denied funding through the Skills Development Fund, perhaps because they didn't have a Conservative lobbyist or people hadn't donated enough money to the Conservative government.

Now students have been trying to get their education at private career colleges and they've just had the rug pulled

out from under them. So I hope the member will use his platform within the government to advocate for funding to train dental hygienists.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to thank the member for her comments this morning. One of the rhetorical games that the government plays in here is that they put together an omnibus bill like this one, with 18 schedules affecting many, many different acts and all kinds of different topics. One of them is something we really want to support: the protection of women, in particular, from the sharing of intimate images.

On the other hand they also put in a poison pill. In this case the poison pill is they're indemnifying the Minister of Colleges and Universities from lawsuits because he's cut off OSAP for all private career college students in the middle of the semester.

One of the things I expect the government to say is, "Oh, the opposition voted against protecting women from intimate partner image exploitation." Do you think that there are some things that the government should not use this rhetorical game on?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Absolutely. Thank you to my colleague from Spadina–Fort York for that excellent question. I think protecting women and girls and non-binary and trans folk from gender-based and intimate partner violence is incredibly serious and important. It's something that I would like to think that we could all be committed to in this House, and yet we've seen this government repeatedly use that issue as a rhetorical shield to protect them in other areas while not taking substantive action to actually protect women.

0950

We've seen repeated politics from them, whether it's refusing to allow Lydia's Law to be debated or standing up and pretending that, somehow, presenting a bill that would allow survivors to have their day in court was trivializing the issue of gender-based violence. I think that if the government was truly committed to progress, we would see them stop playing these rhetorical and cynical political games on the issue.

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

MPP Paul Vickers: Students and taxpayers deserve confidence that the OSAP dollars are supporting real education and training. That is why our government is proposing stronger requirements for private institutions to verify student identity and environment, along with higher performance standards. We are also proposing limits on the Ontario portion of OSAP-funded enrolment and stronger authority to recover OSAP funds from institutions where appropriate.

So I ask the member opposite, if you believe OSAP should support students pursuing a real education, will you support these measures to strengthen the program or will you vote against stronger protection for students and taxpayers?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Students do deserve transparency and confidence and accountability, and for five years, under your government, they did not get it. Perhaps that's because there were donations going to the government from the private career college sector.

And now, after five years of failing to act, the government has tabled a bill where the only guardrail is to protect themselves. They're not protecting students. They're not providing accountability and transparency to students. What they're doing is protecting themselves against any legal accountability for their own actions.

That doesn't deliver confidence to a single student in the province, Speaker, and a government that was truly serious about ensuring integrity in how public dollars were spent would not have tabled this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A reminder to all members to direct their comments through the Chair.

Questions?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Let's be straight up: This bill, protect Ontario families, only protects this government from liability and from their past mistakes.

The thing that's most egregious about this bill is the way in which it does not protect children in this province. We have a KPMG audit—that they tried to bury—that shows how children were being treated in this province when they're under care. To be clear: When these children are in care, the government is in fact, legally, the parent.

This bill does nothing to support the over 90,000 kids that are on the autism wait-list. It doesn't do anything to ensure parents can get the specialized support that they need. In fact, parents are relinquishing their kids into care because they can't get the services and supports they need.

So can you just explain how this bill continues to fail children in the province of Ontario and how it's clearly a parallel to the way this government underfunds education in our province? It's a pattern of this government not stepping up to protect our children and our kids in this province.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thanks to my colleague for that fantastic question.

This government is really failing children across the spectrum. Children can't get early diagnoses for autism and for other conditions. Once they have a diagnosis, there's over 60,000 children on the wait-list for the Ontario Autism Program. Many children are aging out of the program before they ever get funds, or maybe their parents get funds right before they age out, with not enough time to spend.

We don't have funding for respite care.

There are not enough services within our communities, whether it's mental health care or other professionals who are providing care.

So parents are desperate to get the help that they need for their children, and they are hopeful that the province will be a better guardian and will actually provide that care that they are not able to get if the children are legally in the care of the province.

Yet, what we see is that this provincial government is actually failing these children once again, once they actually have legal responsibility for those children.

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

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy: To the member from Ottawa West–Nepean: Ontario has experienced shortages of our domestic pharmaceutical supply in the past, when Americans have aggressively purchased from Canadian pharmaceutical suppliers online, and it's left Ontario in short supply.

My question is, do you not think it is responsible that we protect our own supply chain?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I do think we should be protecting our supply chain in Ontario, Speaker. I think that, first of all, if the government was serious about that, they wouldn't have included a measure like that in this omnibus bill with its 18 schedules and 77 pages.

Also, I think if this government was truly interested in protecting our supply chain, our Ontario economy and buying Ontario, then they wouldn't have signed a $60-million contract with an American company that is busy exploiting our teachers through price gouging while not delivering the supplies that we need for our schools. That's just one of many examples where this government has turned to American companies to procure things that we really need in Ontario.

But they're not actually interested in protecting our Ontario economy and protecting jobs; they're just interested in talking about it while not actually doing anything.

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

Mme Lucille Collard: As I take my turn this morning to speak to Bill 148, I actually want to take a minute to thank my OLIP intern Jacob Colatosti for all his hard work. He just started with me a couple of weeks ago, and it's been like baptism by fire as we get legislation thrown at us with little time to turn around and study it, and we still have to come up with notes for debate. I want to thank him because he really stepped up, and those OLIP interns are really precious.

Bill 148, Protect Ontario Families and Communities Act may have a great title, but it's not necessarily a great bill. Sure, there are good provisions in this legislation worth supporting, but not all of them.

This is an exceptionally wide-ranging piece of legislation. Across these 18 schedules, we're dealing with everything from children's aid societies and long-term care to health professions, privacy legislation, intimate images, private career colleges and OSAP.

These are all important issues that would actually deserve their own bill, their own debate, their own vote, and yet, despite the wide scope of this legislation, it still doesn't address some critical issues facing Ontarians. If the bill claims to strengthen families, protect communities and improve the well-being of Ontarians, I would say it's missing the mark.

The first issue that came to my mind when thinking of improving the well-being of Ontarians is the Ontario Disability Support Program. From very early on when I was elected, people on ODSP have reached out to me to ask for help, and to this day, it remains the number one issue in my office that my dedicated staff is dealing with.

I want to thank Angie for educating me, one person who's on ODSP that I was able to hire—just part-time, because otherwise she gets clawed back. She's been instrumental in making me understand all the intricacies and complex problems that exist in the province.

I also want to thank Nick from my office, because every day, he tries to help those people, and even though he finds it difficult, he never abandons them.

This program is important because many people depend on it for basic necessities—not because they're lazy, like the Premier suggested, but because they don't have the ability to function like others. A disability is not something you choose, and yet the support provided remains profoundly inadequate, as indicated by the thousands of petitioners we hear from in this House every day. People that reach out to my office are not only concerned about the insufficient allocation, they're also unable to reach out or to access a caseworker.

ODSP is not the only government office where people meet challenges in getting services. The Office of the Registrar General is so backed up that simple requests for basic documents like birth certificates, marriage certificates and death certificates take forever when it used to be very simple to get.

Now, I want to speak about a schedule of the bill that I think is a good one. Schedule 10 introduces the Intimate Images Protection Act, 2026, and I believe we all agree that this is needed. I'm particularly pleased to see this addressed because protecting people online, and particularly protecting children and young people, is something that I felt was so important that I worked on and was successful in passing legislation to proclaim October as Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month in Ontario. I did that in collaboration with my colleague from Orléans.

1000

While the Internet has no doubt brought benefits to our lives, it comes also with increased risks for our children. Cyberbullying, online grooming, exploitation, and trafficking—another subject I've done extensive work on—has become much easier with access online, especially with children gaining access to the Internet at younger and younger ages.

Now let's look at the provisions on OSAP, which are problematic in various ways. I know I sound like I'm jumping from one unrelated provision to the other, but that's really what this bill is.

So the government wants to take away civil remedies for certain decisions it makes about student aid and career colleges, including decisions it has already made. The minister says these changes are about protecting students and taxpayers, but why does the government want to prevent a court from awarding compensation, even for legitimate claims? Ontario law already protects ministry staff personally when they act in good faith, so why does the minister believe that the existing good-faith protections are not enough? Since the blanket immunity the government is proposing would apply retroactively, it

begs the question as to which past decisions the government is trying to hide.

This legislation is textbook for the Ford government. Faced with serious failure, the government appears far more interested in limiting the consequences of its own decisions than providing the transparency and accountability that Ontarians deserve. These protections are clearly designed to shield the government as we uncover the fact that bad-faith actors who exploited the system were also donators to the PC Party.

Instead of facing accountability and having the Auditor General conduct an independent audit of the government's actions which led to the OSAP fraud, the government has chosen to hide behind legal protections and a taxpayer-funded external audit firm which remains inaccessible. So the government is not only denying students the loans they need to continue their studies; it's also denying anyone the rights to sue the government for illegal actions. It's pretty evident that the government has much to hide and is doing everything to make sure that the truth doesn't see the light.

And the people being punished for this government's wrongdoings are students who have made enormous sacrifices to pursue an education and build a better future for themselves and their families, like Jessica, a massage therapy student at Willis College. She wrote to my office about the enormous sacrifices that she and her family have made to allow her to pursue this education. Her partner, her two stepchildren and their wider family all made decisions based on the understanding that they would get support from OSAP, that it would be available, and now, at a critical point in her education, that support has disappeared.

Jessica is devastated by the situation and doesn't know if she will be able to complete her diploma. What happens to her and what happens to the children in her care if she cannot continue? She's not asking the government to turn a blind eye to institutions that may have exploited public funding. She's simply asking not to be punished for something she had absolutely no role in.

Another constituent of mine is Kaitlynn, a paralegal student at the Algonquin Careers Academy. She described the financial strain of trying to balance part-time employment with her studies while waiting for the government to process her application. She cannot afford for the government to continue to delay action. She, like so many other students in my riding, just wants to continue her education without experiencing unnecessary financial hardship.

Speaker, I want to end by returning to the broader purpose of this bill. We all want an Ontario where people can access the services they need, where vulnerable individuals are protected and where people have opportunities to pursue their goals. That requires a government that is prepared to address the difficult issues facing Ontarians, not just fixing the problems that they create themselves.

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

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: Thank you to the member for Ottawa–Vanier for their comments this morning.

I want to ask her about foster care. When a child needs a place to call home, the difference between a temporary placement and a caring family can shape the course of their life. Foster parents provide more than a roof over a child's head. They offer stability, guidance and a sense of belonging during some of the most difficult moments in the young person's life.

Our government is working to strengthen foster caregiver recruitment and retention through enhanced supports and targeted outreach. I wanted to ask the member if she could share her thoughts on that element of the bill.

M^me^ Lucille Collard: I totally expected that question.

The government is focusing on some parts of the bill that are actually acceptable, and we've said that much. It's an omnibus bill; it contains quite a few good things in it, I will accept that, including the one that the member just mentioned. But it's very hard for us to find a position about this bill—whether we're going to be able to support it or not support it—because the bill, while it contains some interesting measures to help people, it also contains some measures that are totally unacceptable, that are not helping people, that are helping the government just cover their mistakes.

This is not the type of legislation that can rally people. I hope they're not expecting people to really support that.

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

M^me^ France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier la députée pour ses commentaires.

Il y a deux petites sections dans le projet de loi qui parlent de violence conjugale. Ce sont deux petites sections qui vont dans la bonne direction, qui vont aider, mais la violence conjugale, ça devrait être déclaré une épidémie. On devrait vraiment y mettre beaucoup plus d'efforts que deux petits pas dans la bonne direction.

Est-ce que la députée trouve que le projet de loi en fait suffisamment, et qu'est-ce qui devrait être fait pour mettre fin à l'épidémie de violence conjugale que l'on voit dans notre province?

M^me^ Lucille Collard: Merci à la députée de Nickel Belt pour la question que j'apprécie énormément, parce qu'évidemment, la violence conjugale, c'est un sujet qui m'interpelle beaucoup et je pense qu'on peut faire beaucoup plus.

D'ailleurs, ce qui est vraiment dommage, qui n'est pas fait, c'est qu'on s'attarde plus au rapport qui a été produit par le comité de justice, un rapport sur la violence conjugale qui émet 121 recommandations sur lesquelles on n'agit pas, malgré le fait que le comité a demandé que le gouvernement donne une réponse complète aux recommandations, au rapport lui-même. Il y a un paquet de monde qui a été interpellé, des experts, des victimes qui ont partagé leur expérience, qui ont donné leur expertise, et ce rapport-là, qui est très imposant, qui a été très bien écrit, pour lequel on a dépensé beaucoup de ressources, est assis sur une tablette et on ne fait pas ce qu'il faut pour aider les gens.

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

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Thank you to my honourable colleague from Ottawa–Vanier.

Let's just talk about the section of the bill that deals with OSAP. If this was being done in good faith to actually address this issue, what do you think might have been included in this bill that could have made a difference for people?

M^me^ Lucille Collard: Obviously, we were expecting the OSAP measures. We actually thought it would come in a separate bill. It's included in an omnibus bill, because I think the government is trying to hide it in there because it's not doing what it should be doing to help students. It's covering the government from mistakes. Yes, it's maybe establishing some guardrails for the bad actors; that's not a bad thing. But what is really needed is solutions to allow students that have invested time, energy and hope in doing education that they can no longer pursue with confidence because they don't know if they're going to get the money.

The government needs to find a way to give the money to the students who have done nothing wrong and allow them to pursue their education.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Speaker, today we're dealing with Bill 148, which is an act to enact the Intimate Images Protection Act, and it also amends various other acts. The short title for this act is a little different. The short title is Protect Ontario Families and Communities Act, and I think that's an apt title.

1010

I've noticed that today we have many nurses visiting us from parts all around Ontario, and I wanted to take an opportunity to thank the nurses who are at Queen's Park today for the remarkable work that they do in the province of Ontario. I certainly appreciate what they do, and this government appreciates what they do as well. Perhaps that is a good spot to start, because in the present project of law before us, there is a very important change being made, and it's a change to the long-term-care homes in the province of Ontario.

As things stand right now, there is a provision in the law which requires long-term-care homes to have a medical director, and that's a very important position. A medical director is a person who, as you would imagine, directs the medical needs of a long-term-care home, wherever it might be situated in Ontario. We are going to make a little change to that—I called it a little change, but actually it's a very significant change. It's a very significant change because it's going to change, first of all, the title of the director—the director is going to be called the clinical director. And the change is going to allow that role of clinical director—that is, the person who directs the clinical care of the home—to be fulfilled by a registered nurse, and the technical phrase used here is "registered nurse in the extended class." I would describe that as an important extension of scope of practice. I think it's a very important extension, to allow nurses to fulfill that role. I think that's going to be a very important improvement for the province of Ontario when it comes to long-term-care homes and people's ability to make sure that long-term-care homes fulfill the function for which they were created, which is to care for people who need those services.

So, once again, I want to thank the nurses who are here today, and it's very much appreciated by myself to have this opportunity to be able to outline that very important change in this legislation that we're discussing today, because I think that's something that the nurses here at Queen's Park today would like to hear.

Something that I was hearing from members of the opposition was how, in between the sittings of this Legislature, they had taken a five-month vacation away from their responsibilities. I was actually very surprised to hear members of the opposition say that they had taken a five-month vacation simply because we weren't sitting in this Legislature, because I know that when I go back to my riding of Essex, I certainly don't take a vacation; I work very hard in the riding of Essex. I think that the people in the riding of Essex, when we're not sitting here in Toronto, don't think that they should—just because you're an MPP and you're not in Toronto, that you should take a vacation. I think that you should go to work, and that's certainly what I did when I went back to my riding of Essex. I went to my constituency office on a daily basis. I talked to my constituents. I worked with my constituents. They're taxpayers and they pay the bill, and I recognize that and I think that's important, and that means I work for them. And I want to let the taxpayers of the riding of Essex know that even though members of the opposition took a five-month vacation, the member from Essex was at work every single day in his constituency office, talking to his constituents, working for his constituents—because that's what the people voted for me for, and that's why they want me to do this job, and I thank them for that honour.

One of the opportunities that I had this summer is, I had an invitation from the member from Sarnia–Lambton to visit his riding. And although it pains me to leave the people of Essex for even a short period of time, I took the offer from the member from Sarnia–Lambton—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Sorry to interrupt the member. Seeing the time on the clock, it is now time for members' statements.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GEORGETOWN HOSPITAL FOUNDATION GALA

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: This past weekend, I was able to attend the Georgetown Hospital Foundation gala.

This year we marked a particularly special milestone of 65 years since the Georgetown Hospital opened its doors. It was great to see so many local leaders in attendance, including newly elected mayor Jason Brass, as well as business leaders from across Halton Hills.

At the beginning of the evening, Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce CEO and gala MC Melanie Frazer announced an anonymous $5-million donation to the Georgetown Hospital Foundation. This is a game-changing amount of money, and I want to thank the donor for this beyond-generous support of our hospital.

The night didn't end there, and I want to particularly thank Paul Armstrong for his tremendous $65,000 donation. Over $200,000 was raised that evening, and an additional anonymous donor gave another $65,000.

Speaker, it is events like these that show how special of a community we have in Halton Hills—a community that supports each other, businesses that care and individuals demonstrating incredible acts of generosity.

Thank you to the Georgetown Hospital Foundation and gala committee for organizing such a wonderful event supporting such a critical institution of our town.

I look forward to working with Melissa and Halton Healthcare as we continue to invest in our world-class health care system.

WOMEN IN POLITICS

Ms. Catherine Fife: Across the Commonwealth, women parliamentarians are facing online attacks and feel that Parliaments, platforms and police are failing to respond. Some 71% name coordinated harassment campaigns as a top concern; 64% fear AI-generated disinformation targeting their reputation; 40% say abuse has extended to their family or their staff; yet 55% say their Parliament has no policy or response mechanism to online harassment.

We know the abuse is gendered. We see body-shaming, sexualized threats and attacks on competence that male colleagues rarely face. We see deepfakes where doctored images are spread, voices are cloned and fake profiles are created. This leads to women pulling back, self-censoring, withdrawing online and being deterred from public life entirely. Women should never have to choose between their safety and their right to participate fully in public life.

That's why on December 9, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will be hosting a webinar and launching the safeguarding women parliamentarians online tool kit. The tool kit provides practical and actionable steps to safeguard women parliamentarians and reduce the risk and impact of online abuse.

The protection of women's political participation is central to our democracy. Women parliamentarians need not feel alone in this journey; we will learn together and support each other.

Thank you to the CPA and the CWP for doing this important work, and I encourage all of you, all parliamentarians, to attend this important webinar.

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW I

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: This year marks the 35th anniversary of the election and enthronement of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

For 35 years, His All-Holiness has been a voice of moral clarity on the global stage, including calling on all people, regardless of their faith or background, to embrace peace, human rights and the protection of our planet.

However, despite regularly receiving heads of state and government at the Patriarchal headquarters in Constantinople—present-day Istanbul—the Turkish government does not legally recognize his role as the first among equals and leader of the over 300 million Orthodox faithful around the world.

To make matters worse, Turkish authorities have prevented the next generation of Orthodox clergy from being trained by keeping the Halki theological school closed since 1971. That's 55 years, Speaker—55 years too long.

As Canada grows its trade with Türkiye, human rights and religious freedoms must remain central to any bilateral negotiation. Canadian values of freedom of religion and expression, enshrined in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, must never, never be sacrificed in the name of trade or geopolitics.

Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking His All-Holiness for his 35 years of historic and selfless service. Your All-Holiness, may your years be many.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Lorne Coe: The Durham Regional Police Service is receiving approximately $287,000 over three years as part of the Ontario government's province-wide investment of $6 million to support crime prevention and community safety initiatives. This funding is delivered through the Proceeds of Crime Front Line Policing Grant and will support online covert investigations that the service will be undertaking.

1020

Speaker, by investing in crime prevention and community safety initiatives, we're equipping the Durham Regional Police Service with the resources needed to address the root causes of crime, support positive outcomes for youth and families and enhance the well-being of the communities across the region of Durham, including the city of Oshawa.

The police chief had this to say about the funding: "Criminal activity is increasingly moving into digital spaces, and policing must continue to evolve with it. We are grateful to the government of Ontario for its investment through the Proceeds of Crime Front Line Policing Grant, which will strengthen our ability to proactively identify emerging threats, disrupt organized and cyber-enabled crime, protect vulnerable members of our community and ensure our investigators have the specialized tools and capacity they need to keep Durham region safe."

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^me^ France Gélinas: Madame la Présidente, saviez-vous que le 18 novembre 2026 marque le 40^e^ anniversaire de la Loi sur les services en français? Cette loi a marqué

un tournant historique dans la reconnaissance des droits linguistiques des francophones de notre province. Elle garantit aux francophones le droit de communiquer en français et de recevoir des services en français du gouvernement provincial dans les régions désignées. Elle demeure un outil essentiel pour protéger les droits des francophones et assurer notre accès aux services dans notre langue.

De la bataille des épingles à chapeaux au jeudi noir du 15 novembre 2018, elle représente le résultat de décennies de mobilisation et de revendications de la communauté franco-ontarienne.

Nous avons réalisé des progrès importants au fil des ans, mais il reste encore du travail à faire.

Dans un premier temps, le gouvernement doit s'assurer que les étudiants et étudiantes de l'Université de Sudbury—notre université pour, par et avec les francophones dans le Nord-Est—aient accès au régime d'aide financière aux étudiants de l'Ontario. Deux ans pour régler ça, c'est beaucoup trop long.

C'est aussi le temps de rétablir l'indépendance de notre commissaire aux services en français et d'éliminer les régions désignées. La loi devrait s'appliquer à tout l'Ontario.

Joyeux 40e anniversaire de la Loi sur les services en français.

Nous sommes, nous serons.

HITACHI RAIL

Mr. Aris Babikian: Earlier this month I had the pleasure of attending the opening of Hitachi Rail's new Canadian headquarters and technology centre in Scarborough, alongside the Premier, the Minister of Transportation and my Scarborough colleagues.

Hitachi Rail has invested $30 million in their new headquarters in Scarborough, which will be home to over 1,100 employees and 100 interns.

Speaker, under the leadership of the Premier and Minister of Transportation, our government is investing billions of dollars into transit. This includes the construction of the Scarborough subway extension and advancing analysis on options to extend rapid transit both east and west of the existing Sheppard subway line, as mentioned recently by our great Minister of Finance in his fall economic statement.

Hitachi Rail will lead critical signalling upgrades to the existing Line 2 subway alongside the Scarborough subway extension. It will enable the TTC to provide more frequent and reliable trips across their network. The SelTrac digital signalling technology that is now deployed on over more than 150 lines across the world in 70 cities was pioneered and developed right here in Toronto.

Congratulations—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

MOVEMBER

MPP Wayne Gates: I rise today to recognize Movember. For 11 months of the year, I'm just a guy at Queen's Park with a moustache. Then, November rolls around, I'm ahead of the trend. Growing a moustache is easy for me; I was actually born with one. But making sure men get the care they need, that's a lot harder.

Movember Canada has been doing that work for over 20 years. They're here at Queen's Park today, and I want to thank them for their work. They've raised almost $2 billion supporting health projects for our dads, our brothers, our sons, our uncles and our grandfathers.

In Niagara, we all know why that matters. We lost Olympian cyclist champion Gord Singleton to prostate cancer. My assistant's father, Bill Mitchell, is fighting it right now. Each day in Canada, 80 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer, and 15 men will die today. And 5,300 Canadian men will die of prostate cancer this year alone.

For years, I've worked with experts and the Canadian Cancer Society calling on the government to cover PSA testing with a doctor referral. Ontario remains one of the last provinces in the country that still makes men pay for this test.

The moustache gets people talking for 30 days, but PSA testing can save lives for 365 days a year. Let's make it happen this Movember. Get tested. Thank you.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A reminder to all members to keep it to a dull roar.

VETERANS

MPP Billy Denault: Last week, communities across the Ottawa Valley gathered to honour the service and sacrifice of those who wore the uniform, reflecting on the service of many through the conflicts and peacekeeping missions woven in our nation's history.

On Remembrance Day, I was honoured to attend the ceremony of the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn along with commemorations across the Ottawa Valley. Honouring our veterans carries special meaning in the Ottawa Valley. With one of Canada's largest military bases in Petawawa, generations of families in our region have served, and continue to serve, in our Canadian Armed Forces.

Speaker, I have always believed that public service is about being a part of something greater than ourselves, and there is no greater example of that commitment than the men and women who wear our nation's uniform. That service extends beyond the uniform. It continues to live in the volunteers who support our Legions and ensure we never forget those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

I want to recognize three individuals from my community who embody the spirit of that service: Frank Russell, Janet Tobio and Bill McLeod, whom I was honoured to personally present with the Ontario Veterans Award for Community Service Excellence.

To those who have served and have continued to serve, our Legion volunteers and to everyone who attended a Remembrance Day ceremony, I say thank you. Because of the service of our veterans, the dedication of those who continue to honour their legacy and those who support their efforts, I know we will never forget them.

MALTON STING BASKETBALL CLUB

Mr. Deepak Anand: Speaker, when youth play sports, it helps their future success, developing their confidence, teamwork, drive and ambition. The Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport reported in 2022 that 94% of executive-level female leaders attributed their career acceleration to athletics participation.

Today I rise to celebrate the Malton Sting Basketball Club. Since 2019, its volunteers have served over 500 student-athletes, ages five to 18, through a competitive basketball program and personal development pathways. Thanks to president and co-founder, Kulbir Sidhu, recipient of the 2026 Canada Basketball Mike MacKay Stewardship Award, for your leadership, mentorship, community building and commitment towards developing basketball and youth success in Canada.

Malton Sting's first female rep basketball team, the U16 Girls team, brought home bronze at the Ontario Basketball Cup in May.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we are proud to continue expanding our youth athletics through investment to serve our youth. When we invest in youth sports, Speaker, we invest in the future of our community, province and country.

Thank you, Malton Sting.

1030

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I would like to introduce Amanda Williams as a guest and welcome her here to Queen's Park. She's the mother of a child who is now 22 with autism and is here seeking support from the government for where there's a large gap in services.

Mr. Deepak Anand: It's an honour to welcome Kulbir Sidhu, the recipient of the 2026 Canada Basketball Mike MacKay Stewardship Award; his proud parents, Paramjit Sidhu and Charanjeet Sidhu; and his brother, Rajbir Sidhu, to Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome Alka Singh. She's the Niagara regional chair for RNAO. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: It's my pleasure to welcome my youth council, led by Maria Polyanska. Thank you for your hard work. Your voice matters. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I'd like to welcome Dr. Rosalyn Juergens, president of Lung Cancer Canada; and the Lung Cancer Canada delegation, including patients and health care practitioners. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'd like to recognize the co-chairs of the Ontario Women's Coalition: Belinda Marchese, the executive director of the Jean Tweed Centre; and Karen Waddell, executive director of House of Sophrosyne in Windsor. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Robin Lennox: I'd like to welcome Dr. Brian McKenna, a family medicine leader from Hamilton; and the members from RNAO Hamilton. Welcome to your House.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to recognize Dr. Doris Grinspun, the CEO of the registered nurses' association; Neil Stephen and Paul-André Gauthier, nurses from Sudbury; as well as Christina McMillan and Lung Cancer Canada for being here with us. There are lots of nurses around here today; it feels really good.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I would like to welcome members from Lung Cancer Canada today, including Dr. Rosalyn Juergens, president of the organization; as well as the rest of the delegation, which includes patients and health care practitioners.

I'd also like to welcome, from the Ontario Women's Coalition: Belinda Marchese, Karen Waddell, Volletta Peters, Amy Collins, Andrea Paszti, Amber Bramer, Maritza Sanchez and Ingrid Graham.

And finally, I understand that the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario is here. I of course welcome them as well.

Hon. Brian Saunderson: I'd like to introduce some important members from the Brampton Steelheads, members of the OHL leadership and the team for Movember at the Movember reception this morning and this incredible partnership called Breaking the Ice. It's important to make sure that we appreciate and address the issue of men's health.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I'm introducing my page captain today, Melchi Phirose. His family is here today: Phirose Philip, Sreeja Phirose, Nathan Phirose, Selah Phirose; and their friends Gregory John Mathew and Riya Aby Varughese. Welcome to the chamber.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'd like to welcome the 100 advocates as well as the 36 organizations from the Ontario Women's Coalition, and a very special welcome to Andrea Paszti, who is the executive director of Street Haven at the Crossroads.

I also want to extend my warmest welcome to the Canadian Parents for French Ontario and Ontario Student Voices.

MPP Catherine McKenney: I'd like to welcome Amber Bramer to the Legislature today. Amber is from Cornerstone Housing for Women in Ottawa. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to wish a warm welcome to Kathy Moreland from RNAO Windsor-Essex; as well as Karen Waddell, executive director of House of Sophrosyne. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am delighted to welcome Janet Hunt, who is a dedicated nurse and president of the Middlesex Elgin chapter of RNAO and also a London West constituent who is here with many other nurses from London.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to welcome our immediate RNAO past president and a constituent of mine, Morgan Hoffarth. I'd like to also welcome all of the nursing students who are currently completing their Learn and Stay grant. I hope you're able to stay.

Mr. John Jordan: I'd like to welcome the CAO of beautiful Perth, Ontario, Michael Touw, and his family, Janelle, Benjamin and Lincoln.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I recognize page captain today, Seher Sharma, from my riding of Ajax; and welcome her mother, Ritu Thakur, as well. Welcome to Queen's Park.

TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow statements in recognition of Transgender Day of Remembrance during ministerial statements and responses this afternoon, with five minutes allotted to the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington in place of the 20 minutes normally allotted to ministers of the crown, five minutes for the official opposition and five minutes for the third party in place of the five minutes normally allotted to responses by each recognized opposition party and two minutes for the independent members as a group.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to allow statements in recognition of Transgender Day of Remembrance during ministerial statements and responses this afternoon, with five minutes allotted to the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington in place of the 20 minutes normally allotted to ministers of the crown, five minutes for the official opposition and five minutes for the third party in place of the five minutes normally allotted to responses by each recognized opposition party and two minutes for the independent members as a group. Agreed? Agreed.

QUESTION PERIOD

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning. This question is for the Premier. Private jets, casinos, five-star hotels—those aren't just the newest features of GTA VI; this is actually the Premier's political agenda. Education, health care, housing, our families, our kids, on the other hand—nowhere to be found on this Premier's agenda.

While our kids are stuck learning in overcrowded classrooms, the Premier has been busy setting up slot machines and booking private jets. Parents across this province are absolutely desperate for a government that actually steps up and delivers for our kids, but the Premier has become incredibly distracted. When will the Premier commit to smaller class sizes?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Look, I think that process began in 2018. We recognized the challenge that we were having in education in 2018. The system was severely underfunded by the previous Liberal government.

Now, of course, we've increased funding dramatically since 2018. We've started to focus that funding, but I think the real fundamental changes started when we started focusing on a back-to-basics curriculum. We started putting a curriculum that was more focused.

We've seen year over year—not only back to basics in math and in reading and literacy, Madam Speaker; what we're seeing is that year over year over year, under a Conservative government, we're seeing our students achieve better. We're at some of the highest rates that we've ever been—in fact, we are at the highest rates we've ever been in literacy in the province of Ontario.

And as I said just yesterday, I think it was, the TDSB announced that, in fact, they had the absolute best results they have ever had in EQAO in over 25 years, Madam Speaker—progress in the right direction.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, I would like the Premier to tell us some of this, the stories that were spun just now by the Minister of Education—I would like them to tell that to Jodie. She's an educational worker who told me that teachers and education assistants are being pushed to the limit—half a dozen kids spread across classrooms all assigned to one education assistant, 31 students crammed into a classroom.

There are children in this province who are sitting on the floor in classrooms because they are so overcrowded. How's that for getting back to basics? Our kids cannot learn like this. The minister wants to pretend this is all about academic achievement? Well, frankly, he is the one getting in the way of our kids' success.

So I would like to ask the Premier, again, to finally listen to parents and commit to smaller class sizes.

Hon. Paul Calandra: In fact, class sizes have not increased in the province of Ontario in many, many years. They, in fact, remain the way they were way back in 2015. We have the lowest class sizes in the entire country, Madam Speaker. This is what has been negotiated not only by this government but by previous governments.

The reality is, as I keep saying, what we want to ensure that we do is support our teachers, our educators, so that they can ensure that our kids have the best opportunity for success, and part of that, yes, is a curriculum that is more focused on student achievement. We have accomplished that.

Part of it is bringing on new schools so that we can get some of the older schools out of our system and bring new, modern schools on that our educators can be proud to teach in. We're doing that with an over $30-billion investment in many of the schools in her own riding.

But, again, I refer the member to their own results. When she was a trustee at the Toronto District School Board, year over year, results were going down. When this government was elected, the highest results in over 25 years—

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

1040

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, the minister can spin all he wants, but the facts remain the same. I've got to tell you,

almost half of our students across this province are not meeting provincial math standards, okay? And no wonder, because under his watch, class sizes have grown from 21 to 31, Speaker. Under his watch, we have seen students from three grades forced to work in one classroom together with one teacher, because there are simply not enough education workers.

Interjection.

Ms. Marit Stiles: You think that's funny? I don't think that's so funny. I don't think it's funny. That is no way for kids to learn—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism will come to order.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Special-needs students are falling through the cracks. They are being sent home—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, I would love to get to the question if they would just stop—anyways.

When is this Premier going to stop ignoring Ontario families, start taking this seriously—this whole government—and commit to smaller class sizes?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism and the Minister of Natural Resources will come to order.

I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, I know it troubles the Leader of the Opposition, because when she was a trustee, we saw results continuously on the decline in that school board. But if she doesn't want to take it from me, she can take it from the TDSB themselves, who said:

"—In grade 3 math and writing, the TDSB has seen the largest year-over-year increases in" over "20 years ...

"—In grade 6 math, the TDSB has seen the greatest year-over-year gains in the past 20 years.... In grade 6 reading and writing, the percentage of students reaching the provincial standard is the highest it has ever been in the" last "25 years."

The TDSB went on to say, "These results show that targeted math and literacy efforts across the system, including additional math supports put in place by the province under supervision, are having a meaningful impact on student achievement."

That is the reality, Madam Speaker. When you focus the system on results and student achievement, when you give our educators the tools they need to succeed, when you remove conflict from the system, the beneficiaries are students, and our teachers can get the job done better.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: All right, well, the Premier may not want to speak to his record on education, so let's try health care.

"I have never litigated a case where the stakes" weren't "life and death." That is a direct quote from Sabrina Apitz-Grossman's lawyer as they are preparing to take this government to court to get funding for life-saving cancer treatment that this government has repeatedly denied. Experts have said that this treatment could save Sabrina's life. It's a new low from this government, forcing a 31-year-old cancer patient into court. It is cold, it is callous and it is heartless.

Speaker, to the Premier: Will he please direct his minister to approve funding for this treatment so that Sabrina can spend more time with her family instead of fighting his government in court?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, there you have it. There is a member of the Legislature who doesn't understand the process. This is not a political process. This is a decision that is made separate and apart from politicians, as it always has been and as it should be.

We have, through programs and initiatives, ensured that we have Ontario-made—5,000 clinical trials happening in the province of Ontario right now. We want Ontario products and Ontario patients to have access to OHIP-funded care.

We have the FAST program that, as I have said many times, has accelerated the ability for us to offer oncology and cancer treatments over a year earlier than would have been the case. I have to say, patients who access cancer treatments through FAST waited an average of 55 days in 2026. In 2025—

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Process? The minister wants to talk process. The doctors have said this treatment would save her life potentially. You want to spend millions of dollars taking her to court at this moment? Let's not talk process. Let's talk about saving somebody's life. Oh, my God. Speaker, the experts have said the treatment could work. The Premier and this minister need to stop hiding behind these made-up excuses and admit that they are the ones making this decision.

I want to read another quote: "I feel like I'm not only battling cancer; I'm also battling the Minister of Health." That is how 59-year-old cancer patient Kevin Nash has described his current situation. He too has to go and get a court order. He's going to court to try and get this government to do the decent and humane thing: fund the treatment that could save his life.

Will the Premier stop dragging cancer patients to court and simply fund the treatment?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It does not have Health Canada approval. It does not have FDA approval in the United States. You are completely ignoring the fact that here in Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Through the Speaker.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: —we're actually expediting when those are proven technologies. As I said, 300 days it would have taken in 2025. Because of the FAST program, because of individuals who have lung cancer, leukemia, prostate cancer, these FAST program initiatives have meant that access is available in 55 days. Those are the

initiatives to make sure that we have made-in-Canada, approved processes to ensure that OHIP-funded therapies are available in Ontario.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: It is approved by the FDA, and it was made in Ontario—but anyway. Maybe if these patients had donated to the PC Party the government would be a little more willing to help. Is that what we're down to? Because that's what it feels like.

Yesterday, the health minister literally ran away from the journalists who were rightfully asking her questions about this very issue. We have the evidence. We know that the experts recommended this treatment and that it was her office making the choice to deny these patients coverage.

This is not how we look after people in the province of Ontario, Speaker. This is not how we should be running our province.

Back to the Premier one more time: Paying for these treatments is exactly what is expected from someone who says he's in it for the little guy. Will he direct his minister to do the right thing?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Made in Ontario, offered in Ontario, paid for by OHIP—we have the lung society of Canada here today; Tagrisso is on the market and OHIP-funded because of the FAST program to ensure that lung cancer patients have that treatment here in Ontario.

We have examples with leukemia, prostate cancer, lymphoma, treating colorectal cancer and liver cancer. Those are the individuals, the patients here in Ontario, who are getting access because of the program that did not exist under the NDP or under the Liberals. We're getting it done, and we're making sure it's available here in Ontario.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response. This will be the third day I have asked this minister about her role in this OSAP scandal.

Speaker, let's remember when this minister was the minister in charge. The minister ignored the Auditor General's report. The Auditor General's report, well, it said exactly what has happened would happen: fraud, waste, students being hurt and students being taken advantage of, just to name a few things.

Can the Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response please provide a response? If not, maybe this minister can, because he sounds like he's got something to say.

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I appreciate the opportunity to clarify to that member the time frames of how we got here: over 3,200 individual OSAP investigations. So to say we've ignored the problem—we have not, Speaker: 3,200 individual OSAP investigations. We did 1,700 inspections at career colleges, with another 700 investigations into those career colleges. These are very serious criminal allegations. He can keep trivializing them all he wants. He's reminded us this is the third day he's not taking these allegations seriously.

We do on this side of the House. That's why we brought in the Ontario Provincial Police and brought it forward to KPMG—forensic auditors—so that they can bring back confidence into the OSAP system when it comes to private institutions—

Interjections.

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I know they're yelling over me right now, but they will support our bill because they understand the urgency of re-releasing OSAP to the students, and that is why we have legislation this session to re-release OSAP to the students.

1050

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

Mr. John Fraser: That is just an absolutely incredulous answer. Did you look at any one of those reports? Because probably if you had, we wouldn't be in the mess that we're in and you wouldn't have hurt so many honest, hard-working people.

After the former minister ignored the Auditor General's report, she hosted a $150,000 fundraiser for the PC Party, an industry dinner that the career colleges gave $150,000—

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: Speaker, I'm going to ask the minister again, but there seem to be a couple of ministers—I think the Minister of Natural Resources—who would like to stand up and speak to this, because I can hear them. So I invite them: If the minister can't respond to my question, then maybe one of them will.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Natural Resources will come to order.

I recognize the Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Interjections.

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

Order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Natural Resources will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order.

Back to the Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I know that member does not take it seriously, but Career Colleges Ontario just two weeks ago sent my ministry a letter suspending another 24 campuses. If he is okay releasing OSAP dollars when it is still evolving and Career Colleges Ontario has concerns with campuses, that's on him, Speaker. But ultimately, they also have concerns with another 33 additional campuses backdating applications prior to August 1 when we made our changes and made it 100% loans at career colleges, Speaker.

This is continuing to evolve, and that's why we have KPMG—forensic auditors, the experts. He is not an expert, Speaker, and if he believes he is an expert, then that's on him. But ultimately, KPMG, the auditors, are

working very urgently because they understand the urgency of re-releasing those dollars, but we need confidence before we release one more dollar of taxpayer dollars towards the students and their intended uses. Unfortunately, bad actors have taken advantage of Ontario taxpayer dollars.

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

Mr. John Fraser: You don't have to be an expert, Minister. All you have to have is a nose to know how much this whole thing just reeks.

Again, it's like The Silence of the Lambs over there. I've got to give the minister credit; he stands up and gives the same answer every day. At least he stands up. Everybody's got something to say, except when they're asked a question—except for this minister.

So let's move on here. What happened next? The former minister made online asynchronous learning permanently OSAP-eligible, and that's where the fire started.

Oh, I forgot: Her chief of staff then became the CEO of Career Colleges Ontario, and there are all sorts of Premier's office staff embedded all through this scandal—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Natural Resources has been warned.

Mr. John Fraser: So that's where the fire started, and it's still burning. That tire fire is still burning over there. If you can't smell it, Minister, you've got a problem.

Hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars wasted, and the lives of honest, hard-working people turned upside down. Will somebody other than the current minister stand up and somehow defend this thing's happened?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Sounds like that member is sick of hearing my voice, Speaker, but ultimately, we have acted. We have acted, Speaker. We've acted since 2024, when we realized that there was a growing number of applications at private career colleges.

But I do need to remind that member, we went through a global pandemic, and that's why we brought forward online learning. But in 2025, when the third-party agency, Career Colleges Ontario, highlighted the same concerns we had, we took that very seriously. In May of that year, the federal government completed their report and gave it to our ministry, and we did targeted and enhanced inspections.

I've said it numerous times, and I think that's why he's sick of hearing my voice, but I'll say it again and again and again: We've taken this very seriously. We've done over 3,200 individual OSAP investigations since 2020, but once we realized that it was more widespread than initially thought, we paused OSAP going to private career colleges, and we brought in KPMG and the Ontario Provincial Police to ensure that we can bring back confidence into the OSAP system with private career colleges.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: It sounds like everybody over there is pleading the fifth, except for the minister. This whole career college thing—well, it's quite the enterprise.

Look, I don't know why they're worried, Speaker, because they've already granted themselves immunity—I mean indemnity. Tomato, tomahto, right?

So what's next for all you folks? A witness protection program? Is that what the Premier means by "protecting Ontario"?

So many honest, hard-working Ontarians have been hurt by this government's incompetence, scandal and need to constantly fundraise and put Ontarians at risk. It's unbelievable.

Speaker, when will this government stop hiding the truth about this OSAP scandal?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Truthfully, I expected more from the interim leader. This is his last question period. I expected more serious questions from the interim leader. But the reality is, he'll probably be the four-time interim leader as well.

Ultimately, we have taken this very seriously—more seriously than the Liberals have. That's why we're bringing forward legislation this session. We understand the urgency. We're adding stricter identity verification controls. We enhanced the KPIs—graduation rates, employment rates. The threshold for audits has been lowered. We're imposing caps on OSAP enrolment eligibility and excluding predominantly online programs. We're also going to give out fines every time there's misrepresentation of the relationships between career colleges and immigration and recruitment firms, as well as force them to list it on our website. So whenever there has been an enforcement action taken upon that institution, students will be able to see very clearly the action that has been taken against that post-secondary institution.

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

Mr. John Fraser: Well, don't worry. I'll be back next week, guys. I'm not going anywhere. I know you'll be disappointed, but I'll be around. I'm sure I'll be back at you next week.

This OSAP scandal is like every other scandal in this government—the greenbelt, skills development, MZOs—embedded PC Party insiders, lobbyists, former Premier's staff, and then fundraising. It's kind of like a family affair, folks, but it's all about secrecy, obviously, inside the family, because nobody is talking. In this family, silence rules—that silence I hear right now. What happens in this family stays inside this family. Nobody talks. If you talk, you're in trouble.

Speaker, when is someone in the family going to break their silence, other than the minister?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Speaker, I recommend that he use the earpieces that we have at our desks, because I've been speaking and speaking and speaking on this file. Whether he wants to listen, that is up to him.

Two days ago, they were saying that I'm saying the same thing over and over again because I'm very consistent with the time frames of how we got here.

We've done over 3,200 individual OSAP investigations. But once we realized that it was more widespread, we brought in KPMG, third-party auditors, because we need to bring back confidence into the system. This was systematic abuse, widespread abuse. These are serious criminal allegations.

And I know they keep yelling and laughing about my answers, but ultimately, we take this very seriously on the government side. That is why we have paused all OSAP payments towards private institutions. But we do understand the urgency, and that is why we're working with KPMG, and that is why we're auditing every single institution to ensure that we can bring back the confidence that we need. Taxpayer dollars need to go towards their intended use, and that is to help students train and reskill for future jobs.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I don't need an earpiece, because all I hear is the minister's scripted, sterilized response, and the rest is all just silence. You don't need an earpiece to hear nothing, and I'm hearing nothing from anybody else. Ontarians aren't hearing anything from any one of you, including the former minister. And it's silence because they know they've done wrong. It's silence because they know that they've hurt honest, hard-working Ontarians—cut them off at the knees, left them holding the bag and wasted hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars.

1100

So when is this government going to stop protecting their family and start protecting Ontario families?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order.

We can break early. I can name everyone. I can name parties. I don't know if it's ever been done, but we can try.

I recognize the Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Standing ovation for his last question—I think his caucus is excited to have his interim leadership done for the third time.

Speaker, Career Colleges Ontario, just two weeks ago, sent me a letter with more concerns about the sector. They've suspended another 24 campuses because of misdoing at those campuses; 33 other campuses have backdated applications prior to August 1, because that's when we changed the grant-to-loan ratio at private post-secondary institutions.

Whenever Career Colleges Ontario still has concerns of the evolving nature of these challenges we have with OSAP, I'm not too sure why that member believes we should re-release taxpayer dollars. These are taxpayer dollars that we are protecting because, ultimately, they need to go towards their intended use, and that's why we brought in KPMG to bring back the confidence we need before we release any more taxpayer dollars. We're going to go after the bad actors because these are very serious criminal allegations, and that's why we brought it forward to the Ontario Provincial Police because we need to make sure that we get every single dollar back from these bad actors and use them for their intended—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

MPP Robin Lennox: Kevin Nash is a 59-year-old gentleman with metastatic melanoma. His oncologist gave him two options: palliative care with only months to live or trying a novel cancer treatment only available in the United States that could give him years. Kevin chose to keep fighting but he didn't know that his biggest fight was going to be with this Conservative government. We now know that the ministry, not health experts, are turning down applications for out-of-country treatment for patients with advanced cancers like Kevin.

My question is for the Premier. Will you finally take accountability for these wrongful denials and fund out-of-country cancer treatments for people like Kevin who are fighting for their lives?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I want to be very clear. The member opposite is suggesting that we should be funding out-of-country coverage instead of actually building made-in-Ontario, made-in-Canada innovation. It's not on, Speaker. We need to make sure that those 5,000 clinical trials that are happening today in the province of Ontario are going to turn into approved treatments, approved pharmaceuticals and ultimately funded by OHIP in the province of Ontario.

When I look at what a difference the FAST program has made, when I see that previously we had to wait 300 days in the province of Ontario and those same patients are now waiting 55 days, it's only because we are encouraging the FAST program, the health innovation program. We are making sure that innovation stays and happens in the province of Ontario. That is our focus as a government because we want to help all patients in Ontario.

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

MPP Robin Lennox: Unlike the Minister of Health, I have been the principal investigator on a clinical trial, and I can tell you that those trials take years and it didn't stop me from trying to save lives at the same time at the bedside.

Now, I wish that Kevin had an advocate in his MPP to try to help him access his treatment, but unfortunately, the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock hasn't taken the time to meet with her constituent, despite dozens of requests. Maybe if Kevin was a lobbyist or had Mr. X on his side, he would have been able to get a meeting or a direct line to the Premier's office.

And make no mistake, Speaker, cancer treatment has become politicized in this province because the Minister of Health has allowed her assistant deputy minister to override the recommendations of health experts. He is a bureaucrat, not a physician.

My question is to the minister. You have said that these decisions should be made by health experts—I agree—so why are you allowing bureaucrats to override the very recommendations of the health experts that you recruited to adjudicate these applications?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I will take the member at her word that she understands clinical trials. She also understands that all clinical trials do not end up in Health Canada or FDA-approved. We need to ensure that patients are protected, and we are doing that by not only encouraging clinical trials in the province of Ontario, encouraging and changing innovation so that we can get this access to treatments faster, but doing it in a safe and measured way, and always without political interference.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Ted Hsu: The Minister of Emergency Preparedness was the Minister of Colleges and Universities when, in 2023, warnings were received about suspicious OSAP activity at career colleges. In August 2024, the Premier replaced her. The current Minister of Colleges and Universities repeatedly says that after he took office—and here's just one quote: "In late 2024, we had an understanding of a growing concern of applications towards career colleges."

When the current minister took over, did his briefing binder contain the warnings, or did he only learn about them afterwards? Which minister let the problem get out of control? Which minister was soft on crime?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I hope when the interim leader is replaced with a full-time leader, they will get more serious questions towards our government.

They keep repeating the dates, and I'll keep repeating the dates as well, Speaker. As I've said, in late 2024, we had a concern with the growing amount of applications that we'd received at private career colleges. In January 2025, Career Colleges Ontario brought forward the same concerns to my ministry. In May of that year, the federal government completed one of their own investigations and gave those results to my ministry, which we did targeted and enhanced inspections of that year.

Earlier this year, we removed eligibility from six of those institutions. But once we realized that the problem was more widespread, we brought forward KPMG, third-party auditors, to bring back confidence into the system. We reported it to the Ontario Provincial Police, and we paused all OSAP payments.

But just two weeks ago, Career Colleges Ontario sent me a letter updating us, saying that two dozen other campuses have been suspended and 33 other campuses are possibly backdating applications. Speaker, we cannot release OSAP dollars until we have full confidence that it's going towards its intended uses.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Speaker, we know from court records that burglar alarms were already ringing during the member for Simcoe North's tenure as minister. And now, a perfect example from the current minister, who never, ever talks about what happened in his ministry before he took over in late 2024. Why?

Which minister was soft on crime? Which one let the offences and reoffences pile up until hundreds of millions of dollars had been stolen from the public purse? Which one was it? Or was it both of them?

To come clean, will the Premier release the portions of the August 2024 transition binder dealing with reports of OSAP abuse so Ontarians can see whether these warnings and any responses were handed off to the incoming minister?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I've been very clear: Since 2020, we've done over 3,200 individual OSAP inspections. Since 2019, we've done over 1,700 inspections of career colleges. Since 2019, we've also done 700 investigations into career colleges.

Speaker, we have been consistently taking this very seriously, but I'll repeat to that member: Just two weeks ago, Career Colleges Ontario flagged more concerns with their members. They suspended two dozen members, and 33 other members were backdating applications that they have concerns with, as well as another dozen campuses.

This is continuing to evolve. If the Liberal Party is okay with taxpayer dollars going out to fraudsters, criminal activities, then that's on them, Speaker, but I need to have confidence before another taxpayer dollar does flow for its intended uses. Bad actors have misused taxpayer dollars, and we take this—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

1110

SKILLS TRAINING

MPP Monica Ciriello: My question is for the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. Ontario employers need skilled workers, and veterans, military personnel and first responders have the valuable experience to help meet that demand. These individuals already bring leadership, discipline and a strong commitment to service. With the right training, they can build on those skills, take on new challenges and pursue rewarding careers. As our government works to protect Ontario, investing in training is key to make sure workers have the skills they need and the employers can find the talent that they're looking for.

Can the minister explain how our government's latest investment is providing training opportunities for veterans, military personnel and first responders while helping strengthen and protect Ontario's workforce?

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

Hon. Trevor Jones: Thank you to the member from Hamilton Mountain for that question—a champion of first responders and our military personnel.

Speaker, every day, Ontario's first responders and military personnel put their lives on the line to protect Canada and our communities. Our government is proud to stand with these men and women by investing in their skills

training to support them to meet new challenges and build rewarding careers. Unlike members of the opposition who would rather defund the police, we're investing more than $7.1 million in the Skills Development Fund Training Stream to help over 1,800 first responders and veterans access training in policing, emergency response and technology.

We'll continue to face tariffs by President Trump, and we'll continue to protect Ontario by investing in the skilled workforce we need to protect our communities and protect our country.

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

MPP Monica Ciriello: Thank you for that response, Minister.

Speaker, training helps people build the skills they need to access good-paying jobs and adapt to the changing demands of a workforce. Whether it's strengthening emergency response, supporting policing and security or preparing veterans and military members for careers in technology, these training opportunities are helping build and develop skills in important fields across our province. As Ontario's economy continues to evolve, we need to make sure our workforce is ready for the new challenges.

Can the Minister tell us about how this investment will help workers gain the skills they need and prepare Ontario for the future?

Hon. Trevor Jones: Thank you again to my partner from Hamilton Mountain. That's exactly what the Skills Development Fund is doing: making sure people have access to the training they need to succeed. Through four unique projects, over 1,800 veterans and first responders are receiving training: firefighters in advanced emergency response, anyone who wants to pursue a career in policing or security—strong skills to pursue that very training.

And by the way, the Ontario Police College has graduated hundreds of recruits under the support of Premier Ford, with free tuition, helping them get started in a rewarding career on the right foot—and veterans, after they hang up their uniform, to pursue careers in technology and trades.

We're going to invest in training and invest in people. These are our neighbours, protecting communities and protecting Canada. That's how we protect Ontario.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

MPP Catherine McKenney: Speaker, this government keeps promising to make it easier to build housing, but with their latest budget bill, they are actually making affordable housing more expensive to deliver. Instead of helping non-profit providers build more homes, this government is going to ensure that they are paying full property taxes. While they give their private corporations breaks, they charge non-profits. How much worse does Ontario's housing crisis need to get before this government commits to using public land, low-cost financing and put non-profit and co-op builders up at the front of the line?

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

Hon. Rob Flack: Part of our plan, Madam Speaker, is to protect the most vulnerable in this province, and that's exactly what we're doing. We're working closely with our municipal partners, all 47 service managers, and the 10 district service administration boards right across this province. We are investing significant money to support those individuals and groups. Over $2 billion—close to $3 billion, in fact—has been invested in this key support.

Homelessness prevention is up 40% since 2023, $700 million; homelessness and addiction recovery—HART—treatment centres, over $500 million; encampment support—a new deal for Toronto, a new deal for Ottawa; the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit; the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative; others delivering services for people in need and vulnerable in this province, Speaker.

We're going to continue along this path. And you know what, Speaker? We met last week—more in the supplemental—with the federal, provincial and territorial leaders. We have a plan and we're going to stick to it. It's going to work.

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

MPP Catherine McKenney: Speaker, people across the province tell us that affordability keeps them up at night. Young people can't afford to buy their first homes. Tenants can't afford their increasing rents. Seniors can't afford to stay in their communities.

Everybody knows that the private market cannot solve the housing crisis. Developers build what they can sell or rent at a profit. Yet instead of making the public investments needed to build more affordable homes, this government continues to rely solely on private corporations.

Once again, Speaker, will they commit today, on National Housing Day, to supporting the non-profit sector to deliver the affordable housing that we need in this province?

Hon. Rob Flack: Speaker, we are doing exactly that; we're making life more affordable in the housing sector. How are we doing it? In light of major international headwinds, we are creating the environment to get more homes built faster—the conditions. Governments shouldn't build homes; we create the conditions to get them done.

Let's take a look at the results. We paused the HST for six months and we've seen housing sales up 93%—an incremental growth of 8,000 homes, Speaker. And let's talk for a second about the purpose-built rental sector: over 20,000 starts—up 41% year over year.

Guess what? When you build supply, you build competition, and when you build competition, you make life more affordable. We are making housing more affordable for all people in this province, whether you rent, whether you buy, or you're in supportive housing.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Stephen Blais: The most anticipated video game of the decade was released today. The story follows a

small-time street thug from the suburbs of Smoke City—a drug dealer who rises to power through the ranks to become the boss of a powerful criminal syndicate. Of course, Madam Speaker, any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

But crime in Ontario is no game. Since the Premier rose to power, violent crime is up 19%, auto theft is up 12%, and the use of cocaine has doubled. What's the Premier's big solution? To write a letter.

So, Madam Speaker, when will the Premier stop playing games and start doing something about the rising crime here in Ontario?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Ottawa South will come to order. The government side will come to order. The Minister of Education will come to order. The government House leader will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The House will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Education will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Education has been warned. The leader of the third party has been warned.

The next person who speaks is out—and that kind of question is going to be cautioned.

Is there a response from the government side?

Interjections: No.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Next question.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Madam Speaker, the Premier says he wants tougher bail laws and longer sentences, but he won't hire the cops necessary to find and arrest criminals. There are 157 inmates improperly released from Ontario jails; criminal cases thrown out because the province couldn't get them to trial on time. How many criminals are walking the streets of Ontario today because of this Premier's failure to get his own house in order?

1120

Instead of fixing these problems, the Premier wants to write a letter. The Prime Minister doesn't run Ontario courts, he doesn't manage provincial jails and he doesn't administer Ontario's police services. The Premier does, and if you scrape away the scurf of his tough-on-crime rhetoric, all you'll find is talk and no muscle.

Madam Speaker, when will the Premier stop passing the buck, provide necessary funding to the police, to the court system and to the correctional institutions and give them the resources they need to keep criminals off our streets?

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

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I don't know where the member opposite has been. There's never been a government that has been more proactive in our public safety than our government, led by the Premier. That's a fact.

Let me give you the numbers: Over 3,000 beds committed to be brought online in corrections. We've exceeded our target now of 1,000 in the shortest of terms—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I apologize to the Solicitor General. The member for Don Valley North has been warned.

Interjection: Throw him out.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): And the next person who says that is going to be warned as well.

Back to the Solicitor General.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Since August 2022, 8,000 new police officers have been back. That's a fact.

We have put together a program of almost $1 billion in the last few years through the Community Safety and Policing Grant, through the auto theft grant, through many other grants. Show me a government that has done more. I'll show you our government.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

MPP Billy Denault: My question is for the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement. Taxpayer dollars should work for the people and businesses of Ontario. We have incredible businesses, manufacturers, farmers and skilled workers who should have every opportunity to benefit from the contracts our public sector awards. Whether it's the vehicles used by public institutions or the goods and services purchased by schools and municipalities, these are opportunities to support Ontario businesses and keep our economy moving forward.

Our public sector spends billions of dollars every year on goods and services, which is an enormous opportunity to support local jobs.

Minister, can you explain what our government is doing to make sure more of those taxpayer dollars support Ontario workers and businesses?

Hon. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the great member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for that question.

Buy Ontario legislation is supporting Ontarians every step of the way. Take sanitization products, for example: All 13 multi-year contracts for products like hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes went to Ontario vendors, with the products made right here in Ontario. Three Ontario companies that provide safety learning resources to schools have already received more than $620,000 in work through our procurement process. And a Toronto-based education company received more than $54 million through our education procurement system.

Speaker, on that side of the House, on the last Friday in June of this year, not one member of the Liberals or NDP amplified Buy Ontario day. On this side of the House, members were active. It's all hands-on deck supporting Ontario and Canadian businesses, and we are going to do everything we can to support businesses to grow right here in Ontario.

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

MPP Billy Denault: Thank you, Minister, for that response. It's good to hear that Ontario businesses are benefiting from this historical piece of legislation that our government passed last year. These are real opportunities for local companies and the workers they employ, so I'm happy to be a part of the government that put this together and is actively enforcing this policy.

Speaker, there's always more to be done to make sure Ontario businesses have every opportunity to succeed. With that in mind, can the minister explain how our government is building on these success stories for the new Buy Ontario fleet directive and the municipal Buy Ontario procurement directive?

Hon. Stephen Crawford: Again, thank you to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for that great question. We've shown that buy Ontario can make a real difference to Ontario businesses, but as my colleague mentioned, we're not stopping there. We want more Ontario businesses winning contracts and more opportunities for our workers right here in this province. That's why we're looking at expanding fleet requirements to medium and heavy-duty trucks, giving our auto sector opportunities greater than they have today to compete. We're also looking to give Ontario- and Canadian-made products greater priority from the very beginning of major infrastructure projects, starting at the planning and design stages. We're working with businesses and manufacturers and municipalities to get these changes right because when government spends public money, Ontario businesses should have an opportunity to benefit from that right from the forefront.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

MPP Fatima Shaban: My question is for the Premier. Last year, this government abruptly removed 2,600 skilled trade workers out of the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program. This is a pattern with this government. We see it with OSAP. They suspect fraud from a few bad apples, and instead of doing their job and investigating thoroughly, they uprooted the entire stream.

Speaker, these people already had jobs. They were paying taxes. They were doing everything right, and this Ford government sent their applications back without reviewing them. Now the employers are suffering; our small businesses are suffering; our economy is suffering. Thankfully, these workers went to court and won.

My question to the Premier, through you, Madam Speaker: Will the Premier do the right thing, commit to not appealing this decision and let these workers get back to work?

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

Hon. Trevor Jones: I'm fairly certain the new member opposite would be quick to stand up and protest, Heaven forbid, if a misrepresentation or fraud was detected by our public service and we failed to act. However, we act on the advice of our public service on misrepresentation, and now the member protests.

Speaker, our government made a decision, a prudent decision, to pause applications to the OINP skilled trades stream because we found troubling patterns of misrepresentation. This undermines the very integrity of the system that we need to connect employers with the right job seekers and the right new Canadians. Our focus remains on ensuring employers can be partnered with the very people they need to strengthen their businesses, expand their businesses and protect Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Scarborough Southwest.

MPP Fatima Shaban: When I'm asking the government to act, I mean actually do their job and thoroughly review every application. Speaker, these workers shouldn't need a court decision to get a fair review from the government. Most people can't afford that fight. Thousands of other OINP applicants were treated exactly the same way, and they weren't part of this case.

My question: Will the government extend a fair, individual review to every worker whose application was returned, not only the ones that went to court?

Hon. Trevor Jones: I appreciate the new member's passion. We share that same passion because when an employer has a job to fill and a skilled worker is ready to build a future here in Ontario, we want to place that worker in that skilled trade with that employer—the same outcomes.

The program helps employers fill workforce gaps that they've been unable to fill locally. That's why the OINP program is in place. And last year, a third of our nominees came from the health care sector. Some 3,000 health care workers—the most in a single year of the program's history—were connected to good jobs across communities in Ontario, including her own. For a community like Chatham-Kent–Leamington, my community, that means joining people and our neighbours with the in-demand skills that employers need. We're redesigning a program to better connect people that Ontario needs to protect Ontario and protect our employers.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I'd just like to thank the nurses who are here today for helping us and our families in times of need. I had the opportunity to meet with some of them from Durham region today. You're truly health care heroes.

My question is to the Minister of Health. Durham region is one of the fastest-growing communities in Ontario, and with that growth comes pressure on our health care system, and particularly the Ajax Pickering hospital in my community. I understand from recent public comments made by the member for Whitby that the new Whitby hospital is sitting on the Minister of Health's desk waiting for sign-off to move to the next stage, and I understand the Pickering post-acute care centre is in a similar position. These projects will help ease health care infrastructure pressures in my community and they have broad support.

1130

So, Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health: Will you commit today to signing off on the next stage of the new Whitby hospital and moving forward with the Pickering post-acute care centre?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I would also like to acknowledge and welcome the RNAO to Queen's Park today. The RNAO has been an incredible partner as we ensure that we add additional scope of practice to our nurses, and it's actually the RNAO that's doing a lot of that training, so thank you for being such a welcoming partner to our government.

As I look at the 100,000 nurses that have been registered to practise in the province of Ontario—as I see 30,000 nurses training in our post-secondary institutions—I know that these are well-paying and well-sought-after positions in the province of Ontario because we have a world-class health care system. People want to be in Ontario to practise and train, and we're going to welcome the world to Ontario.

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

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: The government's health care infrastructure spending isn't reaching communities like mine on the western side of Durham region. The community needs to fundraise its local share for the Whitby hospital, and it can't do that until the Minister of Health signs off on that project reaching the next stage. It takes many years to build a hospital, and my community of Ajax in Durham region can't afford any more delays.

Speaker, hallway health care has doubled under this government, and people are genuinely concerned in my community due to the lack of provincial funding for hospitals.

So again, will the Minister of Health commit to signing off on the next stage of the new Whitby hospital today so the community can do its part and start fundraising?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: There is $64 billion in hospital capital that we have in place and moving forward on today. Just last week, I was up in Collingwood where we were breaking ground and acknowledging a new hospital that will serve as the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital. We have new hospital builds literally across Ontario, whether they are new, expanded or renovated. There has never been a Premier or a government that has invested so much in our hospital infrastructure.

And we don't stop at hospitals, of course. We are building roads, we are building schools, we are building, absolutely, hospitals to make sure that as Ontario's population ages and grows, we are there as a government to protect the people of Ontario in all aspects of their lives.

ENERGY POLICIES

MPP Susan Lahey: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Mines. Ontario is known around the world for providing the reliable, affordable and clean electricity this province's workers, families and businesses depend on. Not only that, our nuclear industry, through over 200 companies, keeps our economy running 24/7, supporting roughly 89,000 jobs across the country.

Ontario has a track record of delivering large nuclear refurbishments on time and on budget, with the Darlington refurbishment completed four months ahead of schedule and unit 3 at Bruce Power completed a record-setting seven months early. Both nuclear refurbishments combined put over $300 million back in the pockets of taxpayers.

With construction at the Pickering refurbishment under way, can the minister provide an update on what's next for Ontario's nuclear future?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Thank you to the member from York–Simcoe.

With President Trump's tariffs threatening Canadian jobs, we must become more resilient and self-reliant. That's why our government is leading North America's largest nuclear expansion—a tariff-proof national building plan to create over 15,000 jobs, $800 billion to our economy's benefit and new large-scale builds at Wesleyville and Bruce C.

Bruce C is expected to generate up to $238 billion in economic impact over 80 years, creating 18,900 jobs and powering 4.8 million homes, with 95% of the project spending staying in Canada.

At Wesleyville, we're proposing 10,000 megawatts of new generation, enough to power another 10 million homes.

Speaker, that is how we're contributing to our economy while boosting our economic sovereignty in response to Trump's tariffs, doubling down on what we know best: reliable, affordable nuclear power.

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

MPP Susan Lahey: Thank you to the parliamentary assistant for that answer.

From day one, our government has supported Ontario families and workers. In fact, it was our government's years of advocacy that led to the cancellation of the Liberal carbon tax, saving Ontario households $365 per year on home heating and over $400 per year on fuel—while the Liberals and NDP continuously vote against our cost-saving measures that drive prices up.

Speaker, can the parliamentary assistant please explain how our government is advancing new sovereign energy and electricity supply chains for Ontario's workers, families and businesses?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member again for that question.

Speaker, our government is reducing reliance on foreign markets while creating good-paying jobs right here in Canada for our workers.

We're also moving forward with the Northern Shield Energy Corridor, a 3,300-kilometre pipeline that will move 500,000 barrels of Canadian oil every day from Alberta to Sarnia's refinery hub.

At the same time, we're exploring a strategic petroleum reserve to strengthen energy security and—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I'm warning the member for Kitchener Centre.

I'll allow the member to continue.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: While the opposition would let red tape delay nation-building projects, we know that delays mean lost jobs, lost investment and missed opportunities for Ontario.

Speaker, it is time to think big and build big, to secure Ontario's energy future with our own resources, our own workers and infrastructure under our own control. Under the leadership of our great Premier, that is exactly what we're doing right here in Ontario.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the leader of the third party on a point of order.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you, Speaker. I want to take a moment to introduce my wife, Linda, who's in the gallery right here.

We first met about 50 years ago this spring. And you all know what I'm like. She has been with me that long, so she must really love me. I know that I really love her. We're going to put that all to a challenge later on today, because she bought a new IKEA bed frame for my apartment and we're going to put it together.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, before I do the standing order 59—my thoughts are with the leader of the third party, with your IKEA installation this afternoon.

Under standing order 59, this afternoon the government will be debating Bill 148, followed by debate on government motion number 20. We'll end today's day with private member's notice of motion number 99.

On Monday, November 23, it's the government's intention to table a bill on Monday, followed by opposition day and debate on government notice of motion number 20.

On Tuesday, November 24, there will be debate on a government bill both in the morning and the afternoon, followed by second reading of Bill 145.

On Wednesday, November 25, we'll have debate on a government bill in the morning and afternoon, followed by second reading of Bill 19.

On Thursday, it is still to be determined, because of a bill in committee being reported back to the House, followed by second reading of Bill 147.

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

The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members, I would like to draw your attention to the Speaker's gallery. Joining us this afternoon is one of the former members, from Parkdale–High Park in the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st Parliaments, Cheri DiNovo. Welcome back.

Mr. Dave Smith: I wasn't able to do it during question period. I had a Trent University political science class here today. I would like to introduce them now: Devin Penner, Marc Zanoni, Jeremy Wortman, Delvyn Larshen Yu, Zandria Elliott, Tyler Fallis, Janelle Johnston, Jacob Drouin, Cora Reid, Kenadee Thomas, Egan Wolfgram, Juliana Ferraz, Kaiya Bynoe-Sinclair, Reagan Lusted, Travis O'Connell, Kate Hynes, Makayla Graham, Ryan Turnbull, Marianne Smith, Natalie Rewenko, Xhesika Sofi, Andrew Rose, Antonio Salfi, Bintou Cherif, Ava Shaw, Cristine de Clercy and Zakary Marshall.

MPP Tyler Watt: I am pleased to welcome Dr. Angela Cooper Brathwaite, past president of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario; RNAO CEO Doris Grinspun; and President Sue LeBeau, along with my fellow RNAO members from Ottawa and across the province who have joined us today at Queen's Park. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Deepak Anand: It's always a pleasure when you have stakeholders from Mississauga–Malton here.

I'd like to welcome and recognize the president and co-founder, Kulbir Sidhu, of Malton Sting, along with his parents, Paramjit Sidhu and Charanjeet Sidhu; his brother, Rajbir Sidhu; and most importantly, his three nephews: eight-year-old Niam Sidhu, five-year-old Kian Sidhu and two-year-old Arin Sidhu.

They are very excited and so happy to see and tour Queen's Park, and they're looking forward to coming again and again and knowing that their name will be in the Hansard.

REQUEST TO INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I beg to inform the House that I have today received and laid upon the table a request by the member for Nepean, Tyler Watt, to the Integrity Commissioner for an opinion pursuant to section 30 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, on whether the member for Etobicoke North, the Honourable Doug Ford, has contravened the act or Ontario parliamentary convention.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated November 19, 2026, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Mr. Hardeman from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs reports the following resolutions:

Resolved that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries and offices be granted to His Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027:

Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade: 901, ministry administration program, $25,072,500; 902, economic development, job creation and trade program, $2,576,723,900—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Dispense? Dispense.

Pursuant to standing order 66(d), an order for concurrence for each of the resolutions reported from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs will be placed on the orders and notices paper.

Report deemed received.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE INTERIOR

Mr. Aris Babikian: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Interior.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Mr. Babikian from the Standing Committee on the Interior reports the following resolutions:

Resolved that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries be granted to His Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027:

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness: 101, ministry administration program, $2,136,400; 107, better health and environment—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Dispense? Dispense.

Pursuant to standing order 66(d), an order for concurrence for each of the resolutions reported from the Standing Committee on the Interior will be placed on the orders and notices paper.

Report deemed received.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Brian Riddell: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Mr. Riddell from the Standing Committee on Social Policy reports the following resolutions:

Resolved that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries be granted to His Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027:

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services: 701, ministry administration program, $137,356,600—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Dispense? Dispense.

Pursuant to standing order 66(d), an order for concurrence for each of the resolutions reported from the Standing Committee on Social Policy will be placed on the orders and notices paper.

Report deemed received.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HERITAGE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CULTURAL POLICY

MPP Tyler Watt: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): MPP Watt from the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy reports the following resolutions:

Resolved that supply in the following amounts and to defray expenses of the following ministries and offices be granted to His Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027:

Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism: 4601, ministry administration, $9,094,200—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Dispense? Dispense.

Pursuant to standing order 66(d), an order for concurrence for each of the resolutions reported from the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy will be placed on the orders and notices paper.

Report deemed received.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

Mr. Lorne Coe: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Mr. Coe from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy reports the following resolutions:

Resolved that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries be granted to His Majesty for the fiscal year—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Dispense? Dispense.

Pursuant to standing order 66(d), an order for concurrence for each of the resolutions reported from the

Standing Committee on Justice Policy will be placed on the orders and notices paper.

Report deemed received.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

EARLY AGE ONSET CANCER AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE SENSIBILISATION AUX CANCERS PRÉCOCES

Mr. Rakocevic moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 154, An Act to proclaim Early Age Onset Cancer Awareness Day / Projet de loi 154, Loi proclamant la Journée de sensibilisation aux cancers précoces.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I do. Thank you, Speaker. And I want to thank the bill co-sponsors from Nickel Belt and Hamilton Centre.

The incidents of new cancer diagnoses in individuals under the age of 50 is rising in Ontario and represents a growing public health concern in the province. Cancer among young people often goes undetected in its early stages, leading to more frequent diagnoses of advanced-stage cancers.

Proclaiming November 19 as Early Age Onset Cancer Awareness Day will enhance awareness among health care providers and other individuals of the risk of early-age-onset cancer. Increased awareness can lead to earlier interventions, such as identification of symptoms and earlier diagnosis, thus improving health outcomes for those under the age of 50.

Let's support this. Let's save lives.

1310

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

JOURNÉE DU SOUVENIR TRANS

Mr. Ric Bresee: I'm honoured today to rise in this House on behalf of the government of Ontario to mark Trans Day of Remembrance and to join Ontarians all across the province in a moment of reflection, a moment of solidarity and a moment of grief.

Each year, by an act passed unanimously in this House, we recognize November 20 as Trans Day of Remembrance, a day when we come together across party lines to remember those who were taken tragically from us simply because of who they were.

Tomorrow, at vigils held across the province, names will be read aloud. Each one of those names represents a life, represents someone's child, someone's sibling, a partner, a co-worker, a dear friend. Each of these people had dreams, had talents and a future ahead of them. These are lives cut short by violence against a backdrop of anti-transgender hatred, prejudice and discrimination.

It is a day of remembrance, so to the families and the loved ones, please know that we see you and that we grieve with you.

Speaker, as part of our act of remembrance, we need to remember a woman named Rita Hester. In 1998, unfortunately, Rita was murdered in Boston, and her death received almost no mainstream media attention. Refusing to let Rita or the victims who came before her, like Chanelle Pickett, be erased or forgotten, this prompted Gwendolyn Ann Smith to launch a website project called Remembering Our Dead and organize the very first Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20, 1999.

It should never be a privilege to live as your authentic self. It is a fundamental right that belongs to every single one of us. Across Ontario, transgender, two-spirit, non-binary and gender diverse people are our neighbours, our friends, our colleagues and our family members. They contribute to our communities in countless ways, and yet too many continue to face discrimination, harassment and threats to their personal safety simply because of who they are. No one should have to question whether they will be treated with dignity and respect or whether they will be safe going about their daily lives.

As members of this Legislature, fulfilling the promise of the day of remembrance demands that we honour the lost by protecting the living. Our government is fully committed to the idea that every Ontarian deserves to feel safe in their communities, welcomed and respected in their workplaces and their schools.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, this government is backing that commitment with action. Since 2023, we have invested over $300,000 through our Anti-Hate Security and Prevention Grant to strengthen safety and security in LGBT+ community spaces across the province.

Through the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, we continue to fund the LGBT2SQ Initiative, in partnership with the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, supporting caregiver training and inclusive youth programs. And the Ontario Trillium Foundation invests millions each year in grassroots organizations, providing important, locally driven programs for mental health and crisis services and safe spaces in communities all across Ontario.

Speaker, every person in Ontario deserves to walk down the street without fear. Every young person deserves to grow up knowing that they are valued and loved for exactly who they are. And every family deserves the comfort of knowing that their province stands behind them and their family members. As we observe Trans Day of

Remembrance, let us carry the memory of those we have lost not just in our thoughts and prayers today but in our actions every day of the year. Let us choose compassion over division, understanding over fear, for every single person who calls Ontario home. We will always step up, fighting for the rights of Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Before I begin my remarks, let me just take a moment to thank the Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo for being in this Legislature, for her ongoing advocacy and support for 2SLGBT human rights and, of course, Susan Gapka.

November 20 is the Trans Day of Remembrance. This day can be bittersweet for so many trans and queer community members because we are gathering to mourn the trans, non-binary and two-spirit community members we have lost.

As a member of the trans and non-binary community, a person who uses they/them pronouns, I'm honoured to deliver this year's remarks on behalf of the official opposition Ontario NDP.

On November 20, 2026, we will commemorate the 27th anniversary of the very first Trans Day of Remembrance, originally organized in 1999 by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith. The first Trans Day of Remembrance was held in Boston and San Francisco, in the form of a vigil to honour the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was killed in 1998.

Being trans is beautiful, and gender expansiveness has existed throughout time and culture. In countless ways, trans people, culture and history have shaped all of our communities.

In my own riding of Toronto Centre, we have Canada's most prominent gay village, a historic 2SLGBTQIA+ community. It's the home of Canada's largest Pride parade; Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, the very first queer theatre in Canada; and the many trans-owned and operated businesses that dot Church Street. We even have the 519 community centre, one of the oldest, most prominent community centres for the 2SLGBTQ community anywhere in the world. Places like these are sacred, and their history is deeply intertwined with trans organizing and advocacy. Many of these institutions would be very different today without the involvement of trans community members. They play a vital role in advancing civil rights, culture, art, and the mutual aid and support that we all enjoy.

There is nothing that politicians can say, do or fail to do that will erase trans people, no matter how hard those attempts are. Being trans has always been a fraught experience, but after several seasons and years of progress, we are seeing a right-wing backlash that is targeting trans people. It's scary right now, especially with how trans people are being continually used as scapegoats for political gain. Politicians who use buzzwords like "gender ideology" are causing moral panic, when, in reality, solid data confirms that gender-affirming care saves lives.

We are not immune to transphobia here in Ontario. This very government voted against my bill to improve and expand access to gender-affirming health care in Ontario. It literally would have saved lives. Today, the government could pass our follow-up motion 30 that we placed on the order paper in June 2025 to expand access and funding to gender-affirming health care in Ontario, but they won't. Our community deserves more than words or even a moment of silence. We all need—and our community needs—timely, protected health care.

Even changes in procedure at Queen's Park mean that we no longer raise the Pride flag or trans flag here. These days of significance are deeply meaningful to our community. They show the 2SLGBTQI community that the house of democracy supports and honours them. Let's try to fix this together.

Many people in Ontario are being misled and fed false narratives about what it means to be trans and what gender-affirming health care is, and we are not seeing the political leadership from the government that trans Ontarians deserve.

In Canada, in the province of Alberta, we're seeing trans youth having their freedoms and rights taken away. In British Columbia, the Conservative government is now making the same threats.

Trans people know how deeply uncomfortable it is to be forced to live their lives in secret—and we don't want anyone to not feel full and supported as Ontarians.

I think we owe all Ontarians, including trans and non-binary Ontarians, our obligation to do everything we can to protect them, to honour them, to work with them. Let's love them. They are our family members, they are friends, our neighbours.

1320

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Ottawa–Vanier.

M^me^ Lucille Collard: I rise today to recognize Transgender Day of Remembrance, observed annually on November 20.

This is a day of reflection, remembrance and solidarity with transgender and gender-diverse people. It is an opportunity to honour those whose lives have been taken by transphobic violence over the past year and to recognize the families, friends and communities who continue to carry their memory.

La journée de commémoration des personnes transgenres a été instaurée pour la première fois en 1999 par la militante Gwendolyn Ann Smith à la suite du décès de Rita Hester, une femme transgenre noire brutalement assassinée à Boston en 1998. La mort de Rita a attiré l'attention sur la violence subie par les personnes transgenres et sur le fait qu'elles passent souvent inaperçues. Ce qui a commencé comme une veillée à sa mémoire est rapidement devenu une journée internationale de commémoration.

More than 25 years later, the need for this day remains. Transgender people continue to face disproportionately high rates of homelessness, poverty, unemployment, harassment and violence. Too many experience discrimination simply for being who they are, and too many have lost their lives because of hatred and intolerance. Behind

every name we remember today is a person—someone with family and friends, with hopes and ambitions and with a future that was taken from them.

Nous devons également garder en tête que la commémoration ne peut se limiter à une seule journée de l'année. Elle doit s'accompagner d'actions concrètes pour garantir que les personnes transgenres puissent vivre en sécurité, accéder aux services dont elles ont besoin et participer pleinement à la vie de leur communauté sans craindre la discrimination ou la violence.

À Ottawa et dans tout l'Ontario, nous avons la chance de disposer d'un réseau dévoué d'organisations qui oeuvrent sans relâche pour créer des espaces d'appartenance, fournir des ressources et préserver l'histoire de la communauté. Je pense notamment à Trans Health Ottawa, FrancoQueer, the 519 et Egale Canada.

These organizations, their teams and their volunteers remind us that alongside the challenges faced by the community, there is resilience, leadership and a commitment to supporting one another.

Speaker, today I want to recognize the transgender people we have lost and extend my deepest condolences to everyone who is mourning someone they love.

I also want to recognize those who continue to speak up, advocate and build safer spaces for the next generations of trans people.

Every person deserves to live with dignity, to feel safe in their community and to be accepted for who they are.

On this Transgender Day of Remembrance, may we honour those we have lost, stand in solidarity with those who remain and renew our commitment to building an Ontario where everyone can live openly, safely and without fear.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I stand here today to honour the trans people who have lost their lives in their struggle to live as their authentic selves.

As a mom and former school social worker, I've worked for decades to support people to be themselves so they can thrive. But for trans people, being visible means risking harassment, bullying, violence and even getting killed. And we all know there is not equitable or sufficient access to supports and protections, so people elect to suffer in silence, often alone.

Today, on this Trans Day of Remembrance, I hold in my heart Eli Wood. Eli moved to Kitchener Centre to study social work at Laurier and, just months away from graduating, was followed and intimidated by a group of strangers. His house was burned and he went missing, and one year later, Eli is still missing. Foul play is suspected.

And this past month, Kaden Hammond, a 15-year-old from Centre Wellington—a trans student attending a school in my riding—died by suicide. He struggled with his mental health after experiencing bullying at school. Kaden's family says he "deserved a world that fully saw, celebrated and protected him."

My heart goes out to Cindy Wood Amero, Angela and Michael Hammond, the Laurier school of social work community, the Eastwood Collegiate community and all the friends and family and loved ones who are grieving.

The impact of hate on people's lives is immense. In the last few years, especially since the election of Donald Trump, we've seen a rise in transphobic and anti-queer hate. Hate crimes targeting gender identity and expression in Canada have nearly tripled since 2020.

We have to do better to fight hate in our communities and online, but also as politicians. In the words of Suzie Taka, the executive director of Spectrum, she says, "When you're living in a culture where your very existence is turned into a political debate, that is also harm and that is also violence."

So I call on this government and all of us to lead, to put protections in place in our communities and online, to hold these trolls and the tech billionaires who enable them accountable, and to promote love and acceptance in all spaces.

Today, I hold in my heart those who suffered, those whose lives were lost and those who are missing.

I want to thank the queer community, MPP DiNovo, and all allies who raise awareness and keep everyone safe. Let us fight hate today and every day.

Applause.

PETITIONS

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

MPP Jamie West: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly. This has to do with the recent closures of the WSIB locations. There have been 10 across the province; it's going to affect more than 700 people. They kind of found out just like this. It's affecting areas like Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay, Windsor, Waterloo, Guelph, St. Catharines and Kingston.

Frankly, everything in northern Ontario has been closed, so as we talk about opening mines in the Ring of Fire, that means that people in heavy industrial workplaces like that, who, when they get injured and need extra help to get back on their feet, will have no one to talk to in person. They won't understand when they say, "A chunk of loose fell from the back," and that connection to it.

They go into all the details about the impact that's having in our community. They want to emphasize as well that this has nothing to do with the US tariff threats. We should be protecting jobs in our province at a time of deep unaffordability.

They are petitioning the Legislative Assembly to immediately direct the WSIB to halt these office closures and reverse the planned workforce reductions.

I strongly support this petition. I'll affix my signature and give it to page Reese for the table.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: My petition is signed largely by constituents of Haldimand county, and I'm disheart-

ened that I actually have to continue to ask the government to fix the intersection of Highway 6 and Haldibrook Road, just down the road from the infamous Caledonia Bridge.

Construction to make this intersection is not set until 2028. Petitioners are asking the Legislative Assembly to immediately address the safety concerns with this intersection and commit to an accelerated timeline on fixing the intersection.

I wholeheartedly support the petition, will sign it, and send it to the Clerks' table with page Ryan.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

MPP Tyler Watt: I'm pleased to introduce a petition signed by hundreds and hundreds of students across Ontario. I had a wonderful meeting yesterday with Ontario Student Voices, where they outlined what they're advocating for. I think that this petition gives an opportunity to show them that the government is listening.

Ontario Student Voices and the undersigned are calling on the provincial government, the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the recent changes to OSAP and to implement the following: return grant-to-loan ratios to 2025-26 rates to support financially vulnerable students; eliminate provincial interest on student loans; and providing up to $4,000 in student loan forgiveness on the provincial portion for every year a graduate works in Ontario, up to five years.

1330

The last point in particular I find is a new one that has been brought forward and I think is a great opportunity to encourage people to stay and work here in Ontario. The young students are bright. We should listen to them.

I proudly endorse this, and I will hand it to Georgia to bring forward.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Ms. Jessica Bell: I have petitions that I am holding today. They're from students from the University of Toronto, which is in my riding. These students are making a very legitimate call that university should be affordable. They're calling for OSAP to be fixed so it is no longer a loan program; it is a grant program. They're calling for an end to the tuition hikes, and they're calling for the government to stop interfering in admissions, research security plans and student fees.

I wholeheartedly support this petition. I'll be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Chelsea.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Over the last year, I've read thousands of petition signatures into the record. Today, I have almost 2,000 raising concerns about Highway 413. The petitioners note that it will pave over 2,000 acres of farmland, 400 acres of the greenbelt. They also note that it will cost billions of taxpayer dollars, and we still don't have a cost estimate from the government of how much this highway will cost or a business case, even whether it's going to solve gridlock. They also note that the highway threatens archaeological sites of First Nations.

So they call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to cancelling Highway 413 and instead invest in livable and affordable communities connected by transit that protect nature and reduce climate pollution.

I wholeheartedly support this petition, will sign it and ask page Hera to bring it to the table.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm proud to rise in the House to present this petition on behalf of the Canadian Federation of Students. They've been working really hard to raise the alarm bell and let this House know that the changes to OSAP have been detrimental.

The petition is entitled, "No to OSAP Cuts! No to Tuition Hikes!" They want the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to understand that the recent changes to OSAP, especially the loan-to-grant ratio, have been very detrimental. They have upended how students are able to access education. They say that students are now blocked from accessing post-secondary education.

They want us to understand that this government has also cut $670 million to OSAP in 2019, which represented one of the largest cuts to the OSAP program, therefore helping fewer students, making them less eligible for OSAP simply because the pot has gotten smaller. They want all of us to understand that students are now leaving universities and colleges with record debt and accumulating interest on those loans, making it much harder for them to get ahead once they've been able to graduate. They want this government to understand that the regressiveness of Bill 33 directly attacks student democracy on campus, rolls back admission gains and makes education less accessible. They want all of us to know that Ontario tuitions are now the highest anywhere in the country.

They're calling on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to do the following:

(1) Ensure that grants, not loans, are in place and remove all interest on OSAP loans.

(2) Stop the tuition hikes.

(3) Halt government interference on admissions, research security plans and student fees.

I will proudly submit this petition, which is signed by over 3,000 students. The majority of them attend Toronto Metropolitan University in the riding of Toronto Centre. I'll return it to the centre table with page Leo.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to present a petition that, as it sits on my desk, has hundreds of signatures. There are thousands more that are coming into my office.

This specific petition is in relation to education, the crisis that is being faced there. In particular, the petitioners seek to reduce class sizes that have grown out of control over the last almost nine years under the current government. It draws on the fact that the current government has cut approximately $6.35 billion in public education in relative terms since 2018, and this has had a consequent impact in larger class sizes, increased violence and inadequate supports for special education and for mental health.

We know that larger class sizes are a major factor resulting in increased violence and decreased quality of education. Reduced access to teaching resources significantly diminishes the quality of the educational experience and handicaps the next generation of leaders and citizens in our province.

The vast majority of parents, students and educators support smaller class sizes. Therefore, the petitioners, by submitting this document, are asking that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario finally commit to reversing the cuts and making the necessary investments in public education so that we can guarantee our students and our youth and our future lower class sizes, increased student supports and the high-quality schools and education that they deserve.

It's hard not to support this petition. I'm proud to do so, and I'm pleased to present it to page Eva.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I have more petitions here asking the government to create a food belt in Ontario. We know that Ontario farmland is under threat, being paved over at a staggering 319 acres each day. We know that the food and farming sector contributes over $50 billion to Ontario's economy and employs over 875,000 people. We also know that once you pave over farmland, we don't get it back.

The petitioners are asking the Ontario government to create a food belt to permanently protect farmland in Ontario from being paved over for non-agricultural uses.

I wholeheartedly support this petition, will sign it and send it to the Clerk's table with page Ryan.

RED TAPE REDUCTION

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I'd like to thank Michael Visocchi for sending in this petition. Michael Visocchi has sent in this petition regarding archaeological assessments, which are absolutely necessary, but it also indicates that 98% of all archaeological assessments ultimately authorize the construction that is being requested.

What this particular petition does is it requests that the process for archaeological assessments be streamlined and, in the situation where there is duplication of archaeological assessments, that that duplication should be done away with, and there should be one method of archaeological assessment that applies into any construction site. This is a common jurisdictional situation in places such as New Zealand and various countries in Europe. They have this non-duplication of archaeological assessment.

It is something that is worth exploring for the province of Ontario, and so I will also agree with Michael Visocchi and endorse this petition and give it to this fine page, Leo, to bring to the Clerk's table.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition here collected by the citizens for a clean Coleman township. It's regarding the cobalt refinery in Cobalt in Coleman township. It's a fully licensed refinery that was last used in the 1990s. In the words of Jim O'Brien, who was a former mayor, they trusted the MOE to actually monitor and control the site. Now the MOE has admitted and the minister has admitted that there are arsenic and other heavy metals migrating off the site. The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario has previously stated that the government should move in and clean the site up. That's actually what the citizens are petitioning for, for the MOE to move in and make this site safe.

I fully agree with it. I will sign it and hand it down with page Emily.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

M^me^ France Gélinas: I would like to thank Jana and Jack Lahnalampi from Onaping Falls in my riding for this petition. There are about 1,900 people that live in Onaping-Levack, and 1,250 of them have signed this petition.

1340

It has to do with the Levack Public School. It is a vital community hub. It goes from junior kindergarten to grade 8. It also has daycare and EarlyON programming and Our Children, Our Future programming. It is used by all sorts of community organizations who want to get together, but it is threatened under right-sizing for demolition, and 1,250 people have signed this petition to say do not demolish the school. Instead, do the planned school repairs and upgrades that are needed. Our community needs to keep this school.

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

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I rise to present a petition entitled "No to OSAP Cuts! No to Tuition Hikes!" This was put forward by the Canadian Federation of Students Ontario, and these hundreds of signatures were collected at the main campus and Glendon campus of York University. They're calling for a freeze on all tuition hikes, and, of course, they're calling to reverse these disastrous OSAP cuts.

Education should open doors, not close doors, and finances and money should never be a barrier to education.

I'm, of course, supporting this petition. I'm proud to sign it and give it to page Leo.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I have in my hands petition signatures gathered by a grade 9 student, Sasha Gislason, and others in my riding who are desperately afraid for their future. They see the OSAP cuts. They see that they are losing a chance at becoming the individuals they wanted to grow into. So they have gathered petitions on their own. These are 14-year-olds and 15-year-olds.

I have petitions from the Humber Polytechnic Lakeshore student union. I have Ignite posters from around the province. Students are scared. They want the OSAP grants reversed. They want OSAP to be accessible to them. I fully support their fight for tuition that people can afford.

I want to ensure that—the other part of this that they wanted was that the tuition hikes are cut, that we stop making universities unattainable and that we fund our universities at the levels of other provinces. Thank you.

I fully support the petition, and I'm going to bring it down to you with page Nathan.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECT ONTARIO FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 VISANT À PROTÉGER LES FAMILLES ET LES COLLECTIVITÉS EN ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 19, 2026, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act to enact the Intimate Images Protection Act, 2026, and to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 148, Loi édictant la Loi de 2026 sur la protection des images intimes et modifiant diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I believe we left off this morning with the member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I had been speaking this morning about how diligently I was working during the sessional breaks of the Legislature, and I had started to talk about how, during that diligent work, I had taken a brief departure from the riding of Essex, which I really do not like to do because Essex is most beautiful during the summertime and the springtime.

But I did leave Essex, and I went to the town of Petrolia, which is located in the riding of Sarnia–Lambton. I had the opportunity to visit the groundbreaking of the—I'm going to read the name of the hospital—Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital in Petrolia. Petrolia is a beautiful town. It also has the Victoria Playhouse, which is a marvellous, marvellous performing arts venue, and it now has a great multi-million-dollar project at Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital.

That hospital will have the following upgrades to the following departments and services: It's going to have improvements to the emergency department, including improved triage space, a dedicated waiting room, renovated exam rooms, a new airborne isolation room and a new ambulance entrance. That multi-million-dollar project is, of course, part of the upgrades, expansions and new builds associated with this government's projects to improve hospital care across the province of Ontario.

Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital will also have upgrades to the diagnostic imaging department, including the X-ray area and the associated rooms, and finally some infrastructure upgrades to improve equipment, including an air handling unit. All of that is taking place in the riding of Sarnia–Lambton, represented by my colleague who is a long-standing member of provincial Parliament. I want to congratulate my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton for the excellent work that he's done in advancing this project and advancing health care in his writing.

With respect to the bill that's before us today, which is Bill 148, it contains several expansions of what I will describe as scope of practice for various health professionals in the province of Ontario.

I want to start by inviting all members of the Legislature to turn their attention to schedule 1 of the bill. Schedule 1 of the bill deals with audiology and speech-language pathology. There's a specific act which relates to those services.

Now, I know a great audiologist from my riding. She hails from the village of McGregor, and her name is Lisa Sylvester. She works for the Canadian Hearing Services organization. Lisa Sylvester is passionate about what she does: assisting people with their hearing issues and helping them live better lives by assisting them with improving the ability to hear and participate in daily life. I want to congratulate Lisa Sylvester from McGregor, Ontario, and all audiologists for what they do for people in the province of Ontario.

The bill before us today specifically will authorize audiologists, in the course of engaging in the practice of speech-language pathology, to apply a form of energy prescribed by the regulations. So I should have actually referenced speech-language pathologists when I was referencing that specific section, but I did want to praise the audiologists just the same.

This particular schedule deals with speech-language pathology. Now, a form of energy prescribed by regulations will be authorized for speech-language pathologists to be used in the treatment of their clients. That's an important expansion of scope of practice. I think that will be very welcome, and I think it's going to be a good thing for patients in that area.

I now invite members of the Legislature to turn their attention to schedule 3 of the act. That's the Chiropractic Act. I know a great chiropractor in Harrow, Ontario. He is my chiropractor; his name is Michael Janisse. He's a fine individual and a fine professional who brings good care and health to people in Harrow and in the riding of Essex,

and I want to congratulate Michael Janisse on the excellent work that he does for his patients.

This particular act under the Chiropractic Act will allow the ordering of an application of a form of energy prescribed by regulations. That again is a small advancement but an important advancement for people who need that kind of treatment, and I'm sure that chiropractors like Dr. Michael Janisse in Harrow, Ontario, will welcome that advancement, that increase to their scope of practice because they know, like I know, that it will help them assist their patients in living more active lives and healthier lives.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Adil Shamji: My question is to the parliamentary assistant for health. I, like him, celebrate the excellent work of audiologists and speech-language pathologists. Congratulations to Lisa for exceptional work.

I wonder if the PA for health can elaborate on what Lisa's practice will look like once she is able to apply a prescribed form of energy. What exactly will change in her practice?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I misspoke there. I was actually speaking with regard to speech-language pathologists when I was speaking in that area. I am not personally either a speech-language pathologist nor an audiologist. I'm sure that those qualified medical professionals would be qualified to answer a question like that.

In that particular instance, it was speech-language pathologists who will be allowed to apply a form energy prescribed by the regulations. I was speaking of Lisa because that also applied in the particular act which is in schedule 1. But the energy about which I was speaking actually applies specifically to speech-language pathology.

1350

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

MPP Wayne Gates: I'd just like to raise, because you mentioned—just briefly though—already today about the shutdown of 147 days of the Legislature, and you seem to support it. But we have no meetings during that time at Queen's Park, no question period, no opportunity for bills, no opportunity to discuss private members' bills.

Ontario, as a province: Our food banks are at record levels. Seniors are going to food banks, can't pay their rent, can't pay their mortgages. Hallway health care is the worst it's ever been under all the years I've been here. Ontario has the highest unemployment for youth. Our young people can't get jobs to go to school, quite frankly.

My question is, how can you support shutting down this Legislature for 147 days, and I'm hearing we're even going to shut it down early for Christmas?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I'd like to thank the member from Niagara Falls for that question. I know he is a hard-working individual in this Parliament. And also, outside this Parliament, when we're not sitting in between sessions, I would imagine that he's a very hard-working individual just like myself.

I know that in between the sittings of this Parliament, we work very diligently. I work very diligently in my riding to make sure that I connect with my constituents. In fact, just short weeks ago, I was walking through the Red Lantern café in Kingsville, where I ran into Craig, the owner of the Red Lantern café, who runs a very successful business in Kingsville. He was telling me that he appreciates how hard I work, and I want to let Craig know: Craig, I work hard for you and for the constituents of the riding of Essex. Whether I'm in Toronto or whether I'm back in Essex at the riding, I'm working for you and for the taxpayers because, for me, it's a calling, and I appreciate you, and I hope that you appreciate how hard I work too.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: My question is to the member from the beautiful area of Essex.

I'm hearing so much from my students and my residents in my neighbourhood about these drastic OSAP cuts and how they are affecting them and how they are affecting their futures, their accommodations where they're living. Some of them have to quit school, some of them can't even go to school now, and their dreams are totally dashed. What are you hearing from the good students in the riding of Essex? What are you hearing about these horrendous OSAP cuts and how they're affecting them?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I'm not going to pretend that I talked to all the students who are in colleges and universities from the riding of Essex, but I can tell you that the ones I have spoken to are studying nursing—and that's a very, very big and important area of study in our area because it's a hugely in-demand profession. They greatly appreciate the expansion that this government has made not only with respect to the primary care action plan, which is going to mean that more nurses are going to be hired, but in addition to that, the expansion of 50% operational funds to all the hospitals across the province of Ontario, because it's going to make it possible for hospitals to hire more nurses.

In fact, that's exactly what they have done. There are more nurses working in Ontario today in our publicly funded system than ever before, and according to the Canadian Institute of Health Information, there has been a net increase in the number of nurses working in our publicly funded system, something in the neighbourhood of 15%. That's an approximate number. I have not got the opportunity to look it up immediately, but there's approximately a 15% net increase in the number of nurses working in our publicly funded health care system as a result of the increase in funding provided by this government.

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

Hon. Mike Harris: I've been around this place almost 10 years at this point. I like to think that the Harris family has a lot of history in this incredible institution, which I feel gives me a pretty good, well-rounded reference to say

that there is no government in the history of the province of Ontario that has invested more into health care, more into social services, more into education, yet the opposition parties consistently, consistently, consistently still stand in the way of those investments.

My question to the member is, why does he think—why, for the life of us, does the opposition still want to consistently try to block these investments from being made?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I greatly appreciate the Minister of Natural Resources and his experience and history in this chamber. Of course, I'm too young to remember his great father, but I learned a lot through him about the excellence of Premier Harris in those days, which I was too young to remember.

I can only speculate as to why the members of the opposition—it would only be speculation on my part, but since the minister forced me to speculate, I will speculate as to why the opposition continuously opposes the marvellous innovations made in in our health care system.

One of those awesome innovations has been the expansion of scope of practice for pharmacists, which allows patients in the province of Ontario to skip the appointment with the doctor and go straight to the pharmacist and get immediate treatment for a whole host of common, everyday ailments such as hay fever, pink eye, dermatitis, cold sores, impetigo, insect bites—things that you shouldn't have to go to the doctor for; things that you should go straight to the pharmacist and get treatment.

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

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I've been trying to figure out what denturists, audiologists, speech language pathologists, children who are dying under this government's watch in children's aid societies, women fleeing intimate partner violence and deepfakes all have to do with each other. In other words, I'm trying to figure out why they are all tucked into the same Bill 148 as OSAP.

In particular, I am wondering why all of these constituents' groups that deserve their own time and attention have been sidelined by this government's messing-up of OSAP that requires them to put a schedule in this bill that will indemnify themselves not from future wrongdoing, but from past wrongdoings.

So I would like to know from the member across the way: What wrongdoing is this government trying to protect themselves from?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I thank the member for that question. She wanted to know what all these things had in common, and if you look at the first page of the bill where it says "contents," there's section 3, which says the short title of this act is the Protect Ontario Families and Communities Act. So what all these things have in common is they are all forms of protection. In particular, when she mentioned all the various forms of medical protection, that's what they have in common.

I would personally add schedule 10, which is the Intimate Images Protection Act, which, in my own words, creates a right to privacy with respect to intimate images. Sometimes an intimate image comes into possession of somebody who ought not to have that image and they use it in a nefarious and improper way, and so those people who are subject to that problem should have a form of protection. This right gives them a form of protection. I think that's important in the Protect Ontario Families and Communities Act.

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

MPP Catherine McKenney: I am going to focus my remarks today on the changes to OSAP and private career colleges under this Bill 148 and the consequences that these decisions are having on students across Ontario.

At a time when the cost of living continues to rise, finding stable employment is becoming more and more difficult. Affordable housing remains out of reach for so many Ontarians—85,000 to be close to precise, as a matter of fact. The last thing this government should be doing is creating additional barriers for people trying to improve their circumstances, and yet this is exactly what we're seeing.

According to Stats Canada, Ontario's unemployment rate increased to 7.3% in October, up from 7% in September. Consumer prices across Canada increased 3.1% year over year, and this government's own employment report found that hourly wages increased by just 1.5% in the third quarter of 2026, well below the 2.3% inflation rate over that same period. So things are not going well for the people of Ontario, Speaker.

1400

For many Ontarians, returning to school is not simply about pursuing an education; it's about finding better employment, earning enough to support their families, building some financial stability in an increasingly unaffordable province. These are people making a significant investment in their futures, often while balancing work, housing costs and family responsibilities.

Speaker, the government is presenting these changes to OSAP as a necessary response to fraud and misuse of public money in the private career college sector. Of course, institutions that are exploiting students or misusing public funds should be investigated and held accountable. But these concerns did not emerge overnight or over the last few weeks.

As early as January 2023, Career Colleges Ontario was raising concerns with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities about suspicious activity involving OSAP applications. According to correspondence filed in court, the association held four meetings with ministry officials through 2023.

I can tell you, that would not be the case if this was some suspected fraud in, say, Ontario Works. Sometimes with Ontario Works, when the government makes a mistake and pays someone who can barely manage on a few hundred dollars a month, they actually scrape it back. They don't wonder if it happened and they don't take years to determine whether there was any misuse of funds. When it's their own fault, they scrape it back the next month. That didn't happen here, and we have to ask why.

By January 2025, Career Colleges Ontario had provided this ministry with detailed figures—detailed—identifying extraordinary growth in OSAP applications at certain institutions. Ten schools experienced an average of an 855% increase in OSAP applications between 2022 and 2024. One institution went from 107 applications in 2022 to 2,992 in 2024. That is a 2,700% increase.

At most career colleges, application numbers remained relatively stable. And then in May 2025, as the career colleges association, their own association, warning them—the federal government raised additional concerns with Ontario about certain institutions.

Speaker, these were not minor fluctuations in enrolment; these were extraordinary increases concentrated at a relatively small number of schools, and further reporting has shown us just how significant that growth became.

The Canadian College of Business, Science and Technology—I'm sure many folks on the other side know them well—saw its OSAP-funded student population increase from 562 to 17,157 in just three years. At one campus alone, OSAP-funded enrolment increased by 5,955%—still no action.

The institution where this happened wasn't even among the schools that were initially cut off from OSAP earlier this year. Again, we have to ask, why not? What is it about certain institutions that they can get away with this type of behaviour? These figures should have raised serious questions about how effectively the government was monitoring the system and responding to the information it was receiving.

So by October 2026, over three years later, the government decided to pause all OSAP payments to students associated with private post-secondary institutions while its broader investigation continued.

Speaker, I want to just share, in the time that I have left, what I've heard directly from Willis College, which is an Ottawa-based career college that contacted my office about the consequences of this government's OSAP funding pauses.

Willis College shared survey findings that showed serious financial difficulties being experienced by their students. Among their respondents to their survey:

—64% said they could no longer cover their upcoming rent or mortgage payment—64%;

—52% could not afford groceries or they were relying on a food bank;

—33% said they couldn't afford transportation to work or to placements;

—32% could not afford their child care;

—87% said that they might very well need to suspend or withdraw from their studies within 60 days if the funding pause continued.

These findings come from a survey conducted by the college rather than a province-wide study, but they provide a concerning picture of what affected students are experiencing. These are students who enrolled in education and training programs to improve their employment opportunities—many while balancing existing financial obligations and family responsibilities—and now they're struggling to afford the basic necessities of life. They have got no money; it has been cut off. And we cannot separate these experiences from the broader affordability crisis in Ontario.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario has told us that there are approximately 85,000 people experiencing homelessness in Ontario, and for someone already struggling to afford rent, the sudden loss of expected financial assistance can have devastating consequences. OSAP is not simply about paying tuition; students also rely on it to cover housing, transportation, groceries and all of their living expenses while they are completing their education. When that funding is withheld, overnight, students who did nothing wrong—nothing wrong—will be forced to choose between continuing their studies and meeting their basic needs, if they are fortunate enough to even be able to go out and regain employment.

Speaker, this is what makes the government's response so concerning. In attempting to address suspected wrongdoing at certain institutions that they were warned about time and time again by Career Colleges Ontario, by the federal government, it has created serious financial consequences for students who have not been accused of doing anything wrong.

And the impact of this decision is not limited to students: Colleges across Ontario have reported layoffs, suspended classes and disruption to their programs because of this funding cut. The government has repeatedly emphasized the importance of training workers for in-demand careers, but its response to the OSAP situation is disrupting programs that will prepare students for those very careers that we need them trained in. That is what we're seeing here today.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much to the extraordinary member from Ottawa Centre for her passionate prose this afternoon.

As I mentioned to the member from Essex, I'm hearing so much from so many students in my riding—not just beautiful Beaches–East York, but Ontario-wide—about the catastrophic effects of these horrendous OSAP cuts and how people have to quit school. They can't go to school, they're losing their housing, and they're totally down in the dumps that their dreams are being dashed.

What are you hearing from students in Ottawa Centre about the dog's breakfast—I think we mentioned a few times in this House—OSAP cuts?

MPP Catherine McKenney: Thank you to my colleague from Beaches–East York. We've had two cuts to OSAP, of course. Grants have gone from 85% down to 15%. That was a blow to students. It happened quickly, and every time I go onto the university campuses—and I go often; I'm fortunate to have a very strong university in my riding, Carleton University—I hear from students and I hear from professors. I hear from students who were and were not directly affected. Everybody has a story about someone who they don't think is going to be able to continue in university. And then the career colleges, like I

say, Willis business college—these are mostly adults carrying on their education. It is devastating. It will be devastating for the college, and it is devastating for the students.

1410

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

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Madam Speaker, this bill proposes changes that would be required for long-term-care homes across this province to have a dedicated dementia care program that would provide, first off, a person-centred and an emotion-based care system.

Now, I'd like the member from Ottawa Centre to perhaps talk a bit about what the benefits would be to their constituents who would receive this proposed change.

MPP Catherine McKenney: Thank you to the member for that question. I have been involved very closely, formerly, as a city councillor in Ottawa. The city actually operates three long-term-care homes, and I worked very closely with members of the community to institute emotion-based care in long-term-care homes.

I've seen the results of what can happen in well-funded long-term-care homes that have that type of what we call "butterfly model," if you will. It is people who are able to function with some forms of dementia in long-term care and feel an attachment to their past, whether that's through pictures on the wall, how they're fed, what they're able to do during the day. So emotion-based care, well-funded, is absolutely required in long-term care.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Bill 148 has 18 schedules, and it's yet another government omnibus bill. After going through 200 pages, we find the needle in the haystack, the so-called poison pill.

Speaker, what horrible things has this government done that they would abuse their legislative powers to create a law that's tailor-made to protect themselves by prohibiting lawsuits against government members who are implicated in the OSAP scandal?

MPP Catherine McKenney: Thank you to my colleague from Toronto Centre for that. Yes, these big omnibus—I was going to call it ominous; it's also that—bills land, and we always know. You go through the schedules. There's always something in there. It's always games. Nobody really pays attention to that out there in the end.

But in this one here, I have to say that the indemnity clause reminds me a bit of the freedom-of-information rules where, retroactively, nobody could look at what you're doing; retroactively, you're not being held accountable, even though we know that this government is holding students—through no fault of their own—accountable for egregious wrongdoing. So it wasn't entirely surprising, but it was that poison pill.

Thank you for that question.

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

MPP George Darouze: I want to thank the member from Ottawa Centre for their comments today. I always appreciate hearing their comments, whether at Ottawa city hall or at Queen's Park. I know that the member has always been very focused on social issues, making sure that people across Ontario, including vulnerable people, are supported. I've learned a lot about this over the last 12 years.

An important proposal in this bill is a proposed measure to protect women and others from intimate image abuse, a very important initiative that makes sure that victims have more resources. With this important proposal in this bill, I'm not sure how the member will be focusing or voting on that important bill.

MPP Catherine McKenney: I thank my colleague from Carleton. I also thank my colleague for getting my pronouns correct. That is always very much appreciated. I do, I'll remind everyone, use they/them pronouns.

Thank you for that question. It is very important, and yes, I have spent much of my career in the area of violence against women, intimate partner violence. Every measure that we take to keep women safe is important. But I think that for me, if you asked me what is the one thing you would do today to keep women safe across this province, I would say let's build enough housing so if a woman wants to leave her partner immediately, there would be the affordable housing for her and her children to go to.

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

MPP Alexa Gilmour: In my riding of Parkdale–High Park, we have a tremendous number of students using OSAP, including career college students like Dan. Dan was hoping to be a paramedic, and when he found out that his OSAP was frozen, he immediately got a part-time job washing dishes. But even that is not going to pay the rent and the money that he needs for school.

There are many, many students like Dan out there, and so I am wondering what this government is doing and when this government will finally protect students instead of its members.

MPP Catherine McKenney: Thank you to my colleague from Parkdale–High Park for that. I just want to go back to Willis College, the career college in Ottawa Centre. That college has already reported to me that enrolment in their health programs has fallen by 25% with this funding disruption, and that affects the ability of new cohorts to begin their careers.

Some of their personal support worker programs can graduate new cohorts approximately every eight weeks, so this type of disruption will see a disruption in the workforce, in the PSWs and other health care support workers that we need in our workforce.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I will say there's not enough time for another question and answer. Further debate?

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I want to begin by saying that there are provisions in this legislation that deserve serious consideration. There are important issues addressed in this bill, for sure. There are changes affecting health care,

long-term care, child welfare, protection of intimate images and the regulation of private career colleges. These are all really significant areas of public policy. They affect people's lives, their livelihoods, their safety—all those things—and their ability to access essential services.

That is precisely why I have some serious concerns about the way that this government has chosen to bring this legislation forward: because once again we have a government introducing an enormous omnibus bill—I always say "ominous;" same thing—

Laughter.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Thank you for that laugh—bringing together a collection of legislative changes that have really little to do with one another, despite the member trying to explain or asking the Legislature to consider them all under one piece of legislation. There are 18 separate schedules, 18 different areas of law, 18 sets of policy questions, consequences, implications, and somehow we're expected to treat this as one coherent piece of legislation. Speaker, this has become a familiar pattern with this government, and I think it deserves to be called out.

What actually is contained in Bill 148? We have amendments to the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act, changes to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, amendments to the Chiropractic Act, Dental Hygiene Act and Denturism Act. We have changes to the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, provisions concerning health insurance, public health, personal health information and retirement homes, and we have this new Intimate Images Protection Act.

1420

Then tucked in there is schedule 13—oh, substantial changes to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act.

And in schedule 14 we have changes to the Ontario Career Colleges Act.

Now, Speaker, I'm not suggesting that every one of these changes is without merit. Some may be necessary. Some may be long overdue. Some deserve support. But what possible reason is there for bringing all of these matters together in one bill?

Interjection.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Oh, what? I heard that—the "get the hell out of here fast act," right?

What is the connection between expanding—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock.

I will invite all members to use parliamentary language in the chamber, and I would invite the member to take the opportunity to withdraw.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. Please continue.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Where was I? What's the connection between expanding the scope of practice for certain health professionals, changing the rules governing long-term-care homes, creating new protections for victims of intimate abuse and fundamentally changing the legal liability of this government in relation to the OSAP scandal? Why should those issues be debated together? Why should a member of this Legislature who wants to support stronger protections for victims of intimate image abuse be put in the position of having to consider an entirely separate provision that limits the ability of Ontarians to pursue legal remedies against the government? And why should the public have to search through 18 schedules to understand what their government is actually doing?

This is not a minor procedural concern. Legislation is meant to be scrutinized. Members of this Legislature are supposed to examine the details, challenge the government, propose amendments and make sure the consequences of legislation are understood before it becomes law. That's the point of debate.

But an omnibus legislation makes that job considerably more difficult. It makes it harder for the public to follow what's happening. The public needs to know this. It makes it harder for stakeholders to identify provisions that affect them. It makes it harder for organizations to respond to proposed changes, and it makes it easier for significant policy decisions to receive less attention than they deserve. That is of particular concern when some of those provisions have enormous implications for the rights of Ontarians.

The title of a bill should tell the public something meaningful about what is inside it. It shouldn't be a label that gives the government cover to introduce a grab bag of legislative changes. The government has a responsibility to be legally transparent: the responsibility to make it clear what it is proposing, why it's proposing it and what the consequences will be.

Nowhere is that lack of transparency more troubling than in the provisions dealing with the OSAP scandal in this bill.

I want to speak to schedules 13 and 14, because buried in the legislation are provisions that should concern every member of this House, regardless of party. The government is proposing to change the law to protect itself, its ministers and other government officials from legal proceedings connected to the administration of the student financial assistance system and the investigation of potential fraud in the private career college sector.

The provisions, what they do: Schedule 13 amends the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act, introducing new sections that restrict the ability to bring legal proceedings against the crown and current or former members of the executive council, along with deputy ministers, employees and other officials.

It specifically addresses investigations of actual or potential fraud, enforcement actions, decisions about institutional eligibility, the suspension of student loan payments and other actions connected to the government's administration of the OSAP system.

Schedule 14 introduces similar protections in the Ontario Career Colleges Act. These are not simply technical changes to clarify the responsibilities of public servants; the legislation goes much further. It says certain

causes of action do not arise. It says compensation and damages are not payable. It restricts proceedings in court, including claims involving contract, negligence, tort and other forms of legal remedy. Perhaps most significant, the legislation expressly states that these provisions apply "regardless of whether the cause of action ... arose before, on or after the day" the provisions came into force. In other words, the government is proposing to apply these protections retroactively. Sound familiar?

Why is this government introducing legislation to protect itself from legal action connected to a scandal that it is still investigating? What conduct is this government anticipating being held accountable for? What potential legal exposure is it trying to address? And why does it believe that the appropriate response is to change the law to limit the ability of Ontarians to seek compensation?

This is a scandal involving public money, student financial assistance and private career colleges. We have to remember that. And there are serious questions about how institutions were able to access such significant amounts of public funding, whether warning signs were missed, and why the government did not act sooner.

The government did not discover this problem yesterday. Don't believe it. The government was warned.

Going back to where I began, there are legitimate policy questions in Bill 148. There are provisions that may improve protections for vulnerable people, modernize legislation and strengthen oversight in important sectors. But that does not mean the Legislature should accept the way this government has chosen to package these changes. And it certainly does not mean that we should overlook the extraordinary legal protections being proposed in relation to the OSAP scandal.

This government has spent considerable time telling Ontarians that it is committed to accountability. It has told students that it's protecting the integrity of their financial assistance system. It has told taxpayers that it's determined to recover public money. But accountability is not a one-way street. It can't mean that private institutions and individuals are expected to answer for their conduct while government officials are given new protections from legal proceedings. It can't mean that students are expected to absorb the consequences of a broken system while the government writes itself new legal protections. And it can't mean that the public is expected to scrutinize 18 separate areas of law hidden inside one enormous piece of legislation without asking why they have been brought together in the first place.

The people of Ontario deserve a government that is willing to be held accountable. They deserve legislation that is transparent, understandable and open to meaningful scrutiny. And they deserve to know that when their government makes mistakes, there are still avenues to seek justice.

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

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to my colleague for the debate. I really appreciated the part where she talked about the omnibus bill—the difficulty of getting feedback in debate, and concerns in that bill.

In Bill 140, for example, I think there are 23 schedules; it's a little over 200 pages. They had one day of debates, and I think maybe seven people were able to speak. You couldn't even have a person speak about each schedule. That really does erode your ability to get feedback and to provide debate, especially considering that we haven't sat in the last 147 days.

The most concerning part of this bill, though, is that they have buried the OSAP scandal. A lot of people's lives have been devastated by OSAP, and they are looking for relief, and the only relief in sight is protecting the minister who failed to do his job.

Would you agree with most people in this House that the minister should resign or be fired?

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Thank you to the member for the question.

We believe that the minister should resign and/or be fired, absolutely. This is a scandal that runs deep and that deserves answers and accountability—just the accountability I was talking about.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I have a question for my spectacular colleague from Toronto–St. Paul's. Thank you for your excellent eloquence in delivering your speech.

You spoke, as did our fine member from Sudbury, about the omnibus bills—and this is the second one. We didn't sit for five months, but we're back here, and then they just rammed things through. We had the omnibus Bill 140 with 23, 24 schedules and this Bill 148 with 17, 18 schedules. It's what I call the cornucopia of destruction: so many things just rammed in there that don't belong together.

1430

Don't you think, if this government was serious about addressing some of these issues, they would have stand-alone bills and take the time to do it thoughtfully?

MPP Stephanie Smyth: Thank you to the member from beautiful Beaches–East York.

Of course. There's so much here to be considered and discussed, and there has been so much time passed that we haven't been in the Legislature. This is a rush. This is not doing the best for the people of Ontario, and I think we need to make sure that we keep talking about this and this method of proposing legislation, because it just isn't getting the time that it deserves.

Fixing long-term care in a bill with 18 schedules—yes, let's just fix it like that. The lack of time for debate, the lack of consideration for all members to debate and discuss shows a complete lack of regard for the people of Ontario and the people affected by many of these bills.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I enjoyed hearing the various comments made this afternoon regarding this bill, and I'm looking forward to hearing further comments, I believe, from the Minister of Agriculture after this question is asked and answered.

I'm going to turn the member's attention to the part of the bill which allows long-term-care homes to have what, under a new title, is going to be a clinical director and which makes nurses eligible to fulfill the role of clinical director.

We have some very fine nurses in the province of Ontario. I'm sure the member has some fine nurses in her riding. She probably wants to pay homage to some of those nurses and inform them that this bill is going to give them the authority to be clinical directors of long-term-care homes, should they decide to do that. I think it's a good development both for nurses and for the residents in long-term-care homes, and I invite her to praise her—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Response—quickly.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: How can we not praise our nurses and health care providers, working the way they do despite the stress and the burnout and the funding and Bill 124?

I always have praise for our nurses, and I would always have all the time in the world to debate anything to do with long-term care in a separate bill. Understanding how passionate you are about it, maybe you could take it out of this piece of legislation and make it a separate bill that we could debate for nine hours. We'd really appreciate that.

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

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: I appreciate everybody's enthusiasm. I appreciate the Minister of Agriculture's enthusiasm today, and I appreciate some of the debate.

I was following the debate today and this morning, and this has been a really important part of our legislative calendar. We made a very conscious decision as a government to structure the session with some very high-profile bills. I appreciate the opposition's feedback. Both opposition House leaders for the official opposition and the third party are here, and I appreciate a lot of their feedback that they've given me.

I think, as a government, through this bill and all bills that have taken place in this session of Parliament, we've been true to our word that these bills have gone to committee and had the maximum amount of debate before we would even contemplate closing off debate and moving things to the next level.

I think in this case, Speaker, we've had adequate debate, that we can now move this piece to the next level of legislative process, and I would move that the question now be put.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Clark has moved that the question be now put. There being over nine hours of debate, I am satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion that the question be now put, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion that the question be now put, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred to the next instance of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Orders of the day?

PUBLIC SAFETY
SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the federal government should build on the Ontario government's work of closing drug injection sites, passing legislation to strengthen public safety and advocate for strong bail reform laws; and

Further strengthen bail and sentencing laws to protect communities from violent, repeat offenders and hold those responsible for home invasions, carjackings and extortion accountable; and

Increase federal policing and border enforcement resources to disrupt fentanyl trafficking, illegal firearms smuggling and organized criminal networks; and

Refuse to accept any requests for decriminalization of possession of illicit drugs, or steps towards supplying illicit drugs, and instead focus investments into treatment, supportive housing and recovery services, including HART hubs.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the Solicitor General.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I will be sharing my time with our great member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the member from York South–Weston.

Madam Speaker, this is an important motion, because it talks about public safety and addiction recovery. Our motion calls on the federal government to strengthen bail and sentencing laws, increasing policing and border enforcement against organized crime and illicit drugs, and prioritizes addiction treatment and recovery over decriminalization and measures that facilitate illicit drug use.

But, Madam Speaker, nothing is new on our side. From day one, our government has been incredibly unapologetic and proud and relentless and clear where we have prioritized our public safety morning, noon and night. We have done so with great intention. We have done so with a laser-focused approach. We have done so by consulting the electorate when we were re-elected with another majority government in February 2025, where we ran on a platform of protecting Ontario. We have been very consistent.

We've expanded our prosecution teams to keep violent and repeat offenders behind bars where they belong. We've delivered digital tools and created a surety database to make it easier for police to crack down on anyone violating their bail. We have invested over $1 billion to support police officers, and we gave them equipment and technology and resources they need.

Along the way, something else special happened that I've attended myself as Solicitor General 15 times at the Ontario Police College: to see 8,000 people come forward to finish their basic constable training and start their journeys across Ontario in municipal, First Nations and OPP police services to protect Ontario—8,000 officers. Since Premier Ford was elected in June 2018, that number is quickly approaching 13,000. It's an incredible number.

I said yesterday in my meeting to the PAO delegation that was here and met with people from across the aisle that in a year or two, one out of every two officers serving in Ontario as police officers will have received their badge during the time that Premier Ford has been Premier. That number is growing, and our commitment is as well. I believe that when a government has an approach that is clear, Ontarians will acknowledge that.

1440

I've spoken about this before: We take great pride in our province, the size of our province, 2,400 kilometres from Cornwall to Fort Frances. Last week, I had the privilege of completing my journey of the 2,400 by taking the drive from Thunder Bay to Kenora. You drive through the town of Atikokan, you go by beautiful Rainy Lake and you appear at the end of the road, as far as you can go, in Fort Frances, Ontario—what a beautiful community on the border with International Falls. Wherever I have gone—in fire halls, in police stations, in municipal and First Nations police services—proudly as the minister responsible for our OPP visiting as many of the OPP detachments across our province as I can, our message is absolutely the same: There's a government on your side.

I remember like it was yesterday, on the first Monday after we were sworn in as cabinet ministers in June 2022, the Premier reminding me in his own words, "Whatever you do, understand one thing in your role: We must have the backs of everyone that keeps Ontario safe." I said to him, "What does that mean?" "It means that you have to make sure that you are going to introduce legislation and come up with regulations, and no matter what, no matter the circumstances, stand with our police officers, with our firefighters, with our correction, probation and parole officers, with our 911 call operators, with everybody that keeps us safe." You know what, Madam Speaker? It's something I took to heart, and I still do. That's why, almost four years and six months—I'm as enthusiastic as I was on day one. Our government is committed as we were on day one to doing the right thing.

But it's not the same everywhere in this place. We inherited a mess that's completely undeniable. When I saw for myself that the Ontario Liberal Party closed, under their watch—I call it the 15 years of shame, because that's what it was, or however long they were there. They closed eight jails. Nobody knew why. Nobody knew what rationale was the reason they wanted to close them. Who in their right mind, with a growing population, would intentionally take correctional beds out of our system and shrink the capacity? The Ontario Liberal Party did it.

When I asked more questions—why were the class sizes at the Ontario Police College so small? Today our annual run rate is over 2,000: four classes of 500-plus. It's an incredible number. But you have to go back—well, I can tell you, what we did is we turned the numbers. By the time I became Solicitor General, inheriting this role from our incredible Deputy Premier, the Minister of Health, we were already increasing numbers again, but it wasn't enough. I went back to understand what happened. When a government of the day does not have the backs of our people that keep us safe, who wants to be a police officer who wants to be disrespected, who wants to live under the veil that there's a party in government that wants to defund the police? But that's what happened. That's the record of the Ontario Liberal government, and it wasn't our record. We said no way.

That's why I make every effort, as my colleague does—our great PAs. I want to shout out the PAs I've had the privilege of working with: parliamentary assistant Bob Bailey, the member from Sarnia–Lambton; our former member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Christine—

Interjection: Hogarth.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Thank you—Christine Hogarth, a great PA.

Minister McGregor, who was my parliamentary assistant as well—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock.

Minister, I'm sorry to interrupt—just a quick reminder that we must refer to each other by ministerial titles or ridings and not by name. Thank you.

Please continue. The Solicitor General.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Minister McGregor, in his prior role as—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Sorry. Please stop the clock.

Minister, please understand that it is by riding or ministerial title, not by name. Thank you.

Solicitor General.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: The member from Brampton North. The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville—wow, she's incredible. And now, the member from Hamilton and the member from York South–Weston: These people have participated every step of the way. I want to give a shout-out to the member from Milton as well as the associate minister; he was phenomenal when he was with us at SOLGEN.

The reality is, our pledge and mandate as a government was to stand first-hand with our first responders. Just earlier this week, on Monday, we passed Bill 119, Protecting Ontario's Streets and Communities Act. That act was another reaffirmation of our commitment to public safety.

I said, Madam Speaker: The way we have approached our fall and our spring legislation is not one and done. I'm already working on the next one. We're going further and faster. And you know what? We're collaborating with our stakeholders, with the Police Association of Ontario, with the Toronto Police Association, with the Ontario Provincial Police Association, with the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, with the Ontario Association of Fire

Chiefs—saw them this morning; they're great. Next week, it will be the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association.

We have been non-stop in developing relationships that no other government did, certainly not the Ontario Liberal government. I don't think they attended anything, because that's what I'm told. So we have come forward and we said we will do business differently.

And when it comes to recruiting for the next phase of our provincial growth, we realize that we have to lay the seeds for people to want to become police officers. I'll tell you, if I was 30 years younger, I'd do it myself, because I would want to be a police officer when the government of the day says, "I'm going to have your back." You know what? That's something that's absolutely true. What did we do? We came forward with a bold initiative. We wanted a plan to take us from 1,200 graduates a year to over 2,000. We waived the tuition fee. We invested $34 million a year to make sure that we would reduce the barriers of entry to encourage people to serve.

Madam Speaker, Bill 119 did a number of other things. We came forward with relief for victims of human trafficking from debts forced upon them by the traffickers. It was unbelievable that this actually happens, and we took action against it. We came forward by holding commercial landlords to account if they knowingly rent their properties for people who are operating pill presses. We strengthened Ontario's sex offenders and traffickers registry, Christopher's Law, by authorizing the publishing of information about high-risk offenders.

No one issue has impacted me more than meeting the Stephenson family. The member from Thornhill and the member from Aurora were there that day when we met the Stephenson family to hear the story about beautiful Christopher Stephenson, whose life was tragically taken from him.

It was Premier Mike Harris, in his time as Premier, who came forward with a bill to address the fact that we can't live in a society where people can get away with it with no consequences.

In May, we passed Bill 75, Keeping Criminals Behind Bars Act, which included addressing Andrew's Law, cracking down on dangerous and impaired driving with stronger penalties and immediate roadside enforcement. This was in response to Andrew Cristillo, whose life was taken from him, leaving his wife and three beautiful young daughters. Getting to know his family and listening to who Andrew was as a human being through the words and the eyes of his brother Jordan has been something incredibly impactful, and I'm grateful to Jordan for his advocacy. Jordan, I'm always going to be there for your family, now and forever.

For me, it is also reflecting on our Community Safety and Policing Grant Program. The numbers are astounding. This program alone: $638 million from 2019 to the current cycle of 2026. It means that there's money for police services to execute their priorities, with local priorities such as intelligence sharing, mental health supports, specialized training with technology, equipment upgrades, road safety. It's $87 million we've invested to support, again, provincial priorities such as reducing gun and gang violence, sexual violence, harassment, human trafficking, hate crimes, retail theft.

1450

But there's more: $51 million for the provincial auto theft grant, what we call the Preventing Auto Thefts Grant, the PAT Grant. We just announced a renewal this year of $6 million.

The Joint Air Support Unit: It's almost $190 million—for the first time. People thought there were always helicopters in a lot of the big police services when there weren't. We came forward with a super program. Eyes in the skies mean criminals have nowhere to hide. That's in Ottawa. That will be in Toronto. That's in Peel. That's in Durham. That's in Halton. That will be in Niagara, Hamilton area and Windsor.

When we came to border security, our government acted with Operation Deterrence, because we wanted to make sure in the absence of the federal government at that time—I'll call it like it is, Madam Speaker. Prime Minister Carney's government has listened to Premier Ford. I'm very grateful for that. They have taken their first steps, but more needs to be done. In the absence, even before Prime Minister Carney came to office, we came forward with Operation Deterrence because we recognized that maybe there were things happening at the border that there were not enough resources from the federal government to deal with. So we strengthened the OPP, and we gave them extra people to help at the border. We provided more resources, and we did it unapologetically.

Now, Madam Speaker, we're very pleased that we've launched Operation Deterrence 2.0, a $32.5-million investment to provide local police services with the resources they need; a $30-million border security program. I made the announcement in beautiful Windsor. I have criss-crossed our province, echoing that police services who are on a maritime border should apply. The grant has closed, and we will be announcing shortly the recipients of that.

Wait, there's more. There's another $2.5-million Border Integrity Investigation Fund to support operations addressing threats like gun-running and drug smuggling. We didn't wait for President Trump to tell us something happened; something needed to be done at the border. We acted, and we acted as a sub-sovereign government in our own province, within our own jurisdiction, 2,400 kilometres long, between beautiful Cornwall and beautiful Fort Frances. It has been an honour of a lifetime to travel that road with many in this Legislature to go to the borders and to see for myself.

When it came time to hold people to account, we realized, as we know, that the record of the Ontario Liberal government of closing eight jails was wrong. There was no critical investment that they made. There were no people that they hired. The numbers were abysmal, and we said we would have a different path.

I'm proud and I have been very transparent that we would open up new jails, we would open up new beds, we would build permanent new jails, we would build modular

new jails. We will build now rapid-build jails. We will open units that were closed. We will leave no stone unturned. We're investigating, I'm proud to say, if we could reopen—one day, please—the Brantford jail and the Walkerton jail, and we're studying to see if that's feasible.

And we've started work on our expansion. I rose in this Legislature, and I said that we want to envision a day to see 2,500, if not more, spaces brought online in the shortest possible order. I said I want to see 1,000 spaces brought online in the nearest term. We will have exceeded our targets and I'll have more to say in the months ahead, and I'm proud of that.

Anybody that has followed my travels as Solicitor General across the province—we've been incredibly clear. When we reopened the regional intermittent centre at the London-Middlesex jail in London—there was a unit that opened up. We said we would open a unit that was closed previously at the Toronto Intermittent Centre, at Toronto South Detention Centre. That unit will be completely brought online very, very soon; part of it is open now. OCI, the Ontario Correctional Institute—and the list goes on. We've left no stone unturned.

But I've done even more as Solicitor General, thanks to our great team and the support of our government led by the Premier. We wanted to look at facilities that we've had for a long time that we didn't build but that are in our care, and we wanted to make sure that we could look at bed optimization and put in more spaces that we can do—so that we can house people in a much easier way. And that's what we've done as well.

We're calling on the federal government to do more as well. We called on them to introduce meaningful bail reform.

I have to go back, actually, to the carbon tax, because nobody would believe how it was actually impacting police and fire service budgets, but it did. Prime Minister Carney did the right thing, to get rid of it, because that means there's more money freed up in municipal police budgets, with our OPP, First Nations and our fire services.

We asked the federal government, "You've got to look at bail reform. There must be consequences for people who break the law."

Premier Ford talks about this whole revolving door—that little Jimmy will be back on the street tomorrow, and he'll tell the people in the correctional institution that he's leaving, "I'll be back. Just wait." It's ridiculous.

Stores are being broken into in the middle of the night. Our doors are being kicked in in the middle of the night. It's not right. There must be consequences when you break the law.

And I'll tell you something else: Premier Ford was 1,000% right when he wrote to the Prime Minister and said that there must be consequences when a person hurts a first responder or a police officer, as an example. You can't get away with it.

This year, tragically, Canada saw a number of police officers killed in the line of duty. I stood there too many times in my four and a half years as Solicitor General—and this year, it was unbelievable when we lost a beautiful young police officer, Tarun Bali, who I had the privilege of marching past in one of the ceremonies at the Ontario Police College. He went up north to relieve another officer, where OPP Hearst is, and he lost his life, and we grieve with his family. There must be consequences, and that's why we're calling on the federal government to do more.

In a few weeks, I'm going to be in Niagara at the next federal-provincial-territorial meeting on public safety and justice, and I've got a great partner—with the Attorney General and the Associate Attorney General. They get it. They are working hard, morning, noon and night, to represent Ontario's position—tough on crime, consequences must take place when a person breaks the law. I appreciate the work that the Attorney General, the Honourable Doug Downey, and the Associate Attorney General, the Honourable Michael Tibollo—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock.

Minister, I will remind all members that we must refer to others by their riding or their ministerial title—and for everyone else, I'm going to be consistent in this. Thank you.

I return to the Solicitor General.

Hon. Michael Kerzner: The honourable the Attorney General and the honourable the Associate Attorney General.

I don't know if the Ontario Liberals will support any of what we have been talking about that has to be called on the federal government to do—I don't know; we're going to find out. We're going to find out in short order whether or not they are going to dust off their record and do the right thing and stand here and say that their time here as a governing party in the Legislature, when it came to public safety, amongst other things, was a time that was shameful, a time when nothing happened. And when we came to office, we said we would never accept that as the status quo.

People respect our government because we ran in 2025 under protecting Ontario's moniker, but it protects Ontario—from a strong economy. We need a strong economy—everything else revolves on it—we need strong health care, we need a strong educational system, but we need a strong public safety umbrella. Everything revolves around that.

1500

As I walk the streets in my riding of York Centre, that I'm privileged to live in and represent, a diverse riding that runs from Bathurst Street to the east, including Armour Heights—I don't want to forget about the Armour Heights subdivision—and Jane Street to the west—and we're diverse. We speak many languages. We are proudly Jewish and Russian and Italian and Greek and Filipino and Vietnamese—

Hon. Stan Cho: And Korean.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: —and Korean. We are proud. Notre diversité est notre plus grande réussite. For us, this is a sense of pride that we have.

We have to accept the fact that, fundamentally, we can't accept the status quo where lawlessness has taken the rein in many jurisdictions around the world. Left unchecked, it has destroyed not only communities, not only cities, but it has destroyed countries. And that's why I'm proud to be part of a government that will work collaboratively with our municipal partners and our federal partners. Nobody will ever say, "Kerzner doesn't reach across the aisle," because I do. Because that's what we do. That's how you get things done. The Solicitor General and the proud MPP from York Centre will reach across the aisle.

I will go to the federal, provincial and territorial meetings, as I have—in Halifax where I went. I went to Bromont, Quebec. I went to Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. I went to Kananaskis, Alberta. And I've been clear. I've also called on the federal government that they must crack down on illicit drugs and reject decriminalization and tighten controls over precursor chemicals. They have an opportunity to do more. And you know what? We'll support them, because that's what they have to do. We're going to support them. I'm going to go out and say, "You've got to do it. You've got to tighten your bail laws, and we will be there to support you. You've got to crack down on illicit drugs because they could kill." Fentanyl could kill so many people with such little drugs. It's unbelievable. The precursor chemicals are a real threat.

I'm proud of the work Commissioner Carrique is doing every single day with the OPP. I'm proud of the work the Deputy Solicitor Generals are doing: Mario Di Tommaso on the public safety side; Erin Hannah on the corrections side. I'm proud that we have resources that are second to none. I'm proud of the work that our government is doing every single day, but it means we cannot stop. We have to keep going.

I believe that we have to put it all on the line, and that's why I'm going to call on the Ontario Liberal opposition to decide very soon—because they're going to have a convention to pick their next leader. I don't know if the leader will be like the previous leaders, afraid of the police, wanting to defund the police. This is top five answers on the board. We have to not take that as something that is good for Ontario. We need to make sure that they will call on the federal government—as we will do proactively, constructively and with a good heart—that we can't let this revolving door of justice exist unchecked.

Some things have to matter, Madam Speaker. Law and order must matter. Living safely in our communities freely, raising our kids and seeing them off to school, and checking in on our seniors—all of this must matter. And you can wrap everything around a bow of how proud we are as Ontarians, as Canadians.

I'm lucky. We are all lucky. We're one of less than 2,000 people, or thereabouts, that has ever had the honour of being elected to this place. And one day, when our time is done, we should reflect positively on what we did. I've listened to articulated debates in this chamber. It's okay to be passionate. It's okay to be proud. It's okay to call things the way that they are. And it's okay afterwards to shake hands with somebody and to say, "I debated here hard because I believed in this."

But when it comes to our public safety, nothing should come in the way of this. And that's why it's incumbent of all members here, including the Ontario Liberals—correct your record of what you said and what you did. Be accountable to what happened: eight closed jails, never attending events, having very, very, very strained relationships with the associations. We have to look at it differently. You should take a page book from our government that is so proud in every way of how we have approached it.

So I'm calling on everybody in this Legislature to support this motion calling on the federal government to strengthen bail and sentencing laws, increase policing and border enforcement against organized crime and illicit drugs, and prioritize addiction treatment and recovery over decriminalization and measures that facilitate illicit drug use.

We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to leave our children something that is even better than what our parents and grandparents left us. We should leave no stone unturned. We should do what is hard. We should believe every single day how grateful we are to make the smallest difference in somebody's life—not expecting a reward or an acknowledgement, but because it's absolutely the right thing to do.

Pour moi, pour le premier ministre de l'Ontario, c'est très personnel. Et je voudrais toujours remercier chaque personne qui travaille fort pour assurer la sécurité de notre province.

Every day we should treat this personally, that we came here to make a difference. In my case, I am so blessed to serve in a government with a caucus that comes here with a clean heart every day, with one goal in mind: To do good. It's not easy to govern. I'm here to say that I will always work hard every single day, but I'll call it out just the same. I'm not afraid to do that—nobody should be. And that's why this motion, motion 20, speaks to the time that we're in, speaks to the moment that we're in, and it allows us to meet the moment with pride, with conviction, with a resoluteness, with relentlessness, with an unapologetic approach to our public safety.

This is something I will be proud to leave my children.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. The minister indicated he was sharing his time. I recognize the member for York South–Weston.

MPP Mohamed Firin: Madam Speaker, I'm proud to rise today in the House in support of this motion alongside our wonderful Solicitor General. The member for York Centre is very passionate about not only serving his community but about keeping Ontarians safe, and that's what he works day and night to do in this province.

I also want to thank the Premier, whose leadership has shown time and time again that he's for public safety, and my colleagues.

Speaker, I'll also be sharing my time with the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to reaffirm our most fundamental pledge to protect Ontario.

I want to begin with a very simple statement. And before I actually get into my statement, I'd like to also

acknowledge that I have the privilege of serving alongside the wonderful member from Hamilton Mountain. And I want to take a moment to also thank the previous parliamentary assistants the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville—the current Minister for Tourism, Culture and Gaming—for his wonderful work that he's done in that ministry, and I would also like to acknowledge the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism for the wonderful work that he's done in this file.

I'd also like to acknowledge the House leader for doing great work as well.

Speaker, every single Ontarian deserves to feel safe—safe in their homes, safe in their neighbourhoods, safe when they take their children to school or ride on public transit.

Just about a few weeks ago, I told you the story of my first transit ride into Queen's Park, where I witnessed two individuals wielding a knife and chasing each other on the transit. That's not something that people in Ontario should experience or see. They deserve to know that when they call 911, someone will answer the phone; that when a police officer arrests a dangerous criminal, our justice system will hold that individual accountable; and that when someone threatens the safety of our communities, the rights of innocent, law-abiding people will come first.

1510

These are not unreasonable expectations. They are the most fundamental responsibility of any government. And under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government has made it absolutely clear that we will never apologize for putting the safety of Ontario families first.

Speaker, the people of Ontario gave our government a historic third mandate with a clear expectation—

Interjections.

MPP Mohamed Firin: I hear the Liberal members chirping, Speaker, and one thing that I'll say is, under the leadership of Premier Ford, unlike their previous leader who said that she was not a big fan of the police, who said that she was afraid of the police, I'm actually hoping that whoever the next leader of this party is, the Liberal Party, that they're not going to be afraid of the police. I think it's a common thing: When leaders of parties are afraid of the police, it sets a bad example for Ontario.

Speaker, the people of Ontario gave our government a historic third mandate, a clear expectation to protect Ontario, and that's exactly what we're doing—not with empty promises, not with political slogans, but with this historic investment, meaningful legislation and decisive action to support the brave men and women who put their lives on the line to keep us safe.

I would like to acknowledge Constable Marc Pinizzotto, who tragically died in my riding of York South–Weston.

Speaker, the contrast between our government and the third party could not be clearer, as you can hear them chirping away. While the Ontario Liberals closed jails, which is something that they're proud of, our government is actually building them. They closed six jails—sorry, eight jails. And I know these two members were not here at that time, but that's the record of the Liberal Party.

While others question the resources we provide our police, our government is making historic investments in policing. And while some continue to defend a justice system that often allows dangerous and repeat offenders back onto our streets, our government is fighting to keep violent criminals behind bars because protecting Ontario is not simply something that we talk about; it's something that we have and will continue to deliver on.

Speaker, let me start with the backbone of public safety in this province: our police officers. Every single day, thousands of dedicated officers put on their uniforms, leave their families and go to work knowing they may face danger and unpredictable situations. They respond to violent crimes. They confront armed criminals. They dismantle organized criminal networks. They protect victims and bring dangerous offenders to justice. And our government believes that when someone is willing to put their life on the line for us, the very least that we can do is give them the tools, training and resources that they need to succeed.

That is why we've committed more than $1 billion in policing and community safety supports, including critical investments in recruitment, enforcement and community safety initiatives. Through our Community Safety and Policing Grant, we're providing approximately $91.2 million in the 2025-26 budget—that the Liberals voted against—to help police services address local priorities, combat crime and keep their communities safe.

We have invested in tackling guns and gangs, organized retail theft, auto theft and other crimes that threaten our communities, and we have seen clearly that these investments are making a difference. In September this year, our Solicitor General announced an additional $6 million in investments in the Preventing Auto Thefts Grant Program, which has helped deliver a 36% reduction in auto thefts in Ontario.

And we've made historic investments in the next generation of police officers. We've eliminated approximately $17,000 in tuition fees for basic constable training at the Ontario Police College. We've extended tuition-free training through 2029. We've added another annual intake and expanded class sizes, creating the capacity to double the number of officers trained each year, and we're making more than a billion-dollar investment, Speaker, to expand and modernize training infrastructure at the Ontario Police College in Aylmer and the OPP academy in Orillia.

Speaker, these investments are about making sure that police services across Ontario have the people they need to respond to emergencies, investigate crimes and protect our communities because, unlike the opposition, especially the Liberals, we understand that you cannot build safer communities by weakening the very institutions responsible for keeping them safe. You cannot ask police officers to do more with less, which was done under their government. You cannot expect families to feel safe when the people protecting them are denied the resources they need, which the Liberals did. Our government will always stand with the men and women in uniform, and we will always have their backs.

Speaker, our commitment goes beyond recruiting and training more officers. We're also giving police services the technology and equipment they need to confront increasingly sophisticated criminal networks. That includes the launch of the joint air support unit, a nearly $200-million investment to expand police aviation capabilities through seven helicopters to support police services in the greater Toronto area, Ottawa, Windsor and Niagara. I'm pretty sure the Liberals did not support any of these initiatives, Speaker. These are powerful tools to help police track dangerous subjects, respond to violent carjackings, combat auto theft and support officers on the ground with an advantage over criminals who increasingly exploit highways, jurisdictional boundaries and international borders.

Speaking of international borders, Speaker, our government has led the push to protect Ontario through increased border enforcement. Ontario shares critical international crossings with the United States, and criminal organizations continue to exploit those crossings to traffic illegal firearms, deadly drugs and other contraband.

These are not victimless crimes. Every illegal firearm that enters our communities represents a potential tragedy. Every shipment of fentanyl threatens more lives, and every organized criminal network that operates across our borders undermines the safety and security of Ontario families. That is why our government launched Operation Deterrence and committed $32.5 million to strengthen border security and enforcement. These investments are supporting police services with equipment, technology and operational capabilities needed to disrupt criminal networks and stop illegal firearms and drugs from entering our communities.

Speaker, we're seeing the importance of coordinated enforcement. Through provincial border enforcement efforts, police have reported significant seizures of illegal drugs, firearms and other contraband, along with hundreds of criminal charges.

But provincial investments alone are not enough. The federal government has a fundamental responsibility to secure Canada's borders. That is why this motion calls on Ottawa to increase federal policing and border enforcement resources. I hope the same Liberal members that were chirping are able to write to their Liberal colleagues up in Ottawa to support this. We need stronger coordination, Speaker.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: Do an operating funding deal with supportive housing.

MPP Mohamed Firin: I'd urge the member to write a letter.

We need more effective intelligence sharing. We need the resources necessary to stop fentanyl trafficking, illegal firearm smuggling and organized crime before they reach our streets. Ontario is doing its part; it is time for Ottawa to do its part too.

Speaker, when we look at the record, the difference in priorities is unmistakable. Our government has invested more than $1 billion in policing and community safety. We're expanding police-training capacity and removing financial barriers to recruitment. We have committed approximately $191 million to new police helicopters. We're investing $32.5 million to strengthen border security.

These are not small commitments, Speaker. They represent a fundamental choice about the kind of province we are building: a province where everyone feels safe in all aspects of their lives, a province where police officers have the tools they need to do their jobs, where violent criminals face meaningful consequences and where governments stand firmly on the side of law-abiding citizens.

1520

The Ontario Liberals can criticize these investments all they want, but their record speaks for itself.

When it comes to the federal government, the message from this House must be equally clear: Ontario cannot secure our international borders on its own, and Ontario cannot unilaterally change federal criminal sentencing laws. Those responsibilities rest with Ottawa. That is why we're calling on the federal government to act to strengthen bail and sentencing laws.

When this Premier led the charge in writing a letter to the Prime Minister and getting all the Premiers across the country to support him—I'm not sure how many of the Liberal members wrote a letter to their colleagues in Ottawa, but I hope this time that they're going to be able to write letters in support of this.

Speaker, I want to close by returning to where I began: Every person in Ontario deserves to feel safe. This is not a partisan aspiration; it's a fundamental right and responsibility that every elected representative in this House should take seriously—

Interjections.

MPP Mohamed Firin: I hope the members chirping take it seriously.

But achieving it requires more than good intentions; it requires courage and leadership to make difficult decisions and stand firmly behind the people to protect our communities.

Under Premier Ford's leadership, our government has demonstrated that commitment time and time again. We're taking decisive action against the criminals who threaten the safety of Ontario families. We will never accept a province where criminals feel more confident than the families that they terrorize, and we will never accept a justice system that repeatedly fails victims. We will never stop fighting to give police officers the tools and the resources that they need to keep us safe—which unfortunately was the case under the previous Liberal government—because this is our responsibility. This is our commitment, and this is what the people of Ontario elected us to do. We are protecting Ontario. We're standing with law enforcement. We will never stop fighting for safer streets, stronger communities and a more secure future for every Ontarian.

I urge every member of this House, Speaker, especially the members of the third party, to support this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tom Rakocevic): I recognize the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

MPP Billy Denault: I want to thank my friend the Solicitor General as well as my friend the member from York South–Weston for their passionate remarks on what is a very important motion, because when it comes to public safety, we as a province have a clear goal, and that is to ensure Ontario's communities and the people living in them are supported and protected by safe, effective, accountable and responsive law enforcement and correctional systems. To put it simply: Ensure safety for law-abiding citizens and ensure accountability for those who hurt others. For us, it means providing critical support to first responders. The work that first responders do affects every individual, family, business and community throughout this great province, even though sometimes these efforts go unnoticed.

Every day, the Solicitor General works with police services, adult correctional services, fire services, coroners, security personnel, forensic experts, animal welfare inspectors and community partners to advance public safety for Ontario and Ontarians. These are services that people depend on during some of the most difficult and urgent moments of their lives. That is why it is so critical to ensure strong front-line services and effective oversight. This, of course, includes emergency and specialized services. These services often operate behind the scenes, but they are essential to Ontario's public safety system.

One of our government's largest investments is in this area, and it's the $765-million investment in the Public Safety Radio Network. This leading-edge communication system connects approximately 38,000 provincial, front-line and emergency personnel—police officers, aviation emergency responders, wildlife crews, paramedics, correctional staff and conservation officers.

We are replacing outdated equipment with a digital network that gives emergency personnel reliable communications across the province of Ontario, even in those remote areas where commercial cell coverage isn't available.

We are also investing directly in Ontario's municipal fire services. Last year we doubled the annual Fire Protection Grant, from $10 million to $20 million. All 380 eligible municipalities received funding to improve firefighter health and safety, strengthen responses to lithium-ion battery incidents and upgrade essential infrastructure, equipment and communications. We have extended this vital program to the end of fiscal year 2026-27.

We're also expanding the mobile live-fire training unit program, a kind of portable classroom that provides skill-enhancing opportunities to fire departments across the province, including those in rural and northern communities.

Emergency preparedness also means supporting the people who respond when lives are at risk. Our mental health supports for the public safety personnel program is backed by more than $32 million. It provides peer support training, wellness programs and other services tailored to the realities of front-line public safety work.

We have also invested more than $3 million in the Ontario Immediate Family Wellness Program, which provides rapid bereavement counselling to families of public safety personnel who are killed in the line of duty or die by suicide.

In addition, the Solicitor General's ministry is responsible for several specialized organizations that provide critical services to Ontarians. The Centre of Forensic Sciences provides scientific analysis that supports police investigations and Ontario's justice system. The Office of the Chief Coroner and the Ontario Forensic Pathology Services investigate deaths, identify systemic public safety issues and make recommendations aimed at preventing future deaths. Animal welfare services enforce provincial animal welfare legislation across Ontario, while the Inspectorate of Policing strengthens accountability and ensures police services and boards comply with provincial standards.

These investments and services reflect the breadth of our public safety responsibilities. They ensure Ontario has modern emergency communications, well-equipped fire services, strong supports for front-line personnel and the specialized expertise needed to protect people and communities across this great province.

Our government's approach is straightforward: We're investing in the people, the infrastructure and resources needed to prevent crime, respond to emergencies, hold offenders accountable and protect Ontario streets, individuals and communities. And we're very fortunate to share Ontario's public safety mandate with some of the province's most respected public institutions, including the Ontario Provincial Police, municipal and First Nations police services; adult correctional services; the Office of the Fire Marshal and fire departments serving municipalities, unincorporated communities and First Nations communities; the Office of the Chief Coroner and the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service; animal welfare services; and the Inspectorate of Policing.

These organizations have distinct responsibilities, but they are connected by a common purpose: protecting Ontario through responsive services, accountable institutions and continuous improvement. And, Speaker, we've heard from the Solicitor General and from my friend and colleague the member from York South–Weston that we've taken significant steps to provide police with the tools to ensure laws are enforced and criminals are held responsible for their actions. But enforcement is only part of the public safety equation, and that's why today I want to focus on the accountability aspect of our strategy. How exactly do we improve the system so that criminals are held to account? Our answer is simple: through bail reform and investments in the correctional sector.

1530

Too often, we've seen serious repeat offenders caught red-handed, only to be released back into the community—sometimes re-offending while they await trial. Unfortunately, that includes more recent and violent examples of crimes, like home invasions. Ontario has been a leading voice in the call to have Ottawa reform this current system, and thanks in part to our advocacy and input, the federal Bail and Sentencing Reform Act was passed and came into force this summer. We welcome changes in the act that

strengthen bail and strengthen laws, particularly for repeat, violent and serious offenders.

But of course, Speaker, the work is not done. That is why it's crucial that this House continue to advocate for continued bail reform. We can see that our efforts are working. The federal government can make a change and will listen to the voice of the people, but only if we help to amplify their voice through this Legislature.

Closer to home, we're not just advocating and waiting for change. We're doing our part to support bail reform as well. Over the past three years, we've invested $112 million to bolster bail monitoring and enforcement in Ontario, including over $18 million through the Bail Compliance and Warrant Apprehension Grant Program. The funding through this investment also supported dedicated bail enforcement teams and stronger prosecutorial resources. It also supported the Provincial Bail Compliance Dashboard, giving police timely information to help monitor accused persons and respond to breaches. By the way, we're investing an additional $8.3 million to keep the Bail Compliance and Warrant Apprehension Grant Program running to the end of fiscal year 2026-27.

Speaker, this government has been very clear when it comes to dangerous repeat offenders: If you break the law, you will be held accountable. It's a powerful message and one that depends on the support of a modern, effective correctional system. Our government inherited an adult correctional system facing significant capacity and operational pressures, but we took action, initiating one of the most ambitious correctional infrastructure and modernization plans in this province's history.

Already, this government, led by Premier Ford, completed renovations at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, increasing capacity by 110 spaces. We've begun expansion of the Quinte Detention Centre, which will bring another 90 spaces on board. We've upgraded—and are close to reopening—tower D at the Toronto South Detention Centre, adding 320 spaces. And meanwhile, we are close to finishing work on the new Thunder Bay Correctional Complex, which means another 117 spaces. The Ministry of the Solicitor General also got the ball rolling on new facilities in Brockville and the St. Lawrence Valley, which together will add almost 300 spaces.

And yet, I would like this House to compare and contrast from the previous Liberal government that closed eight jails. For example, in 2014, Chatham-Kent jail, Toronto West Detention Centre and the Don Jail closed. In 2012, the Brantford jail closed. In 2011, Owen Sound jail and the Walkerton jail closed. In 2004, the Renfrew jail closed. In 2003, the Burtch correctional was closed. We are planning to reopen as many as possible.

We've come a long way, but infrastructure alone is not enough. Our government is recruiting and training additional correctional staff and along the way creating some 700 new employment opportunities for Ontarians.

We can't do it alone. The leadership at the federal level must meet this challenge, and the Ontario Liberals have to support this motion, sending a clear signal to their federal cousins: The people of Ontario are tired of the soft-on-crime approach that dominated our country and province for decades. It is time to turn the page and work on real accountability.

Since day one, our government has been focused on keeping communities safe. We've expanded bail prosecution teams to keep violent repeat offenders behind bars. We've delivered digital tools and created a surety database to make it easier for police to crack down on anyone violating their bail, and investments of more than $1 billion to support police officers and give them the equipment, technology and resources they need.

As I close, Speaker, this government supports a public safety system that reaches every region of Ontario and serves people at the moments when effective government matters most. They support the recruitment and training of police officers. They strengthen local policing and border enforcement. They help combat auto theft and organized crime. They expand and modernize adult correctional facilities. They improve firefighter training and safety. They sustain forensic, coronial, animal welfare and oversight services, and they support the mental health and well-being of people who perform this difficult work.

These are significant investments, and we have a responsibility to ensure they are well managed and deliver results. Our government will continue to respond to emerging threats, strengthen public safety institutions and support the front-line personnel who keep Ontario safe. We will continue to protect victims, hold offenders accountable and build the capacity our growing province needs.

But as I've said before, we need to have a collaborative, tough-on-crime approach together with the federal government. This means a continued and improved work on bail reform. This also means a secure border, where illicit drugs and guns can't get through into our neighbourhoods. All levels of government have to be on the side of the people who abide by the law. This is the prerequisite for a safe, healthy society. That is why I support this motion, and I invite everyone in this House to do so.

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

MPP Jamie West: I'm happy to rise and speak to this debate. I don't know; "happy" is probably overestimating. I'm happy to be here with my colleagues and talk to my colleagues, but I have to say that we've sat so far this year 29 days in the spring, and then about a five-month break where we didn't sit, and maybe we'll sit 23 days this session, but that's not a really strong work record. And things are tough in the province of Ontario. Things are not great.

I have a lot of respect for the Solicitor General; we have a great relationship. But one of the things that he said was, "There is nothing new on our side," and I don't know if it came across the way he meant it. I don't think that's a flex—because in my community of Sudbury, before the Premier was elected, the Conservative government was elected, we did not have tent encampments in our community. Before the Conservative government was elected,

we didn't have people massively losing their housing and not able to make ends meet. Before the Conservatives were elected, we did not have working people going to food banks on a regular basis. And so when they stand up and they say, "There's nothing new on our side," it kind of shows, like this motion, that maybe they're out of ideas.

Because this motion, Speaker, is, "Let's have a debate to see if we should write a letter that would not ever force the federal government to do anything, but can we please have a debate about writing this letter?" It is as toothless as an old man from the 1920s. It is a meaningless—we're going to speak about this all day today, and I think we're going to speak about it next week, and it makes no sense to me.

1540

If they're out of ideas, let's have a debate—or, if you want to have a debate, let's have a debate ahead of the greenbelt scandal. See if you can get permission to do that. Let's see if we can get permission to do the Therme scandal. Let's see if we can get permission for the hotel scandal, or the SDF scandal or the time you bought a jet. Come to us for permission on that.

We're in a situation where the bill we just finished debating says that one in three children die under the care of this government. But today we're going to just talk about this debate: "Hey, is it okay if we write a letter?" You know what? Write a letter. Go ahead, man. But you don't need our permission, frankly.

There's a bit of a flex. It's a little bit of a "Hey, we're policing, tough on crime, and yeah, all criminals, they should be held accountable. Absolutely." That's why, more than likely, we're going to vote against the bill where you're trying to protect the government from being sued. It's why, during the last budget, we voted against closing down FOI to prevent, perhaps, the Premier from being held criminally accountable for the greenbelt scandal.

We believe that criminals should be held accountable. But at the same time, I think there's some frustration for our law enforcement officials when they hear about people going missing from being incarcerated, when they hear about the backlog in courts and that people who are being prosecuted are being let free after all the hard work that our officials have done on that.

In my community, they're closing Cecil Facer. It's a youth facility. They're going to open a women's prison. If you've been to Sudbury, we have enough room that you could do both. Males between age 12 and 17 in northern Ontario come to Greater Sudbury, and that's where they're incarcerated when they're in trouble with the law.

As they close it, what we're seeing with our police force—and the Greater Sudbury police was here just yesterday, and I was speaking with them. They've written to the Solicitor General, and they've talked to him about the costs for police to transport a youth to a facility because the next closest one is Brampton or Thunder Bay. In 2024, they travelled more than 11,000 kilometres; in 2025, they travelled more than 17,000 kilometres. Every time you transport, it's two constables that go with you.

In the conversations I had with the officers yesterday, they talked about the increase. Once this is closed, those transportation costs are going to increase. Now they'll be flying to Thunder Bay, so think of the cost. If you've ever flown to northern Ontario, there are never deals; they're always very expensive. Coming from Sudbury is about a grand.

If you're going to Thunder Bay, you're going to send two constables with an offender. And because flights aren't reliable, you're probably going to put them in a hotel overnight, pay them for the day, pay them to come back the next day. That's a cost that's going to be borne even more. That is frustrating for the constables, it's frustrating for the municipalities who are footing the bill for this and it's something that's difficult for people to wrap their head around.

That cost is going to be passed down to the municipality of Greater Sudbury. Greater Sudbury has a footprint the size of the GTHA and Peel but does not have that population. We have a much smaller population, so our footprint of taxes is a lot smaller to pay for these sorts of things.

One of the other things that I heard was how we're going to build a lot more jails. I think that if we need places to incarcerate people, that's great, but I wish there was an aggressive plan to build more housing. We need people in housing.

The government, when they first came into power, froze the minimum wage. It increased for the first time—the Liberals were worried about losing the election, so they nudged the minimum wage up. Then the Conservative government froze it right away, and they made sure that people couldn't afford to make ends meet.

OW has been frozen, I think, forever. For a very, very long time, it's been less than $1,000. I don't know where you can rent anything for $1,000.

ODSP, they raised, but they didn't even bring it above the poverty line. They rose it and they brag about how they've frozen it, so you're always going to have your head underwater. You're always going to be scrambling.

They also removed rent controls on any new builds after 2018. That means that you can just charge whatever you want every year, increase as much rent as you want. That creates an incentive for other landlords to try to hit market rate and climb up as quickly as possible. "Let's increase the number of people who have been evicted"—renovictions.

In my city, Speaker, what they've done is they've said, "We're doing renovations," and what they do is change the windows and maybe add some paint. This happens again and again and again by these faceless corporate institutions.

So we have this visible unhoused population that did not exist before the Conservative government was in place. We had some unhoused people. We had homeless people. We had people struggling with addictions; alcohol or drugs. I'm not pretending life was rosy, but not visible—not visible like it is now. That is the claim to fame of the Conservative government.

When I ran in 2018, our campaign slogan was "Change for the Better." And the population decided to elect the

Conservative government, and I think that we went from bad to worse. I think you could see it in every city community, because Sudbury is not alone in this. I travel all around the province, going around talking to workers and people in the field, and I see it everywhere that people are struggling.

The Conservative government love to pose with blue-collar workers like miners and trades workers, but they ignore the fact that when miners and tradespeople get hurt and they can't make ends meet because of all the cuts the Conservative government has done for WSIB, well, they play hard. And what that means is you go to work hurt, and you start with painkillers—Tylenol, that sort of thing—but then you can get fentanyl, or you can drink. And it's not like these organizations—mining and the trades—are quiet about this. If they're telling me, surely to God they're telling the Conservative government, "We need help with this; people are struggling." But they don't do anything about that.

So this model they want to replicate across the country, I don't think it's something we would want to replicate. My aunt lives in Winnipeg—I know they have some struggles there as well—but I wouldn't tell my aunt, "Oh, take our model. It went from bad to worse." It's worse now than it has ever been.

But again, this is just a letter.

Could we have done something? Yes, we could have, because seven years ago, in 2019, my very first PMM I put forward was to declare an opioid emergency. I wanted it to be a public health care emergency. The reason I did that is because people kept dying in my community. In my community, in Timmins—I could just name all of them. This was in Conservative ridings, all across the province. But northern Ontario was being affected the most: Timmins, Thunder Bay, Sudbury. We would compete to see how many people—I don't know if "compete" is the right word, but we had the most people dying every month from opioid overdose.

So I put forward this thing because the Conservative government would stand up and offer thoughts and prayers and "I feel so bad," but that doesn't mean they have to do anything. You don't save lives with thoughts and prayers; you save lives when you put money where your mouth is. It was supposed to be that the government would commit funding towards it, and the funding would go towards comprehensive, evidence-based local health and community initiatives: harm reduction strategies, awareness programs, anti-stigma training, residential treatment, overdose prevention services.

And I was hopeful that perhaps they would vote it down, but take it and make it their own, or maybe they would see the value in it and say, "It's not just northern Ontario. We need this everywhere." Because they have a lot of MPPs who could say, "Yes, us too. We're struggling too."

We were recently in Peterborough. It's a Conservative riding, right? Right across from our hotel, there were some people really struggling with addictions—really, really struggling, just like in every community in Ontario. And that's why I don't think it's a model we want to share with the rest of Canada. It's not a model I would brag about if I was in your shoes.

The Conservative government, they voted that down, that motion. They didn't adopt it. They didn't move forward. They didn't do anything. It's like how with the environment, they didn't do anything in that first term with the environment, and they thought that telling people that they picked a day to pick up litter was a move forward with the environment. The expression "the least you can do" doesn't mean "find the very least you can do." It means "find something you can do."

In Sudbury, in 2026, we've had 36 deaths already. Our mortality rate is more than four times Ontario's rate—more than four times. When people are dying and dying and dying—I can't even count the number of times during question period I got up and said, "How many more people have to die before the Premier takes action?"

We have Crosses for Change, where people put up crosses to remind us that these are our family members. Our family members are there. You want to talk about police services and the care for police services? Police services have issues because of what they see and what they witness with self-medication as well.

Not everybody who is an addict is on the street. There are people who have offices and jobs, and they're hiding in their cars and they're struggling to hang on by their fingernails and they're desperate for the government to make a difference in their lives, and the government chooses to say no. They choose to buy ads, "Imagine Ontario," where all this stuff that doesn't happen is happening to you, but it's not. And we're not falling for it anymore, Speaker.

We know there are long wait times and lack of funding in services. SACY, the centre for action for youth in Sudbury, they had to close. So that means that young people who are homeless and struggling—some with addictions—live in an encampment now. In an encampment in the middle of this field, you have young men and women basically trying to find a place to stay. And I'll tell you what happens to a lot of them—it's horrifying what happens to a lot of them because we know that there is trafficking that happens there. We know that there are predators that are in the encampment, and it's easier—just like in the wild—to prey on the young and the defenceless. So they live out there. They live in the cold—not enough food, not enough heat, and no bathrooms—and maybe some friendly person decided to take them into their tent, and I'm sure that's going to work out really great for them.

1550

The Go-Give Project is doing everything they can, but their funding has been reduced as well. They go out and they build relationships and bring food and try to find services for people who want to escape addictions, but there are no services because the backlog is so long, because that isn't the focus. The focus is to take a bad situation and make it worse—have every policy you can find to make it worse, and have no services to escape to,

and pretend that people will magically give up their opioid addiction.

I know people who can't give up smoking, and smoking is legal. You can come out and ask somebody for help for smoking. What are you going to do when you're doing something that's illegal—and has been shamed and shunned?

For the last hour, we heard of how they're all criminals: "They're not our sons, our neighbours, our fathers, our kids. They're all criminals. Let's lock them up because they're homeless. Let's put them in jail. We're tough on crime."

I'm proud that I'm part of a party that cares about people. New Democrats care about people.

I got involved with learning about opioid overdose, and Denise Sandul—everyone in Sudbury knows her name. Her son Myles died from an overdose. Myles loved football. I got to know him as an individual, not as an addict. He struggled with addictions. He struggled with some mental health issues. He tried to quit a couple of times, and sometimes he wasn't successful. He died right in front of a fire department. There's a cross there—that's where Crosses for Change came from. There's a cross in front of the fire department. The fire department and the mayor went to speak to Denise and said, "It is really hard for our members, because we respond to overdoses on a regular basis, and this cross reminds us how many times we fail." They fail because they're not supported by the government. They're not supported with mental health. They're not supported in the ways that they should be, to respond.

So they moved it—and God bless the city for making the courageous decision to have a monument for people who've died from addictions right at a busy intersection. I've lost count of how many crosses are there, and it's not even every single person because some people don't want that reminder. But it's a reminder to me that these are people we care about; these are people we grew up with; these are our friends and our families; these are people with names; these are people like Myles, who loved football.

The burden is on the municipality. The municipality is trying to figure out how to do this without a partner from the provincial government—without a partner at all. We had the Spot. It was a supervised consumption centre—zero funding from the government. The municipality paid the entire thing. They just paid it and paid it and paid it, and eventually they couldn't do it anymore because there was no money, because the provincial government takes provincial responsibilities and downloads them to the municipality. They're starved; they have no money to do the right thing for the community.

So now what we have is called Energy Court. It's a gravel parking lot. It's not graded, so whenever it rains or when snow melts, all the tents are soaked because all the water floods around them. There aren't really any bathrooms. There's not really much safety as well—it's not guarded; there's nowhere to store your stuff when you're away, so things get stolen or lost. It's beside a railroad track. Imagine how wonderful it is to try to find shelter and sleep near a railroad track. People are suffering in there, and people are dying on a regular basis there—freezing to death and dying in fires because they're trying to keep themselves warm. And like I said earlier, they're being trafficked.

The other day, Denise went down there and rats were climbing over people, like back in the 1800s, when the plague happened—rats just going around, and the people are trying to shoo them away, but they keep coming back. Denise said, "Maybe we could get some plastic tubs to keep the belongings in." They said, "It doesn't matter. The rats chew right through them." That's the level of care the government has that they want to share with Canada. "Let's write a letter to the country so they can copy this model, where children are being trafficked in places like Energy Court, where people are laying in the snow and the water, where people are dying in house fires, where they're freezing to death while rats are climbing around and biting them. That's the model that we should write to the federal government and say—let's share this with them."

I want to thank my friend Mickey O'Brien. We call him OB. OB has been very open about his addictions with drugs and alcohol and about the importance of recovery, and how you need that candle in the darkness. He has brought forward a program called Solidarity in Recovery for—OB is a steelworker for Local 6500, my old local. It's about supporting recovery of miners with addiction. God bless Mickey for doing this, but he's doing it because there's no support from this provincial government that loves mining. Remember critical minerals? Remember the Ring of Fire? So Mickey is going to do the heavy lifting because the government doesn't want to. Instead, they want to do a debate. We're going to eat up hours and hours of our time debating this meaningless thing—"Can we write a letter?" Yes, you can. Do you need permission to go to the bathroom, too? Let's be serious here. What a slap in the face to people suffering with addictions, people who care about them.

I reached out to Neil. Neil was the director at the Spot. Neil is a registered nurse: military service, Canadian decoration. I'll just read it straight out. Neil says, "Despite constant guidance from front-line health care professionals—including myself—alongside provincial medical associations, provincial and federal nursing associations and unions, public health researchers and decades of peer-reviewed evidence, current policy shifts have moved away from data-driven care.

"In Greater Sudbury, for example, the closure of the supervised consumption site in March 2024 was followed by a sharp rise in preventable harms, with local hepatitis C infection rates climbing 30% above the national average.

"While expanding recovery and treatment options is essential, eliminating proven harm reduction infrastructure removes the vital first point of contact that keeps vulnerable residents alive long enough to access that care.

"The current preoccupation with criminalizing a medical condition rather than facilitating access to quality

health care, affordable housing, social supports and mental health services is concerning.

"Rather than addressing the social determinants of health, inequality and facilitating preventative care, this government seems hyperfixated on punishing those that are already struggling"—punching down; my words, not his.

"Combining a dangerously misinformed drug treatment motion with a crime reform bill further muddies the water and will only exacerbate the stigma and discrimination faced by those that openly use substances and will drive those that hide their substance use further into isolation.

"From our clinical experience and research, we can affirm that this will have the opposite effect this motion pretends to promote.

"It will increase drug-related harms, fatalities and increase taxpayer burden through increased uses of emergency services, emergency departments and increased cost through the criminal justice system as well as drastically increasing wait times in emergency departments for the general populations."

That is from Neil Stephens, Canadian decoration. I think that if we're going to talk about how much we love the military, we should listen to people who have military service and who care about our community as well.

If you're out of ideas and need ideas, we can share some of ours. New Democrats had a press conference about two weeks ago, shortly after we came back to sit here in December. It was about substance use treatment. We called on the government to implement a province-wide access to a treatment line to guarantee that both patients and clinicians have in-the-moment expert advice on how to start treatment where and when they need it.

We want to guarantee timely access to quality substance use treatments, including same-day treatment in emergency departments and hospitals, access to outpatient programs and detox within 24 hours and access to bed-based residential treatment within 14 days. We want to expand community-based treatment, including supportive housing integrated with high-intensity mental health and substance use treatment to reduce emergency visits and pressure on our hospitals while ensuring people have the supports that they need to get well.

This echoes what the nurse, an expert in mental health and addictions, told us. It echoes it because we're following data-driven advice, not ideology.

When I first learned about addictions, I was pretty naive. There were things that I thought would work, and they don't work, because they've tried them before. If you want, you can try to pound a round peg into a square hole, and maybe it would fit, but it's probably not going to. And if you keep failing—if you fail for almost nine years—you might fail in the future as well. I'm hopeful that you fail to the point where you get kicked out of government and we form government in our party, because we care about people.

We need to invest in this. We need to invest. Locking people up is not going to be a solution. The reality is that if you're addicted—and this is my conversation I had with the former chief of police in Sudbury. He said, "Look, Jamie, if you had an addiction"—back when I worked at Vale—"if you had an addiction and you got locked up, well, the odds are probably there's drugs inside the jails as well. We do our best to keep them out, but they're there. But let's just say magically you're able to quit. There are almost no services to help you quit while you're in jail, but let's say you're able to come clean and you quit on your own. Well, you've lost your job. You also have a criminal record now, so what are the likelihoods that you'll have a good-paying job in the future, and what are the likelihoods that you'll go back to using drugs again?"

The system is broken, and the solution isn't just to keep locking people up—especially people who are not criminals in the first place—just because you don't like the way they look. You can't lump everybody in as criminals based on the way they look or the environment that they live in. If you're out of ideas, we tabled a bill this week calling for a toxic drug crisis emergency task force to be formed to address the crisis. We actually put a bill and recommendations forward. We didn't say, "Hey, let's write a letter to the federal government." We said, "You don't seem to know what you're doing. Let's give you some ideas." And so we gave you this idea.

The bill would enact the toxic drug crisis emergency response task force. The Minister of Health would be required to establish a toxic drug crisis emergency response task force. The task force is to be chaired by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and composed of persons from among the experts and specified groups.

1600

The reality, Speaker, is that we're MPPs; we're not experts. Sometimes we forget that because everyone is so nice to us and we have these nice titles and they mention our ridings, and you can get a really swollen head. We work in a beautiful place. It's a palace. So sometimes you think, "Oh, my God, I bet you I know stuff," but we don't. That's why we have those meetings when people come to our office to tell us what it's like to be a paramedic or a teacher, and it's important for us to listen to them. Because the ideology that you've been hearing right now isn't working for you—maybe it polls well, right? When you talk to somebody, maybe if you had asked me before I was an MPP and I had access to all this information, maybe I would come up with some of these ideas that you're coming up with, but they're not data-driven, they're not fact-based and they're failing. They're failing to the point where, in every city in Ontario, you're seeing visible homelessness, visible poverty. You're seeing people struggling with addictions openly—or hiding and terrified to be caught up, to be found out. And they're desperate for a lifeline, but there's nothing.

One of my favourite quotes, Speaker, is that the world is thirsty for leadership, and, unfortunately, the government has handed them a dry paper cup. There is no leadership. There's bravado and there's commercials and there's a spending spree, there's marketing, but there's no leadership. There's nothing to get us out of this mess. They're just pretending it will go away. And it will fail and

fail and fail, and their decision, I think, will be "tough on crime, tough on crime."

The crime would go down, you know, it would go down if people lived in housing. Crime would go down if people had a place to go for addictions where they could get away from addictions. It would go down. It wouldn't be magically fixed. Not everything would be perfect—I'm realistic about this—but I tell you, it would go down.

People in downtown Sudbury would feel safer going to downtown Sudbury if Energy Court didn't exist—because it did not before this government was elected, Speaker. It didn't exist before. There were services. There was help. We're doing the best we can, but not only have they not done anything, they have said, "Health care"—a provincial responsibility—"is your problem" to the municipalities, to the point where AMO, last year, said, "Stop downloading your provincial responsibilities to us to cover"—stop it. All these ads, the bragging they're doing about how "We've never raised a tax"—do you know how they did that? They downloaded everything to the municipalities, so the cities and towns have to raise property taxes and cut things. And people get upset when the snowplowing doesn't work out or garbage is moved more and more days, but it's just a blame game.

I remember the Premier and his brother both saying there's only one taxpayer. So they just take this side, and instead of the province digging your hand in here, the province takes the money away from the municipality and says, "You pay for it. You pick up the tab."

When I worked at the smelter, we used to say that somebody like that had gator arms—little, tiny gator arms like this—because they couldn't reach their wallet. That's what the provincial government does. They've got gator arms. They won't pay for anything.

Oh, my God, I mean, think of the number of times that places have gone out of business and the Premier will huff and puff and try to blow the house down, but he's ineffectual. And basically, what he does—he's like, "Oh, please, federal government, can you come and do something? I'll stand beside you in the photos." And that's what we're doing today. They want to brag about what's going on here?

If anybody from the Conservative Party—if you leave and you go south, you may not see this, but leave the building and go north. There are people living in the park, in Queen's Park. There are people living everywhere in Ontario, and I guarantee you they're in your community as well. The difference, though, is New Democrats will talk about it because we want to help people. In your party, everyone is silent, and everyone is handed a note. Sometimes during debate, I want someone to start and say, "Thank you very much, Speaker. Now I'm going to read the speech that my colleagues read." It's the same speech again and again.

So we have ideas that we can share that are important, that are valuable, actual solutions based on data—data-driven solutions. Any industry in the world will use data-driven ideas, not ideology. God, if this was a business, you'd be out of business like that, right?

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Deco Labels.

MPP Jamie West: I heard my colleague talk about Deco Labels. It's unbelievable we have a Premier who had a sticker company and put stickers on gas stations that wouldn't stick—unbelievable, right? Like, how do you blunder that up? Or a licence plate—they made licence plates. How can you make licence plates wrong? You make them too bright so that the police—the people they talk about how much they love, and we love them too. They're very important to our society, but, my God, could you imagine trying to follow someone and you're describing the car and then all of a sudden, you're like, "The licence plate is really, really bright"—because you can't read them, ever. What a blunder. What a blunder.

We have solutions and one of them, I think, is we need to amend this motion.

Speaker, I move that the motion be amended by removing everything between the words "this House," and "focus investments" and that we insert the words "the government of Ontario must" before the words "focus investments," and insert the following after the words "HART hubs"—and I'll obviously give this to the table so you don't have to memorize it:

"; and

"Protect communities by guaranteeing timely access to quality substance use treatment, including same-day treatment in emergency departments and hospitals, access to outpatient programs and detox within 24 hours, and access to bed-based residential treatment within 14 days; and

"Make Ontario's streets safer by expanding community-based treatment, including supportive housing integrated with high-intensity mental health and substance use treatment, to reduce emergency visits and pressure on our hospitals while ensuring people have the supports they need to get well."

Just to ensure, in case I did not say it earlier, I am sharing my time with the member for Hamilton Centre, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. West has moved the following amendment: That the motion be amended by removing everything between the words "this House," and "focus investments," insert the words "the government of Ontario must" before the words "focus investments" and insert the following after the words, "HART hubs":

"; and

"Protect communities by guaranteeing timely access to quality substance use treatment, including same-day treatment in emergency departments and hospitals, access to outpatient programs and detox within 24 hours, and access to bed-based residential treatment within 14 days; and

"Make Ontario's streets safer by expanding community-based treatment, including supportive housing integrated with high-intensity mental health and substance use treatment, to reduce emergency visits and pressure on our hospitals while ensuring people have the supports they need to get well."

I return to the member for Sudbury to debate the amendment.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you very much, Speaker. And just the government House leader is saying that I forgot to say I'm sharing my time. I believe I said it at the beginning and then again before the motion, but just for clarity, Speaker, I am sharing my time with the member from Hamilton Centre.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Hamilton Centre.

MPP Robin Lennox: I always say it is a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Hamilton Centre, and that's always true. I do appreciate the privilege in this work of being able to debate ideas, to talk about how we can make Ontarians' lives better, to talk about solving the problems that we collectively share and about building a brighter future.

There are only 124 of us who get to be in this role, and I think each and every one of us has to come into this room with the very best ideas and with a commitment to doing our very best work on behalf of our constituents. But, Madam Speaker, I think we can all agree that there was no best work brought to this motion. This motion is, at best, uninspired, uncurious. I imagine the government side must be having a really terrible week to pull this together, because I don't know how many of you got together to write on the back of a napkin and try to combine as many buzzwords as possible to try to distract from the fact that you are having an absolutely terrible news week, having to be held accountable for all of your failures, but it's truly as if, Madam Speaker—the Attorney General has an opportunity, has a tremendous portfolio and what we have instead is a few paragraphs of a motion thrown together at 4 o'clock on a Wednesday, debated less than 24 hours later and it's a non-binding motion about writing a letter to the federal government. You've got an entire ministry at your disposal, and the best that you have to offer the people of Ontario—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Through the Chair.

1610

MPP Robin Lennox: Through the Chair, the Attorney General has an entire ministry at his disposal and the best he has to offer the people of Ontario is a non-binding motion to write a letter. That's not enough. I would hope that the Attorney General cares enough about public safety to want to put forward real solutions, things that are going to actually improve the safety of our communities, to make people feel like they have spaces in which to thrive. But that is not this. When I look at this motion, Madam Speaker, I struggle to see the priorities of Ontarians reflected in this work.

We know that when we speak to people in our communities, when we speak to people all across the province, they want to know their government is working on making their life more affordable, on helping them put food on the table, to pay for rent, to be able to have meaningful employment, to be able to get health care when and where they need it. The fact that we are sitting only for 23 days and that we are spending debate time on a motion that has given so little thought is such a disrespect to the people of Ontario.

I have to acknowledge that this motion is not the work of a serious government. I think that we've known that for a long time, that this is not a serious government in front of us. There are so many issues that could have been addressed in this time.

First of all, there's the fact that we are on track to half a trillion dollars in debt—half a trillion dollars in debt. You love saying that you're producing these historic numbers; that is a historic number—the highest debt in the history of this province, and it's under this government.

What I would like to understand is how you can justify this to each and every Ontarian in this province, each household that is spending between $3,000 and $4,000 of their tax dollars on servicing your debt. That's money that's not going to health care. That's money that's not going to making groceries more affordable, that's not going to transit or any of the other essential services that we rely on. It's just paying off a debt. Madam Speaker, this government is essentially spending like frat boys who are blowing all of their money on booze and video games and then, at the end of the month, they're surprised that they don't have money for groceries. It's truly astonishing, and it's shameful.

When we look at the actual substance of this motion—let's be honest about what this is. This is a back-of-the-napkin attempt to deflect from all of this government's failures. On the face of it, you're talking about public safety. This government has no track record on improving public safety. This government has systematically dismantled so many of the structures that actually create safer communities, and one of them is mentioned in your motion itself.

In your motion, you talk about how you wish the federal government would build on the Ontario government's work of closing drug injection sites. When this government made that decision, the year prior this government had actually convened a symposium of health experts, of justice experts, of community workers, of police and other front-line workers to give recommendations on how to address the toxic drug crisis. This government convened that symposium, they asked them to write us a report and then they hid that report because they didn't like the results.

What was in the report was a recommendation, actually, to build and expand upon the structures we already had in place, to ensure that harm reduction services were available, to make treatment more available, to look at novel approaches to meet people where they were at. None of that actually came to fruition. Instead, arbitrarily, this government made the ideologic decision to close supervised consumption sites.

And what happened next? Well, it only took about six months to see the impact. Over that time, there was a nearly 70% increase in ambulance calls for opioid toxicity in the six months after the closure in Ontario. The burden on the emergency departments also went up: a 67%

increase in emergency department visits for opioid-related harms in that same time period.

Then there are the impacts that we are all seeing in our communities. Without safe, indoor, designated spaces for people to use drugs under the supervision of trained providers, we are seeing an explosion in public drug use in our public spaces.

This is what is concerning so many people in Ontario, because they know that we can do better. They know that when people have safe, indoor spaces in which to use substances, they are not needing to use out on the street, they are not having overdoses in Tim Hortons bathrooms and they are not dying preventable deaths.

Make no mistake: Right now, one Ontarian dies of a drug-related harm every three and a half hours under this government. That is truly shameful. Those are all preventable deaths, and those numbers have gone up. They have gone up.

The devastating part is that this was all predictable. Everyone knew that this would happen. When the idea was floated about closing the supervised consumption sites, everyone advised this government that it would increase harm to the communities, that it would increase safety concerns, that it would increase burden on hospitals. Even the government's own reports show that. That was highlighted by the Auditor General in her recent analysis, and yet it was disregarded.

How many times do we need to keep proving the same things over and over again? This government loves to undermine the expertise of people who are actually doing the work, steamroll over their recommendations and then act surprised when it doesn't work out well. That's exactly what is happening here.

When we look at some of the calls to action, we have put forward a number of proposals that we hoped the government would adopt to actually take meaningful action on this issue. In August of 2025, myself and my Ontario NDP colleagues had a press conference calling on this government to recognize the crisis that we are in, to put in place an emergency task force to develop a comprehensive strategy to actually address the crisis. You didn't listen.

This past week, we tabled a bill to that same effect. That is a piece of legislation that we could be debating today. We could be talking about how we put together a comprehensive strategy to actually address the crisis, but we're not.

Instead, we're talking about a non-binding motion calling on the federal government to give you guidance on how to manage the issues that are actually provincial jurisdiction. It's completely unnecessary, it's a poor use of our time and it's a waste of opportunity for Ontarians.

Madam Speaker, there's a quote that has always resonated with me. It's that the difference between where we are and where we could be is a waste. This government are the experts in creating wasted opportunity, and this motion is no different.

We could be spending this time talking about how over one million Ontarians are using food banks. Many of them are working people working full-time but who cannot compete with the fact that a basket of groceries has gone up 30% in price over the past five years. Rent has gone up similarly over the past five years. That's all happening under this government, and you have the power to change it, but you are neglecting to do so.

At the same time, we see even more failures when it comes to housing. Housing starts were down 8% last month. Why are we decreasing the production of affordable housing? Why are we taking away tax benefits for people who are trying to build deeply affordable housing? It is completely counterproductive.

It's happening at a time where we have 85,000 people who are unhoused, many of whom are sleeping rough on our streets. Rather than taking bold, ambitious action to house them, this government works to criminalize them, to sweep them from one park to the next park, to ticket them and, at times, threaten to jail them, because this government would rather build jail after jail after jail, spending billions of taxpayer dollars, than actually house people.

1620

We all know that housing someone in supportive housing is one of the most cost-effective ways to eliminate homelessness. For every dollar that we invest in supportive housing, we save $2 in social services costs, justice costs and health care costs. The problem is that this government has downloaded so much of the cost of social housing onto our municipalities, who are struggling to pay for it. They're pushing it all down onto the municipal property tax base.

And then who actually gets the benefit of social housing? It's the province. Because when we save money on health care, that's money saved for the province; when we save money on social services, that's money saved for the province; when we save money in the justice system, that's money saved for the province. You are downloading all the costs and breaking municipalities when it is, in fact, our provincial government who would benefit most from a bold expansion of social and supportive housing.

So why aren't you doing it? Better yet, why are you writing to the federal government asking them to help you do your responsibility? This government could boldly expand support housing this year, but instead, in this budget, only 425 net new supportive housing units were funded—425 new supportive housing units for the entire province. To put that in context, there are more than 2,000 people unhoused on Hamilton streets alone; we could use five times the amount of supportive housing units that the province is funding for all of Ontario.

The math does not add up. That shouldn't be a surprise, because this government is not very good at math. You can see that in their budget. They are the most fiscally irresponsible government that we have seen. And the thing is, when we look back in our history, it is NDP governments that balance the budget.

Interjections.

MPP Robin Lennox: Yes, I know they're also not students of history.

Tommy Douglas is known for being the greatest Canadian of all time. Tommy Douglas got that recognition for bringing in medicare—which is, by the way, one of the best things that have ever happened to this country. But the first thing that Tommy Douglas did when he got into government wasn't medicare; he balanced the budget, because that is what New Democrats do. We know that in order to best serve people, to best meet their needs and uplift public services, we need to be in a fiscally strong position.

This government knows nothing about that. They love to spend money and get into debt and say, "Oh, the next government will take that over. The next government will figure that out. Once we've burned through all the good public will, we'll let the next government be hung with half a trillion dollars in debt." And do you know who really suffers? It's Ontarians, because servicing that debt is coming out of money that should be going into the services that people actually need. Absolutely shameful.

It was quite shocking to me, speaking about the use of money and public funds: One of the things that this motion calls for is asking the federal government somehow to invest in HART hubs. Now, HART hubs are an invention of this government, half a billion dollars of investment. As someone who has worked in addiction medicine treatment, I welcome investment in treatment. The problem is, this government gave the front-line organizations no runway to convert their programs into something that could actually open their doors on day one—no runway. As a result, we are 18 months in and some HART hubs are still not fully operational. That means there are gaps in services in those communities.

I have to say, I was quite surprised when the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions rose the other day to speak about a proud moment about HART hubs opening, and mentioned that at one of the newer HART hubs over the first six months that they've been open, they have served 98 clients. Again, this government isn't very good at math, but I happened to crunch the numbers, and that works out to roughly one client every two days—one client every two days, at a program received $6 million in funding a year. We can do better with that money, and the front-line organizations need more support from this government to operationalize the HART hub model and make it work, because our people need it. Ontarians need it. They need access to that treatment.

But speaking of the Associate Minister for Mental Health and Addictions, when we talk about numbers and how people do with numbers, I was interested to see how this minister does in the position, because somehow, the minister was able to take $18,000 from one donor when I thought the maximum was—what was it, $3,200 that year? So that's pretty exceptional. I can see why she was promoted to that position, given her exceptional ability to manage money.

But I would wonder, again, why are we turning to the federal government to help us manage the expansion of HART hubs, which was the model that you created? If you didn't know how to operationalize it, why did you push it onto our communities? Why are you now needing to ask the federal government for help?

We have put forward solutions that would actually work. When it comes to substance use treatment, we have put forward concrete calls to action that we know are evidence-based, are proven models and are costed. That includes a 24-hour phone line for patients and clinicians to access to get in-the-moment advice on how to initiate substance use treatment where their patient is. That is something that we could put forward this year.

We have also put forward a guarantee that any person who has a substance use disorder, if they are seen in the emergency department, should be able to get treatment on the spot. Right now, if you go to the emergency department with an opioid overdose, you have a 5% chance of getting started on treatment. Can you imagine if we had those kinds of numbers for heart attack? You go to the hospital for heart attack, and only one in 20 of you with heart attack will get started on the right treatment? We wouldn't accept it.

The only reason it's accepted is because this group of people who are affected by substance use disorders have been so highly stigmatized by people in power—including this government—have been so deeply disregarded and treated as though they are criminals, that their care is not valued in the same way that we value care for other medical conditions, and that has to change.

We would guarantee that if you go to hospital, same day, you can get started on treatment. Further to that, if you want to go to an outpatient substance use treatment program, within 24 hours you can get an appointment. And if you require going to bed-based treatment, you should be able to get a spot within two weeks. Right now, to get a spot in bed-based addiction treatment, on average it is 96 days of waiting.

In that time, someone is fighting for their life. Many of them will experience opioid poisonings during that time. There are significant complications that can occur even if you survive that event. Many of them may be living rough on the street, and we know the harms of that experience. So 96 days is unacceptably long, and in some parts of the province, it's as high as 300 days—300 days to be able to access treatment. It shouldn't be that way. We can do so much better.

These are all solutions that we have put forward, and this government has continued to disregard them to instead follow their own make-your-own-mystery path, to disregard the recommendations of their own health experts that they have recruited to give them recommendations. This is a really troubling pattern of disregard and of the absence of caring, not to mention the fact that you're not putting your money where it could be most effectively used. Every single dollar that goes into substance use treatment should be going into the place where it will make the most difference for the patient in front of us. But it's not, and that's what's really devastating.

Like I've said, this government is not acting like a serious government. This motion is not a serious motion. When you talk about trying to improve public safety or

community safety, that is a significant issue. That is something that Ontarians really want to see their government acting on. This motion does not respond to that level of concern. It doesn't. It doesn't recognize the experience that people are having each and every day.

1630

In Hamilton, the community that I represent, the area where we are seeing crime rise the most is among youth inflicting violent crime upon each other. This is a tragedy upon a tragedy. There have been multiple episodes of gun violence in our community where both the accused and the victim have been teenagers. There is nothing in this motion that is going to change that. Our Hamilton municipality has called upon this government to give them funding for a youth wellness hub so that youth have a safe place to go, supportive people around them, a way to escape situations of violence, to get support in finding work, finding meaning, finding healthy communities. We have yet to see any response from this government in funding that youth wellness hub or doing anything substantial to address the rise in crime among youth in Hamilton.

Even further, last year, eight youth crime prevention programs were defunded. They were defunded. Those were crime prevention programs that specifically worked with youth who were either involved in gangs or at risk of being involved in gang violence. When those programs were defunded, those youth were left with no other options. This government likes to say that they're tough on crime and they're building new jails, but how about we prevent violent crime from occurring in the first place? I don't want to see a teenager locked up in jail; I want to see a teenager in school, imagining a future for themselves, imagining a future for their family. That's what we see. And that's possible if we make the right investments at the right time and we take these concerns seriously. But we need a serious government to do that, and this is not a serious government.

And even more, when we talk about some of the proposals that are in this plan, we see this government calling on the federal government for assistance in bail reform. But the thing is, the last time that this Ontario government dabbled in bail, you wound up with a constitutional challenge that we as taxpayers are now paying for. How many millions of dollars are we going to pay in legal fees because you didn't know whose jurisdiction was whose? Maybe that is a good reason to write to the federal government to clarify who does what, but it's a shame that we have to debate it here today. Because we gave you solutions at that time when we were debating that bill.

We talked about ways that we could meaningfully improve our court system and our bail system. We know that each year, cases of violent crime are being thrown out because of Jordan's Principle, because this government can't guarantee that those survivors will see their day in court. Sexual assault victims have come forward who have taken that brave step to report violence that has happened, and their cases are getting thrown out because this government can't make a court system work, can't get them their day in court to seek their justice. How do you feel like you are in any position to call on other orders of government to do bail reform when you can't even get your own house in order?

How about this? How about you not only fix the court system; you stop getting yourself bungled up in constitutional challenges because you're overreaching? How about you take the money that you're now spending on all those legal fees and you put it in actually solving the problem, getting more judges in our courts, moving things forward?

You talk about bail reform, but the bail system here is so deeply broken. You're overly relying on sureties. You're promoting cash bail, which is going to put more burden on working people. And then you don't even have the resources to recoup forfeited bail amounts. That's another thing that's been highlighted. Even when people don't meet the bail requirements, you're not even recouping that money. That's one thing that you could do. That would be focusing on getting your own house in order, but you're not doing that.

So this has all been, like I said, fairly uninspiring. This is not a motion that seeks towards bold and visionary leadership. This is not a motion that is actually serious about solving problems. This is a motion which, I think—best guess—was, "Maybe we can get one good news story going into the weekend. Maybe we can distract from the fact that we have a massive OSAP scandal on our hands." And by the way, for a government that says they're tough on crime, you certainly allowed yourself to get pickpocketed out of a few hundred million. My goodness. Tough on crime.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: You had to call the police.

MPP Robin Lennox: Yes, a tough-on-crime government who had to refer to the OPP because you did not heed warning after warning after warning that there was fraud. It's truly exceptional in the fact—and it would be funny if it wasn't so consequential. If government wasn't just so important, it would be actually quite laughable. But unfortunately, this is a very important job. These are very important issues and very important portfolios, and they deserve that recognition. They don't deserve this back-of-a-napkin "maybe we'll get a few populist points if we throw together a few buzzwords." I don't know which group got together and said who can put together feds, guns, trafficking, borders all in one motion, and then everyone was like, "Great job. Good work today. We'll debate it tomorrow." Absolutely a waste.

But let's talk about what an NDP government would do. An NDP government wouldn't write to the federal government to ask for permission. We would actually expand supportive housing. We would fund it. We would end homelessness here in this province. We would raise social assistance rates so that people weren't left living in poverty with no other option and no way out. We would expand substance use treatment to match how deep the crisis is that we are in right now. And we would put forward real, meaningful bills—pieces of legislation that

were worthy of debate, not this nonsense that you just tried to throw together to make your way through a Thursday afternoon without another scandal.

I don't know what's coming next week, and I'm sure we won't find out until the very last possible moment, but I certainly hope that whatever work is coming is actually going to address the concerns of Ontarians. Because it would be a real shame if we got to the end of this session without a plan to make groceries more affordable, without a plan to make rent more affordable, without a plan to close the loopholes so that people aren't getting hit with above-guideline rent increase after above-guideline rent increase to the point where they are at risk of losing their homes. It would be really nice if we got to the end of this session with an actual economic plan that would dig us out of this fiscal hole that you have dug and would set us on a path that's actually sustainable.

Speaking of sustainable, it would be really nice to get to the end of this session and actually have a plan to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions for once. How about meeting our climate targets? Even better, how about not gutting the Environmental Bill of Rights that gives people the right to have input over their land, their air and their water? Those would be a few substantial things that you could consider going into next week.

I don't want to forget, but I do have a sub-amendment that I would like to offer. And so, I move that the amendment be amended by removing the words "get well" and replacing them with the word "recover".

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order, please.

MPP Lennox has moved that the amendment be amended by removing the words "get well" and replacing them with the word "recover".

Further debate on the amendment to the amendment?

M^me^ Lucille Collard: I'll indicate right away that I will be sharing my time with the member from Don Valley East and the member for Ottawa South.

I appreciate the opportunity to talk about the amendment to the amendment of the motion that was presented at the end of the day yesterday to be debated today. At the outset, we're talking about safety, but I think what those amendments are getting to is looking at the underlying reasons for the public safety issue in the first place. I think it's pretty clear that if we don't address the homelessness crisis, the addiction crisis and the mental health issues, we're not going to improve public safety in any way.

1640

So I think that these amendments are good ones and on point because I think that every Ontarian deserves to feel safe in their community. They deserve to know that when someone is convicted of a violent offence and reoffends, our justice system has the resources it needs to respond and protect the public.

According to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, nearly 85,000 Ontarians were known to have experienced homelessness in 2025. People facing homelessness should be able to find a place to live and get the support they need, including mental health care and addiction treatment.

Building safe and healthy communities means taking both the violent crimes and homelessness seriously. This government needs to fund the justice services that protect the public and the housing and supports that help people get off the street and stay housed.

The motion before the House today, or the amendments that have been brought forward, is actually an example of how the government is failing, and when it does, it blames the government—that's what they were trying to do with the initial motion. Their own strategy is obviously not getting the results that they would like to see, because their priority is not addressing the underlying reasons for the challenges we see with public safety.

While the government continues to speak extensively about public safety, their approach continues to focus on punishment and incarceration. They simply refuse to acknowledge that addressing the underlying circumstances which contribute to the public safety crisis would save them spending billions of dollars on emergency services and jails. Thousands in my riding of Ottawa–Vanier are feeling that failure. I'm talking about residents, business owners, service providers, agents of the peace and of course the homeless people themselves, who see no way out of their predicament.

These are people. They are human beings that have gone through hardship, but instead of getting support from their government, they keep bouncing between shelters, the emergency services and the justice system with no end to their nightmare.

The government seems to believe that the homelessness and opioid crises can be resolved with HART hubs, and the government is asking the government to focus investment into treatment, including the HART hubs. But that's the province's primary responsibility. The province decides where those hubs will be open and how much money will be invested. And, by the way, despite the high demand in my riding—in the ByWard Market and in the Vanier area—there is no HART hub being considered to be added to replace services that were cut. That's despite repeated demands and requests and press releases and asking the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addiction to come to my riding to speak with the service provider to see for himself—or herself, now—what the crisis is doing and how much that area needs support and alternative treatment.

So maybe the government could start by showing up. If the government wants money from the federal, I think the first thing they need to do is show the efficiency of the HART hubs. Unfortunately, that's not going to happen. They can't show efficiency because they're not measuring the success of these HART hubs. I know, because I did ask a written question to the Minister of Health, asking her about the performance indicators that they are using to evaluate or measure the success of those HART hubs. The response I got was that they're actually not measuring it. They're putting in money, they're deciding where the HART hubs are going, but they have no idea of whether

this is helping with the crisis and whether the services they are providing are adequate.

Right now, according to Addictions and Mental Health Ontario, there are over 36,000 Ontarians that are waiting for mental health and addictions supportive housing. The average wait to get community-based services is about four months. That's a long time for a person to wait for services—for a person who, in that big nightmare, sees a breach of light and they decide they want to go and get treated, and they get told, "Well, it's going to take four months." Well, that's enough time to get discouraged and to fall back into the complex problems that they were in and basically fall deeper into despair.

These problems point to a much broader problem with how we approach addiction and mental health in the province. Addiction takes many forms and recognizing the full range of challenges is essential to solving the crisis. An area that deserves considerably more focus from the government is the growing impact of online gambling. And I need to talk about that because we've seen a rise in mental health problems with young people because of gambling. Since Ontario expanded its private online gambling market in 2022, emergency room visits for gambling disorders have nearly doubled relative to the expected rate. This is deeply concerning and unsustainable for an already strained system.

The consequences of online gambling go far beyond individual financial loss. Problem gambling is disproportionately prevalent among those in the criminal justice system and can contribute to debt, poverty, family instability and eventually even homelessness and criminal behaviour. Yet, Ontarians are constantly exposed to gambling advertisements, including during the sporting events families watch together. We cannot continue to normalize an activity that has such devastating consequences. We need to prioritize prevention over crisis intervention and end the online gambling advertising that fuels addiction.

Madame la Présidente, les gens ne cessent pas de vivre avec une dépendance ou de perdre leur logement ou d'éprouver des problèmes de santé mentale simplement parce que le gouvernement a décidé que sa solution est la meilleure. Les comportements problématiques deviennent tout simplement plus visibles. C'est ce qu'on voit dans nos rues : la consommation de drogues se déplace vers les toilettes publiques, vers les parcs, vers les ruelles, les stations de transport en commun et d'autres lieux publics que les gens fréquentent au quotidien. C'est précisément ce qui soulève les préoccupations de sécurité publique que l'on veut adresser avec la motion initiale.

À mon bureau de circonscription dans Ottawa–Vanier, j'entends chaque jour des gens qui s'inquiètent de voir la consommation de drogues dans les lieux publics où les enfants et les familles devraient pouvoir se sentir en sécurité.

En fait, à Ottawa, on essaie de régler le problème des gens qui consomment dans les transports en commun. C'est vraiment un problème important, et il n'y a pas de solutions réelles qui sont apportées. Le gouvernement a proposé de donner plus de pouvoir aux gens qui sont responsables de la sécurité sur les transports en commun, mais ils n'ont pas les compétences pour pouvoir intervenir de façon appropriée lorsqu'il y a des occurrences, justement, de consommation dans les transports en commun.

When addiction and homelessness resources are cut, the need does not disappear. It just gets handed over to paramedics responding to overdoses, to emergency departments treating people in crisis, to police officers responding to calls in public spaces, and to municipal services managing the resulting impact. And I have to say that in my riding, the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre has been preventing overdoses daily, and it has just been getting worse. What we're seeing is an intervention of the emergency services that is costing the city and the province a lot of money.

1650

It is really clear that the government's approach is making things worse, not better. In my riding alone, the crime rate increase speaks for itself. The Ottawa Police Service's year-end data reported that offences in the ByWard Market more than doubled from 2021 to 2025, rising from 1,400 to over 3,200. In Vanier north and Vanier south, a raw increase of 14% was also reported. Collectively, Ottawa saw a 32% increase over the past five years. That represents an increase of more than 1,000 offences in the year. Clearly, what the government is doing is not working.

Those statistics reveal that the government's strategy to reduce crime has failed. They cannot claim to prioritize public safety when their own policies have clearly had the opposite effect.

The government's strategy to reduce crime is far too focused on arresting people and putting them in jail. However, even with this approach, the government has failed to adequately fund the institutions responsible for the administration of justice. It raises the question: What good is the government's promise to increase sentences and arrests when our court system fails to process cases in a timely manner and our correctional institutions are beyond capacity?

The government has been in power for more than eight years; I think we're going to reach nine years soon. Their responsibility was to address the growing pressure facing Ontario's justice system, yet some of its earliest decisions made the situation worse.

In 2019, the Conservative government cut Legal Aid Ontario's budget by $133 million, dismissing top judge concerns that this would increase delays. We have victims waiting years for their cases to be heard. And when cases take too long to proceed, there are constitutional consequences as well. The Supreme Court of Canada previously established in the Jordan case that everybody knows now that criminal proceedings must generally be completed within 18 months in provincial court and 30 months in superior court. In the face of this decision, the Ontario government has once again failed.

In recent years, nearly 50% of Ontario cases at risk of breaching the Jordan limits were stayed or withdrawn.

This is an obvious failure when compared with all the other provinces. We are not shining there at all. This is what happens when a government talks about strengthening the justice system without adequately investing in the institutions that make it function.

Unfortunately, these problems do not end when someone finally makes it through the court system; instead, they continue into our correctional institutions. If the government's answer to every public safety challenge is to arrest more people, impose longer sentences and put more people behind bars, well, it should probably have a plan for where those people are actually going to go.

Right now, Ontario's correctional system is already struggling with significant overcrowding. Jails are currently overflowing, with facilities averaging 130% capacity. Building more jails will not solve this problem, and it is not going to save money. Instead, it is going to just place more of a burden on taxpayers while reducing the quality of care for all Ontarians.

Speaker, I want to talk about the fact that the government is showing no willingness to take responsibility for its own actions. It is the province, not the federal government, that has primary jurisdiction over many of the housing, health care and social services that are essential to reducing crime. The province has the ability to provide better investment in treatment infrastructure, supportive housing and appropriate mental health services, and they have failed to do so.

Central to this need are changes to the Ontario Disability Support Program. Earlier this morning, I rose and highlighted how Bill 148 failed to make any improvements to a program in desperate need of support. The real value of ODSP has fallen below where it stood before the government froze increases, and we see its effects, with the current value of benefits falling over 50% below the poverty line.

This is the difference between being able to afford groceries for the month or being forced to go hungry. It is why we have seen record food bank usage under this government, with nearly nine million visits between 2024 and 2025. It is a great failure of the current government that more than one million Ontarians are now relying on charitable organizations to just put food on the table.

This is not a problem which stands in isolation. An even more concerning aspect of the government's affordability crisis is the rise in homelessness seen across the province. For most people, homelessness does not just happen overnight. Instead, it is often the culmination of months or years of financial instability. Since 2021, there has been a 50% increase in homelessness. That means 85,000 Ontarians are currently without a home. When homelessness rises, crime and drug use follow. If we want safer, cleaner communities, the government must start to address the conditions which leave people vulnerable to homelessness in the first place. We cannot keep ignoring the root causes of this crisis and expect the symptoms to suddenly disappear, and they cannot simply shift responsibility onto another level of government.

Before I turn my time over to the member for Don Valley East, I just want to reiterate the fact that a night spent in a hospital or a jail costs taxpayers far more than providing someone with stable, supportive housing. Yet, instead of investing in solutions that prevent people from reaching a point of crisis, this government continues to take a reactive approach. And as expected, when all this talk fails to deliver results, as it has for the past almost nine years now of this government, the PCs do what they do best: They blame the federal government.

We need a housing-first strategy that recognizes housing as a foundation for stability and recovery. We need an increase to ODSP rates so people with disabilities can afford to keep a roof over their head, and we need to put an end to online gambling advertising that fuels addiction and financial hardship. We need to eliminate addiction treatment wait times, so people can receive help as soon as they need it.

On this, Speaker, I will turn it over to one of my colleagues, the member for Don Valley East.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Don Valley East.

Mr. Adil Shamji: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity to discuss an issue of paramount importance to my constituents in Don Valley East and, of course, across Ontario, and that is the state of crime, safety, mental health and addictions across the province of Ontario.

I wanted to begin my remarks by reflecting a little bit on the unusual circumstances that transpired earlier this morning. These are merely observations, but my colleague who sits next to me is an avid gamer, and he was reflecting on a new game that's coming out. He wasn't making any accusations, merely reflecting and expressing his excitement. The game is GTA VI, and for people who don't know, it's a game about a drug overlord operating a criminal empire marked by greed, ambition, corruption, betrayal and manipulation. It's just a description of a game that he's excited to play.

But what was so peculiar that transpired earlier this morning is there was enormous commotion by certain members in the House. I can't exactly explain why. Presumably, it may have been because they were uncomfortable hearing that description; perhaps it hit close to home. I'm not saying that it should or that it did, but apparently, it elicited that reaction, implying that it did.

1700

Truthfully, I would never make that comparison. I don't think that it's a fair comparison to make. I don't think it's gentlemanly—I mean, with the greatest of respect to my colleague, I'm not sure that it's the most gentlemanly accusation to make in this august chamber. There are other games that I think could more accurately describe the state of our province.

For example, Monopoly: Monopoly is a game where people are driven to a state of bankruptcy because of the concentration of property in the hands of a few, while that few tries to evade jail. That feels like it describes the state of our housing sector and the state of our province a little

bit more accurately. I feel a little more comfortable describing that.

Another game that might accurately describe the state of our province is Jenga. Jenga is where you take a structure that is stable, that functions as designed, and you pull out foundational blocks under the pretense of trying to create something bigger, meanwhile making it all the more unstable in the process. I think that is a perfect metaphor and a perfect game that accurately describes what this government has done to our great province.

Another game that I think of when I consider the state of our province and the way that this government operates is pin the tail on the donkey. This is where someone completely blinded, who has no idea what they're doing, just wanders around and tries to put the blame on someone else. I think that's actually a very accurate metaphor and description of this motion.

Interjections.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'm not done yet.

Another game that I think could accurately describe the state of this government, the performance of this Premier, is Yahtzee. Yahtzee is a game where you just throw things up in the air randomly and hope that you get a favourable outcome.

The performance of this government is simply astonishing. But what is not astonishing, what is not a laughing matter, is the state that our province has been thrust into under the incompetence of the people that sit in the front row over here, and the people in the rows behind them that blindly support them.

This is a government that faces an RCMP criminal investigation and then has the audacity to stand up and introduce a motion on crime and safety. This is the same government that allowed criminals to get away with dismantling our career college system, ignored all of the warnings, and then panicked when the Ontario Liberals pointed out the error of their ways.

This is a government that has said that they are going to protect Ontario, and so in their infinite wisdom, their genius idea to protect Ontario was not to do anything about it—not even to write a letter, which the Premier historically has actually been pretty good at doing. Their genius idea was to introduce a motion in order to write a letter, in order to ask someone else to do the job that they are supposed to do.

This is the ridiculous state that this government, this Premier and everyone in the front row plus all the other people who support them have created here in this chamber, in this province. And it's not fair to the good people of Ontario. It's all smoke and mirrors because for everything that they say about wanting to protect Ontario, the record speaks for itself.

This government introduces a motion that is intended to address homelessness, mental health, addictions, crime and safety through a motion to write a letter to someone else. But here's the track record of this government, and it's not a joke: Under this government, since 2018, homelessness has skyrocketed. People lining up at food banks—that has skyrocketed, too. But the most recent report by the Financial Accountability Office projects that the population of people experiencing homelessness is going to go up by 16% by 2029.

So in their infinite wisdom, they have introduced a motion to write a letter to another level of government. The only thing that they actually have done that in any way touches on homelessness, the only active thing that they have done has been—according to the Financial Accountability Office—to cut funding for programs to prevent homelessness by $250 million, or a quarter of a billion dollars. But I remind you, their solution, again, is to introduce a motion to write a letter to another level of government.

Here are some other statistics that paint a very bleak picture of our province, specifically under this Conservative government, under that Premier:

The incidence of police-reported hate crimes in our province has gone up by 238% under a government that said it's going to protect Ontario.

The incidence of police-reported violent crime has gone up in urban areas by 17%; in rural areas, it has gone up by 54%. This government has chosen to respond to that by introducing a motion to write a letter to ask other levels of government for help.

People experiencing homelessness, as I mentioned, is going up another 16% by 2029 and has already gone up by 40% since 2018. People sleeping outdoors in Toronto has gone up by 171%. Now, I'm surprised that the government isn't aware of this one. It's well known to all the members in this House that the government members have a blind spot to municipalities such as Ottawa and Hamilton and Windsor and is entirely preoccupied with Toronto. So why they wouldn't be aware of the fact that they have created a surge in homelessness here in Toronto by 171% is entirely beyond me.

As I mentioned, visits to Ontario food banks have gone up substantially, specifically by 184%. Their solution to this? To overlook all of their failures and introduce a motion to write a letter to another level of government.

There aren't enough jails; there aren't enough beds in jails. People are stuffed into jail cells. Inmate deaths in Ontario have surged by 58%. This is all they have to show for their efforts.

We see that there's been a 164% increase in cyber crime in the province of Ontario.

Around the issue of mental health and addictions, the motion here is simply to write a letter to other levels of government. They're professing to protect Ontario even as, under their watch, opioid deaths have surged by 48%. Deaths related to stimulant toxicity have surged by 117%.

And we now have an epidemic of online gambling that has surged all throughout the province—an epidemic in online gambling that is of this government's creation. It wasn't a problem before; it certainly is now.

As a result of the surge in crime, the surge in violence, the lack of support for policing, for the courts, because of the massive increase in wait times, because of the lack of adequate supports for mental health and addictions, because of this government's preoccupation—fascination,

love—for writing letters and literally doing nothing else, opioid deaths have surged and there is no solution or any hope in sight for people who are struggling.

So, where does this leave us? It leaves us with a government that has lots of time for novelty cheques, for ribbon cutting, for avoiding auditor reports, for avoiding the Legislature, quite frankly, for avoiding question period and instead writing letters and introducing motions.

This allows me to turn to the issue of an amendment that has now been introduced. We're looking at an amendment to an amendment asking for a focus on recovery—

Hon. Steve Clark: This is an amendment to an amendment to an amendment, to be clear.

Mr. Adil Shamji: Thank you for the clarification—an amendment to an amendment, ad nauseum, about a focus on recovery—sure. The word "recovery" is being appended to something much more, focusing on protecting communities by guaranteeing timely access to quality substance use treatment, same-day treatment in ERs and hospitals etc.

1710

There's no question in my mind that, across our great province, there is a massive shortage in access to mental health and addiction services. This government has gutted the services that we have, underfunded the new ones it has pretended to introduce and led to a massive surge in people struggling with mental health and addictions into emergency departments.

Many of my colleagues can speak from personal experience that the number of people asking for help in ERs, driving up wait times, has only increased under this government's watch. This government has no solution except to introduce a motion to write a letter to another level of government. In fact, by my count, this government received approximately $3.8 billion in federal health transfers specifically for mental health services, but nobody has seen $3.8 billion of new investment in mental health and addiction services. But at least the government is asking for permission to write a letter that will probably additionally ask for more money that they will squirrel away somewhere else on things nobody is asking for.

In the current amendment and the amendment to the amendment, a lot of things have been taken out of the original motion and there's now a focus on increased mental health and addiction services, and no one will deny that that is something of paramount importance and we need to get more of that. Even if you agree with the government's approach which has been to introduce HART hubs—some of those HART hubs work. To be honest and fair, some of them work exceptionally well; many of them are abysmal and many sites where HART hubs were actually promised have not been delivered. Many of the ones that have been delivered are underfunded or don't have the resources they require.

I was about to say that all of us can get behind additional supports for mental health and addictions, but I don't want to speak for the government because it hasn't always been clear their members would get behind that statement. What concerns me, however, about the amendment to the amendment is that while it does appropriately focus on the need for more mental health and addiction services and recovery services, it does nothing to address the rampant criminality that's taking place across our entire province. It does nothing to address crime and safety and the sense that Ontarians across our great province don't feel safe in their own homes. If the members across were to say that their amendment to the amendment addresses that because it addresses mental health and addictions, I would be offended at that because I cannot and will not blame the mental health and addictions community for the carjackings, the hate crimes and the violent crime that we're seeing across our province.

One element in the amendment addresses mental health and addictions, and that's fine, but their amendment does nothing about crime and safety. It does absolutely nothing about reducing the wait times to get justice in court. It does nothing about putting more police on our streets. It does nothing about strengthening our jail system to ensure that no more prisoners are inappropriately released.

We know that the very same minister who introduced this motion to write a letter, to talk to another level of government, the same minister who is using this as his excuse to demonstrate he's trying to protect Ontario, he's the same one who let out over 100 or 120 prisoners—

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: It's 127.

Mr. Stephen Blais: It's 157.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'm hearing two numbers, 127 or 157. It's probably higher than that. So 157 prisoners under his own watch—he's neglected to say anything, and he still hasn't found all of them, won't report back to all of us. The only instrument in his tool kit is to tie us up in the Legislature, talking about a motion to write a letter to talk to another level of government.

It's a flawed motion and it's a half-hearted amendment that only talks about mental health and addictions and just shows that the only people in this House that can be credible on both mental health, addictions, crime and safety are the people that sit in my caucus next to me and behind me.

The reality is that while we need more services—both for treatment and recovery for people struggling with mental health and addictions, and people experiencing and struggling with homelessness—we need to take urgent action to make sure the minister, the Solicitor General, never again loses 157 prisoners; never again gets away with losing them, not finding them and not telling the Legislature about them.

We need to make sure that never again do we have a province where hate crimes have gone up by 238%, where violent crime has surged, where cyber crime has surged, and the amendment to the amendment and the original amendment do nothing about that.

So what should it have said? Well, in addition to things on mental health and addictions, I would have appreciated if it called for additional funding to put more police officers on our street. I would have appreciated if it had more funding so that we can have more courts, more funding so that we can make sure that we've got enough

jails and to make sure that we've got rehabilitative services in those jails and outside jails. I would have appreciated if it had a call to action for more funding to get bad guys off the streets. And none of these things are present in the amendment to the amendment, making this only partially credible.

Across our great province, every day, we have hard-working police officers, firefighters and health care workers working day and night, evening and weekend. We see nothing against workplace violence that's targeting them. We see nothing that is focused on retaining the great people that we have, the health care workers who are essential to addressing mental health and addiction.

In fact, just days ago, this government had an opportunity to address the massive attrition of health care workers that is taking place right now: those very same people that we require to operate those HART hubs, those very same people that we require to help people who are struggling with mental health and addiction struggles, the very same people who we need to help provide vital services in our homeless shelters in Toronto and across our great province. But instead, we're hemorrhaging those great people. Again, yet another reason that we're seeing a surge in violence, in homelessness, in people struggling with mental health and addictions. None of those things are mentioned in this motion.

In fact, when the government had an opportunity to vote to stand up for those workers who could help with mental health and addictions, who could help in combatting homelessness, they had the audacity to say no, which makes me realize something: They like to talk a big game about recruitment; they never talk about retention. And that is truly something that is remarkable and surprising, because I have observed that when this government is interested in retaining employees, they're actually really good at doing it.

There is a growing list of disgraced ministers who have resigned and ended up in all sorts of other places, who mysteriously find out that there's still a place for them in the most senior levels in cabinet and in our government. The government knows how to do retention; they just don't know the people that they want to keep. Those people should be the people who are serving in our mental health services, addiction services, homelessness services, and looking after the people who keep us safe on the streets.

But this does not call for more funding for police officers. It does not call for additional services for courts. It does not call for investments to make sure that we've got more jails, that we've got safer jails. It does not call for additional rehabilitative services. All it seeks to do is to increase stigma and make it look like a government that has done worse than nothing. They've done worse than nothing; they've actively made the situation in our great province worse, and I had already enumerated many of the statistics that have worsened since this Premier took power in 2018.

Now, I wish that I could take this opportunity to discuss this in greater detail, but my esteemed colleague the MPP for Ottawa South is quite keen to jump in here, so I'm going to yield the rest of my time to him.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Ottawa South

Mr. John Fraser: It's more like the "steamed" colleague from Ottawa South, and I'm going to get there in just a second. But I want to thank my colleague from Ottawa—

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: I've got you going already, guys. I love it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: You should.

But I want to thank my colleagues from Ottawa–Vanier and Don Valley East, and of course my colleague from Orléans who got you all really excited this morning. But we'll get to that later.

1720

As my colleague from Don Valley East said, we are here this afternoon debating an amendment to an amendment to a motion so that the Premier could write another letter to another level of government. It would be funny if we didn't know right now that somewhere somebody is in a hallway in a hospital waiting to get the care that they need; or that there's a kid who couldn't go to school today because they were excluded, because there wasn't somebody there to help them; or there's a person out there who's overdosing because they can't get the addiction treatment that they need; or there's a young man thinking about killing himself because he's become addicted to online gambling.

But no, we're here so you can put on a show, so you can show the world how much you have done—so the government can show how much they've done.

The reality is that you heard my colleague from Don Valley East tell you how much crime is up all over. It's eight years. It's going up, not going down. But the Premier talks so tough on crime, you would think, my God, he's out there on the street all holstered up himself, right?

You know what? This small-town sheriff, "Ah, shucks, folks," isn't going to work. It's not keeping people safe. It's not protecting people. They spent hundreds of millions of dollars saying, "We're protecting Ontario." Well, you're not, and this motion actually shows that you're not focused on the job—not focused at all.

This morning, my colleague from Orléans asked a very straightforward question on crime, on the failures of the government and the court system and the jail system and policing. Nobody could stand up. What that says to me is they knew that your record is indefensible. And if you listen to my colleague from Don Valley East, it's pretty clear.

It's not what you say; it's what you do. And what you've done is made Ontario less safe. You made Ontario less safe by not funding the police properly. You made Ontario unsafe because the Solicitor General has a hard time keeping criminals behind bars. He lost 157 criminals,

and for at least a week, maybe two weeks—actually, it was six question periods—he could not give a straight answer about that question. He tried to pretend like it didn't happen, and the only reason that it happened is somebody did an FOI, which is something you took away.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you for the reminder.

But it is so frustrating that we're debating this motion. There is other legislation that we could be talking about right now. There's Bill 105, which supports workers. It makes increases to WSIB. It keeps people safer. It protects them if they get injured at work. It's going to give them a 5% increase—they've been waiting for two decades. But no, we're going to talk, as my colleague said, about an amendment to an amendment to a motion so the Premier can write another letter, as if he needs our permission or is really even asking for it.

This is a farce. It is a total, absolute farce and a waste of not our time but the people's time. This time in here is the people's time. It's the people's time for the government to get something done for them. It's the people's time for the opposition to push the government to get something done.

So it's not funny. It's not funny that we're here. We should be debating a bill that's going to change something for people. We should be debating this government putting more money into police, putting more money into the courts and putting more money into mental health and addiction.

My colleague from Don Valley East talked about online gambling. Do you know what's happening? Does the government know what's happening to young people, especially young men, how we're letting advertising just—it's all over. It's all over your phone. It's on the bus. It's everywhere you look: "Bet. Bet. Bet. Bet. Bet." And what's happening is there's a generation of young men whose lives will be changed forever because they become addicted. We all know that, and nobody is doing anything about it. But instead, we're debating a motion so you can be seen to be doing something, so the Premier can write a letter, so he can talk about how good he is and how somebody else should fix the problems that he created.

Think about it. Why are we doing this? Why are we going through this exercise? There are so many things out there that we could be doing right now that would actually make a difference in people's lives. This motion—it's not going to. It's not going to happen, folks. We're going to spend nine hours debating this motion.

Now, I appreciate the amendment, and, as my colleague said, the amendment is incomplete because it doesn't talk about the whole picture. We need more money in mental health and addiction. We need it. We need people to not be stuck in the hallway in a hospital. We need our schools to work. We need to make sure that kids can be in class. That's going to make our community safer.

We need to have those things in the amendment to this motion. But at the end of the day, what we're doing here is an exercise in the government trying to look good; an exercise in the Premier pontificating; an exercise in the Premier being "I'm the tough-on-crime guy," except you know what, folks? He's not. He talks tough on crime. He likes people to believe that "You know what? I'm taking care of you," while you're spending $120 million a year on Protect Ontario ads. Give me a break.

What could you do with $120 million? Well, you could fix up the courts. You could provide more mental health and addiction services. Guys, there's so much more you could be doing. But we're here debating a motion to write a letter so the Premier can look good. I wonder if he's going to write in French. Sorry, I just had to throw that out there. Anyway, well, good luck with that. It might have been cute and funny in Quebec, but I can tell you: pour les Franco-Ontariens, ce n'est pas bon. La langue française n'est pas une blague. It's not funny. It's not funny.

This whole thing of government is not a dog-and-pony show; it's about actually doing things. It's not about performing and being an actor and being seen as the sheriff, the small-town cop. I have been in a seat on this front row for eight and a half years, and I've watched this. And I've got to tell you—

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: You know what? Keep smiling. I've been on both sides. I know where you guys are at right now. I know where you're at. So maybe you can be smiling, and I know where you're going. Everybody has got a best-before date: not so good after—an expiry date. I've got one too; trust me. I'm not saying I don't, but at least I know when mine is. At least I know when mine is, guys.

Speaker, this motion just shows this government has passed its best-before date. It's not like yogourt. You can't keep eating this stuff past the date. If you eat this stuff, you're going to get sick.

Thank you, Speaker. I'll stop with the food analogies. Grocery business—you know I've got to do it.

1730

I'm vacillating between trying to connect with you guys by making you laugh a little bit and being angry because we're debating this, being angry because we're not taking care of the things that are important to people.

If classrooms are too big, it's not safe. If you're in a hallway in a hospital, you're not safe. If you can't afford your groceries, you're not safe.

Policing, courts, jails, mental health and addiction, hospitals, schools, getting control of the advertising for online gambling so we don't lose a generation of young men—why aren't we doing that? That would mean something. That would change things. This motion is going to change nothing.

We don't have much time here—all of us. We get elected. We have a responsibility. And on the other side—and I fully respect it; I've been there—you have an opportunity to do things; you have an opportunity to change people's lives; you have an opportunity to make people's lives better. But you only get so much time. It doesn't go on forever. We don't have all the time in the world. And for us to be here talking about what we're

talking about this afternoon—not that it's not important, but we're not talking about it in a way that gives any action, that makes things happen. We're not trying to protect young men from online gambling. We're not trying to make sure that young people are getting the treatment, the counselling for addictions that we need to. It's infuriating, but it's also—guys, it's really discouraging. It is so discouraging that we're here doing this right now.

I know I've got six minutes left, and I guess with that last six minutes—

Mr. Stephen Blais: Casinos.

Mr. John Fraser: Casinos, yes. Thanks. I needed a reminder.

My colleague has just reminded me about casinos. So do you know how I know that you know, over there, that what we're doing right now is not a good use of our time, that it's stupid—to be honest. We're debating an amendment to an amendment to a motion for the Premier to write a letter.

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: But do you know what? And my colleague reminded me about this—"Hey, guess what? Let's get some new casinos for Niagara." You know that I know that you know that's a dumb idea, because somebody over there said that—at least one or two people. We know that, right? So I know that you're thinking over there. I know somebody is thinking—actually, a lot of you are thinking.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: It is a dumb idea.

Think about Ontario over the last eight years. Here's the change you notice the most—booze on every corner, cannabis on every corner, gambling wherever you look. So I don't know if, actually, the member from Orléans's question was that far off the mark, and maybe that's why it got everybody excited. Seriously, think about it. The House leader should think about it. There's booze on every corner, right? There's cannabis on every corner, everywhere we look, and you can't escape gambling. What we're saying to young people—and not just 16 and 17-year-olds or 20-year-olds or 25-year-olds; seven-year-olds, seven-year-olds that are watching sports with their parents. Why can't you just end that? Why do allow that to be embedded into sports broadcasts? What do you say to your six-year-old when they say, "Oh, what's this betting thing, Daddy?" People are taking advantage of people. That's what gambling is. Yes, maybe there's some entertainment value in it, but the purpose of the people who run those gambling things is to take advantage of people, is to take people's money, not just because they're being entertained but because they're addicted. It's like heroin. Do you know why it's like heroin? Because it destroys people's lives like heroin does. I really feel that way.

The decisions we make aren't easy, but this one—I think it's easy for us to say, "Why don't we just dial back this advertising? Why don't we just protect our kids?" If you guys wanted to debate that this afternoon, I'd be all for it. If you want to debate putting more money into addictions and more money into policing, more money into schools, more money into health care, I'd be happy to be here. I'd stay until midnight. I'd stay overnight. We all would.

It's late in the afternoon. Admittedly, I'm running out of gas.

Hon. Matthew Rae: You've got a bed to make.

Mr. John Fraser: I've got to make the bed, yes. That's true. She'll be doing it—the only way it's going to get done. That's what I learned this year.

I ain't got two sticks to rub together, guys, so—

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: That's exactly right. Thank you very much.

It's going to be my last two minutes here; I've got to make them count. It's a two-minute warning, guys.

I want to thank the Speaker for her patience—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, there you go—her patience and good nature.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): That's not what this is.

Mr. John Fraser: I just want to finish by saying that we can elevate the rhetoric and be interesting and entertaining and thoughtful and all the things that we do in here. The reality is, we have the opportunity to do things and to change things and we shouldn't waste too much of our time talking about things like this that don't actually lead to an action, that don't actually change people's lives, that don't actually make a difference. That's what's wrong with what we're talking about this afternoon: We're not actually doing anything. We're all just talking, talking and talking about an amendment to an amendment to a motion to write a letter.

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

Hon. Matthew Rae: It's wonderful to rise in this place, as it always is, to speak, no matter the time of day or the day of the week, on very important business before this assembly. And I know we only have a short amount of time left before we get to return to our lovely ridings across this beautiful province, so I will say I am going to share my time with the great government House leader, the member from Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes and that beautiful part of the world this afternoon.

Speaker, I've been here most of the afternoon with many of you, listening to the debate originally on the motion before us moved by our great Solicitor General, on ensuring we're supporting our front-line police but also calling on the federal government, in particular, to act at the border and ensure that the illegal guns coming across the border, the fentanyl coming across the border and the human trafficking is stopped at the border.

1740

And we have no authority over that, colleagues. As you know, this is the province, and in the Constitution, the

border is with the federal government and we do not have the authority to do that.

I know a couple of budgets ago, this government brought forward support for our police forces in our border towns—whether that's in Cornwall, Windsor and many others—because they were the ones stepping up where the Canadian border officials were not. Those border officials do their work, but they need more resources.

So this motion—then amended by two subsequent amendments by our colleagues across the aisle—really was focused on ensuring we're advocating with our federal partners.

And Speaker, I know you were very gracious with everyone this afternoon, indulging them to go off-topic, and I appreciate that. Really, I found it entertaining, from the socialist NDP, working with the Ontario Liberal Party, to make fun of a very important motion to propose amendments. The last amendment, colleagues, was "get well" to "recovery." And Speaker—

Interjection.

Hon. Matthew Rae: An important letter—it is an important letter, Speaker.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Hon. Matthew Rae: The member from Don Valley East even admitted that the Premier of this province has a very good track record with writing those letters and gets action from those letters, and I agree with the member from Don Valley East.

That is what we're asking this government, this assembly, 124 members here currently, to vote together in support—I hope they support this motion—to advocate to the federal government to step up and ensure that they are with us, supporting our front-line police officers.

I know the member from Ottawa South mentioned that he would be happy to debate a piece of legislation that was going to support our front-line police officers and invest in them.

I have news for that member, Speaker: We do have a piece of legislation. It's called the fall economic statement. It's also called the provincial budget. The fall economic statement and provincial budget—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock. I'm sorry to interrupt the minister who does indeed have the floor. I'm going to invite all of the members to be respectful of this member having the floor. Thank you.

I will return to the Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries.

Hon. Matthew Rae: I am happy to serve in any capacity in this House, Speaker; I don't care about my title. Thank you, though.

Speaker, as I was mentioning, the most recent provincial budget and the fall economic statement continue to make historic investments in our police forces, supporting our front-line police forces.

I know the paramedics were here earlier this week—they've been brought up, our great paramedics—and our front-line firefighters as well, ensuring we're supporting those individuals being there. Community paramedicine is very well-received in our rural communities, supporting some of those individuals that this motion references through the HART hubs, making those investments and ensuring that the federal government is there to support those investments as well.

I know the federal health transfers came up already in debate this afternoon, Speaker, and I would encourage my colleagues on that side to also join this Minister of Health to advocate to the federal government to honour their commitments, because they are cutting the health transfers to all the provinces. It doesn't matter if you have a Progressive Conservative government, a Liberal government or an NDP government, the federal government is planning to cut and reduce those services. And so we hope they join us in advocating for the amount that they promised the provinces in the health transfer, Speaker.

I know the socialist NDP was talking about us not investing in housing, and I found it perplexing because I know the government House leader, when he was the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in the 2023-24 budget cycle, increased the Homelessness Prevention Program by 40%. Over $600 million annually goes to support the Homelessness Prevention Program, which goes to the front-line services in our province.

And Speaker, as you know, unfortunately, the members of the opposition voted against that provincial budget and all subsequent provincial budgets that continue to make that important investment.

As has been alluded to, the HART hubs, which is a portion of this motion—$550 million being invested through that. And again, the members of the opposition are voting against those investments across Ontario, which is disappointing because they are not just in downtown Toronto. Our caucus is represented in every corner of this province, and it's going to places like Sarnia; it's going to places like Windsor, ensuring we're supporting our front-line mental health professionals on the ground helping those who may need a hand up.

I know it was talked about as well on the costs we are seeing in Ontario, and that's why our government—we're very famous for it now in this place: We have never raised a tax on the hard-working people of Ontario. Under the socialist government of Bob Rae, they introduced exemptions to the rent control—the same policy, I hate to admit it, that we have, Speaker. We have the same policy as Bob Rae on rent that he had. And they had this exemption for everything built after 1991.

When the NDP was last in power, the rent increased—and these are the years: 1990, the rent increased by 4.6%; 1991, 5.4%; 1992, 6%; and 1993, 4.9%. That is a big, big increase, colleagues, over that four-year term just in rents right there. But our government has kept rents at the 2.5% or lower on those units, because we know affordability is important to the people of Ontario. And as I mentioned, we have never raised a tax, and we got rid of the licence

plate sticker fee—a tax on anyone who owns a vehicle in this province.

The motion before us and the subsequent amendments were really focusing on ensuring we're supporting our front-line health care professionals, working with our federal government. It is going to take all levels of government to ensure that we meet the challenges ahead of us currently.

I know colleagues in this place talk about provincial downloading to our municipal colleagues. Speaker, just for the record, I've actually done some research on this. Social services such as housing and welfare—what year was that given to municipalities as a responsibility, colleagues? I don't think any of us would think of this year: 1866. That is the year municipalities—before our country was even officially formed—had the responsibility and the partnership on social services and housing.

Interjection.

Hon. Matthew Rae: Before the Minister of Seniors and Accessibility was born, that is correct, my colleague from Essex has said this afternoon.

And Speaker, that is there to show you that we continue to work with our municipal partners, but these are long-standing partnerships. I know I've mentioned it in the previous Parliament that I had the honour of serving in: Under Premier Harris, there was actually an uploading of costs to the provincial government. The education system was uploaded. We assumed all of that cost.

I know I bring up education, and the members in the third party brought up education—more money for education, more money for health care. We agree. Again, we have a fall economic statement that they chose to vote against, where we're investing historic amounts in our health care system and our education system.

I'm not surprised the third party is a little confused. You know, they do have a big weekend coming up. They're going to again elect a leader that we will meet at the polls in a few years. We will, again, take our message to the people of Ontario, and I will be proud to stand on our government's record of creating a million jobs since 2018, securing over $235 billion in investment. We will not go back to the dark days when they increased electricity prices by $1,000 a year for Ontario families and drove 300,000 jobs out of this province. We are going to continue to protect Ontario and fight for the good people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Steve Clark: You know, this has been a really interesting afternoon. When a government like ours tables a notice of motion like motion 20, you want to do it in the spirit of collaboration, because I've always felt, in the entire time I've been in this place, that we're always stronger when we have a common message coming out of the Legislature.

But I have to say, this is so reminiscent of my entire time in this House. I was elected in a by-election in 2010, and in those 16 and a half years, I have never seen the left-wing parties in Ontario have each other's back like the NDP and the Liberals do in Ontario.

1750

It's fascinating how, no matter where they are in their political journey, no matter whether they're in the middle of a leadership like the Ontario Liberals are, if the Liberals pick the phone up and say, "Hey, we're electing our new leader. There's going to be a new leader. The Tories have got this motion that talks about the federal government. We don't really want to do that. Can you guys help us out and put an amendment on the floor to give us a bit of cover?" Sure enough, the NDP table an amendment. Then they don't even get it right the first time; they've got to do an amendment to the amendment. Then the Liberals, they talk about anything but the amendment or the motion that's before you, and it's quite reminiscent.

I remember vividly in 2012 when the 17-person NDP caucus literally sat on their hands for the Liberal budget in the minority because they just had this deal where they sat on their hands. Then, to my surprise, they stood up in the House and they criticized the Liberal budget. It was an unbelievable spectacle. They got so much flak in 2012 that they literally just showed their colours, and the NDP unequivocally supported the Liberal budget the next year in 2013.

So when we got elected in 2018, we made the comments about how over the last 15 years, literally the two parties voted and aligned 98% of the time. It's not surprising that there are amendments on the floor. It's not surprising that the NDP and the Liberals—

Mr. Chris Glover: The letter is going to solve all the problems—

Hon. Steve Clark: Listen, the Dippers don't want to talk about what was in this main motion. Let's review the amendments, Speaker. Let's actually do the amendments.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Spadina–Fort York will come to order.

Hon. Steve Clark: These guys were talking about a letter; there's no reference to a letter. This is all just made-up stuff where they sat in the west lobby and just said, "What do you want to talk about this afternoon?" So they make up this thing about a letter. I'm going to talk about the motion.

Here's what the Liberals and the NDP, here's what the Grits and the Dippers, the left-wing parties, don't want to talk about. What did they take out? They took out that "the federal government should build on the Ontario government's work of closing drug injection sites." That says everything you need to know about these two left-wing parties in Ontario when that's the first thing they take out. There's the city of Toronto request. This is a very topical discussion before the House. They try to belittle it and make sure that we don't talk about it, but they make a very strong—that's the first thing that's taken out.

They don't want to talk about the fact that we close drug injection sites. They don't want to talk about that we're asking the federal government to pass legislation "to strengthen public safety and advocate for strong bail

reform laws." Neither left-wing party wants to talk about bail law; that's why they took it out with their amendment.

They also don't want to talk about strengthening "bail and sentencing laws to protect communities against violent, repeat offenders." They don't want to hold people accountable for home invasions, carjackings and extortion. They don't want to do that.

One of the Liberals actually talked about police. Right in that third paragraph that these amendments took out: "Increase federal policing and border enforcement resources to disrupt fentanyl trafficking, illegal firearms smuggling and organized criminal networks...."

Listen, we had the duty-free guys here the other day. I have two land border crossings. It's very important that we support those federal workers on those land border crossings and that we do exactly what's in this third paragraph. But what happened? The Dippers and the Liberals. The first amendment took all of those things out.

They don't want to talk about that this afternoon. They don't want to have a discussion about the border and about increased border security. They don't want to talk about fentanyl and firearms and organized crime. They don't want to do that. That's not the discussion they want. Heaven forbid one of the Liberal candidates is going to have to address that. They don't want to do that. They want to protect themselves for whoever their new leader is, and they go to their colleagues, their comrades, and say, "Hey comrade, take all this stuff out so we don't have to talk about it."

And literally—through you, Speaker, to the member—this is what I've gone through the entire time that I've been here in the Legislature: these parties having each other's back when they don't want to talk about issues that Ontario wants to talk about.

Finally, when we talk about refusing to accept—and I think this is very important. I can't believe, for the life of me, colleagues, that these two left-wing parties want to take this out. They don't want to refuse to accept any requests for decriminalization of possession of illicit drugs or steps towards supplying illicit drugs, and instead focus on investments—and then they cut it off, and they kept in treatment, supportive housing and recovery services, like the HART hubs. They dance around the HART hubs.

The minister was here in the House, and I have said it to her many times—I had her in the riding: I am so happy that the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston and I were able to have a rural HART hub in Smiths Falls and Brockville. We have not had, because of previous governments, access to detox beds, to withdrawal management beds. God bless our government for ensuring that the people in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville have this service available. I know that Lanark's service was in operation first, before the Brockville service. We actually have constituents who pledge that the HART hub changed their life, that it cleaned them up, that it gave them the tools, that they were able to access supportive housing and that they were able to turn things around. I was so happy to meet some of those people at the HART hub opening in Brockville. And I'm so glad that our government were the ones that decided to make sure these drug injection sites were closed and were turned into HART hubs.

It says everything you need to know about New Democrats and Liberals when that's the first thing they take out. And I have to tell you, the amendment to the amendment was basically just small, right? It was a small mistake you guys made. You're taking the word "recover" and replacing "get well"—that was in your original motion. I just found it hilarious that for an hour three Liberals stood up here and they didn't say the words "get well" or "recover" in their entire speeches. You guys always have their backs. They always have your backs.

We're going to continue to put forward motions like this.

And I have to say to Minister Kerzner what a great minister he is. He has come to our riding so many times. He stands up for our police. We had the Police Association of Ontario—I hope everyone had a meeting with PAO. Their asks were fantastic. I've already talked to Minister Kerzner about what they said.

I also want to encourage you, given what PAO said, to do what I did: I went to bail court with one of those police officers we met a year ago, and it was fascinating to see this revolving system that this motion would have spoken to. It's just unbelievable—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Hon. Steve Clark: The Liberals are so mad that I'm bringing up these points that they just—the NDP are actually silent. The NDP aren't even bailing out the Liberals right now. You guys finally saw the light and said they can stand on their own.

Again, these are very important matters that Minister Kerzner believes very strongly, and so do I—that the federal government needs to hear this message from Ontario. They need to hear from this Legislature about the importance of these. They cannot acquiesce to the left-wing interests that want to bring back drug injection sites. We need to build upon the success of our HART hubs. We need to build on the success that this government has put forward. This was the original motion.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote against the amendment to the amendment, to vote against the amendment, and to support this motion. This motion speaks volumes about what we need the federal government to do.

Again, I call on the new leader of the Liberal Party, whoever that may be, to turn you guys around and make sure you support this motion when it gets called back again.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The House will come to order.

Seeing the time on the clock, it is now time for private members' public business.

Debate deemed adjourned.

Report continues in volume B.

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
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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	