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Lundi
23 novembre 2026

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Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly
Greffier : Trevor Day

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 November 2026

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 novembre 2026

The House met at 1015.

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

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FIRST RESPONDERS

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Good morning. I rise today to recognize Ontario's first responders, whose courage, dedication and professionalism help keep our communities safe every day. Behind every emergency call is a police officer, a firefighter, a paramedic or emergency responder prepared to put the well-being of others ahead of their own. These men and women answer the call without hesitation, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances. My community saw that commitment on full display during a recent tragic townhouse fire in Burlington.

Speaker, first responders are there for us on some of the worst days of our lives, and we can't forget that the weight of those experiences often stays with them long after the emergency has ended. The mental and emotional toll can be significant.

That's why our government is investing more than $32 million through the Mental Health Supports for Public Safety Personnel Program. This investment will help ensure that those who dedicate their lives to protecting others have access to the care and resources they need when they need them most.

Thank you to all of Ontario's first responders for your courage, professionalism and unwavering commitment to keeping our communities safe.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 140

Ms. Jennifer K. French: MPPs have been flooded with emails and constituent calls opposing Bill 140, the Building Ontario Faster Act. It is terrible that these Conservatives are gutting the Environmental Bill of Rights and doing it in a hurry. This bill will have significant impacts on communities, but before many brand new municipal councils have even been sworn in, this bill has moved through the House.

There were 46 requests to appear at committee, but PC MPPs decided to only allow nine presentations in three hours on only one afternoon. There have been over 1,200 written submissions, but there is not enough time to adequately consider these voices.

The changes in this bill will have huge effects on Indigenous partners. In the shockingly limited time we had at committee, the Chiefs of Ontario raised major concerns. Free, prior and informed consent does not fit into a seven-minute presentation.

1020

Grand Chief Joel Abram of the Chiefs of Ontario asked the committee to extend hearings, so I moved a motion to add one day of public hearings and extend the process until December 2. The PCs voted against it.

Curiously, however, after defeating my motion to extend hearings, the PCs quietly did bump the last day of committee back a week, from the 25th to December 2, but without adding any more hearings. Why, Speaker? I can't say for certain, but the Premier does have a fancy, $1,500-per-plate leaders' dinner on the 25th. I guess the lesson is that anyone who wants to bring their concerns to this government has to buy a ticket, and it seems like the going rate for democracy is $1,500 a plate. Shame on this government.

SURESHKUMAR RAVINDRAN

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend and pillar of our Ajax community, Sureshkumar Ravindran, who passed away suddenly on November 4, 2026. We had just spoken a couple of weeks before. I can't really believe he's not with us.

I met Suresh while in university almost 20 years ago. He was the kind of person who would give the shirt off of his back to help you. He was always encouraging others to be their best selves, and he was a passionate advocate for truth and justice for the Eelam Tamil people. Everyone who had the privilege to meet Suresh has a story about his kindness or how he helped them, no matter how long it has been since you've spoken or whether you met him the very same day.

Last year, when I ran to become the member of provincial Parliament in Ajax, he was one of the first to come forward and offer his help. He cared so much about our community in Ajax. It's heartwarming to see and hear from so many people about the impact that he had on them.

At his funeral, someone remarked to me that they had never seen so many people coming to pay their respects at that funeral home before. It just goes to show that Suresh touched so many lives with his positive energy, selfless spirit and his smile.

Suresh, I'm grateful to have known you. I know that there will be a piece of you that will live on forever in all the lives that you've touched. On behalf of the people of

Ajax, I'd like to express my condolences to your family, friends and everyone who had the privilege of knowing you.

ST. VOLODYMYR CATHEDRAL CENTENNIAL

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I rise today to recognize the centennial of St. Volodymyr Cathedral and the generations of Ukrainian Canadians whose faith, service and leadership have strengthened communities across Ontario, including in Oakville–North Burlington.

On November 7, I joined clergy, families and community leaders in Oakville at a gala celebrating 100 years of St. Volodymyr Cathedral. It has been a spiritual home, where families have preserved their faith, celebrated their heritage and passed traditions from one generation to the next. Built on the vision and determination of early Ukrainian Canadians and sustained by generations of clergy and parishioners, St. Volodymyr has helped preserve Ukrainian faith, heritage and culture.

As we celebrate this milestone, we also recognize the strength and resilience of the Ukrainian people and their determination to defend their freedom, culture and homeland.

This year's gala's theme, "Celebrating the Past, Building Our Future," reminds us that the legacy of St. Volodymyr belongs not only to those who built it but also to the next generation who will carry its faith, values and traditions forward.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating St. Volodymyr on their centennial and wishing them continued success in their second century of faith, fellowship and service.

Slava Ukraini.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Where I live, in Parkdale–High Park, we get to dip our toes into the great lake, bike down the rail path and spend time in High Park. Our children learn from Indigenous elders through Turtle Protectors and the Dunn Indigenous Garden. We know the importance of seven generations thinking and the value of nature. It is not for sale.

That is why the residents of Parkdale–High Park decry Bill 140. It's gutting the Environmental Bill of Rights, silencing those who know their neighbourhoods best. This bill accelerates environmental degradation, increases health risk and decreases government transparency and accountability. It opens the door to privatization of our water, garbage incinerators and increased pollution.

We know that this transactional Premier prizes profits for his friends over people and planet, and we will fight him every step of the way. We stopped the Conservatives from monetizing the greenbelt, from polluting our waterfront with jets. We will win this important fight, too.

Today, I am giving thanks for our land lovers—for Parkdale-High Park 4 Climate Action, Green 13, seniors for climate change, Greenest City, Roncy Reduces, Junction Reduces, the High Park Nature Centre, High Park nature conservancy, High Park Stewards, Project Swallowtail, the Junction Residents Association and their tree canopy Initiative, Milky Way Garden, HOPE Community Garden, Runnymede United pollinator garden, Friends of Sorauren Park, Dundas Roncesvalles Peace Garden, Indigenous land stewards. These groups, Speaker, are defending, restoring, protecting our world. Meegwetch. Merci.

BILL STEEDMAN

Mr. Dave Smith: One of the services that people in my riding are able to access free of charge is having documents notarized. Since 2018, we have been very lucky that a gentleman named Bill Steedman, a paralegal in our community, has been volunteering his time. He comes in every Thursday afternoon at 4 p.m. to help any constituent who needs to have a document notarized. But it really isn't a surprise that he volunteers his time like this because, prior to his work in our community, he served as a UN peacekeeper, doing multiple tours overseas.

I bring Bill up today because we have to suspend the notary service for a little bit. On November 15, Bill had a heart attack. I'm happy to say he's doing well. He had a pacemaker installed this past week and has been raving about the quality of care that he's been getting at PRHC. Bill is scheduled to come home today from the hospital, and we know he's well on his way to healing because his unique sense of humour has resurfaced.

Bill, we're all hoping you have a speedy recovery, and I've asked Mike Oke of the Peterborough Petes to make sure that the Petes win every Thursday night for you. Petes home games are not the same without you in your seat at the Mem Centre. Wishing you a quick recovery, Bill.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Chris Glover: There is a homelessness and addiction crisis spiralling out of control across this province, and I think everybody in every community is aware of it. This government has been refusing for eight years to build affordable housing, so last year the number of homeless increased by 8%. It's now 85,000 people homeless.

Last year they also closed supervised injection sites, which pushed drug use and overdoses onto the streets. One of the hot spots is in my community at the corner of Queen and Bathurst. It looks like an emergency room without doctors and nurses. In the last month, there have been 37 overdoses. In one hour, there were seven overdoses. There have been 626 Toronto Fire medical calls to that corner.

Every day people go to the hospital asking for treatment for their addictions, but after a couple of weeks in treatment, they are sent back out into homelessness. In order to overcome an addiction, somebody needs to go through 10 days of detox to get the drugs out of the system, they need rehab for several months, and then they need to be transitioned into supportive housing.

At every step along the way, this system is broken.

The CBC did a report recently on that very corner. They interviewed 18 people; 12 had phoned for detox, and none had gotten through because they were just told, "It's all full. Call back." We need supportive housing, we need detox and we need rehab to overcome this addiction treatment system—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Brantford–Brant.

SIX NATIONS CHIEFS LACROSSE TEAM

Mr. Will Bouma: I rise today to recognize the incredible achievement of the Six Nations Chiefs lacrosse team. On September 15, the Chiefs captured their fourth consecutive national championship, putting them in some very exclusive company. They now join the Peterborough Trailermen and the Peterborough Lakers as the only teams to win four consecutive national titles since the Mann Cup entered the box lacrosse era in 1932.

This accomplishment is even more remarkable for Six Nations, as with four straight championships, this current Chiefs team has surpassed the 1994-96 squad to become the most successful Six Nations team in history, in terms of consecutive championships.

And the significance doesn't stop there: This latest victory marks the 10th Mann Cup championship in Six Nations history. Ten Mann Cups may sound impressive enough, Speaker, but with a 10-0 record in championship series, the Chiefs are the only team with multiple Mann Cups to have never lost a final.'

1030

Monumental accomplishments such as these fill me with the utmost pride to represent the incredible people of Brantford and Brant. Our community has raised remarkable athletes time and time again, and this current Six Nations team is no exception.

Brantford–Brant is proud of you. Ontario is proud of you. Congratulations on this historic title.

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Mr. Ric Bresee: Speaker, today I rise to share something joyous. There's something truly magical about the holiday season, when communities come together, traditions are celebrated and the spirit of Christmas brings a little extra joy and kindness to everyday life.

This is one of my favourite times of year as beautiful Hastings–Lennox and Addington comes to life with Christmas events, parades, festivals, holiday markets and family activities for all ages. In fact, across my riding, we will have 17 Santa Claus parades taking place. I've already had the privilege of being in two, and I'm looking forward to attending six more.

Behind the scenes of each of these events are countless volunteers, community organizations, local businesses and municipal teams who so generously give of their time to bring these events to fruition. Their hard work helps create the magic that makes our community so very special, and a heartfelt thank you goes to everyone who takes time to spread holiday cheer across the region.

I encourage everyone to get out and enjoy the festivities with family, friends and neighbours. By participating in these celebrations and enjoying local events, we show our appreciation to the wonderful people who work so hard to make our communities the places that we live.

Shop local, share a little kindness, and together, we can make this a very merry Christmas for everyone.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MPP Alexa Gilmour: In the Speaker's gallery today we have my dad, my aunt Sheila, and some volunteers from my office, Sharam and Shervin—thanks, Dad, for coming.

Ms. Jess Dixon: It gives me great pleasure to introduce Kitchener South–Hespeler's own page captain, Yuvki Patel, from Oak Creek Public School. In the gallery is her dad, Krunal Patel, her mom, Unnati Patel, her sister Kiyara Patel, her cousin Maira Patel and both of her grandmothers, Kokila Patel and Nita Patel. Welcome, and you must be so proud.

Hon. Graydon Smith: It's always a thrill to have friends at Queen's Park. I want to introduce an old friend, Jason Gow, and his son, Matthew Gow. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'd like to introduce a constituent of mine, Christel Hollinger Ivanyshyn. She is from Get Ready Online Inc. Welcome to your House.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members, I apologize, but I just want to recognize that my blind date is here today, the Honourable Kathryn McGarry, who is the former member for Cambridge in the 41st Parliament. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Just in case you are wondering what I am referring to, it was a TVO special—so just to clarify that.

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I'd like to introduce Waste to Resource Ontario—W2RO—and they represent the waste, recycling and resource management sector. All members are invited to the lunch reception starting at noon in room 230. Please join me in welcoming all their delegates to Queen's Park.

Mme France Gélinas: I would like to recognize Dr. Lori Rietze and Dr. Roberta Heale from Laurentian University, as well as Darin, Toni, Andrea and Connor Heffern as well as Jason Rietze, Hailey Dufour and Edward Green. They are here to support the Jordan Heffern Memorial Act to prevent nurses' suicide. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Today marks the start of National Engineering and Applied Science Technology Week. I would like to welcome visitors from the Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists: president-elect Stephanie Nuttall-Pesheau, CEO Cheryl Farrow and director David Terlizzi.

MPP George Darouze: I would like to welcome some amazing members of our business community in Ottawa from the Kanata North Business Association, including Kelly Daize, Andy Thompson, Veronica Farmer, Brad Skills, Tania Leppert; as well as the local city councillor, Cathy Curry. Welcome to your House.

Hon. Kevin Holland: From Thunder Bay, I'd like to welcome Stephanie Pesheau to Queen's Park.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to introduce, from Entente Education Canada: Barbara Antheunis, Helen Reid, Lorraine Knowles and Natasha Mistry. We had a great meeting this morning. Welcome to your House.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I just want to introduce the wonderful, wise wizards at Waste to Resource Ontario today and thank them so much for battling waste diversion and getting their innovative ideas out there, because we know that's a problem in Ontario.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to welcome Trent University PhD course students for Policy, Economy and the State: Phil Alalibo, Ernest Ewalefoh, Simon Gavas, Dana Lynch, Lillian Prime, Jessica Said, De'Marley Williams, Zhu Zhexian—who's also referred to as Larry—and of course, Professor Jonathan Greene, the brother-in-law of the member from University–Rosedale.

MPP Robin Lennox: I'm pleased to welcome Kevin Nash, Sabrina Apitz-Grossman and her husband, Tomek Apitz-Regan, to the Legislature this morning.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Welcome to Home Care Ontario, including Cameron MacKay, CEO of Home Care Ontario; and Josephine DesLauriers, board chair of Home Care Ontario and CEO of CarePartners.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'd like to introduce Eva Kempler, who is one of our talented pages, also a student at Collège français, and her parents, Richard Kempler and Laetitia Walbert, are here.

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I'd like to welcome Entente Education Canada for retired educators and older adults. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Hamilton Centre on a point of order.

MPP Robin Lennox: I seek unanimous consent that in the opinion of this House, the Ministry of Health should review out-of-country coverage for cancer treatment applications that have been denied against the recommendations of clinical expert reviewers and fund those treatments.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Hamilton Centre, MPP Lennox, is seeking unanimous consent that, in the opinion of this House, the Ministry of Health should review out-of-country coverage for cancer treatment applications that have been denied against the recommendations of clinical expert reviewers and fund those treatments. Agreed?

Interjection: No.

QUESTION PERIOD

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: Madam Speaker, good morning. That was very disappointing on the part of the government.

My question is to the Premier. This morning, two incredibly brave individuals, Kevin Nash and Sabrina Apitz-Grossman, are in the chamber with us today. You have heard their names in this chamber before. They are here at Queen's Park to ask for the government to approve the life-saving care that they desperately need.

Sabrina and Kevin are both fighting cancer. They should not also have to fight their Minister of Health. So, my question to the Premier is, can he explain to Sabrina and Kevin why his Minister of Health is getting in the way of their life-saving treatment?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: While I obviously cannot divulge individuals' medical records, these are very tough and challenging stories for both the patient, their family, and the clinicians who are trying to serve them.

But I want to remind the member opposite and everyone who is actually paying attention to this issue that these are not political decisions, they have never been political decisions, and this is exactly why they should not be political decisions. We do not have access and information to their individual cases, nor should we. We need to leave that to the experts, and that is what we have had in the process, in the ministry, in the government for literally decades.

1040

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, you know where the Minister of Health was just this morning? She was hosting a $1,500—$1,500—per person breakfast fundraiser for herself, for her own re-election fund. So $1,500 gets you a sit-down, a word with the Minister of Health.

Sabrina and Kevin can't afford a $1,500-a-plate fundraiser, a breakfast for $1,500 to sit down with this Minister of Health and get her attention. What they can do is come here to their House, to the Legislature, to get some answers from this Minister of Health.

So I'm going to try again. To the Premier: Is it going to take a $1,500-a-plate donation for Sabrina and Kevin to get some answers from this Minister of Health?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I'm here today to once again try to explain to the member opposite that you do not need to exploit patients to make a point about policy and initiatives. We have a process in the province of Ontario that has literally been in effect for years to assess and ensure when out-of-country requests are placed into the ministry that there is a process to review those and ultimately make a decision on what is appropriate.

I understand how challenging these decisions are. I understand. But I also understand they cannot and they never should be political decisions. They have to be made based on expert advice and input from people who actually understand what is being offered, whether it is FDA approved, whether it is Health Canada approved, whether it is a clinical trial. All of those factors make part of the determination on whether a decision is made to approve US-based treatment.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Exploiting people, eh? This is a government that is so afraid of getting out there and listening to and talking with regular people that they think when we bring people into the Legislature that we are politicizing this? You have forgotten who you work for.

They can ignore the emails, Speaker. They can ignore the phone calls. But they cannot ignore the people who came here to see them today.

So I want to ask this Premier: We have Sabrina here; she is 31 years old. We have Kevin here; he is 59 years old. They should be spending time with their families. They should be focusing on their treatment. But, instead, they are being forced to fight their own government in court simply to get the life-saving treatment that they need.

Again, back to the Premier: The minister has had weeks and weeks to turn this around and has chosen not to. I want to ask the Premier of this province, are donations to a $1,500-a-day breakfast the only way to get a decision made by—

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, our focus has always been—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: —to make sure that innovative treatments and new drugs are available, offered, for all Ontario residents. Because of a program that we put in place, FAST, accelerating access to cancer treatments in the province of Ontario, we have had, in the last year alone, over 700 cancer patients have access to treatments faster than they would have under the previous governments.

We are making changes to ensure that while the 5,000 clinical trials are happening in the province of Ontario, we want to have more of those in Ontario. We want to make sure that these initiatives are made available for all Ontario residents, all persons here in the province of Ontario. That is the work that we will continue to do.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

MPP Robin Lennox: Speaker, it is shameful for this minister to suggest that bringing Sabrina and Kevin's questions to this House is exploiting them. They are not exploited; they are empowered, they have been listened to and they are demanding answers from this government.

Sabrina and Kevin are fighting for their lives. They need these out-of-country treatments, and they have both been denied by this government. Now they are headed to court to fight for their access to treatment. They are here today, and they deserve accountability.

To the Premier: Why are you spending public money fighting patients with advanced cancers in court instead of using that money to fund their treatment?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: So, as I said, I'm not going to—nor should any of us—be talking about individual clinical examples of patients' records. We don't have access to that, nor should we. We need to make sure that these processes are reviewed and assessed by experts and that there is consistency in those decisions.

When I look at those 700 individuals who had faster access to cancer treatments because of a faster, accelerated program that did not exist in the province of Ontario under previous governments, I think that the focus should always be on making sure that we have all Ontario residents accessing these drugs and these treatments.

But I also want to make sure they're safe, and that means Health Canada approval. That means beyond clinical trials. We need to make sure that the clinicians and the experts make the assessments on what is appropriate and when.

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

MPP Robin Lennox: Speaker, the minister should know full well that Kevin Nash's recommended treatment is Health Canada-approved. It is; it has been tried. And your ministry does have access to these files, because it is officials within the ministry who are saying no.

The Minister of Health has consistently said that these decisions should be guided by health experts, and we agree. But in Sabrina's case, two clinical expert reviewers recommended that she get the treatment, and it was the ministry that said no. Now, this government has gone a step further to change the law retroactively to deny access to these treatments.

So my question is to the minister: Why didn't you follow the recommendations of the health experts that you recruited to adjudicate these applications, and why are you changing the law to cover your tracks?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Through a new program that we put in place under the leadership of Premier Ford, Funding Accelerated for Specific Treatments—the FAST program—we actually have six new life-saving cancer treatments on the market for treating lung cancer, for treating leukemia, for treating prostate lymphoma.

These treatments would have taken over 300 days under previous administrations. By putting in place the FAST program, we've actually accelerated and made those treatments available to all Ontario cancer patients by 55 days. We've cut it down by 75%. That's the initiative making sure that it is available to Ontario patients in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Member for Hamilton Centre.

MPP Robin Lennox: Speaker, I wish that the minister would stop with the empty talking points, because these are real people; these are real lives. They deserve real answers, not something you've recycled from your binder that someone assembled in front of you.

And we know about the cases of Alex, Sabrina and Kevin. We know about them because they've been brave enough to take their cases to court. But what I can't stop thinking about is how many other people with advanced

cancers have been wrongfully denied over the past eight years of this government, and that they will never be able to find their justice.

The people of Ontario deserve to know how many lives have been lost because of this government's practices, and their families deserve accountability.

To the Premier: Will you commit to a review of the out-of-country treatment applications that have been denied by this ministry against the recommendation of health experts, and will you take accountability for those decisions?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again, I will remind the member opposite that we have 700 patients in Ontario who are accessing treatments that were not available until we put in a new program accelerating access to cancer treatments.

We are taking that program and being asked by multiple jurisdictions across Canada, "How did you do it in Ontario? We want us to have a similar set-up here," because we know that when innovative medicine comes on the market, we want to make sure that it is publicly funded in the province of their choice.

That is the work that we're doing. Those are 700 patients that are thankful for the FAST accelerated program.

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GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

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

Applause.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Thank you, everyone.

Good morning, Speaker. It's been a big weekend for Ontario Liberals as we chose our new leader. Congratulations, Navdeep Bains.

We are united and ready to focus on the people of Ontario, because it is getting harder by the day for families and people in this province. It's harder to put food on the table. It's harder to pay the rent.

Education used to be something that families could rely on, but it's not important to this government, and this billion-dollar OSAP scandal continues to grow and grow. Last week, we learned that even the Premier wrote a letter of commendation for a private college that is at the centre of this scandal.

Speaker, to the Premier: When did you write that letter of support to the Academy of Learning?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I'm not sure how that member can stand up with a straight face and say education is not important to this government. We just invested a historic $6.4 billion into our post-secondary sector in February. Speaker, that is the largest single investment not only in Ontario history but Canadian history. Part of that $6.4 billion—$1.7 billion of that went to 70,000 newly funded seats in priority, labour market-driven programs; 40,000 of those were on behalf of the institutions with the support of the chamber of commerce right across the whole province. These are labour-market needs that we need.

But when it comes to the serious allegations, I know that member takes them very seriously, just as seriously as we do on this side of the House. That's why we brought forward the Ontario Provincial Police to go after those serious bad actors, the criminals, the criminal allegations that have been brought forward. We're going to bring back confidence into the private OSAP system when it comes to private institutions. That is why we brought forward KPMG—forensic auditors—to bring back confidence towards taxpayer dollars going out.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Speaker, there's just been so much hiding, so much mismanagement of this OSAP program. Every day, the plot thickens. It's like molasses now; it's just so sticky.

The government was alerted for years that something was wrong. The current Minister of Emergency Preparedness knew in 2023, and she did nothing. The current Minister of Colleges and Universities was asked in 2024 to call the police—didn't do it. And meanwhile, the Premier is busy writing letters of praise and support for the very college that they're being warned about? Students are feeling it; all have been cut off while this government figures out its own mess.

Speaker, to the Premier: Isn't it time to come clean about your own role in the OSAP scandal?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Speaker, as everyone in this House knows, OSAP is there to help students uptrain and upskill themselves for future careers. Anyone that abuses the system that's in place to help students will be held accountable, and that's why we have legislation this session bringing forward further guardrails to ensure that taxpayer dollars are utilized for their intended uses.

That member brings up the time frame. I will repeat it again in this House—and I know the member opposite does like it when I do that—in late 2024, we saw a growing concern of OSAP applications in the private institutions sector. In January of 2025, Career Colleges Ontario reached out to my ministry with the exact same concerns we had in the ministry of a growing number of applications in the private, post-secondary system. In May of that year, the federal government completed their own investigation into those six institutions, and they gave us the results of those. We did targeted, enhanced inspections that year and this spring, we removed eligibility from those six institutions and brought—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Speaker, this is getting quite ridiculous. OSAP kept the promise of Ontario alive; this government broke OSAP, and in doing so they broke the promise of Ontario. Students' lives have been put on hold. They've been left hanging because the government ignored warnings that something was very wrong. Maybe now it's more obvious why: The Premier had a role himself. He was writing letters of support to the very college that millions were being funnelled into.

Speaker, to the Premier, how can you hold your own ministers to account when it appears you're involved in the mess yourself?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Speaker, since 2020, we did over 3,200 individual inspections into OSAP. That is not sitting on your hands; that's doing a significant amount of individual inspections into the OSAP system at our private career colleges. We did over 1,700 inspections of those career colleges as well as a further 700 investigations into those career colleges since 2019.

But just last month, Career Colleges Ontario sent my ministry a letter of further concerns still present in the system, and that is why we have paused OSAP across the private post-secondary system, Speaker. They suspended over two dozen campuses; 24 campuses were suspended. For 33 other campuses, there are significant concerns of backdating the applications prior to our August 1 date when we changed the grant-to-loan ratio. Another 13 are under investigation.

Speaker, this is still evolving. If that member wants to flow money when we don't have confidence—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Don Valley West.

Applause.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you, everybody.

I want to congratulate Navdeep Bains on becoming leader of our party. As I said on the weekend, I am all in.

Families across this province are worried about their jobs, paying the bills and their futures. With the high costs of rent, groceries and taxes, it is hard to make the numbers add up—all while their Premier wastes hundreds of millions of dollars on the OSAP scandal, ads and downtown hotel rooms.

Because of this wasteful spending, Ontarians are paying over $17 billion a year on interest on their record debt. Now, S&P has downgraded Ontario's credit outlook to negative, so that interest bill could get even higher.

Speaker, how is the Premier comfortable making families tighten their belts when he can't tighten his?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Madam Speaker, how is the member opposite comfortable with the Liberal Party choosing the chief lieutenant of Justin Trudeau to lead the Liberal Party today, the man who is the architect of the carbon tax that increased costs on everyone? You can tell the sensitivity—

Interjections.

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

We will not have a repeat of last week. Order.

Back to the minister.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Madam Speaker, we don't want a repeat of the decade of darkness that you imposed on the people of this province—higher taxes, weaker laws that made our families at risk. There is no Ontarian that is choosing a party led by Trudeau. It's not mistaken, Madam Speaker, that Justin Trudeau called Mr. Bains today to congratulate him.

We know that the people of Ontario want lower taxes. They want stability. They want affordability. And they're going to get that from Premier Doug Ford.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member from Don Valley West.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Speaker, the best way to make life more affordable is a good job with a steady paycheque.

But you know what is at a record? Ontario's unemployment rate, 7.3% higher than the national rate. Almost 650,000 Ontarians can't find work. Almost 200,000 young people are desperate to land a job. Workers in auto plants and steel mills don't know if they'll have a paycheque next week.

But when the paycheque stops, the bills keep coming. Last year, this government promised $5 billion to help businesses hit by tariffs. Nearly two years later, only 3% of that has left the building.

Speaker, this government is sitting on billions of dollars that could be saving workers' jobs. When will the Premier stop the talk about protecting Ontario and show us the money?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order. The member for Ottawa South will come to order.

I recognize the Minister of Finance.

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Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Madam Speaker, first off, I want to congratulate the MPP for Don Valley West and the MPP for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for putting your names on a ballot and running very successful—almost successful—campaigns. Lots of integrity, so congratulations to both of you.

That said, Madam Speaker, one thing is evidently clear: When the previous government, the Liberals, were in power, supported by the NDP for a period of time, the economy that we inherited was $830 billion. In the short period of time that we've been in power, we've been able to grow it by almost half a trillion to $1.3 trillion. That's one million more jobs in this great province.

That's what the people of Ontario want: not the track record of the previous government but the track record of this government in creating a robust economy.

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

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Speaker, one million Ontarians are relying on food banks just to feed their families. People are being forced to choose between paying the rent and buying groceries. And with this Premier's obsession with pet projects like a spa at Ontario Place and a tunnel under the 401, the fall economic statement provided no new help with the cost of living, no new solutions to help the 650,000 Ontarians who don't have a paycheque, all

while this government found over $100 million to spend on self-promoting ads that do not help the people of Ontario, as they talk about protecting Ontario instead of actually doing it.

Speaker, when will this Premier stop the false advertising and actually start protecting Ontario?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Madam Speaker, through you to the member opposite: I will never apologize for promoting Ontario. We're not an island in a global economy. That's why we together have to continue to invest in our hard workers of Ontario, whether they be at a steel plant, an auto plant, in the manufacturing sector, in the health care sector. We've got to support all workers across this province.

You know what the previous government did when they were in power? They increased taxes. In fact, they increased the Ontario health premium in 2004. Madam Speaker, they added items to the HST in 2010. They put tolls on the 412 and the 407 and the 418, taking money out of people's pockets. And do you know what the rating agencies did as a result of those increased taxes?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Response?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: My response is this: They downgraded the credit rating—Moody's in 2012, S&P in 2015. This government is doing just the opposite: providing stability for Ontarians.

NURSES

Mme France Gélinas: My question is for the Minister of Health. Dr. Heale and Dr. Rietze are in the gallery right now. They did a research study for Laurentian University's school of nursing and the Centre for Research in Occupational Safety and Health. The result of their study indicates that 41% of newly graduated nurses working in our hospitals have considered suicide. Over 60% are in therapy, and nearly 30% rely on medication for anxiety, PTSD or severe depression.

Does the minister feel that these statistics indicate Ontario hospitals are healthy workplaces?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you for raising this important issue.

There is zero tolerance for any kind of workplace harassment, physical or verbal, in any of our workplaces in the province of Ontario. But I would say that we need to make sure that we double down and have empowered hospitals and other employers to make sure that they understand they have a legal—not just moral—responsibility to protect their workforce.

We're doing that with legislation, and we're going to continue to do that under the leadership of the Minister of Labour, making sure that the employers understand their responsibility to ensure that reporting of any kind of harassment is automatically happening and ultimately ensuring that those workers have the support they need to feel protected.

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

Mme France Gélinas: Dr. Heale and Dr. Rietze's study also includes solutions. I put these solutions in the Jordan Heffern Memorial Act. Number one: nurse-to-patient ratio. Then, mandate mentorship programs for new grads. Enforce zero tolerance for violence in our hospitals. Mandate trauma-informed leadership training, presumptive WSIB coverage for mental illness for nurses and health benefits for part-time nurses.

The parents, grandparents and family of Jordan are in the gallery right now. Will the minister support the Jordan Heffern Memorial Act to prevent nurses' suicides?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: We have a nurse preceptor program in the province of Ontario that didn't exist under the NDP nor the Liberals. We ensured that nurses who have that seniority, who have that ability to train and assist younger nurses coming into the workforce are there, and the feedback has been incredible. They love the work; they want to be part of the solution.

We have a zero tolerance for any kind of workplace harassment, verbal or physical. We have made sure that there is mandatory reporting when an incident happens. And of course, we are on track for the first-in-Canada PTSI centre that will include first responders and our nurses, because we know how important it is to make sure we as a government are there to support everyone who needs help in the province of Ontario.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Adil Shamji: Madam Speaker, I'd like to share a tale today of two fundraisers by two women, each of them fighting for their own survival. First, we're joined by Sabrina Apitz-Grossman. She's 31, fighting cancer, and she's trying to fundraise over $700,000 through a GoFundMe so she can afford a proven treatment that could save her life. That treatment has been denied to her by the Minister of Health.

Ironically, that same Minister of Health is also fundraising, but not for Sabrina—for herself. This morning, she hosted a $1,500 fundraiser dedicated to the Conservative Party. Think about that for a second: One woman is fighting for her own future; the other is fighting for her party's future. The Minister of Health has lost sight over which future she's supposed to be fighting for.

Will the minister put patients over politics and just fund the treatments that Ontario's cancer patients need?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It is absolutely unbelievable that a parliamentarian would not understand the importance of making sure that we do not politicize and make people share information that is very personal in its nature.

I look at the information that we as parliamentarians have a responsibility to protect. It's to protect the people of Ontario. It's to protect the Ontario public service. It's to ensure that we have access to treatment in the province of Ontario here for all patients so that we don't have to take people and push them out into other jurisdictions. That is the work that we are doing.

Every time the member opposite chooses to exploit one individual, I think of the 700 patients who have got treat-

ment because we have accelerated access in the province of Ontario. That's who I'm working for.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Don Valley East.

Mr. Adil Shamji: This is the disappointing kind of answer that we've come to expect from this minister.

Today, Sabrina and Kevin are alive and they're in the chamber to hear it, but not everybody is. Colleagues, meet Evan Armit, a 23-year-old hockey player from Dryden. Unfortunately, he developed metastatic melanoma, and he applied for out-of-country coverage for a drug that could save his life, but he was rejected. So his dad called the Premier. The Premier actually called him back and said he'd fix the problem. Then the Minister of Health called Evan's dad. She said that she would fix the problem. Evan's dad even called his own MPP, the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, and he said that he'd fix the problem. They all stopped taking his calls, and on August 24, 2025, Evan died with the promises of two ministers and the Premier unfulfilled.

How many more people will die waiting on broken promises?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Is the member opposite suggesting that we need to walk away from 5,000 clinical trials that are happening in the province of Ontario right now? Does the member opposite think that we should not be encouraging research and development in our world-class hospitals? Does the member opposite think that Princess Margaret, a world-class cancer facility that literally leads the world in cancer treatment, should be ignored, so that we are not encouraging that made-in-Ontario, not encouraging Ontario patients to access Ontario OHIP funding here?

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I will continue to focus my efforts on ensuring that these procedures, that these treatments, that these interventions, are happening in the province of Ontario, not sending people elsewhere.

LANDFILL

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Our government recently introduced the Building Ontario Faster Act, a piece of legislation that, at its core, Speaker, is about making sure our province can build what our economy depends on and build it on our own terms.

This legislation proposes important changes that would help increase Ontario's landfill and waste management capacity, delivering on our urgent need to find immediate alternatives. With less than 10 years of landfill capacity remaining, now is the time to act.

Can the minister please share some of the steps our government is taking to address this challenge and build new landfill capacity?

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I thank the member for Whitby for that very timely question. He is an excellent member and a fine parliamentarian, a great example to all in this House.

For far too long, Madam Speaker, we have relied on exporting our problems—out of sight, out of mind. Waste management is one of those exports. Today, 40% of Ontario's commercial waste gets loaded onto trucks and shipped to Michigan and New York.

With President Trump imposing new tariffs on Canadian waste—50%, just a few short weeks ago—and continued threats from the state of Michigan to hike disposal fees, it's clear we can no longer rely on anyone else to manage Ontario's waste.

That is why our government is moving forward with a comprehensive waste management strategy that will help build our capacity quickly—a strategy that includes increased diversion, new and expanded landfills, and energy-from-waste facilities. This is how we protect Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you to the minister for responding to that question. Time and time again, constant delays and red tape have hindered our ability to build the waste management capacity our province needs.

My constituents have been clear: They no longer want our province to have to rely on the United States to meet our basic needs. Residents, businesses and communities need certainty so they can plan for the future, and they want assurances that no matter what happens at the border, Ontario will be ready.

Can the minister please share more about how we are building a sustainable waste management system right here in Ontario?

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: As the excellent member for Whitby knows, it's not only right here in Ontario, but it's right here in Durham, where he and I sit as members advocating for our community. The Durham York Energy Centre, operational since 2016, is a great success story. We have had energy from waste since 1992. That goes back to the newly expanded Emerald waste-to-energy centre.

Let's face it: If a business cannot manage its waste, it cannot operate. A community that cannot manage its waste cannot function. It really is that simple.

So with President Trump attacking our economy like never before and piling on waste product tariffs, our government must take steps urgently to expand our landfill capacity as an insurance policy, but also to embrace the modern, clean technology of energy from waste. We will do so. We will work together. We will make sure that the Blue Box Program is expanded to increase diversion from what would otherwise go into a landfill.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, this government continues to talk about expanding access to affordable child care and creating thousands of new spaces, yet they've decided to freeze early childhood educator wages and cancel the promise of a $1-an-hour increase in 2027. Operators are already

struggling to find qualified RECEs, and some facilities are sitting fully built but unable to open because they can't find staff.

How exactly is this government expecting child care operators to recruit and retain qualified educators when their decisions are making the profession less desirable?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Of course, we're doing no such thing. As you know, Madam Speaker, under our government, we've seen child care fees come down every single year. Under the previous Liberal government—of course, supported by the NDP—child care became one of the most expensive costs for families across the province of Ontario, making it completely unaffordable.

Our ECEs also were paid some of the lowest wages across the country. Now, under our government, those wages have gone up each and every year. We're very proud of that. At the same time, we have created thousands of spaces in the child care system. We're building new spaces. At the same time, we're building spaces into the over $30 billion worth of schools that we're building.

We're doing the things that need to be done to ensure that there is quality child care available to Ontario families. We've increased wages, brought more spaces online and we brought the costs down for Ontario families, which is a major step forward in comparison to where Ontario families were in 2018 when the Liberals left us with the most expensive child care system in the country.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I just can't believe, sometimes, the response.

Child care operators across Ontario are working hard, actually, to create desperately needed spaces, but some projects have faced delays because of approvals, permits and construction outside of the operator's control. Surely this government can understand that the December 31 construction deadline is putting projects already under way at risk of being abandoned.

Why won't this government work with operators to ensure these desperately needed spaces in child care actually get built?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Well, Madam Speaker, let me just say this: We announced the deadline three years ago. We've also told our municipal partners that if you want the child care done, do what you have to do to ensure that the permits are done, that the inspections are done. But the December 31 deadline isn't a provincial deadline; it is a federal deadline, because the CWELCC system, of course, is a federal program.

So, the federal government has said that we have to have these spaces in place by March 31, which means that the construction deadline that we gave them three years ago—three years ago—has to be done by December 31 of this year. As I said to municipalities when the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing allowed me to meet with AMO just a couple of weeks ago—we said, "Get your permitting done."

There is absolutely no excuse that, three years later, at the last minute, municipalities are saying, "Oh, no, we're going to give you our permit. But don't worry; these spaces will be built in two weeks." It's not good enough, Madam Speaker. What we're going to do is we're going to ensure that the spaces that are available are made available for families, because affordability is what is needed.

If the federal government decides to increase the deadline, then we'll respect that. But this is a federal program with a December 31 cut-off date, and we will honour that, Madam Speaker.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

MPP Stephanie Smyth: We heard a few minutes ago from my colleague the really upsetting story about Sabrina and the choices between life and death and money and where money is spent. I think about the hundreds of millions—maybe billions—of dollars and how those dollars were used in another scandal and how they could have helped with somebody's life.

But I turn to the OSAP scandal: Almost a billion dollars of taxpayer money—this is unbelievable—is essentially unaccounted for. This government ignored the warning signs all along, and they have allowed this scandal to fester.

The Minister of Colleges and Universities, Speaker, has said that he has formally asked the OPP to investigate. I want to know: Where is the evidence that you have made that formal request, or do we just take your word for it?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Speaker, the Liberals like to say we ignored the tips and the complaints that were coming in in the system; we have not. The only thing we have ignored is their leadership race, like the rest of Ontario.

I will repeat it again and again and again—maybe I haven't repeated it enough—but in late 2024, we understood there was an increased amount of applications at private post-secondary career colleges. In January 2025, Career Colleges Ontario, a third-party agency, highlighted the same concerns that we had internally in our ministry.

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In May of that year, the federal government completed their own investigation into the private post-secondary sector and gave us the results of those. We used those results. We did targeted and enhanced inspections throughout the sector, and this year we suspended eligibility at six of those institutions because of the targeted and enhanced inspections we did, Speaker.

But once we understood it was more widespread than we initially expected, we put a pause on OSAP payments across all of the private post-secondary system until we can have confidence back in the system.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Toronto–St. Paul's.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I didn't hear an answer, as usual.

I think Ontarians have to remember, always, these are your dollars. This is your hard-earned money. We know,

and we just heard from my other great colleague, that this could have started at the top—letters from the Premier himself to one of these colleges embroiled in this festering scandal.

So again, Speaker, to the Minister of Colleges and Universities: Will an OPP investigation now not only examine the career colleges but the Premier himself, and is he subject to this investigation?

Interjections.

MPP Stephanie Smyth: There's more. Is he part of this investigation?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Breaking news: I am not the Ontario Provincial Police. I know a previous member of our cabinet was—the Minister of Labour—but I am not, Speaker. Those decisions are best held with the Ontario Provincial Police.

But these are very serious allegations. That's why we're bringing forward legislation this session, because we understand the urgency of it. We're adding extra guardrails. We're adding identity verification controls. We're ensuring that there's no relationship between the career colleges and immigration and recruitment firms.

We're also going to have fines and AMPs associated with those misrepresentations, as well as ensuring that any enforcement we do across the sector will be posted on the ministry website so that students truly understand the quality of education they're stepping forward with, Speaker.

But again, I'll remind the member opposite, just last month, Career Colleges Ontario gave us a letter suspending another 24 campuses, with another 33 campuses that they have concerns of backdating.

This is still evolving, Speaker, and we need to ensure that we have confidence—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Mr. Andrew Dowie: My question is for the Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity. Everyone deserves to live free from violence and abuse. For women experiencing intimate partner violence, having access to employment, financial independence and community supports can be critical to rebuilding their lives and achieving long-term safety.

However, many survivors continue to face barriers to employment, training, mentorship and economic security, making it more difficult to leave abusive situations and move forward. Our government recognizes that empowering women economically is an important part of addressing gender-based violence and creating safer communities.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how the new WELL Fund will help women, including survivors of intimate partner violence, access economic opportunities and build financial independence?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: Thank you to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh for the question. You know, our government believes that women deserve to live with safety, dignity, and free from violence and intimidation and abuse. That's why our government launched the WELL Fund, the Women's Economic Leadership and Legacy Fund, an $11-million investment to help women gain the skills, supports and leadership opportunities needed to succeed in Ontario's growing economy.

Speaker, we know that economic insecurity can create additional barriers for women experiencing intimate partner violence, which is why, through our WELL Fund, community organizations are providing mentorship, leadership training, financial literacy, career coaching and job-readiness programming.

This work builds on our commitment through Ontario-STANDS, our government's action plan to prevent gender-based violence, support survivors and strengthen women's economic opportunities.

By connecting women to meaningful employment and financial independence, we are helping them build safer and more secure lives.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Thank you to the minister for that response. Economic independence can be an important part of helping survivors of intimate partner violence rebuild and save their lives. However, we know that accessing employment and training is not always easy, particularly for women who are balancing caregiver responsibilities, recovering from trauma or navigating the challenges of leaving an abusive relationship.

For too long, community organizations have faced increasing demands while supporting women experiencing violence and exploitation. That's why our government must continue investing in organizations that provide local, flexible and trauma-informed supports to help women regain their independence.

Can the minister explain how our government's investments through Ontario-STANDS are strengthening community organizations and ensuring survivors of gender-based violence have the supports they need?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: Community organizations are essential to helping survivors of intimate partner violence and gender-based violence rebuild their lives. Through Ontario-STANDS, our four-year action plan, Ontario invested nearly $1.5 billion to support gender-based violence services. This includes—that's right—$162 million in federal funding through the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

We have invested approximately $98 million in over 85 community projects focused on building safer communities, supporting survivors and preventing violence through education and awareness.

We also expanded the Investing in Women's Futures Program to 34 locations across Ontario, committing over $26 million to provide training for low-income women.

Our government will never stop standing up for women and girls, because we know that no woman should ever have to fight for her right to live free from fear, violence and abuse.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Premier. People in Oshawa and across Durham region need health care to meet their needs. The proposed Lakeridge Health hospital that will be sited in Whitby cannot come soon enough.

At infrastructure estimates, the minister surprised the committee with the news that the new Ottawa Hospital will cost $10 billion. And remember, Speaker, that the Mississauga hospital is costing about $14 billion. Based on this government's own budget, at $10 billion or $14 billion per hospital, that means we can expect about four and a half hospitals to be built in Ontario in the next 10 years.

So my question is, will the Lakeridge Health Whitby hospital be one of the four and a half hospitals built in the next 10 years?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It's not often that a member of the NDP actually asks whether they want a hospital or not. We have invested $64 billion for 50 different hospitals across Ontario. Whether it is a brand new hospital, as we are seeing with Trillium and in Brampton; whether it is a renovated or expanded hospital—again, 50 different hospital builds across Ontario. That's the investment and the commitment we're making to the people of Ontario, because we know, as the population of Ontario increases, as the population of Ontario ages, we need to be ready.

We're doing that with expanding not only our hospital capital but obviously training more hospital care workers through the excellent work of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. We're getting the job done.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: With all due respect, they're not getting the job done, and $50 billion allocated—$50 billion divided by $10 billion to $14 billion per hospital—does not equal enough health care. Four, maybe five hospitals in 10 years would be absurd if it wasn't so dangerous. But $10 billion for just one hospital is wild.

This government's wrong-headed commitment to super-expensive and secretive P3 procurement means we don't have transparency, we don't have accountability and we don't have enough health care infrastructure.

My question is, will this minister acknowledge we are not getting our money's worth or our hospitals and commit to public procurement so we can actually afford to build the health infrastructure that we deserve?

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

Hon. David Piccini: What's wild is the fact that those members don't support any of these investments that we're making across Ontario. Whether it's Ottawa, Windsor, Lakeridge or throughout this province, this minister, this government are making record investments in infrastructure.

1130

That member speaks about transparency. Just this morning, the Premier was at SickKids to announce the RFP for the new tower.

It's incredible, the work that is being done in every corner of this province to ensure we get shovels in the ground on hospitals. We're working with construction partners. We're training the next generation of young men and women in the skilled trades—something they're also voting against.

When it comes to building, the people of Ontario can count on this government to get shovels in the ground, to get these hospitals built, and we're going to stay focused on just that.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

MPP Tyler Watt: Speaker, the Premier has a lot of explaining to do. A company operating three Academy of Learning colleges, who are at the centre of this billion-dollar OSAP scam, wrote a letter to the Minister of Colleges and Universities where they talk about a letter of support from the Premier himself. I have the letter here. It says: We have "received letters of commendation from former students and employers, and indeed from the Premier himself"—indeed the Premier himself—and this isn't to mention that the owners of this company donated to his party, and it hired former Premier's office staff as lobbyists.

This is why I have asked the Integrity Commissioner to investigate the Premier himself with this OSAP scandal. The consequences of this government's handling of OSAP are real. They're destroying the lives of thousands of Ontarians across this province. Future PSWs, ECEs, lab techs all will not be trained right now, when we desperately need them in the workforce. And their solution to fixing OSAP is to protect themselves from future lawsuits.

Premier, what exactly was your involvement with these colleges and the point of your letter of support, and why are students paying the price for this government's handling of this OSAP scam?

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

Hon. Nolan Quinn: While the Liberals may be focused on frivolous things that lack any substantial details, I'm focused on building a stronger OSAP system for students and taxpayers. With this legislation, we're going to bolster OSAP integrity, ensure stricter compliance with career colleges and hold bad actors accountable. And I hope the member opposite can refocus their time on something that actually makes a difference for students, with support of this bill.

I'll remind the member opposite: Just last month, Career Colleges Ontario sent us a letter of further concerns in the system, of 33 additional campuses backdating applications, which, I'll remind the member opposite, is a criminal allegation of fraud, as well as the 24 campuses that they suspended from their membership, with another 13 that they're currently reviewing right now. This is

continuing to evolve, and we'll ensure that we bring back confidence with KPMG and the Ontario Provincial Police before we release another taxpayer dollar.

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

MPP Tyler Watt: I would like to remind the minister that he caused all of this and the former minister caused all of this. They're the ones who created this loophole back in 2020 and made it permanent in 2022.

They say they're taking these allegations seriously, that this is systemic. This government made it systemic. They're the ones who broke OSAP. So how are they going to stand there and pretend that they actually respect taxpayer dollars? I'm so sick of hearing that. Actions speak louder than words.

This is the most incompetent, fiscally irresponsible government, that is destroying the lives of students and Ontarians across this province. It's outrageous—zero accountability from the Premier, zero accountability from that minister.

So stand up again and share that same spin, the same key messages. We want answers. Students deserve answers. Actually answer my question, Minister.

Speaker, through you: What was the Premier's purpose with writing a letter of support to the Academy of Learning when they were already under inspection by your ministry?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: As I've said numerous times in this House, we've done over 3,200 individual inspections into OSAP—3,200 individual inspections into individuals with OSAP—since 2020. That's a significant amount. But we will not rest until we bring back confidence into the system. We also did 1,700 inspections of the individual career colleges since 2019, with a further 700 investigations into those specific career colleges.

I'll remind the member opposite, while they're laughing over there, that third parties were completing the coursework. Third parties were doing the OSAP paperwork for them as well as numerous applications from a similar IP address or similar geographic location. They were also completing their coursework in one day or exams in as little as six minutes.

Bad actors have taken advantage of Ontario taxpayers, and that is why we have legislation this session to bring back the appropriate guardrails so we can rerelease OSAP for its intended use: to help students to be able to upskill and uptrain for—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Steve Pinsonneault: My question is for the Minister of Long-Term Care. Long-term care was a sector that was long neglected by previous governments. Between 2011 and 2018, the previous Liberal government only managed to build 611 new spaces. That is an increase of only 0.8% while the population of Ontarians aged 75 and over grew by 20%. That is 611 spaces over 176,000 people.

Speaker, our government has been clear about our plan to build 58,000 new and upgraded long-term-care spaces. Can the minister please provide us with an update on how our government is delivering on the promise?

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Thank to the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for the question. When our government took office, we inherited a long-term-care sector that had been long neglected for decades, and we quickly got to work. We're investing over $6.4 billion to build 58,000 new and upgraded long-term-care beds—or homes, as we call them.

Speaker, I am proud to announce here today in this House that, as of September this year, 168 projects representing over 27,000 new and redeveloped beds have been constructed or are under construction or have received approval to construct. In fact, this past Friday, I toured a brand new home recently opened in Essex with the stellar member from Essex. There's nothing like touring a new home, with the fresh paint, new furniture, modern home decor and the best, state-of-the-art equipment. We actually walked in on a bunch of seniors playing the game "smash the ball." I thought maybe we should implement that in our caucus during our caucus meetings, because it was a lot of fun and it broke the ice very well.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for a follow-up.

Mr. Steve Pinsonneault: Thank you to the minister for that exciting update. I know my constituents in Lambton-Kent-Middlesex are excited about the newly opened Craigholme project in Ailsa Craig, and it's great to hear the progress that our government is making across the province. Thank you for coming out, Minister, and cutting the ribbon.

Every project that moves forward brings seniors and families waiting for long-term care closer to home. That is why it is so important we have the right tools and resources in place to support the planning and construction of these homes.

Speaker, back to the Minister of Long-Term Care: Can the minister explain a bit more about the updates that have been made to the design manual—and speed up construction to protect Ontario's long-term care residents?

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: I was proud to stand with that member in Ailsa Craig and cut the ribbon on that brand new long-term-care home.

On the same occasion, I was able to announce the brand new design manual and catalogue of standardized designs, which had not been updated in over a decade. This new updated manual and catalogue incorporates feedback from the long-term-care sector to bring greater clarity and efficiency to the planning and design of new and redeveloped homes. They provide clear design standards and best-practice guidance for accessibility; dementia care; infection prevention and control; and technology integration. The updated manual includes clearer technical requirements, making design standards easier to understand and apply. Together with the complementary visuals in the design catalogue—which are accessible on our website free of charge—these tools will streamline the

planning and design process, helping accelerate the redevelopment of modern, high-quality long-term-care spaces across Ontario and all of your ridings.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(g), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required, and therefore, the afternoon routine on Wednesday, November 25, 2026, shall commence at 1 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

PROTECT ONTARIO FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES ACT, 2026

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

Deferred vote on the motion that the question now be put 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): We have a deferred vote on the motion for closure on the motion for second reading of Bill 148, An Act to enact the Intimate Images Protection Act, 2026 and to amend various Acts.

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

The division bells rang from to 1140 to 1145.

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

On November 17, 2026, Mr. Parsa moved second reading of Bill 148, An Act to enact the Intimate Images Protection Act, 2026 and to amend various Acts.

On November 19, 2026, Mr. Clark moved that the question be now put.

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

Ayes

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

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

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 71; the nays are 41.

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

Mr. Parsa has moved second reading of Bill 148, An Act to enact the Intimate Images Protection Act, 2026 and to amend various Acts.

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

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1149 to 1154.

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

On November 17, 2026, Mr. Parsa moved the second reading of Bill 148, An Act to enact the Intimate Images Protection Act, 2026 and to amend various Acts.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Flack, Rob	Quinn, Nolan
Anand, Deepak	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Racinsky, Joseph
Babikian, Aris	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Bailey, Robert	Gualtieri, Silvia	Riddell, Brian
Beattie, Jeff	Hamid, Zee	Rosenberg, Bill
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hardeman, Ernie	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Harris, Mike	Sandhu, Amarjot
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Holland, Kevin	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Sylvia	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Calandra, Paul	Jordan, John	Saunderson, Brian

Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kanapathi, Logan	Scott, Chris
Cho, Stan	Kerzner, Michael S.	Scott, Laurie
Ciriello, Monica	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Clark, Steve	Lahey, Susan	Smith, David
Coe, Lorne	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Graydon
Cooper, Michelle	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Laura
Crawford, Stephen	McCarthy, Todd J.	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McGregor, Graham	Tangri, Nina
Darouze, George	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Denault, Billy	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dixon, Jess	Parsa, Michael	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dowie, Andrew	Piccini, David	Vickers, Paul
Downey, Doug	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.
Dunlop, Jill	Pinsonneault, Steve	
Firin, Mohamed	Pirie, George	

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

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 73; the nays are 42.

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

Second reading agreed to.

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

Minister, would you like to refer the bill to a committee?

Hon. Michael Parsa: Yes, I would—to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, please.

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

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

The House recessed from 1158 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MPP Alexa Gilmour: I would like to welcome the family of the page captain from my riding of Parkdale–High Park, Amira, including her grandparents, the honourable Peter Broderick and Mrs. Gretchen Broderick, and her father, aunt and sister, Patrick, Elizabeth and Alya Broderick.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

PROTECT ONTARIO'S NORTHERN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 POUR PROTÉGER LES COLLECTIVITÉS NORDIQUES ET RURALES DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Pirie moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 155, An Act to enact the Ontario Northland Transportation Corporation Act, 2026 and the Respecting Rural Ontario Act, 2026 and to amend various other Acts / Projet de loi 155, Loi édictant la Loi de 2026 sur la Société de transport Ontario Northland et la Loi de 2026 sur le respect de l'Ontario rural et modifiant diverses autres lois.

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): Minister, do you wish to speak to the bill?

Hon. George Pirie: Speaker, yes, I do. This bill recognizes the contributions of the people, industries and businesses of rural and northern Ontario through the new Respecting Rural Ontario Act. It reduces red tape and increases economic development through amendments to various acts, as well as strengthening regional transportation networks through the Ontario Northland Transportation Corporation Act.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2026

LOI DE 2026 SUR LA SEMAINE DE SENSIBILISATION AUX SOINS À DOMICILE ET EN MILIEU COMMUNAUTAIRE

MPP Rosenberg moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 156, An Act to proclaim Home and Community Care Awareness Week / Projet de loi 156, Loi proclamant la Semaine de sensibilisation aux soins à domicile et en milieu communautaire.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

MPP Bill Rosenberg: Yes, I do, Madam Speaker. This bill proclaims the first full week in October in each year as Home and Community Care Awareness Week.

PETITIONS

NURSES

Mme France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mr. Edward Green from Sault Ste. Marie, who is the grandfather of Jordan Heffern. The petition is called "Pass the Jordan Heffern Memorial Act."

As you know, Speaker, a recent study found that 41% of early-career nurses have considered suicide, 60% of them are currently in therapy and nearly 30% are on medication for anxiety, PTSD or severe depression since entering the nursing profession.

Right now, in our hospitals, the environment is unmanageable, often toxic and unsupportive of nurses. No amount of preparation can equip them to manage unsafe patient ratios, workplace bullying, recurring trauma, patient assault, insufficient mentorship, unsupportive leadership, short staffing and little to no debriefing of mental coverage.

They petition the Legislative Assembly to immediately put in place the recommendations in the recent research study as stated in the Jordan Heffern Memorial Act, including a safe nurse-to-patient ratio, a 12-month protected mentorship program with reduced workloads for new nurses, zero-tolerance reporting for lateral violence and assault from patients, presumptive WSIB coverage for mental illness and trauma-informed management training, and mental health coverage for part-time and casual nurses.

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

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am very proud to present a stack of petitions for a petition campaign that was organized by the Canadian Federation of Students, and the petition is called "No to OSAP Cuts! No to Tuition Hikes!"

Altogether, CFS has gathered over 11,000 signatures on this petition from students across the province: students who are in high school and many students who are currently studying at any one of a number of institutions in Ontario, including Trent, University of Windsor, McMaster, Queen's, U of T, Algoma, Brock, York, University of Guelph-Humber, Nipissing, and Waterloo.

The petition was started following the major cuts that this government made to OSAP grants. The students who have signed this petition are very concerned about the impact of those cuts on their opportunities to access post-secondary education and to have to now look forward to graduating with a mountain of debt, plus interest, that will accumulate on those OSAP loans that they will now be forced to take.

So the petitioners are calling specifically for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to remove interest on OSAP loans, convert all loans to grants, stop any hikes to tuition, and halt government interference on admissions, research security plans and student fees.

I couldn't be more supportive of this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Yuvki.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I have more petitions here today asking this 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 also know that the food and farming sector contributes $50 billion to Ontario's economy and employs over 875,000 people.

We know that Ontario's food security has never been more important, given the threat of tariffs and the trade war with the USA. And we also know that once you pave over farmland, you don't ever get it back. So the petitioners are asking this 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. I will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk's table with page Daniel.

PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES IN SCHOOLS

Ms. Jessica Bell: I have a petition here that is calling on the Ministry of Education to implement a bell-to-bell phone-free policy in the province's elementary and secondary schools, so that students can focus on learning.

You would think that there is actually a policy like this, but in reality, it's being poorly implemented and cellphones are everywhere when you walk into a secondary school. We need improvements.

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

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MPP Alexa Gilmour: November 25 every year begins the 16 days of action to prevent gender-based violence.

Right now in Canada, every 2.5 days a woman or girl is killed by gender-based violence. In 2025, 148 women and girls lost their lives, were murdered by violence. And 41% of those knew the individual; it was a spouse or a partner.

1310

I have before me the "Act Now to End Gender Based Violence" petition, and it asks that this government support the official opposition's plan to end gender-based violence, including investing in social infrastructure, women's economic security and improving the services that women count on and need in this public sector and in child care.

It's my pleasure and honour to affix my name, to give it to page Léa, and to support this motion here.

TENANT PROTECTION

MPP Catherine McKenney: I want to start by thanking the Carleton University students in Ottawa for continuing to bring to light the struggles that students are having across this province. We know that almost half of post-secondary students struggle to cover basic essentials, including housing, and we know that students also pay 25% more rent for the same units than other renters. This is due to higher turnover rents than other renters, and of course, because we don't have vacancy control, students continue to pay much higher rents.

The Carleton University students are calling for the immediate re-adoption of vacancy control in the province, the elimination of the post-2018 rent control, which leads to an increase in renovictions, demovictions, and of course, to create a province-wide rental registry that would document rent increases and then protect students from potential renovictions or unfair rent hikes.

I'm very pleased to send this down with page Yuvki, and I will affix my name to it now.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Ms. Catherine Fife: Did you know that 1,639 sexual assault cases last year got dispensed before they had their day in court? All that we've asked for with Lydia's Law, which is justice for sexual assault survivors, is that the Attorney General look into why that's happening in Ontario so that we can better understand the sexual assault survivor experience in the court system, which we know is hostile, re-traumatizing and re-triggering.

Recommendations 1 and 3 of the Auditor General's report from 2019 look to make the Victim Quick Response Program in time for survivors and also report back to us, the Legislature, to find out what is actually going on in our court system.

I wish he would do his job. We're calling on him to do his job. It's my pleasure to affix my signature to the petition for Lydia's Law and give this to page Léa.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Chris Glover: It's my pleasure to read this petition. It's from George Brown College as well as the Ontario College of Art and Design. Thousands of students have signed these petitions, and they're saying no to OSAP cuts and no to tuition hikes.

They're talking about how this government, under the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, converted grants to loans. We used to be up to 85% of the funding for students on OSAP would be grants. The government has converted that to loans. They want this generation—they are downloading thousands and thousands of dollars of debt onto this generation of students. That's going to take them decades to pay back.

They're also talking about how this government is not only supporting the students less; they're also seizing control of student unions and their ability to speak freely on campus with Bill 33.

Their demands are to convert the loans back to grants, to stop the tuition hikes and to stop government interference on admissions, research security plans and student fees. This government needs to get out of the business of the colleges and universities and the interference that they're imposing on these students and the debt that they're downloading.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

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

To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: Recognizing that understaffing is negatively impacting the quality of our public health care system, causing longer wait times, unreliable access to care, unmanageable workloads, deskilling of health care work, and many more issues, we are seeing a rise of burnout among health care professionals, in particular in nursing and other professionals—you're literally driving them out of the profession.

Speaker, we know that this government has undermined the public health care system by taking the money that should have been used for staffing and, instead, making deals with for-profit, private corporations to deliver health care at a lesser quality and more expensively.

Therefore, the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to do the following:

Mandate staffing ratios for nurses and health care professionals across the public health care system, develop staffing ratios in consultation with the professionals and their unions, and make sure that health care funding ensures that Ontarians can have access to the health care that they deserve within the system that they need—and that should be public and not privatized.

I'm proud to sign this petition and return it to the centre table with page Leo.

TRANSPORTATION ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm very pleased to present a petition on behalf of transportation enforcement officers from across Ontario. They shared a letter to go with the petition signed by many transportation officers and numerous front-line officers throughout the province.

They want me to share that transportation enforcement officers are facing increasing operational demands, expanding enforcement responsibilities and growing risks to their personal safety. The Ministry of Transportation continues to expand its enforcement mandate, including the transition towards 24-hour, seven-day-a-week operations, additional responsibilities, broader enforcement authorities and expectations; however, the transportation enforcement officers regularly encounter dangerous situations involving criminal activity, weapons, potentially

violent individuals and serious roadside incidents. Many officers believe existing safety measures, training, intelligence access and operational resources have just not kept pace with the expanding responsibilities of their position.

The petition that they have signed and shared across the province calls for an immediate comprehensive risk assessment, improved access to critical police intelligence systems, transparent communication regarding officer safety incidents and meaningful safety measures, supported by appropriate training and funding.

If they're calling for help, this government needs to listen. Of course, I support them and I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Melchi.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's my honour to present the following petitions on behalf of Professor Sally Palmer from the school of social work at McMaster University. The petition is to raise social assistance rates.

As this petition points out, people who are on social assistance are living in legislated poverty—they are literally below the poverty line. This petition calls upon the government to do the right thing, understand that they're keeping people under water and to double social assistance rates.

When we look at the escalating costs for food, for rent and for so many other things, people cannot keep up. This government needs to stop looking after rich people and actually look after people who need their support. They should not pat themselves on the back for an increase which still keeps people's head under water.

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and deliver it with page Léa to the Clerks.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

MPP Jamie West: I want to thank the Ontario Nurses' Association for collecting signatures for this petition. It is entitled "Stop Privatization and Support Staffing Ratios."

There's a lot of conversation today on this. The Heffern family was here to talk about their daughter who had died by suicide because of the pressures from being a nurse—bullying and violence.

We know the ratios help create a workflow that a regular human being can handle. They are petitioning the Ontario Legislative Assembly to mandate staffing ratios for nursing health care professionals across the Ontario health care system, to develop staffing ratios in consultation with nurses and health care professionals through their unions and to use health care funding to ensure that Ontarians can access the care they need within the public system rather than privatizing health care through outsourcing services to private, for-profit corporations.

It will be the topic for opposition day, and our member from Nickel Belt will be debating this. It's a bill that I've co-sponsored as well.

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

1320

OPPOSITION DAY

HEALTH CARE
SOINS DE SANTÉ

Ms. Marit Stiles: I move that, whereas patients across Ontario are experiencing unacceptably long wait times for emergency care, hospital admissions, surgeries and diagnostic procedures; and

Whereas nurses are essential to delivering timely, safe and quality patient care, and reductions in nursing staff mean fewer health care professionals available to assess patients, provide treatment, monitor patients' conditions and support timely discharge; and

Whereas cuts and restructuring during the Harris Conservative government led to 15,000 nurses being laid off, and the Wynne Liberal government's multi-year freeze on hospital budgets led to over 1,600 nursing positions being eliminated along with hundreds more front-line health care positions; and

Whereas hospitals and health care facilities across Ontario are once again facing austerity cuts and laying off nurses and front-line health care workers, including personal support workers, laboratory technologists, medical radiation technologists and other essential hospital workers, undermining the health care teams that patients depend on for timely, safe and quality care; and

Whereas patients should not face longer waits, delayed treatment, cancelled procedures or diminished access to care because underfunded hospitals are being forced to lay off the workers needed to deliver those services; and

Whereas Ontario's Financial Accountability Office has warned that the government's planned health sector spending is insufficient to maintain existing service levels and will lead to a $3.8-billion shortfall by 2028-29, resulting in a loss of thousands of nurses and front-line health care workers by 2028-29;

Therefore, this House calls on the government of Ontario to immediately implement a province-wide moratorium on health care worker layoffs and position eliminations and close the gap in funding required to prevent further increases in wait times.

This is addressed to the Premier.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): MPP Stiles has moved opposition day number 3.

I return to the member to start the debate.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good afternoon.

New Democrats built Canada's public health care system, our universal public health care system. We are very proud of that fact, starting back in the days of Premier Tommy Douglas, bringing it Canada-wide. And we did that because it was the right thing to do and because it was the just thing to do. We believe that Ontarians and Canadians should have the fundamental right, rather than it being attached to a priority based on the wealth that you have,

how much you earn. Health care should be, absolutely, a fundamental right.

One of the other major benefits—I always like to mention this—of a health care system like ours is that it makes our economy so attractive for investment, absolutely. It really is the heart of why we have an auto sector and had an auto sector for so long in this country—so much investment. Because for generations, companies knew that our health care system would keep their workforce healthy, cared for, and that workers would never end up in medical debt.

But this government has been dismantling our health care system brick by brick and piece by piece. They ran on a promise—we remember—to end the Liberal era of hallway health care, but today, the crisis has just gotten worse. They promised—I remember—that more Ontarians would have access to primary care, but today, fewer do. They promised that they would bring down emergency room wait times, but those wait times have gone up. And they said they would shorten surgical wait-lists, and those lists have only gotten longer.

The pattern is very clear: After more than eight and a half long years, there can be no question: This government is making our health care crisis worse. And the single largest contributing factor to our worsening health care crisis is the firing of health care workers by this government.

Speaker, I've got to tell you, when I go out there and I'm travelling around the province and I talk to people who maybe haven't caught the news lately or don't have a direct attachment to the health care system, they cannot believe it when I tell them that health care workers in this province are being laid off, that positions are being eliminated. It is shocking.

Two weeks ago, I was travelling around southwestern Ontario, and I met with health care workers there. I wanted to share a few of the stories they told me.

I talked to Lindsay, a registered nurse in London. She asked me to pass along this message to the government: "Nurses care for patients, but when are you going to start caring for us?" That was the message she wanted me to pass along.

I spoke with June, who has worked in her local hospital for 32 years in Sarnia. Now, when she needs care, she is on waiting lists for month after month to get the care that she needs.

I talked with Marg in London, who talked a lot about the nurses who have cared for her and her family and how they feel like family. She contrasted that with what happens when those health care workers are eliminated, and she reminded the government that consistency is so important to our patients and their health and well-being. It means that we can get to the root of the problems quicker. She said, "Please pass this message along to the government. Please keep the consistency. Cutting nurses is not the answer."

I spoke with Bonnie, who is a registered nurse in Windsor, who has been a registered nurse for 33 years. She said to me that in her bargaining unit, they have just gone in the last year from 164 registered nurses to today 115. She said, "This is the worst I've seen it. We need to stop the cuts."

I will tell you, I was this weekend in Ottawa. We held a health care town hall in Ottawa, and I'm going to tell you, Speaker, the stories were shocking. They were shocking even to me, and I've heard a lot of bad stories about the situation in health care.

I met with folks from all across London and all the health care facilities there, and they told me, "We are losing staff and we cannot keep up." I wanted to share a few more words from some of them.

I spoke to the president of the Undergraduate Nursing Student Association, Sophia. She said to me that their clinical externships are disappearing, that there are not enough preceptors to supervise them.

I just want to be very clear: They have written to the Premier very recently, and they said this, and they wanted me to pass that along to all of you in case you didn't get the memo. "What is the point of training nurses if we aren't going to let them do the work they are trained to do?"

We heard from Rachel Muir, who is the Ontario Nurses' Association regional vice-president for region 2, and she shared a lot of really interesting numbers. They have seen 2,000 positions eliminated since 2025. The government is going to get up, and they are going to tell us that that's not the case. But just so you know, yes: 1,700 positions alone eliminated since January.

I want to point out this: I was listening to an emergency room nurse who has been working for over 30 years. She got sick and tired of being laid off all the time, so now she goes and she works in small hospitals all across the province. She reminded me that when you hear those numbers, it's frightening, but if you eliminate two positions in a very small hospital, that is also absolutely a nightmare.

We have lost 32 million hours of nursing care in this province due to these eliminations. Just think about that. That is a lot of nursing care lost. That's a lot of patients that are going without care. One in five Ontario hospitals have had unplanned closures, and this is contributing to that.

Nursing is now listed as the most dangerous occupation in Ontario—can you even imagine?—more than fire. How is this possible? Eight thousand nurses actually left the sector themselves last year because we know they are facing trauma and burnout.

Here's the problem: You keep eliminating them. You keep forcing them into situations where they're overworked and overwhelmed and unable to do the work that they know how to do and what they've been trained to do. And Ontario is the only province in Canada that is cutting nursing positions. How can we be doing this when everybody else is absolutely competing for those very same workers?

I want to bring along another message, from Jeremy, who is also a registered nurse in the Ottawa area. He said, "Please quote me on this in the Legislature this week." He said he is tired of deflection. He is tired of the government

passing blame and just blaming hospital management alone. He said this: "Nurses didn't cause the constant budget pressures, but we are the ones paying for it, and we are paying for it at the bedside."

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I want to tell you, Speaker, I could go on and on and on with more and more examples, and we have heard from so many patients, families of patients. We have heard absolutely horrifying stories. Every one of those stories, whether it's about the wait-lists, or the failure to get the care, or the hallway health care, or the fact that somebody was treated in a broom closet—it all comes back to: How is it possible that the government could be, in this moment, laying off health care workers?

So I want to bring it back to our motion, because I really believe that the government needs to do the right thing here and actually support this motion, for a change, because it's very, very clear. We are calling on the government to stop firing health care workers—period. Ending hallway health care begins with appropriate and safe staffing levels. Lowering wait times begins with staff. A hospital bed is just a piece of furniture without someone staffing it. We need to stop firing. And then we need to start hiring. It's pretty straightforward.

So the real question is, what is the government going to do? Will they vote with us today to fix this health care system and this crisis that they have created, to stop firing workers and renew their commitment to fixing health care in the province of Ontario? Or are they going to vote to continue firing the very staff who keep our hospitals and our health care facilities running?

Our public health care system used to be the pride of our communities, of our province, of our country. But this government is tarnishing that reputation.

Health care workers, let's not forget, also live and work in our communities. They spend money in our communities. They look after our communities—and of course, they look after us and our most vulnerable community members.

The answer to fixing health care is not going to be found in the boardroom; it is going to be found at the bedside. But we need staff—nurses and other health care workers—to be there at that bedside.

So, Speaker, I am imploring the government to join us on this side of the House, stand up for the workers who keep our communities healthy, and vote in favour of this motion.

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

MPP Tyler Watt: It's great to be here today debating such an important topic.

As most of you know, I am a proud registered nurse. It's very challenging to see what's going on in our health care system right now, particularly in hospitals. I've been working at a hospital since the start of COVID.

Why do people get into health care in the first place? It's because we want to help people. Nurses want to help people. PSWs want to help people. Doctors want to help people.

I particularly pride myself on the fact that I specialize in geriatric rehab, and we work with so many other different health care workers—speech-language pathologists, physiotherapists, occupational health therapists, social workers—all with the goal of helping our patients get better, more healthy and hopefully able to go home safely.

What's going on right now in our hospitals is an absolute disgrace. The health minister won't even acknowledge it. Look at how many health care workers have been or will be laid off in the coming months—1,900-plus registered nurses' and health care workers' positions are being cut since January 2025, with the majority of that being registered nurses. That's 3.1 million hours of care lost annually.

Here's a breakdown of some of the hospital cuts that are happening: —Hamilton Health Sciences: 413 positions cut; London Health Sciences Centre: 288 positions cut; Queensway Carleton: 119 positions cut; St. Joseph's Health Care London: 114 positions cut; Niagara Health: 98 positions cut; St. Joseph's Healthcare: 62 positions cut. I could go on and on.

This is a crisis that has been created by this government. The moment that layoffs and position cuts started being announced, the health minister should have intervened and made sure that they are protecting those jobs.

You know those incessant ads that we're constantly seeing about protecting Ontario—the hundreds of millions of dollars being spent trying to convince people that this government is protecting Ontario? Well, where's the protection for our health care workers—our health care workers who are just trying to show up and do their job despite the amount of burnout that they're facing, despite knowing that they are entering an uncertain work environment where violence is accepted and the norm?

And now my co-workers, my colleagues, are losing that bare minimum support that they already have. It's not because the hospitals want to be doing this; it's because they have to, because of this government.

So they can brag all they want about facts and figures, but the reality is that health care workers right now are either being let go or they are fleeing the province or profession altogether. And I don't blame them. I've never seen the morale as low as I have. I still get to work at the hospital, and morale has been bad. The support is not enough, but it has never been this bad. And frankly, it's dangerous. How are we supposed to provide safe, competent, quality care to our patients when we don't have enough staff or expertise to do that?

They talk a big game about recruitment, but who is going to train those brand-new nurses? Who's going to train those brand new health care workers that are being thrown into the lion's den right now? It feels like we are just trying to survive. You never know what's going to happen.

I often will have five, six, seven patients sometimes during the day shifts, seven to 10 at night, and it's not abnormal that a health emergency happens, that one of my patients codes. And then not only is all my attention now

focused on saving that patient, but my team is there as well. So what's happening to all the other patients on the floor?

We have quad rooms that now have five patients in them. We have rooms of two that now have three in them. I'm not even talking about the hallways or the closets that patients are being put into. That's the world-class health care system that this government is bragging about. That's that world-class health care system.

At the end of the day, should the goal not be to care for our health care workers? If we can take care of our health care workers, make sure that they themselves are healthy, that they're supported and compensated properly, then they can do their job. But they can't do their job right now.

And when the government is constantly gaslighting them, is constantly misrepresenting their reality, it just adds to the hopelessness of working in Ontario's public health care system. When my nurse colleagues see investments going into private health care when we are just surviving in the public system, that just adds to the insult and low morale that I talked about.

What are hospitals looking like right now? Well, hallway medicine has doubled under this government. I remember the Premier promised in 2018 he'd get rid of hallway medicine, so great job at that one. ERs are closing frequently; that's becoming the norm. Imagine you are going into cardiac arrest, you are having a stroke, and the nearest hospital to you is closed because they can't staff it. Imagine that.

Emergency rooms are beyond overwhelmed, often operating at above 100% capacity. QCH was in the news this week—I believe 120% capacity, and we're firing RNs. We are letting go of RNs because the hospitals don't have the budget needed to keep them there. That's a choice that this government is making.

Burnout, violence, often working short—I can't remember the last shift I worked where we weren't short a nurse. I'm often one who is filling in one of those gaps. I don't have a set schedule. I like to pick up when I can, and we're still short. Patients are suffering in the hallways, in closets. You can't provide quality care like that—certainly, a lack of privacy for them.

You know what makes me sad too? Last time I worked in the ER, I'm walking through the hall, I see three patients on this side in the hallway, three patients on this side in the hallway, and it was like it was totally normal to them. They're just used to it at this point. That is not the health care system that Ontarians deserve.

We are so lucky to live in a country where if you are going through a health emergency crisis, you will be taken care of and you will not go into life-crippling debt for it. But we need to be investing in our public system, not purposefully breaking it down, defunding it, making sure that people get sick and tired of it so they're more open to the idea of private health care, because that's what this government's end mission is. It's crystal clear with where some of their investments are going.

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Where we should be investing in, number one: our health care workers. My colleague tabled a fantastic bill last week, Bill 133, that actually listened to health care workers. As the government, I don't understand why you don't sit down with people and say, "What can we do—us who are in power—to make your lives better?" "Hey, health care workers, what can we do to help you help patients?" They don't do that. This Bill 133 did that, and the government came down and said, "No. It's too expensive."

After calling us "heroes" during the pandemic, banging their pots and pans, slapping us in the face with Bill 124, health care workers are done. You have a motion in front of you today that could actually start showing health care workers that you're listening. I have a sneaking suspicion I know how the government is going to vote on this one. There's absolutely zero bipartisanship here. It's atrocious.

But we're in a real crisis right now. Hospitals are dealing with the brunt of our health care system. This is not sustainable. It is the most expensive way to treat people and to provide health care. The most expensive way is at the hospital. We should be investing in community and home care, access and prevention and retention.

I hear a lot from this government about recruitment. That's great, although I don't know where those new recruits are going to go, since all of these positions are being eliminated across the hospital sector. You have all of these experienced RNs and health care workers that are being laid off who will then be competing for whatever jobs remain. So when we don't invest in retention—actually improving the lives of health care workers; simple things like guaranteeing them health care—did you know it took me four years working beyond full-time as an RN before I finally got access to health benefits? Four years before I could go see a therapist, maybe to deal with some of the trauma that is pretty regular when you're working at the hospital, instead of having to pay for all that out of pocket, or pay for your medications, or maybe a massage or physiotherapy.

We should be guaranteeing health care to all health care workers, hands down, particularly when it comes to mental health, because the trauma and violence that health care workers see on a daily basis just adds to the burnout and it adds to them fleeing the profession. I don't see any focus on retention, proper compensation, pay equity across the whole system.

The only way that we're going to start the healing and fixing the crisis and burden in our hospitals is making sure that people have access to care earlier, when they need it, in the community. It is far cheaper to provide care in the community, and ultimately, it is better for the patient. It is much cheaper and better to treat someone who's in pre-diabetes than full-blown CKD. It is much cheaper and better for the patient to treat cancer in stage one than in stage four. But we are just letting everyone get to the point of crisis where they have to go to an emergency room or they know they're going to be waiting an eternity for care.

Do you know how many people I know who have reached out saying, "Should I go to the hospital?" I'm always like, "Yes, go. Absolutely, go." "Well, you know, I'm going to put it off for a bit because I know I'm going to be waiting forever." That is just the reality now, so then, what they need to be taken care of may result in something even worse. This is the system that this government has set up. It doesn't allow anyone to be successful.

I want to talk about the social determinants of health, because health care is more than just your physical health in this moment. And this is a big reason why I decided to run for provincial government, because the government is responsible for all of these things.

Going beyond just investing in hospitals, the government—here are some social determinants of health for you: income and social status: dealing with poverty, income inequality, financial security; employment and working conditions: job security, wages, workplace safety and stress; education and literacy: I could go on about this one, but it is a sad state of affairs what is happening in our education system right now.

I've heard stories of five-year-olds who are showing up to school in diapers. I've heard stories of kids that are teenagers who can barely read. This isn't the education system that I grew up in. I graduated in 2008. How did we go from one of the most renowned education systems in the world to this? It's the political will and vision of this government.

Childhood experiences: early development, nutrition, safety and childhood poverty; physical environments like housing quality, pollution, neighbourhood safety and access to green space; social support and coping skills; healthy behaviours like nutrition, physical activity and smoking; access to health services—the key one—availability of family doctors, nurse practitioners, hospitals, mental health services and preventative care. I don't see a government that is taking any of these issues seriously. And when we have a crisis right now where health care workers are being laid off and it's just accepted, I don't understand how the health minister didn't hear, from the first announcement of nurses being fired—why she didn't reach out to that hospital and stop it.

Let's find out why this is happening, because the government has to own this now. I wouldn't be proud of this current system; it's impossible to work in. But for the ones that remain, it's because we believe in our duty as nurses, as health care workers, to take care of our patients and take care of our community. It is becoming nearly impossible to do so. It feels like working in constant chaos day to day to day, never knowing what you're going to walk into. Think of the stress that that puts on our front-line workers. You never know what you're going to walk into.

And I think the fear that a lot of health care workers have, myself included, is just not having the ability to catch things. When you are so overworked, when you are working short and you have extra patients, your attention is everywhere. What happens if you make a med error? What happens if you miss the smallest sign that someone is about to code or have a stroke? It's not fair. It's not good for the patients and it's not good for the health care workers.

The minimum that this government could do right now is to stop these layoffs. It's to fund these hospitals properly so we can keep the talent of all these health care workers in their positions. The consequences of eliminating all of these positions, particularly the registered nurses—those consequences are going to be severe.

Stop looking at health care workers as numbers, as a cost; invest in them. If you invest in your workers, you're going to get better results out of it. But when you start pinching pennies constantly without actually making those proper investments in the community, in access and prevention—you've got to do both at the same time, and we're just creating absolute chaos in hospitals.

Ontarians deserve better. They deserve a peace of mind for knowing that if something goes wrong, if your mother needs to go to the hospital, you want to make sure that they're cared for properly, that the staff there aren't so overworked that they can barely pay attention to them.

Let's do the right thing today. Let's vote yes on this motion and actually make sure that we can keep our talented and wonderful health care workers in their current jobs and then start to actually improve their lives.

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I'm happy to join today's opposition day motion before the House.

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I would like, of course, to start by acknowledging our world-class professional Ontario health care workers. They are incredible. They do incredible work and we see it every single day. Every day, nurses, physicians, personal support workers, laboratory technologists, medical radiation technologists, respiratory therapists, paramedics and countless other clinicians provide exceptional care to patients across Ontario. They care for Ontarians during some of the most difficult moments in their lives. They are there in our emergency departments, our long-term-care homes, our primary care offices and our communities, and our government is deeply grateful for everything they do.

Speaker, because we value health care workforces and because we understand the challenges facing Ontario's health care system, our government has made health care the single largest area of our provincial investments. That's why I find today's motion deeply flawed. What is frustrating is that the motion before us ignores the significant progress being made across Ontario and presents a narrative that simply does not align with the facts.

The evidence demonstrates exactly the opposite: This government is growing the workforce, increasing health care investments, and getting shovels in the ground and building hospitals, and this government has been taking action to ensure that Ontario families can access care closer to home.

Let's begin there: Since our government took office, more than 100,000 new nurses have registered with the CNO to work in the province of Ontario. That is a workforce that is growing. Last year alone, in 2025, the

College of Nurses of Ontario reported a net increase of more than 7,100 nurses. Once again, the College of Nurses reported for 2026, year over year, the number of registrations reporting full-time employment has grown across all nursing categories—all nursing categories.

Overall, this pattern suggests a growing share of nurses are securing full-time positions. In fact, nursing workforce growth in 2025 reached nearly 4%, the highest annual rate recorded since our government took office. These stats matter, because they tell a very different story than the one we consistently hear from the opposition. Nursing is a growing, high-demand profession, with more nurses working in our publicly funded system than ever before.

There are currently 30,000 nursing students enrolled at Ontario colleges and universities; 30,000 future nurses are preparing to enter the Ontario workforce. That pipeline exists because investments have been made and opportunities have been expanded, and it exists because our government understands that workforce planning is one of the most important responsibilities any government has.

Did you know, Speaker, that since 2020, there are approximately 16,000 more nurses working in Ontario hospitals? Did you know that represents a nearly 17% increase in the hospital nursing workforce? Thousands of students are preparing to enter the profession. These are indicators of a health care workforce that is expanding and strengthening to meet the needs of patients across Ontario. The opposition's narrative simply does not match the reality.

Our government has also taken practical steps to remove barriers for health care workers who want to practise in Ontario. For years, provinces across Canada struggled with credentialing recognition and labour mobility challenges. That changed under the leadership of Premier Ford. Our government has acted. Through labour-mobility reforms, we've made it easier for qualified nurses from elsewhere in Canada to register and begin working in Ontario immediately. The results speak for themselves: in 2025 alone, nearly 1,900 nurses from other Canadian jurisdictions registered to work in Ontario, more than four times the number who registered in 2021.

We've reduced barriers for internationally educated nurses and expanded a Learn and Stay Grant for nursing students, providing them free tuition and books. That means more health care professionals are helping patients, more expertise is entering the system, more capacity in hospitals and communities and better access to care.

Speaker, workforce growth does not happen by accident. Our government invested an additional $124 million in clinical training and education funding for nurses through the 2026 budget because we are planning for an aging and growing population. Our government is ensuring students have the training necessary to succeed.

The motion before us argues that hospitals are facing funding cuts. Again, the facts tell a very different story. This year alone, Ontario is investing more than $100 billion into our health care system. That represents the largest health care budget in the province's history, and the total health care budget of almost every other province and territory combined. Health care in this province is seeing historic investments. The members opposite may not like to hear it, but the facts are the facts, and Ontarians deserve a debate grounded in facts.

For the fourth consecutive year, our government has increased hospital annualized funding by 4%—each and every year. This year alone, that represents an additional $1.1 billion being invested in Ontario's hospital sector. We've increased hospital support by more than 50% since taking office—investments designed to help hospitals manage increasing demand while continuing to deliver high-quality care.

The members opposite referenced previous governments in their motion. Since they have chosen to raise history, let us look at the record. Ontarians remember when hospital budgets were frozen for years. Ontarians remember reductions in hospital capacity and nurses losing their jobs due to previous governments. Ontarians remember a health care system that struggled to keep pace with population growth.

Our government chose—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I need to hear the member. The member has the floor. Thank you.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Our government has chosen a different path. Rather than talking about health care growth, we've delivered on it. If members want evidence of these investments, they need only to look at the hospital infrastructure projects under way across the province. Our government is investing $64 billion to get shovels in the ground for more than 50 major hospital redevelopment projects. These projects represent one of the largest health care infrastructure expansions in Ontario's history—modern health care facilities designed to meet the needs of today's patients and tomorrow's population.

Communities across Ontario are seeing tangible evidence of these investments. We have shovels in the ground with construction under way, as new beds are being built today and new opportunities to improve patient care. Our government is adding 3,000 new hospital beds across Ontario. This is on top of the 3,500 new hospital beds we have already added since 2020. This matters to families who want confidence that care will be available when they need it.

The motion cites concerns about wait times. We share the goal of reducing wait times. No government should ever be comfortable with delays in care. Our health care workers deserve the support necessary to provide timely treatment. That is precisely why our government has invested over $1 billion through our Surgical Recovery Strategy. These investments expanded surgical capacity across Ontario hospitals. This allowed us to clear the surgical backlog—a result of the pandemic—which resulted in increased hours for operating rooms across the province.

These are actions our government is producing—real benefits for patients. Compare that to the Liberals, who froze hospital budgets for three consecutive years, reduced hospital beds, fired nurses and actually cut medical school

residency spots. Can you imagine cutting residency school spots when our population was growing?

When the Leader of the Opposition was a staffer in Bob Rae's government, we saw a three-year wage freeze for public sector workers and up to 12 unpaid Rae days impacting health care workers from across Ontario. That NDP government was known for breaking collective agreements across the health care sector. The Leader of the Opposition liked it so much that she stayed around to become their leader.

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The opposition is calling for a blanket directive that would apply to every hospital, every facility, every health care organization and every community across Ontario. There is no priority of services, no flexibility and no consideration for the needs of the individual hospital; no recognition that health care delivery varies significantly, not throughout a hospital, but also throughout the province. A large urban teaching hospital has different needs than a rural facility. A growing community hospital has different pressures than a small hospital. A hospital must have the tools to adjust to the changing needs of their community.

We have seen many hospitals that are adjusting their health care professional mix to represent their existing needs. Health care leadership must be able to make operational decisions based on local realities. The opposition's proposal ignores those realities. It assumes every staffing decision is identical, it assumes every workforce adjustment is a cut, and it assumes that health care outcomes improve simply by imposing a province-wide prohibition.

Health care workforce planning is more complex than that. For the best care, sometimes teams need to be restructured. The objective should always be better care for patients, and that requires local decision-making informed by health care experts.

Instead of imposing a blanket moratorium, we are investing in hospitals. Our government, more than any in the past, is investing in health care education, and we are investing in primary care. In fact, our government's historic $3.4-billion primary care action plan is going to connect two million more people in Ontario to a primary care health care provider by 2029, closing the gap—and we are well on our way. We have already attached over a half a million people to care since launching the primary care action plan in 2025, and we are on track to connect every Ontarian to primary care by 2029.

But we recognize there is more work to do. That is exactly why this government remains focused on strengthening Ontario's health care system for the decades to come. We will continue building the infrastructure communities need, and we will continue to invest in a publicly funded health care system that delivers for Ontario families.

The opposition has brought forward a motion based on a claim that the health care workforce is shrinking. The evidence demonstrates that Ontario's health care workforce is in fact growing. The opposition says hospitals are being cut. The evidence demonstrates that hospital investments continue to rise. Emergency room unexpected reduced hours have become a rare event, with some of the lowest numbers since data started being collected.

Let's talk about some of the investments and improvements that we are already seeing. Ontario became the first jurisdiction in Canada to recover and provide nerve tissue for clinical use, supporting advanced reconstructive surgeries.

Ontario introduced innovative heart transplant technology expected to increase heart transplants by 17%.

Our lower limb preservation initiatives are saving an estimated 140 to 260 limbs annually. Think about what that means if your limbs were in danger of being removed. You want to be in Ontario.

There has been significant expansion of advanced cardiac services closer to home, including electrophysiology, defibrillator and cardiac intervention services. We have added approximately 10,000 new CT operating hours for cardiac imaging. Catheter AF ablation is a minimally invasive procedure used to treat Afib, the most common sustained heart rhythm disorder. Catheter AF ablation procedures increased by 162.5% since 2021-22.

Speaker, the opposition says the solution is a blanket moratorium. Our government believes the solution is to continue expanding the workforce, growing capacity and making the investments necessary to improve care for patients. We are making important investments and embracing innovation to connect patients to the care they need where and when they need it. We have a plan to protect Ontario, and we'll continue to support our health care partners.

And for those reasons and many more, Speaker, I cannot support the motion before us. I encourage all members of the House to vote against it.

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

Mme France Gélinas: I'd like to put a few facts for the record. The first fact is that 1,877 nurses have layoff notices in their hands. Many of them will be here Wednesday afternoon. I hope you will take the time to look at their layoff notices and realize that 1,877 nurses have gotten layoff notices in Ontario.

The second is that it's true that the hospital budget has gone up by 4%, but the Ontario Hospital Association had asked for a minimum of 6% just to maintain what we already have. Maintaining what we have means 2,000 people sleep in a hallway or a bathroom or anything but a hospital room. They are sick enough to be admitted, they need nursing care 24/7, and we put them in a hallway. That means that people go to the emergency room with a baby and they will run out of diapers before they are seen because they are hours that turn into half a day that turn into two days of waiting in an emergency room. This is what the Ontario Hospital Association wanted to maintain for 6%. They got 4%, which means $450 million short.

There is a law in Ontario that says hospitals cannot have a deficit. Last year, eight of the 129 hospital corporations filed for an exemption. The minister signed for 80 hospitals that had an exemption and had a deficit last year.

They're not allowed to do a deficit for the next three years, the minister had said.

What are the choices? Your budget did not go up to keep with up inflation. Just to keep up with what you had, they had no choice but to lay off nurses. That makes absolutely no sense. I can read some: Hamilton Health Sciences, 413 layoffs; Queensway Carleton, 118 layoffs; London Health Sciences, 288 layoffs; and, right down the street, University Health Network, 68 layoffs. The list goes on and on. That makes absolutely no sense.

I tabled a bill called the Jordan Heffern Memorial Act. Her parents, her grandparents, her family are here today at Queen's Park. They tell us that 41% of new nurses have considered suicide, 60% are in therapy and 30% are receiving medication for anxiety, PTSD.

We have to stop the layoffs. This is the first step that needs to be taken so that we save our health care system, a program that defines us as Canadians, as Ontarians. We go to the hospital, and we get the care we need. Let's stop the layoffs.

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

Mr. Adil Shamji: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity to speak on the state of health care in our province and to respond to the opposition day motion that has been introduced by the other opposition party.

I want to take a moment to address this in great detail. I think I'm going to divide my remarks in the following way, by addressing three separate areas. The first is, I'm going to take a moment to outline the state of health care in our province right now. That will allow me to respond to some of the inexplicable comments of the Minister of Health. After doing so, I will then proceed to debate the substance of this motion, specifically describing what it says but also by clarifying some mischaracterizations in the motion, and then, finally, by pointing out a number of critical elements that are missing from the motion entirely.

To begin, Ontario faces its worst health care system performance in our province's history. Take it on nearly any metric: ER closures, ER wait times, attachment to primary care, the state of home care, the state of our health workforce. It pains me to say this, but it is in a state of shambles.

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Consider this: Across our province, ERs are perpetually on the verge of closure. Many of them are on the verge of closure; some of them actually do proceed to close, and that's even after some have been permanently closed. I'm an emergency physician. I'm still in practice. I still get the emails all of the time—last minute, desperate emails offering whatever it takes, double or triple multiples of the hourly rate in these remote hospitals, desperate for someone to come in and keep the doors open.

This is not a state of affairs that has ever existed prior to the Premier and this Minister of Health. But ER closures are just the worst final outcome of a health care system that is under strain, because for every ER closure, there are many more emergency departments with unacceptably high wait times. These have grown astronomically under the current government. There are many hospitals in which the average wait time to a physician initial assessment is five, six, seven, eight hours. There was just an article out today documenting the hospitals in Ottawa and in Kingston as being the most hard hit by unacceptable wait times, which, in some cases, were hitting five, six and seven hours—again, a phenomenon that just is simply unprecedented.

Emergency departments are the final safety net, the final common pathway, the final place that people are able to turn to when they have nowhere else to turn.

Apart from the fact that our emergency departments are underfunded, one of the reasons that wait times are going up is because so many other services in our health care system are simply inaccessible. People can't get to their family doctor, even if they have one. They can't get to their family doctor in a reasonable amount of time. They get a message when they call in that has become all too familiar now: "Well, we can't see you for a month. If you need to be seen now, go to a walk-in clinic or go to an emergency department."

Of those who have a family doctor, many of them, even if they can see them in a timely manner, can't see them in the community where they live. Many Ontarians are travelling more than 30 kilometres just to get to their family doctor.

The lack of access doesn't just extend to hospitals and primary care; it extends to the state of our home care system as well. We have countless patients who are trying to get care in the dignity of their own home. The lucky few who are able to access it through Ontario Health atHome far too often find out there's a different provider coming every day or a provider that's always cancelling on them at the very last minute.

Across our province, the majority of hospitals are in a state of deficit—an unprecedented state of affairs.

Additionally, we have nurses being fired. Another week, another announcement: 400 nurses getting fired in—some of the worst offenders are in Ottawa, in Hamilton, but we're seeing it even here in Toronto.

My office keeps track of the layoffs. As far as my memory last serves me, we're at something like 1,800 layoffs so far. The Financial Accountability Office is warning that by 2029, we're going to see another roughly 2,400 to 2,500 nursing cuts—against the backdrop of a minister who constantly brags about how many people are getting trained, and then they're all getting fired. It's simply astonishing.

We have a state of affairs in which we have a government that loves to cut ribbons, pay out novelty cheques—or present novelty cheques, rather—but can't actually deliver on its promises.

Millions of people aren't attached to primary care. And the government loves to make periodic announcements about how many people have been removed off the Health Care Connect list, oftentimes because those people didn't provide a call back when they were contacted to get a family doctor because they left the province, or they died,

or their phone number has changed because they've been waiting for so long.

Even when people are connected to primary care—and I acknowledge that some people are—this government never talks about the number of people who are losing their family doctor. The government's own data that I have from Ontario Health reveals that over the next three to five years, an additional three million people are going to lose their family doctor, against the government's promise of connecting 1.8 million people to a family doctor. So even if they deliver on that promise, there will be an additional 1.2 million people who don't have a family doctor, compared to where we are today and before this government made its promise.

I listened very carefully to the Minister of Health, and she said, "We're not cutting hospitals. We're not cutting their funding. We're increasing"—well, that took me back in time, not too far back, to when we did the estimates for the Ministry of Health and she made similar comments. I didn't buy it then, and I don't buy it now. I asked her, on the record, if she would commit that there would be no further service cuts to staffing or bed levels in hospitals over the next three years. Yes or no? Simple question. And she wouldn't make that commitment. She said, "What I would like to commit—and I will commit—is that we are actively engaged with our hospital partners on regional tables, ensuring that their path to balance is laser focused on front-line patient care." Interesting: "path to balance"—first of all, a tacit acknowledgement that there are over 80 hospitals in our province that face deficits, a crisis of their creation, and then a mysterious allusion to a "path to balance." And we've seen in the days that led up to that, and the days that have led afterwards, what that path to balance means. It means people getting fired. And before that, it meant Bill 124: unconstitutionally restrict the wages of the health care workers who are the backbone of our health care system.

Against that backdrop, we have a motion that intends to do something about this. And I want to start out by commending the other party for paying some attention to this.

I think we can all agree—I would hope that even the government members can agree—that if we truly want to improve our health care system, it's going to need to focus on the people who care for us, because the conditions of care are the conditions of work. If people are stressed, if they're struggling—if they are reeling from moral injury, from mental illness, from burnout—the unthinkable happens. People leave their professions. They struggle with their health. In the worst case—and we now know about this—they even commit suicide. So it's essential that we have measures in place to try to address that and to support the people who care for us.

In addressing this opposition day motion, I want to divide my comments in two ways. The first is to start off by addressing some mischaracterizations, particularly around the Ontario Liberal health record. After doing that, I will point out what is missing from this opposition day motion.

The motion intends to imply that previous Liberal governments have underfunded health care. That simply flies in the face of the evidence. Previous Liberal governments connected more than 2.1 million Ontarians to a family doctor. Previous Liberal governments created 200 family health teams, created the vaunted team-based care that this government is now trying to promise to everybody. Previous Liberal governments created over 26 nurse practitioner-led clinics. And over the time of previous Liberal governments, Ontario went from having the longest surgical wait times to the shortest surgical wait times. Funding in health care increased by more than 50%. Funding in long-term care increased by more than 76%. More than $9 billion was invested in health care infrastructure. Speaker, 23 hospitals were built. There was expanded funding for community care access centres, with funding increasing by 77%. Public health funding nearly doubled. More than five publicly funded vaccines were added to Ontario's vaccination program. We developed the most comprehensive newborn screening program in Canada. And we were the first province in our country to fully fund insulin pumps for children and youth with type 1 diabetes. This is the Ontario Liberal record. And so this attempt by the members who introduced this opposition day motion to entirely mischaracterize all of that spectacular work which happened is an abomination.

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As I turn to the second element of my comments here, specifically, the actual substance of the opposition day motion, I do have to admit that I'm finally relieved to hear some conversation coming from outside of the Ontario Liberal Party about how we can support our health care workers. Many members will know that last week I introduced Bill 133, the Health Care HEROES Act. It was and remains the first attempt in recent memory to introduce a health care worker retention plan for the province of Ontario. It was introduced during the spring session, and then finally debated at second reading last week.

It was endorsed by WeRPN, the Ontario Nurses' Association, and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. It was endorsed by the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions/CUPE. It was endorsed by Unifor. I'm really proud of that, and I'm relieved that finally the other parties are paying some attention and trying to play catch-up. But as is so common when you try and copy someone's homework, it usually doesn't get done to as high of a quality. And so I'm going to try to take a moment to point out what is missing from this opposition day motion.

I'll start out by saying—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I need to hear the member. We need to calm down.

Continue.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I come with receipts, Madam Speaker, so I'm going to explain exactly what's missing from this motion.

First of all, I consider myself a health care worker first—not a doctor, not a nurse, not a PSW; I'm a health

care worker—and every time I rise in this chamber, I rise for all health care workers.

When I look at this motion, it talks a lot about nurses. It mentions a couple of other professions—I think it mentions PSWs, lab technologists and medical radiation technologists—but it says nothing about anyone who works in dietary, says nothing about porters, says nothing about lab technologists, says nothing about respiratory therapists, says nothing about paramedics. The legislation that I introduced last week was designed specifically to capture every single one of them. This motion does not.

Additionally, this motion is preoccupied with health care workers that only work in hospitals. But I will tell you, I will not let anyone diminish the exceptional work that happens in home care, that happens in primary care, that happens in long-term care, and none of that is in this motion. All it talks about is a moratorium on hospital employment and closing the gap in hospital funding.

I won't let that stand. This is a bill that says nothing about Bill 124, one of the biggest reasons that health care workers—not just nurses, all health care workers—were driven out of the profession in the depths of the pandemic. My legislation demanded and prescribed a timeline for all retroactive Bill 124 payments to be completed and even went so far as to prescribe an apology for the unconstitutional legislation that was imposed upon Ontario's health care workers. It's not here.

I'll go further. The legislation does nothing to address the epidemic of mental illness, of moral injury and burnout that is prevalent throughout our health care workforce. My legislation did that. It prescribed OHIP-funded crisis lines. It prescribed a range of therapy options to address the unique needs of health care workers. It even included the consideration of presumptive coverage for specified illnesses under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. I don't see that in this motion.

I can go on, and I fully will. There's nothing in this motion about retention. The closest that it comes to retention is by imposing a moratorium on layoffs. And fine, if you impose a moratorium on layoffs, people will be forcibly retained in their roles, but they will not be voluntarily retained in their roles. For as long as they face an epidemic of workplace harassment and abuse and violence—none of which this motion seeks to address—even if you prevent the government from firing people, it will do nothing to force them from leaving of their own volition. The conditions of work are the conditions of care, but this opposition motion doesn't do anything about that.

Do you know how much paperwork is involved when a health care worker wants to move from one hospital to another, one long-term-care home from another? The criminal record checks that they have to provide, the same orientation modules that they have to do over and over and over again, the same record of vaccinations that they have to go and get from their family doctor, the same TB tests and mask fit-testing and everything—all of this ridiculous red tape that they have to duplicate even though they did it at one other place? My bill would have addressed that. It would have streamlined those kinds of administrative things. None of that is in this motion—no respect for workers' time.

There's nothing in this legislation about fair environmental standards for health care workers. Do you know that when you work in the bowels of a hospital, like in a basement, and it's freezing, what that feels like? Or when, in an ancient hospital that has not received the infrastructure funding that it deserves from this government, when it's boiling in the summer? There's nothing in this legislation to prescribe safe working conditions for health care workers.

There's nothing in this opposition day motion about novel employment strategies like phased retirement schemes. There's nothing about home care, community care or long-term care. There's nothing about honouring our health care workers with long service awards or distinguished conduct medals.

At the end of the day, this is a government on this side that has completely let down health care workers, has driven them out of their professions, disrespected them, has gone so far as to cut their pay and even now to fire them en masse. We fund our hospitals at the lowest rate in all of Canada. Primary care is in shambles, as is home care and community care. And this is a government that has no idea how to fix it and only to support their own friends.

And unfortunately, we have another party here that is interested in standing up for health care workers but doesn't know how to do it. I urge all members to reconsider Bill 133 and to look at the concrete menu of options that would actually go towards improving the state of our health care system.

I thank all members in the House for their careful attention and, when it comes around, will pass it on to my esteemed colleague, the member for Ajax.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): I recognize the Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: So now that the good doctor has finished lecturing us all—

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Speak through the Chair.

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: —yes, Madam Chair; my apologies—I would disagree with him profusely on the notion that only he and only his bill can fix our entire health care system. I think that every single member of this House has a vested interest in improving our health care system. We may disagree with how we go about it—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Can the member come to order?

Continue.

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: We all care profusely about our health care system, every single member does, and he's not the only one that has all the answers. I disagree with that member profusely, with his approach and how he went about this debate. I find it unparliamentary.

Today, Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the chamber—yes, as nurses, we're used to this; we're used to the lecturing from the good doctors because they're the

only ones who know how to fix our health care system. We're used to this, Madam Speaker.

Anyway, it is an honour to rise in the chamber this afternoon to debate this motion and speak to some of the great work our government is doing on staffing in the health and long-term-care system.

It is my privilege to serve as Ontario's Minister of Long-Term Care in this government. I say privilege because as a nurse, the role of Minister of Long-Term Care gives me an opportunity to use my training, experience and expertise to improve the care Ontarians receive. And I could not be prouder of my ministry's work, this government and what all of our front-line and health care staff are doing.

Back in 2021, our government introduced our plan to fix long-term care in Ontario, and while we have updated and modified this plan, as the world around us has evolved, our focus on improving long-term care, on improving the resident experience, on putting Ontarians first has not changed. That is why our government is taking action to build modern, safe and comfortable homes, strengthen our workforce and ensure our beloved seniors receive the care they need.

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We are investing $6.4 billion to build 58,000 new and upgraded long-term-care spaces to provide safe, comfortable homes for our seniors and our residents. But improving long-term care is about more than investment and infrastructure. It is about the amazing people that provide care, the knowledge and skills they bring to their work and the practices that help them deliver the best possible outcomes for residents.

And I say, Madam Speaker, we have 120,000 long-term-care workers that show up each and every day, in their uniform, to care for the most vulnerable people in our province—our 80,000 residents that live in long-term care are some of the most vulnerable—and they show up with professionalism, with knowledge and skills, but also, they show up with heart. Because to work in long-term care, you need to have the theoretical knowledge, but you also need to love and care for your residents. That's why I'm so proud of our nurses, personal support workers, allied health professionals, physicians and other members of the care team, because they all play equally essential roles.

That is why, thanks to the leadership of the Premier, this government has made strengthening staffing and meeting our direct hours of care target a central priority of our care plan. We continue to work closely with the sector to maintain our ambitious, legislated province-wide targets of an average of four hours of direct care per resident, per day, provided by nurses and personal support workers.

And, this year, I am proud to say, the sector has surpassed that four-hour target for the very first time. So, we are at four hours, 10 minutes for four consecutive quarters—so a full year—which is really commendable. I really commend all the operators for working hard to achieve these targets. This means that long-term-care residents are receiving more direct care on average than at any point in Ontario's history. This means an additional hour of direct care every single day, compared to the previous three-hour benchmark. That is 365 additional hours of care each year, or more than 15 full days of additional care annually.

Think about what that means for a resident living in a long-term-care home: more time with the nurses and personal support workers who care for them, more opportunities for meaningful interactions, personalized attention and the support they need throughout their day; and for families, it means knowing their loved ones are receiving more direct care in the place they call home. This is an important milestone and one that would not have been possible without our dedicated, long-term-care workforce. This government is working hard to ensure the sector continues to have the support it needs to deliver this high-quality care.

So, Madam Speaker, if you can imagine, in the past when we had less PSWs and less nurses on each floor, the tasks were very task-oriented. The day: We had to get residents up very quickly, move them in for breakfast, brush their teeth, get them ready because there weren't enough people to provide for flexibility. Now that we have more staff on each floor, if Mrs. Jones doesn't want to get up for breakfast at 7 a.m. this morning—she wants to sleep until 10 a.m.—she can do that. If someone else wants to receive their breakfast in their room, they can do that. If someone would prefer to just have a coffee today and not go to the dining room, they can do that. This wasn't possible before, because we simply did not have enough staff available in our homes. So it was very task-oriented. We are moving away from being task-oriented in long-term care to being people-oriented, and I'm so proud that this work is ongoing.

Of course, in order to achieve this work, we had to invest $4.9 billion to train, hire and retain long-term-care staff. So over the last four years, we have hired about 27,000 additional staff, and we have made a $2-billion annual, permanent investment to strengthen levels for nurses, personal support workers and allied health professionals.

This year, we increased our overall level-of-care funding by almost $140 million, following an increase of more than $350 million the previous year. These investments are helping us strengthen our workforce and provide more direct care to Ontario's long-term-care residents.

But our work does not stop here. As we continue building and expanding long-term care across Ontario, we must also ensure we have the skilled health care professionals needed to care for our seniors. That is why we are creating opportunities for nurses and personal support workers to enter the sector, develop their skills and build rewarding careers.

Through our Jumpstart Opportunities in Nursing in Long-Term Care program, we are investing $70 million to provide eligible nurses with up to $25,000 in incentive bonuses to work in long-term care, and eligible nurses who relocate to work in rural, remote or northern long-term-care homes can receive an additional $20,000. These are

important incentives to attract skilled nurses in support homes across our province.

I'm also proud of a program called BEGIN. We have partnered with our association, WeRPN, through which we are helping our incredible staff career ladder. If there's a PSW who's working in long-term care and is interested in becoming an RPN, the ministry, through WeRPN, will actually pay for their education—for the cost of the tuition—and we will actually backfill their shifts at the long-term-care home so that PSW can take part in that education.

We have the same program for RPNs who want to bridge to become RNs, and I'm excited to announce that we're actually partnering up with NPAO—the Nurse Practitioners Association of Ontario—to create an RN-to-NP pathway, because in long-term care, we know that when we have nurse practitioners present, our residents have much better outcomes, so we want to grow our own nurse practitioners, and that's why we're currently working with NPAO to have that last bridging pathway.

Interjections.

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Thank you.

So, in theory, someone could start working in long-term care as a PSW, bridge to become an RPN, bridge to become an RN and bridge to become an NP, with their entire cost of tuition paid by the Ministry of Long-Term Care. This is how much we care about our staff and how much we want to invest in them.

Two additional programs that are helping to grow our long-term-care workforce are the Preceptor Resource and Education Program in Long-Term Care, or PREP LTC, and our Living Classroom program. In January 2024, our government announced an investment of more than $100 million into these programs to support the clinical placement and training of over 32,000 new PSWs and nurses in long-term care over three years. Since its launch, PREP LTC has helped over 550 long-term-care homes provide clinical placements for over 56,000—that's 56,000—nursing and PSW students.

This investment also helped expand the Living Classroom program, which integrates PSWs and practical nurses into long-term-care homes, allowing students to stay in their home communities as they study, and apply what they learn as they work with the residents. We're creating these living classrooms right in the long-term-care homes. I believe we have close to 50 now, where we are working with our local colleges and local employers—so local long-term-care homes—and they actually built a classroom right within the long-term-care homes. The students will learn their theory in that living classroom and then they'll go up on the floor and practise their theory right away from day one with the residents.

What ends up happening is when these students graduate, they already know that long-term-care home and many of them have a job waiting for them from day one as soon as they graduate their PSW or PN program. The retention rate of those students who graduate from these living classrooms is about 90%, so this is a program that's really working and helping us create a pipeline to hire more staff right into our homes.

As I conclude, as many of you know, before entering politics, I began my career as a registered nurse. Even today, I continue to work in the emergency department at Etobicoke General Hospital. Through this experience, I see first-hand the difference that dedicated health care professionals can make in someone's life. I also understand that providing care to our patients is not always easy; it requires making important decisions, often in challenging circumstances.

As a health care professional, I know that the work of improving patient and resident care never truly ends. That is why we entered this profession in the first place: to care of people. Working in health care and long-term care is more than a job, it truly is a vocation; a calling to ensure that every person receives the dignity, compassion, high quality of care and love they deserve. That is the vision that I share as a nurse and as Ontario's Minister of Long-Term Care. That is the vision that I share with the Minister of Health, the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, the Premier and this government.

We will continue to make the investments necessary to support nurses in Ontario, strengthen long-term care and improve the care our seniors receive.

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

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MPP Robin Lennox: We shouldn't have a health system that requires heroic effort to provide good patient care; we should have a health system that is so well designed and so patient-centred that it becomes easy to provide exceptional care and ensure a good outcome for our patients. That is an achievable goal, but it's going to require bold and visionary leadership to get us there.

Instead, this Conservative government is intent on moving us backwards and undermining our public health care system. Over the past eight years, it's true that it has become harder and harder to guarantee good patient care. Ontario nurses, PSWs and all health workers are highly skilled and dedicated, but their skills are increasingly being tested against the constraints of a broken system.

At a time when ER wait times are hours long and surgeries are being cancelled because of inadequate staffing, 2,000 patients are being cared for in hallways of hospitals every single day, and this Conservative government is allowing thousands of nurses and other health care workers to be laid off. Faster than we can train nurses, we are putting them out of work, taking them away from the bedside where they are desperately needed.

In Hamilton, St. Joseph's hospital announced the loss of 62 positions, including RNs, in January 2026. Those layoffs occurred in the context of the hospital confronting a projected $25-million deficit.

St. Joe's also announced the cancellation of the neonatal ICU expansion and the nursing positions that would have gone alongside it. The NICU expansion had been years in the making, and in fact, the Minister of Health had been only so pleased to go and announce that expansion in

November 2024, in advance of the provincial election. But just a year after that election, the government was quick to abandon its promises and allow that expansion to be cancelled because of hospital underfunding.

Just a couple of months ago, Hamilton Health Sciences announced 413 job eliminations, including nurses, clerks and other hospital staff. That announcement came just days after the by-election in Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, but this government gave no warning that those layoffs would be coming, and they did nothing to stop those layoffs and protect those jobs. Hamilton Health Sciences is now facing a projected $150-million deficit.

Losing thousands of health workers in under two years should be an indictment of this Conservative government. In the Ontario NDP, we are focused on putting forward solutions to protect, restore and expand our public health care system, and that starts with an immediate province-wide moratorium on health worker layoffs now.

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

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: I'm pleased to rise in support of the bill but also to recognize the incredible work of our nurses, doctors, personal support workers and all the front-line health care workers who care for Ontarians every single day. They deserve a government that gives them the resources they need to do their jobs caring for families and loved ones, supporting them through the toughest times of their lives, much like the private member's bill that my colleague from Don Valley East brought forward that this government voted down. That would have been a very good step forward to support the folks who help take care of us in our times of need.

This Premier has been in office for eight long years in this government, and it's responsible for the health care system we have today. It needs to be accountable for the challenges facing patients and health care workers.

Across Ontario, patients are waiting too long in emergency departments—sometimes closed—hospitals are struggling with capacity, and health care workers are being stretched to their limits. Those are serious challenges that require serious solutions.

Speaker, I find it interesting the NDP has chosen to use this motion as well to try and revisit the records of previous governments while leaving out one important chapter of Ontario's health care history, as if the history books were only written from 1995 onwards. So when it comes time to their five years in government—in which, I'll note, the leader of the official opposition worked as a staffer. They conveniently left out the dark period of that NDP government from 1990 to 1995.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Were you born?

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: Actually, I was born.

During those five long years, Ontario lost more than 8,000 hospital beds, but it didn't stop there. They introduced the social contract requiring public sector employees, including health care workers, to take 12 unpaid days off annually. Speaker, imagine being a nurse working in an overstretched hospital, being told by an NDP government, "I'm sorry, you've got to take 12 days off without pay."

So if we're going to talk about—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Stop the clock.

I'm not going to stop the clock again. I'll start warning. Please come to order.

Member for Ajax, take the floor.

Mr. Rob Cerjanec: Thank you, Speaker. I'm not sure where I left off there.

I was born before that NDP government took office.

I'll just say, if we're going to tell the whole story of health care, let's tell the whole story—not just the chapters that are politically convenient.

I want to bring the discussion back to my community in Ajax and across Durham region. More families are moving into our communities. It's a place of a lot of growth. More people are relying on our hospitals, and that's pressure on our health care system—like the Ajax Pickering Hospital, which has an operating deficit of $41 million. Imagine that: hospitals needing to rely on lines of credit just to pay the bills and just to pay the workers there. Our health care workers are doing everything they can to care for our loved ones, but they need the infrastructure, the staffing and the resources to meet the needs of a growing population.

Just last week, I asked the Minister of Health about the proposed Whitby hospital and the Pickering post-acute care centre. I asked the minister a straightforward question: Would this government move forward with the next stage of those projects? Unfortunately, we didn't receive an answer. Just today, the member for Oshawa asked the same question. And guess what? No answers from the Minister of Health. That's frustrating for the folks in my community.

Health care workers deserve better than political finger-pointing. And patients deserve better than waiting years for the investments that their communities need. The Financial Accountability Office has warned that the shortfall in the health care sector will be $3.8 billion, just by 2028-29, to maintain existing service levels, never mind the additional investments that are needed. If that isn't failure in health care, I don't know what is.

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

Hon. Michelle Cooper: I am pleased to rise in response to the opposition day motion before this House.

First, I want to recognize Ontario's nurses, physicians, paramedics, mental health clinicians, addictions counsellors and community service providers. Every day, they help people and families through some of their most difficult moments.

We all share the goal of ensuring Ontarians receive high-quality care when and where they need it most. That includes mental health and addictions care, because mental health is health. We recognize the pressures facing our system, including growing demand, substance use and overdoses, and workforce challenges. But this motion

presents an incomplete picture. It overlooks the progress our government is making to expand access, increase capacity and connect services.

Through our historic $3.8-billion Roadmap to Wellness investment, annual funding for mental health and addictions supports has increased by more than $1 billion. We are investing in early intervention, treatment and recovery, while making care easier to find and closer to home.

Speaker, expanding services is only part of the answer. They must also work together. The Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence is strengthening provincial coordination, service standards, performance measurement and care navigation. Our work toward central intake and six regional hubs will help bring a fragmented system together so patients and families do not have to navigate it alone.

One of our most important investments is in Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment Hubs, or HART hubs. We have invested more than $560 million to open 29 HART hubs in Ontario, bringing together mental health and addictions treatment, primary care, social and employment supports, and connections to supportive housing. These hubs are helping people move beyond crisis towards stability and recovery. They have already delivered more than half a million client interactions.

I recently had the opportunity to open the newest HART hub in Brockville, a 34-bed location offering withdrawal management, treatment and transitional supportive housing. Within a week, clients were already coming through its doors. I also visited the Oshawa HART hub, which is expanding to 45 treatment beds. There, I spoke with a client who described how these services were helping her avoid becoming involved in the criminal justice system. That is what access to treatment and recovery can mean in someone's life.

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Beyond HART hubs, our Addictions Recovery Fund is investing more than $210 million over six years to establish more than 500 recovery beds, with capacity to serve approximately 7,000 clients annually. It also supports mobile mental health clinics and crisis response teams. Recovery is not always a straight line, and people need support at different stages.

Speaker, we are equally focused on helping children and young people who face challenges become connected. Since 2019, annual funding for child and youth mental health has increased more than $224 million throughout the Roadmap to Wellness.

We have more than tripled our youth wellness hub network from 10 to 33 locations. These hubs bring mental health, substance use, primary care and community services together for young people aged 12 to 25. The network has connected more than 60,000 young people and families to support. From April 2025 to March 2026, there were nearly 100,000 visits. Almost 40% of youth report that they would not have received help without these hubs; 62% wait three days or less for clinical services. Having visited the Central Toronto and Northumberland Youth Wellness Hubs, I have seen how a welcoming place to walk in, build trust and access care can make a difference.

We are also investing $4.75 million to expand One Stop Talk, offering free, confidential, virtual walk-in counselling by phone, video and text to children and youth under 18. Alongside stronger school-based supports, this helps young people seek care earlier. Geography should not determine access to care.

ConnexOntario provides 24-hour mental health and addictions information, navigation and referrals, serving nearly 100,000 Ontarians annually in 130 languages.

We have also invested $2.5 million in Breaking Free Online, available around the clock to Ontarians aged 16 and older seeking to reduce or stop substance use, and $1.5 million in a virtual intensive outpatient program.

These options help reduce travel and scheduling barriers, particularly in rural and northern communities.

Care must also reflect the communities it serves. We are supporting two Indigenous-led HART hubs in Kenora and Sault Ste. Marie and the first Indigenous-led youth wellness hub in Sagamok First Nation.

Since 2019, our government has invested more than $72 million in new base funding for Indigenous-specific mental health and addictions programming through the Roadmap to Wellness. This includes culturally grounded approaches such as land-based healing and Indigenous-led traditional healing alongside psychiatric care through the Indigenous Pathways to Mental Wellness program in London.

For Black youth, our $2.9-million investment in the Amani program expanded culturally responsive supports from CAMH into seven satellite locations. These investments help build trust and make services more accessible.

Speaker, timely support during a mental health crisis can change a life. Our government has invested up to $16 million in police-partnered mobile crisis response teams in more than 50 communities across Ontario. These teams connect people with health professionals, help de-escalate crises and can prevent unnecessary emergency department visits or apprehensions.

In Sudbury, one team attended 119 calls involving officers and clinicians, and 80% were resolved on the spot without an emergency department visit or a trip to jail.

We are also investing more than $230 million in new base funding for community mental health, including non-police mobile crisis services, mobile clinics and early psychosis intervention. We were actually the first government to offer structured psychosis treatment for free to Ontarians. New paramedic-led teams in Sarnia, Thunder Bay and Barrie demonstrate how we are adapting responses to local needs.

These investments complement our broader work to strengthen health care.

Through our $3.4 billion primary care action plan, more than half a million additional people have been connected to a primary care provider, and we are working towards connecting everyone in Ontario by 2029.

I have to say, in my riding, everyone is connected, and—good news—we are looking for patients to connect

to doctors in the riding of Eglinton–Lawrence. So if you are in my riding or neighbouring ridings and you are looking for a doctor, we have doctors in our riding to help you.

Better primary care and stronger community mental health services help reduce avoidable pressure on hospitals.

Speaker, I am not suggesting every challenge has been solved. Families still face barriers, and demand remains high. That is precisely why we continue to act.

From the 29 HART hubs and 33 youth wellness hubs to new recovery beds, culturally grounded programs, virtual services and mobile crisis teams, we are building a system with more pathways to care.

The direction is clear: stronger, more connected mental health and addictions services, more options for patients and families, and a continued commitment to helping Ontarians get the best possible care when and where they need it.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: This motion is important to Londoners because we are feeling the loss of our health care workers right now. In the last eight months, over 400 nursing jobs have been cut at St. Joe's and LHSC. Hundreds of positions have been eliminated for PSWs and support staff.

These cuts are affecting patients across the entire region, patients like Marg in London West, a mother of two daughters living with chronic conditions. Marg says the nurses who support her family have been a godsend, offering compassion, understanding and consistency over many years. "Without nurses," she says, "the system simply will not work."

By cutting nursing positions, the government is also closing the door for new nurses. There are nursing students at Western who were only able to enrol in nursing because of the Learn and Stay grant. Without jobs after they graduate, new nurses will not only have to repay those grants; they will not be able to practise what they were trained to do. It makes no sense, Speaker.

Meanwhile, emergency rooms are packed, patients are lined up on stretchers in hospital hallways and people can't get the basic surgeries and diagnostic procedures they need.

Speaker, Londoners deserve better. Ontario deserves better. Stop firing health care workers and support this motion.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Here's a warning from Ontario nurses to this government: "We are in survival mode." Hospitals are in real crisis, and this is becoming very dangerous in Ontario.

Hamilton Health Sciences announced 413 additional job cuts due to the provincial government's underfunding of our hospitals. CUPE 7800 represents almost 5,000 health care workers. They report that layoffs are gutting vital services, including operating rooms and surgical centres. Our hospital lost 2% in real-dollar funding last year and is projected to lose almost 3% this year.

1500

These Conservative cuts are the real reason why health care workers are being fired—nurses fired, when over 2,000 people are being treated in hallways every single day in Ontario; layoffs when the average patient wait time at Hamilton Health Sciences is 24 hours; 37 jobs in surgery lost, when 30,000 people are waiting for surgery in Hamilton; diagnostic clinics closing when people like my constituent must wait almost 400 days for an MRI.

We in the official opposition NDP are bringing this to a vote today to stop the firings. We hope that this Conservative government will take this crisis as seriously as we do.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Last week, the Queensway Carleton Hospital hit a record 124% capacity, the highest in the hospital's history, with long wait times in the emergency department. In August, QCH was dead last in the province for average wait times for a first assessment in the emergency department. And what happened in July, Speaker? The Queensway Carleton laid off 87 nurses and 73 health care workers.

There is no health care without health care workers. The physicians, nurses, care aides—they are the ones who provide the care, not the building. But this Conservative government isn't properly funding health care, and as costs are rising, hospitals are being forced to make cuts.

The cuts at QCH are part of layoffs that are happening around the province, and the Financial Accountability Officer is warning that things are about to get worse. The government's spending plan for health care is going to lead to service cuts, including more than 2,500 fewer nurses across Ontario by 2028.

Speaker, we're in the middle of a crisis. I'm hearing constantly from constituents about long and difficult waits for care, along with incredibly challenging stories from nurses and health care workers about the conditions they're forced to work in. We shouldn't be firing anyone in the middle of a health care crisis. We need more nurses and health care workers, not less.

I urge all members of this House to vote for this official opposition motion to implement a moratorium on all health care worker layoffs and to properly fund health care in this province.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: There was a shocking study revealed today. It was a survey of nurses, and it found that 41% of newly graduated nurses had considered suicide. Some 60% were in therapy, and 30% were using medication for PTSD, anxiety and depression. This is absolutely shocking, and it's a testament to how grossly underfunded and understaffed our hospitals are and how overworked those nurses are.

The Liberals left us in Ontario with the fewest hospital beds per capita and 1,000 patients being treated in hospital

hallways. This Conservative government doubled that to 2,000 patients being treated in hospital hallways, and now they're cutting an additional 1,900 health care workers, including 921 nurses, in this current year.

The motion that we have on the floor just calls for a moratorium on hospital firings, on cutting hospital health care workers. In a few minutes, unless they have the courage to stand up to their own government, these Conservative members are going to stand up and vote to continue to cut health care workers from our already understaffed hospital hallways. Shame on all of you.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Speaker, our health care system in Ontario is in a crisis. Nobody on that side seems to acknowledge this fact.

The FAO's health care sector spending plan review highlights the consequences of your consistent underfunding. We are seeing wait times—in Cambridge, 22 hours for an emergency room; St. Mary's General Hospital, 21 hours; Grand River Hospital, 12 hours.

In May 2026, we learned that wait times for a physician are up 67%. This is a crisis that you can no longer afford to ignore. We do know that 70% of Ontario hospitals are forecasting a budget deficit to end this next year, up from 55% the previous year. It is not getting any better.

The issue is funding, but also, where is the funding going? Because you have diverted money away from our public health care system. I do want to say, the expert front-line care is the last place that we should be cutting in our hospital system.

That's why we are just simply asking you to draw a line in the sand, stop the bleeding, stop the cuts. And while you're at it, get yourself a new Minister of Health who knows how to do her job.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Last November, Niagara Health cut 100 jobs just before Christmas due to a $26-million deficit—the recreational therapists team cut down to half its size; Niagara Health's entire complex continuing care units program, gone; dietary aides and EVS workers let go; PSW coverage in the St. Catharines hospital site reduced from 24-hour, around-the-clock care to just 16 hours. Nurses have been left to pick up the pieces and are facing even more pressure on night shifts. The St. Catharines site ER wait time is currently at 5.5 hours, and that clock starts from when you're triaged to when you see a physician. I'm hearing from residents who are waiting hours before triage.

Hospital budgets were frozen for years, and this Conservative government has only shown that they do not take health care workers seriously.

The lasting effects of Bill 124 and extremely low health spending are to blame for our nursing shortage, and even worse is worker morale.

Our community, seniors and families cannot afford another cut to the people who care for us. With FAO projections showing this government's spending plan will fall $2 billion short over the next year or two, we are headed in a disastrous direction.

On behalf of health care workers across St. Catharines, I urge this Conservative government to ban layoffs within this sector and immediately close the gap in funding.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm pleased to speak to the official opposition motion calling on the government to stop the cuts and end the wait times.

Right now, millions of Ontarians can't see a doctor or nurse. Emergency department visits mean endless waiting—specialists taking months, and thousands languishing in hospital hallways.

Instead of hiring more health care workers to deliver health care faster, this Premier is firing them in the middle of a worsening health care crisis. Even for this government, cutting public health care is despicable.

A health care worker, Rachel, from my riding of Toronto Centre wrote to me to share her concerns about these cuts taking place at the St. Michael's Hospital ER department. Rachel said, "Our hospital serves the most complex, marginalized and vulnerable patient population in the city. We cover patients in the most dire social circumstances, often unhoused, with a high proportion of mental health, violence, and substance use history." St. Michael's Hospital operates a stroke centre, a cardiac centre, a neurosurgical centre, and the only adult level 1 trauma centre in the downtown core. And all of these patients go through one single ER.

Rachel and her colleagues have a very blunt and simple message for the Premier and his Minister of Health: "Your health care cuts are insulting, and our patients will suffer because of them. These cuts will result in longer wait times, less access to much-needed care, and will result in preventable patient deaths...."

Do the right thing: Adopt this motion.

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

MPP Wayne Gates: I just want to say to my Liberal colleagues over there that Bob Rae is a Liberal.

I also want to say to the Conservatives, as you talk about Bob Rae, under the Harris government, you had 29 hospital sites that you closed, and 7,000 nurses were laid off.

In Niagara, we've got a crisis right now. We have lost over 600 hospital jobs between Hamilton and Niagara, and if you count the long-term-care facility in Welland, that's 750 jobs we've lost. Patients in Niagara are waiting 56.4 hours for in-patient care, according to Niagara Health.

The government has made it impossible to calculate hallway medicine. Do you know why? They don't calculate it anymore.

Fort Erie and Port Colborne urgent care centres—every study says you should invest in urgent care centres. We're closing Port Colborne. We're closing Fort Erie—we're cutting their hours right now. And on some weekends, they're shutting down Port Colborne and Fort Erie.

I'm going to close by saying that Tommy Douglas, the greatest Canadian of all time, would be rolling over in his grave on what we are doing to health care today.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: The function of any government is to do collectively what we cannot do individually, and that's why in Canada we believe in publicly delivered health care where you can promptly see a doctor or nurse for primary care; you can get a test so you can be diagnosed quickly; you can get that treatment so that you can have the best possible outcomes, a cure, a high quality of life; and where care is delivered based on need, not on what you can pay.

1510

In my riding of University–Rosedale we're seeing a lot of cuts, and I'm very worried about them. I'm worried about what's happening at SickKids with its growing and unsustainable debt and what that will mean when we take our child to the emergency room on a Friday night because they're in pain. I am worried about what's happening at UHN, where we're seeing cuts in critical wards, like the ward that cares for patients with kidney disease and the ward that cares for patients with heart issues.

I want to quote Erin Ariss, the president of the Ontario Nurses' Association. She says cuts like these result "in the potential for life-threatening and life-altering complications for any patient. It's absurd and quite frankly shocking that when we have the lowest number of registered nurses per population in the country, that you would be eliminating these positions further." Guess what? They're talking about the Conservative government.

I agree. For the sake of patient safety and patient outcomes, we are urging you to commit to not lay off a single health care worker.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I want to add my voice to this conversation. But first, I want to thank all of the health care workers at Lakeridge Health in Oshawa and across Durham region. They are doing an unbelievable job without all of the tools and resources that they deserve, which is why we're standing here and calling on this government to stop the cuts to health care.

We're asking them to ensure that no nurses or health care workers are fired or laid off or lose their job. Right now is the time we should be investing in health care. We've always been so proud of the fact that we have a strong public health care system. This government is working so hard to strangle it, and that is not okay.

I ran into a nurse in my community the other night at the Bright and Merry Market, and I heard about how challenging it is for nurses. This government has a stranglehold on our hospitals, and now they can't invest in what is needed. And when nurses are being asked to deliver food, are they going to be asked to clean the floors next? We need nurses to be nursing. We need nurses to do their jobs and for everybody to have the health care that they deserve. Whether it's dietary, housekeeping, patient portering, invest in health care so that it can all work the way we need it to when we turn to it. Invest in health care and stop the firings.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Sung to the tune of There's a Hole in My Bucket.

There's a hole in the bucket, dear Minister, dear Minister.

There's a hole in the bucket that your government has made.

On the one hand, the ministry has increased the number of people able to become nurses while laying off thousands of nurses at the same time. It's perverse. And what happens to students on Learn and Stay grants if their jobs disappear before they've been able to fulfill their two-year commitments? Guess what? They get a big debt.

The strategy to create system collapse is so that you can justify funnelling public dollars into for-profit health corporations and for-profit nursing agencies and induce nurses to leave the public sector. That's what this is.

The Ford government promised to eliminate hallway medicine, yet it is infinitely worse today than it was when this government came to power. Wait times of 12 hours in an emergency room are horrible, and now Ontario is on track to lose 2,500 nurses.

We therefore call on the government of Ontario to implement a province-wide moratorium on health care worker layoffs, a moratorium on the elimination of positions and a commitment to close the gap in funding so that wait times are reduced and people are able to access health care when and where they need it.

Please fix the hole in your bucket.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the constituents of London North Centre. London is a health care hub for the entire region, and my community has endured the escalation of Liberal hallway medicine, ever-longer surgical wait times, and is now hitting disastrous records under this Conservative regime.

I'd like to share an email from Leisanne, a constituent of London North Centre who's pleading for help for her elderly parents. She wrote, "Both my mom and dad have dementia and other medical issues. My father has literally decided that he would rather stay at the retirement home during a medical crisis than go to emergency and endure what awaits there. He would rather die, than go sit in the emergency department! All of the nurses I've dealt with during our visits have been kind and caring, but they are bearing the weight of the entire department. Removing nursing positions isn't just moving backwards; it's dangerous and careless. We need more nurses not less!"

I'd like to also share words from a London nurse:

"To Conservatives: Please stop celebrating our resilience without acknowledging how the organization is

contributing to the conditions in which we need to be resilient. Resilience should be the capacity to weather occasional storms, not the expectation that we survive a hurricane every shift."

More than 400 registered nurses have been laid off in London, and London Health Sciences Centre has the youngest workforce in the province. I want this government to fight to keep nurses working; don't fight the official opposition who's trying to protect their jobs. Support this motion and let nurses keep their jobs.

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

MPP Alexa Gilmour: It is a privilege to rise on behalf of the people of Parkdale–High Park to begin by thanking the health care workers in my riding, especially at St. Joseph's Health Centre, and to support this health care staffing motion which is of great importance to them.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I was speaking with Dr. Venugopal, an emergency room doctor who works at St. Joseph's Health Centre in my riding. He shared how low staffing ratios lead to long wait times, poor outcomes and even death. He spoke of how frustrating it was to treat seniors laying in hallway stretchers; how awful it is to watch children writhing in pain, sitting in the waiting room for hours. It pains him to know that patients have died while waiting for care.

This government originally won office based on the promise of ending hallway health care, and it is past time for them to do something about it. This government likes to tout their spending, but let's talk about the facts that lead to patient outcomes: Ontario currently has the second lowest per-capita, per-person funding rate in the country. The legacy of this government is disastrous health care, and the NDP government in the future will fix it.

Stop laying off health care workers, stop eliminating positions, give us safe patient staffing ratios and fund public health care like lives depend on it, because they do.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to start by thanking my colleagues in the NDP official opposition, every single one of them. Those who spoke today and those who didn't have a chance to speak today have been fighting for health care workers, for patients, for their communities and for a universal publicly funded health care system in this province and in Canada every single day. I appreciate it and I know the people of our province appreciate it.

I also want to take a moment to thank all of the very brave health care workers. Whether you are a registered nurse, a PSW, an RPN, a porter in our hospitals right now, so many of you have spoken up from hospitals, but also, I will say, from long-term care and public health. You have raised your voices, you have been brave, you have stood up and you are fighting so hard for everyone. I want to thank you so much for lending your voice to this fight.

I also want to thank the students, because we have heard from an extraordinary number of students, particularly—I was with the nursing students over the last few weeks, sharing their stories, sharing their concerns about the future of this province and of our public health care system. I want to thank them.

La crise qu'on vit dans notre système de santé, c'est le résultat des choix du premier ministre Ford et de son gouvernement conservateur.

This is a matter of choices. This is about choices that this government is making. It doesn't have to be the way it is. We've heard over and over here today stories of health care workers being laid off, positions being eliminated. Every Ontarian I speak with right now cannot believe—they cannot begin to comprehend how it is that with a system in crisis, with every other jurisdiction desperately looking for health care workers, our province would be deciding to lay off health care workers in this moment. But it is a choice that they are making.

That is why we've put this motion forward today: because we are calling on the government to end the bleed—end the hemorrhaging—of health care workers in our system. We cannot afford it. Our patients, our people, cannot afford it. Wait times are already absolutely out of control, emergency rooms are overflowing and people are being treated in hallways and in broom closets. This is unacceptable.

1520

You have heard one tragic story after another here today, so the government members have a choice to make. In a few minutes, you're going to be given an opportunity—a really important one; one that your constituents will be looking at in coming months, in the next election. They will be saying, "Did my representative do everything they could to make sure that my family is protected when we're unwell? That when we face a health care emergency in our community, we have done everything we possibly can to make sure that they are going to be okay?"

You will have to live with that, because one of the simplest things you could do right now is just say, "No more firing of health care workers." Stop it. A moratorium, a freeze—whatever you want to call it, just get it done.

One simple vote, right now, is coming up. You can vote with us or you can vote against this motion, but if you vote against it, be very clear: We are coming for you. And we are coming for you in every riding, in every corner of this province, because the people of Ontario cannot afford this anymore.

We are facing a crisis like we have never faced before. And it was bad before, but man, it is bad today. There is no excuse for one single health care worker to be unemployed in this moment, and certainly not to be laid off. So vote with us. Vote in support of this moratorium.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): MPP Stiles has moved opposition day motion number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1522 to 1532.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): MPP Stiles moved opposition day motion number 3. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): All those against, please rise.

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 37; the nays are 65.

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

Motion negatived.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PUBLIC SAFETY

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 19, 2026, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion regarding drug use and public safety.

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

MPP Monica Ciriello: I am pleased to rise today in support of this motion as the parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General. People may disagree about many things in this House. We all have different views about taxes, about the role of government and about how to address challenges facing our province. But there is an expectation that all Ontarians agree on: They should be able to go about their daily lives safely without fearing for their safety. That expectation is paramount.

A parent should not have to wonder whether their child is safe walking home from school. A business owner should not feel that repeated theft is normal in their community. And a police officer who goes to work every day to protect the public should know that the government has given them the tools they need to do their job.

Speaker, this is the core of the motion before us today. Police need enough officers to respond to calls and investigate crime. Prosecutors need the resources to handle their cases. Bail conditions must be enforced when they are violated. Courts need an effective legal framework. And when someone is sentenced to custody, our correctional system needs the space and the staff to keep that person safely in custody. Our government has been working on each one of these parts.

Let me start with policing. Speaker, there is no substitute for having police officers when people need them in their community. That may sound obvious, but it has real consequences on how we plan as a government. We know Ontario is growing. Our population is increasing, and the demands placed on our police services are up.

We need to make sure that when we are training enough officers, they're not only meeting the needs of today, but have the capacity they will need years from now. That is why we have added additional intake at the Ontario Police College and increased the size of each class. The result is almost double the number of new police officers trained and graduating each and every year. We have also waived tuition fees for basic constable training.

1540

Speaker, we are also investing in the college itself. The Ontario Police College needs modern facilities and enough capacity. That is why we are making historic investments to modernize and expand it.

We are taking a similar long-term approach when it comes to the Ontario Provincial Police. We are constructing a brand-new OPP facility in Orillia.

These are the long-term investments that are needed. Our government is thinking well beyond the next year or even the next election. We know Ontario will need more police officers in the future, so we have to build that capacity now.

That same principle applies to corrections. After years of Liberal soft-on-crime politics, Ontario accumulated significant capacity pressures in its correctional system. Our government is fixing it by expanding and improving facilities right across this province.

Our government has completed renovations at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, adding 110 new spaces. We've also begun expanding the Quinte Detention Centre,

which will add another 90 spaces. At the Toronto South Detention Centre, we have upgraded tower D, which will soon be reopened, which will add another 320 spaces. We are also close to completing the work on the new Thunder Bay Correctional Complex, which will add another 117 spaces. We've begun work on new facilities in Brockville and in the St. Lawrence Valley, which together will add more than 300 new spaces.

Speaker, when all this work is taken together, we are bringing more than 2,500 additional spaces into the correctional system by 2032. That is a significant expansion of capacity.

But again, a correctional system is not simply a collection of buildings. Those facilities have staff, and the people who work in them have to be able to do their jobs safely. That's why our government is also adding another 700 correctional staff.

Anyone who has spoken with correctional officers understands how demanding their work can be. They're responsible for maintaining order in difficult environments; dealing with people who can be unpredictable and, at times, dangerous; and ensuring the safety of both staff and inmates within the facility. They deserve to have the resources and the staffing necessary to do their work properly.

The other issue I want to address is bail. People across Ontario have been talking about bail reform for some time now. We have all heard concerns about criminals who are released after being arrested only to commit another offence, or about people who are released with conditions who subsequently fail to comply with them.

There's an important point here that I think gets lost in some political debate: Bail conditions must mean something. Ontarians expect bail conditions to mean something. If a court imposes conditions on someone's release, there needs to be a reasonable expectation that those conditions will be enforced. That is why our government has invested $112 million to strengthen bail monitoring and enforcement.

We have also established the Bail Compliance and Warrant Apprehension Grant Program. We're supporting dedicated bail enforcement teams and providing additional prosecutorial resources.

We've also established the Provincial Bail Compliance Dashboard. These measures give the province greater capacity to identify violations, act on them and apprehend the people who are wanted with outstanding warrants. There's no point in having a condition on paper if there's no practical mechanism for enforcing it.

At the same time, we need to be clear about the division of responsibilities between the provincial and federal governments. The province is responsible for administering much of the justice system on the ground, including policing and corrections. But it's the federal government that is responsible for the Criminal Code, including the legal framework governing bail. That's why Ontario has been calling for federal bail reform, and I think it's important to acknowledge that the federal government has now taken meaningful steps in that direction. We believe that credit is due, but there's also no reason to stop pushing for further investments. The federal government may have made progress, but there's much more work to be done. Ontario should continue to make that case to our federal counterparts.

The same applies to illicit drugs. This is not only a question of individual drug use or addiction; there's a criminal economy behind the illicit drug trade, and organized criminal groups make enormous amounts of money from it. Those organizations do not care about the damage that they cause to families, our cities, our communities, our friends. There is a business model that depends on exploiting vulnerable people and turning addiction into a source of revenue. There's a kind of word for those people, Madam Speaker, and it's "evil." That is why Ontario has called on the federal government to take stronger action against illicit drug distribution, to reject decriminalization policies that can undermine public safety in our province, and to tighten controls over chemicals that can be diverted into the production of illegal drugs and sent throughout our communities.

At the same time, Madam Speaker, I think we need to be sensible about the distinction between addiction and organized crime. Someone struggling with addiction needs access to treatment and to support. That doesn't mean we should be passive towards the people who are manufacturing, importing and distributing illegal drugs for profit. We can provide treatment for those who need it while pursuing traffickers simultaneously. It's why our government has taken steps to invest in HART hubs right across this province. We can help people recover while disrupting the criminal organizations that make money from addictions.

We also need stronger federal responses when it comes to our border. Canada has an enormous amount of legitimate trade and travel with our United States neighbours. Our economy depends on an efficient and smoothly running border, but an efficient border also must be a secure border. We cannot allow criminal organizations to take advantage of our border to move drugs, firearms or other illegal goods into our country.

Madam Speaker, this is why we are calling on the federal government to strengthen border security and do more to disrupt the criminal networks that are operating across it. On our side, our government is investing in police officers and enforcement within our communities. We are strengthening our correctional systems as we improve bail compliance. But we cannot control Canada's international borders. That's the federal government's responsibility, and we expect them to take that seriously.

That brings me to the political contrast that is also at the heart of this motion. Our government has taken action in these areas, and we've repeatedly asked the federal government to act in areas where it has its own responsibility. The Ontario Liberals have not supported those calls. The Ontario Liberals have opposed measures that would provide additional support for police in our communities, expanding correctional capacity and increasing the number of correctional staff. That is worth remembering when we hear the opposition talking about public safety. Be-

cause when you look at the record, Madam Speaker, there's a significant difference between what this government is doing now and what the Ontario Liberals did when they were in government. The Liberal government closed eight jails at a time when Ontario's population was increasing. That decision reduced correctional capacity right across this province. So when we talk today about the need for more correctional spaces, this is not a problem that appeared overnight, Madam Speaker.

Governments make choices about infrastructure, staffing and capacity, and those choices have consequences for years to come. The same is true about policing. You cannot wait until you have a shortage of police officers and then immediately produce thousands of experienced officers in our communities. Training takes time. Facilities have to be available and built. Instructors have to be available. People have to be recruited and trained before they can come into our communities. That's why the investments we are making now are so important.

1550

If the federal government can do more on bail, border security or illicit drugs, I would expect the provincial Liberals to be encouraging them to do exactly that. Instead, we have seen the Ontario Liberals refuse to support calls for stronger action from the federal government. That is a difficult one to explain to the people who are actually having to deal with the consequences of crime. If a police officer says that more resources are needed, I think we should listen. If communities are telling us that organized crime and illicit drugs are creating serious problems, I think the government has an obligation to respond. And when the federal government has responsibility for part of that problem, the provincial government should not be shy about telling Ottawa that more is needed to be done.

I also want to be clear about what being tough on crime actually looks like. It means that accountability has to be a part of the equation. Someone who poses a serious risk to the public has to be dealt with accordingly. Someone who repeatedly violates bail conditions has to face consequences. At the same time, where treatment can prevent someone from entering or returning to the justice system, we should make sure that treatment is available. There is nothing inconsistent about believing in rehabilitation while also believing that the public has to be protected. In fact, I would argue that a serious approach to public safety requires both. We should be interested in what actually works, rather than simply choosing whatever position sounds more compassionate or whichever position sounds toughest.

That is why the investments in this motion matter. Training more police officers is practical. Calling for stronger federal action on drugs and border security is practical. None of these measures on their own will solve every public safety problem in Ontario, but together, Madam Speaker, they will strengthen the system that Ontarians rely on. That system has to be strong enough to deal with the reality that we face.

Ontario is a large and growing province. We have major cities, small towns, rural communities, northern communities and everything in between. Public safety challenges are not identical everywhere, but every community deserves a justice system that functions properly and is there when they need it. That is, ultimately, what I think the people of Ontario expect from us, what they expect from every member in this House. They do not expect us to promise that there will never be another crime. They know that's impossible. What they expect is that when crime occurs, the government will respond seriously, and, Madam Speaker, our government has responded seriously. Police should have the resources to investigate it. The justice system must enforce its decisions. Dangerous offenders should be behind bars, not walking our streets to endanger law-abiding citizens. That is the standard we should be applying. That is the standard everyone in this House should be supporting.

By that standard, our government is making important progress. We are training more police officers and removing financial barriers to entering the profession. We are expanding and modernizing the institutions responsible for police training. We are building a new OPP academy in Orillia. We are strengthening bail enforcement with a $112-million investment and providing the personnel and resources necessary to follow up when conditions are violated. We're expanding correctional capacity by more than 2,500 spaces and adding 700 new correction staff across the province.

Our government is continuing to call on the federal government to strengthen bail, secure the border and take stronger action against illicit drugs in our communities. The federal government has responded to some of those calls, and I welcome that, but I believe Ontario should continue to push for more, because the job is not yet finished.

The people of this province deserve a government that understands the dangers of a soft-on-crime approach. When those who commit crime face consequences, other criminals will think twice. People deserve a justice system that is fair, but also effective; police officers who have the resources to do their jobs each and every day; correctional officers who have safe workplaces and adequate staffing; communities that are protected from organized crime and the illicit drug trade.

Madam Speaker, we are the government that is willing to accept responsibility for the parts of the system under their control, while continuing to press the federal government to do their part. This is the approach this government has taken. We have done our part, and we will not stop. We will continue to press the federal government to do more where federal responsibility begins.

I believe it's a very reasonable position, Madam Speaker. It is also a position that reflects what I hear from people across Ontario, including my own riding of Hamilton. They want their government to take crime seriously, but they also want government to be competent and practical about how it responds.

That's why I support this motion: It recognizes the work Ontario has already undertaken, but it also recognizes that there are limits to what one province can accom-

plish on its own. We need a federal government that is prepared to strengthen bail laws, secure our borders and confront the illicit drug trade with the seriousness that those problems require.

And, Madam Speaker, we need an opposition that understands that public safety is not an area where political parties should oppose reasonable measures simply because they were proposed by someone else. The people of Ontario, the people that elected us, are entitled to expect more from everyone in this House.

Our responsibility is to make the province safer, to support the people who protect us and to maintain a justice system that commands public confidence. That's the responsibility this government has accepted. That is the work we are doing and will continue to do.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to government order number 79, the Solicitor General's motion to write a letter.

I've been looking forward to this debate all through the weekend, Madam Speaker, because, as you may recall, last Thursday I asked the Premier a question about crime in Ontario, and judging by the reaction from the government benches, I may have touched a nerve.

You see, Madam Speaker, I began by describing a highly anticipated video game. I described the theme of the game, which involves dealing drugs and stealing cars and committing egregious acts of violence, and well, the government benches erupted.

You might have thought that I had accused someone of something. There was shouting; there was outrage. Members were practically jumping out of their seats, and I really couldn't understand it because, of course, I was describing a video game—a fictional character, a fictional crime organization. But apparently, some members of the government thought that the description might have sounded a little too familiar.

But, Madam Speaker, as I said last Thursday, crime in Ontario is no game, and that's why the motion before us is actually quite extraordinary. Here, we have a Premier who has been in power for more than eight years—eight years of controlling the provincial treasury; eight years responsible for policing, responsibility for the courts, responsibility for correctional institutions. And after eight years with serious problems throughout our justice system, what is the Premier's grand solution? It's to write a letter. Not to hire more police officers for our cities, not to fix provincial courts to actually prosecute criminals, not to ensure that inmates are not accidentally released from jail—no, Madam Speaker, the Premier wants to write a letter to Ottawa. And you know what? I'm sure the Prime Minister is absolutely terrified. He's shaking in his boots because Doug Ford is going to send him a letter.

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Well, Madam Speaker, you can't arrest a criminal with a letter. You cannot prosecute a criminal with a letter. You cannot keep dangerous and violent offenders behind bars with a letter. But that seems to be this government's approach to public safety: Talk tough, blame Ottawa and hope that nobody notices what's happening in your own backyard, here in Ontario.

There's something that I've noticed about this government over the past eight years. The Premier seems to have a particular fascination with three things: casinos, gambling and booze. Well, think about it. The government has devoted enormous political energy to expanding online casinos and sports betting, apparently thinking about building new casinos in Niagara. They've spent considerable energy to make alcohol available in convenience stores, even trying to lower the price of beer to a buck. They've expanded beer and wine sales.

So more opportunities to gamble, more places to buy alcohol, and you have to wonder: Is the Premier trying to run the province of Ontario, or is he auditioning for the lead role in the next Godfather movie? Because when you look at the government's priorities, it's starting to resemble the business plan from an old gangster movie. Casinos? Check. Bookmaking? Check. Liquor distribution? Check. And sitting at the head of the table, of course, is the boss.

The government seems to have found endless energy for casinos, gambling and booze while our justice system struggles. And while the Premier has been busy expanding vices, Ontario police services have been struggling to get enough officers. Our courts have struggled to bring criminal cases to trial. Our provincial correctional institutions have accidentally released people who were supposed to be in custody.

Speaker, even the Godfather understood that being the boss came with responsibilities: You have to keep your own house in order. You couldn't blame every problem on somebody else. But our Premier wants to send a letter asking another boss to clean up his mess, and that brings me to the fundamental problem with this motion.

We need to be clear about something. The federal government absolutely has a role in fighting crime. Parliament writes the Criminal Code. Ottawa has a responsibility for border enforcement, for federal policing and for penitentiaries.

In fact, as we know, the federal government's responsible for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who are actively investigating this government. So we know that some federal policing agencies are doing something. I think after three years, though, Madam Speaker, we would all agree that that is a particular area of federal criminal responsibility we wish would move faster.

It's strange, actually, that in the government's proposed letter to the federal government about federal criminal responsibilities, they didn't mention accelerating the investigation into their own government so the people of Ontario could see some results. But I digress. We'll leave that for another day.

The Prime Minister doesn't run Ontario's provincial jails, he doesn't administer Ontario's courts, and he doesn't control Ontario's crown prosecution resources. The Prime Minister doesn't run the OPP, and he doesn't

run municipal police agencies. Those are generally the responsibilities of the provincial government.

Ontario, just like every other province, administers the justice system. That's how our constitutional system works, and after eight years, the Premier shouldn't need a civics lesson to understand it. When he demands that Ottawa get tougher on crime on crime, I've got a very simple question for him: What has his government been doing for the past eight years? You can't spend eight years in charge, preside over these serious failures and then blame someone else for not fixing them.

Let's take a closer look at our correctional system, Madam Speaker. As I've mentioned, 157 inmates were improperly released from Ontario correctional facilities between 2021 and 2025—157—not because Parliament changed the Criminal Code, not because the Prime Minister ordered them released, but because, explicitly, something went wrong with the administration of Ontario's correctional system.

And who has responsibility for that system, Madam Speaker? It's the Premier and his consigliere, the Solicitor General—the very same Solicitor General who brought forward this motion demanding tougher action from Ottawa. The irony is extraordinary. The Premier wants tougher bail laws. He wants longer sentences. He wants to keep criminals off the streets. But his own government has struggled to keep people in jail who were already supposed to be there.

And the problem didn't end with the releases, Madam Speaker, because when the scandal became public, the Solicitor General repeatedly assured the Legislature that improperly released inmates had been apprehended almost immediately. He used words like "instantaneously," but records revealed that some had remained at large for months.

The Solicitor General had to apologize to the Legislature for misleading us. He had to stand in this place and apologize for providing inaccurate information.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: Speaker, come on. You hear this?

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Withdraw.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I withdraw.

He had to apologize for providing inaccurate information, Madam Speaker. Think about that: The minister responsible for Ontario jails had to correct the record because his assurances to the Legislature were wrong.

Speaker, the government owes Ontarians more than a simple apology. He owes them a functioning correctional system, he owes them an explanation as to how these things happened, and he owes us proof that those failures have been addressed. But rather than account for the performance of his own ministry, the Solicitor General wants to write a letter to Ottawa asking them to fight crime. He wants to write yet another letter.

Well, Madam Speaker, perhaps if the Premier demands longer sentences, he should make sure that his government can properly administer the detention orders and sentences already in place.

Now let's turn to policing. I have enormous respect for our police officers here in Ontario. They do a difficult job that is dangerous and increasingly more complicated. They respond to emergencies, they investigate serious crimes and confront organized criminal networks, which has been referenced earlier during the debate. But they cannot do that work without the necessary resources, and police agencies across Ontario are facing extreme staffing challenges.

The average staffing among Ontario's 12 largest municipal police services was approximately 145 sworn officers per 100,000. In Waterloo, the police services reported just 118 in 2025. That's a substantial gap. In my own community in Ottawa, the number is 135 officers per 100,000. That means there are about 100 police officers short in the city of Ottawa.

And that's only if you account for population. As many of us know, Ottawa is geographically enormous. You can fit Vancouver and Edmonton and Calgary and Montreal and the city of Toronto inside the city of Ottawa, and you still have 100 square kilometres left. That means our rural communities, such as those in Carleton and Glengarry–Prescott–Russell don't have the policing coverage they need and deserve.

The Auditor General released a staffing audit in August 2025 that identified outdated front-line deployment targets that hadn't adequately kept pace with the city's changing needs. Ottawa has grown. Our suburban communities have expanded. Our rural communities deserve adequate police coverage.

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The simple reality, Madam Speaker, is that the demand for policing has changed, but the staffing models haven't adequately kept up. This is a problem that extends beyond Ottawa and beyond municipal police forces. The OPP has faced staffing pressures affecting detachments and their ability to maintain proactive policing.

When the police lack enough officers, it affects response times, it affects investigations and it affects the ability to prevent crime in the first place. We cannot expect our police to confront increasingly sophisticated criminal organizations without giving them the necessary personnel and resources. But we haven't even gotten to the ridiculous part yet.

Even when police agencies succeed in recruiting qualified candidates, they face another enormous obstacle: getting those recruits into the Ontario Police College. The government has made some progress there but nowhere near enough.

In 2024, a survey of Ontario police chiefs documented serious concerns with the availability of training resources. Police chiefs describe having qualified recruits ready to be hired but not being able to get them the training they need to begin. One chief reported requesting four training places and only getting one; another said qualified candidates were waiting for places.

Speaker, think about the absurdity of that. A community needs more police officers. The community budgets to hire more police officers. They recruit people who want to

do this dangerous and difficult job, and the province can't get them the training they need to put them on the front line.

The Premier is demanding that Ottawa gets tougher on crime while police chiefs have reported struggling to get their recruits through Ontario's own training system. Of course, who controls the Ontario Police College? It's not the Prime Minister. It's not the federal Minister of Justice. It's the Ontario government. We're back to the boss—back to the Premier, Madam Speaker. What does he want to do about it? He wants to write a letter.

The Premier wants Ontario to pass tougher laws, but someone still has to enforce those laws. Somebody has to investigate the crimes, somebody has to make the arrests and somebody has to bring evidence before the courts. You can't get tough on crime if you can't get enough cops trained to be on our streets.

Madam Speaker, the next step in the process is, of course, getting those criminals to court. Imagine being a police officer. You have spent months investigating a serious crime, perhaps even years. You have gathered the evidence. You have interviewed witnesses. You have made the arrest; charges have been laid. You have done everything you're supposed to do, but then the case enters an overwhelmed court system.

There are delays; there aren't enough resources. The trial keeps getting pushed back, and eventually the delay becomes so excessive that the accused person's constitutional rights to a speedy trial have been violated and the charges are stayed. The case is over not because the accused was found innocent, not because the police didn't do their job, not because the court system didn't want to function but because this government chose not to give it the resources to do so.

This is not a hypothetical problem, Madam Speaker; it's happening every day. An investigation cited by the federal victims of crime office identified 580 criminal cases in Ontario stayed for unreasonable delay in recent years. That includes 145 sexual assault cases stayed—thrown out—because the court system didn't have the resources necessary to work quickly enough.

The failures occurring under this government demand answers. The Premier must think about the victims, think about the families who are waiting for justice, think about the police officers who have worked tirelessly to investigate those cases and to arrest the bad guys.

Yes, the charter guarantees them a trial within a reasonable delay, and it's right to do so. We have to ensure that the court system has the resources necessary in order to provide that speed.

When you put these failures together, a pattern emerges: police agencies struggling with staffing, qualified recruits waiting for training opportunities, criminal prosecutions collapsing because of court delays, inmates improperly released from provincial custody and the Solicitor General having to apologize to the Legislature for providing inaccurate information about those releases. These are all issues involving the administration of justice. These are all squarely the responsibility of this government and the Premier. Yet the Premier keeps pointing to Ottawa. He's always demanding that someone else take action, someone else change the law, someone else solve the problem.

Speaker, I have a suggestion: If the Premier is so determined to write a letter, perhaps he should write a letter to himself. Here's how it should go:

"Dear Premier,

"Please ensure Ontario has enough police officers.

"Please make sure we can train the recruits our police services hire.

"Please ensure our courts can hear criminal cases before constitutional deadlines expire.

"And please stop accidentally releasing inmates from provincial jails.

"Yours very sincerely,

"Doug Ford."

At least then, the letter would be addressed to someone who actually has the authority and the power to fix those problems. Because being tough on crime isn't about raising your voice, it isn't about looking angry at a press conference and it's certainly not demanding other levels of government do your job. It's about ensuring the justice system actually works.

As we know, Madam Speaker, there is no shortage of swagger from this Premier. He likes to be the boss. He likes to call the shots. He likes everyone to know who's in charge. And with all the casinos, the sports betting and the booze, he's certainly got the makings of an interesting outfit.

But here's an important thing: The Premier doesn't need to audition for the next Godfather movie. He already has a job. He's the Premier of Ontario, and that job comes with responsibilities. He can't demand tougher sentences while his government improperly releases inmates. He can't demand more law enforcement while his own police agencies struggle to hire and train the officers they need because he doesn't give them the money. He can't demand the criminals be held accountable while criminal cases get thrown out because he hasn't given the courts the money. And he can't blame Ottawa for the problems he knows are happening in his province and fails to address.

Madam Speaker, the Premier needs to stop playing games. He needs stop talking tough on crime and actually start doing something.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise to speak to motion 79. I think we all want to live, work, play and raise a family in a safe community. We know that part of having that safe community is ensuring police have the supports and tools they need to go after violent criminals and criminal gangs. But the question the government needs to ask themselves is: Is it really appropriate to use the police to criminalize people who are experiencing homelessness and have health care needs?

It is far better, more humane and more fiscally responsible to provide people with housing and access to mental health, addictions and other health care supports rather

than throw them in jail. That's exactly why I'm opposed to the government's motion and support the amendments proposed to that motion.

It is far more humane and fiscally responsible to house people. It costs $3.4 million to build a jail bed. It costs $125,000 to build a supportive housing bed. It costs $130,000 to provide operational support for a jail bed; about $40,000 a year to provide wraparound mental health and addiction support in a supportive housing home. It is far cheaper and far better to actually care for people.

1620

I've heard government members say people with a substance use addiction challenge should get treatment. I agree. Most people wait, on average, 124 days to access treatment in Ontario, so even if you want treatment, most of the time, the treatment isn't there for you. If the government wants to have safe communities, maybe we should invest more in mental health and addictions treatment instead of laying off mental health care workers.

Now, I can understand why police officers want bail reform: It's frustrating to arrest somebody and see them back out on the street. There is no doubt the federal government needs to act on that, but the Premier also needs to look at himself in the mirror, because 80% of the people in a jail cell in Ontario right now are awaiting a trial, and between 2022 and 2023, 56% of them got out of jail because of delays in our court system. If the Premier is serious about doing something, he should actually fix Ontario's court system so hardened criminals don't get out because they don't receive their constitutional right to a speedy trial.

Let's do the right thing, let's do the humane thing: Let's actually house people and provide them with the health care services they need and deserve.

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm pleased to be able to rise this afternoon in support of government motion 79 introduced by the Solicitor General. I want to thank him, the Attorney General and all the police officers, prosecutors, correctional officers and first responders who work every day to keep our communities safe.

This motion is exactly what people expect from their government. It's about ensuring that every family can feel safe in their own homes and in their own communities, and every police officer can finish their shift and return home to their family. These are reasonable expectations, but far too many people no longer feel safe.

I've heard directly from residents across Mississauga–Lakeshore at our community safety meetings, including a town hall I hosted recently at the Army, Navy and Air Force veterans club in Lakeview, and some of the stories I've heard are deeply troubling.

One woman described a home invasion in which her husband was beaten and she was held at gunpoint with their children present. She was so frightened for her children that she begged the intruder to shoot her instead. No family should have to experience something like that.

In another case, two men armed with guns forced their way into a home near Lakeshore and Lorne Park Road, tied up the two adults and injured a small child. One was already facing drug and firearms charges, but he had been released on bail; the other was already serving a four-year federal sentence for robbery and firearms offences, and he was living in a federal parole facility.

I want to share another story that is especially close to me: My executive assistant was a victim of a home invasion. Criminals broke through the front door of her family's home and stole her purse. Police responded, but the intruders came back looking to steal the family's car. Imagine that—imagine having someone break into your home, calling the police and then having those same criminals return after the police had shown up to their home. For two years afterwards, her family said it's been difficult to sleep at night. They spent $45,000 installing metal gates, security cameras, security film and protective bollards—$45,000, Speaker. That money that they spent could have gone towards their retirement or to their family's future; instead, they spent it just to feel safe in their own home.

Speaker, when the Trudeau government—including the new Liberal leader, Navdeep Bains—passed their catch-and-release Bill C-75 in 2018, they told us it would modernize the justice system; instead, we got a system that keeps releasing dangerous criminals, even when they have long criminal records and a history of violating bail conditions. It's no surprise that we saw an increase in violent crime, home invasions, auto theft, break-and-entries, assaults and organized crime activity in Peel region and across the GTA. According to the OPP commissioner, the number of violent crimes committed by repeat offenders increased by 72% from 2018 to 2022. Police leaders like Chief Nishan Duraiappah and front-line officers have warned us that violence and repeat criminals are being released, only to commit more crimes and cycle through the system again.

Communities like mine in Mississauga–Lakeshore are paying the price. There have been violent home invasions in neighbourhoods like Lorne Park and Mineola. Organized groups will enter neighbourhoods in the middle of the night and try to steal cars directly from their driveways or garages. Small businesses are dealing with organized retail theft, vandalism and other criminal activities. And far too often, we discover that the criminals were already out on bail, often for the similar crime.

Last year, in Project Night Train, the Peel Regional Police shut down criminal networks responsible for 17 violent home invasions. In one incident in Mississauga, a victim was shot in the chest during a home invasion. In another, a victim was hit by a stolen vehicle and suffered life-threatening injuries. Police laid 136 criminal charges—including attempted murder, robbery and firearm offences—against six adults and youth, and five were out on bail at the time. I want to thank Peel Regional Police Chief Nish and his team for all their work on this case.

With the Solicitor General and our government's support through funding for the criminal intelligence service

and Project Outsource, Peel police targeted organized crime in the towing industry, and half of those arrested were out on bail. In Project Pelican, they shut down a drug trafficking network and made a historic drug bust of over 1,000 pounds of cocaine, worth almost $50 million, the most in the history of Peel. And within days, they were all released on bail. One of them was even allowed to attend a festival in Timmins, over 700 kilometres away. I could go on. Peel police report that a third of the people arrested for auto theft were already out on bail for similar offences, and over half of the people arrested in connection with shootings in Peel region were already out on bail.

Speaker, this is what frustrates families in my riding the most: They expect a justice system that puts public safety first and recognizes the dangers in releasing violent repeat offenders. Families won't have to wonder if someone arrested for a violent assault, a home invasion or a carjacking will be back in the same neighbourhood just a few days later. And our front-line police officers shouldn't have to arrest the same offender over and over again.

That's why the Premier—and Premiers across Canada from every party, including Wab Kinew in Manitoba and the former Premier, David Eby, in British Columbia—have consistently called on the federal government to reverse the damages caused by Bill C-75.

Just last week, Paul Henderson and Florence Bellman were here at Queen's Park to watch the debate from the member for Oakville North–Burlington on motion 86. Their 25-year-old daughter, Darian, was murdered in Brampton in 2020 by a man with a history of domestic violence against her and a history of charges for illegal handguns, drugs, assault and many other crimes. He also had a history of violating his bail condition. He had been arrested at least four times for violating conditions against contact with Darian. He was arrested for illegal firearms, but released on bail after only six days, even though there were concerns about the risk to Darian. Soon afterwards, he shot her five times.

Chief Nish said this was "a complete failure of our justice system." Earlier this year, her father told the House of Commons' Standing Committee on the Status of Women that, "To us, Bill C-75's catch-and-release section is just as guilty as her murderer," because "if the system had done what it truly should have done, and he didn't get bail, Darian would still be with us today."

1630

Again, I want to remind the House that the new Liberal leader voted for Bill C-75 twice, on June 11 and December 3, 2018.

In another case, 21-year-old Pawanpreet Kaur was murdered in Mississauga in 2022 by a man who was granted bail after being charged with kidnapping and sexual assault against her.

And again, I could go on.

But, Speaker, I also want to speak about the sacrifices made by the men and women who serve in law enforcement. We ask our police officers to respond to some of the most dangerous situations and to put themselves in harm's way, often to protect people they've never met. Too many have paid the ultimate price.

In 2021, Toronto police constable Jeff Northrup was killed in the line of duty at Toronto city hall. He had served with Toronto police for over 30 years. I knew Jeffrey from our time at Port Credit high school.

The following year, OPP constable Greg Pierzchala was only 28 years old when he was murdered by a man who was out on bail, despite serious assault and weapons charges and previous convictions for assault, armed robbery, weapons, and failure to comply with bail conditions at least five times. Greg served for over two years as a special constable here at Queen's Park, protecting the people here in this building.

And then, this past June, Toronto police constable Marc Pinizzotto was murdered in the line of duty. My first thoughts were for his mother, Linda, who has been my friend for many years. Marc served with the Toronto police for 18 years, including with the emergency task force. He was a husband, father of two children, a hockey player and coach, a mentor to younger officers, and someone who dedicated his life to protecting others. I'll never forget hearing his children speak at his funeral, including his son, Domenic, who wants to be just like his dad when he grows up. Marc grew up in Lorne Park in my riding. A park in his former neighbourhood has been renamed in his honour. Linda has also created the Marc Pinizzotto Foundation to carry forward his legacy. It will work to create opportunities for young people through sports, music and the arts, and encourage the public, police and elected officials to work together on public safety and justice sector reform.

Just last week, we had another opportunity to hear directly from front-line officers, during the Police Association of Ontario's visit to Queen's Park. I met with members of the Peel Regional Police, including an officer who investigates major collisions and a supervisor who trains new recruits. I want to thank them again for their service.

It's because of feedback in meetings like this that the Premier wrote to Prime Minister Carney to ask for stronger federal protections for police officers, including stronger penalties for serious crimes against police officers.

We can never bring back the officers we've lost, but we can honour their service by supporting their families, listening to front-line police officers, and working to prevent future tragedies.

Speaker, I want to thank the Carney government for Bill C-14, just passed earlier this year, which strengthened the bail system, particularly for repeat violent offenders. Although it didn't repeal Bill C-75, it did clarify that it shouldn't mean automatic release. So I want to thank Prime Minister Carney and his government for listening to us.

There's still more work to be done, but public safety isn't a partisan issue, and when governments take meaningful action to protect our communities, that deserves to be recognized.

At the same time, our government is doing everything we can within our constitutional authority to protect the public. We've taken many important steps to strengthen bail enforcement.

We invested over $110 million in initiatives to monitor high-risk offenders and arrest those who violate their bail conditions. This includes $48 million to double the OPP's repeat offender parole enforcement squad from five teams to 10 teams, $24 million to help police monitor high-risk offenders and arrest those who violate their bail conditions and $26 million for special teams to handle the most serious and violent cases.

We also launched the new bail compliance dashboard, giving police, including the Peel Regional Police, better tools to share information and monitor high-risk offenders. Since 2023, our special bail prosecution team has handled over 5,300 serious and violent cases, and we're investing $3 billion to expand our correctional capacity. We're doing our part here in Ontario, giving police and prosecutors the resources they need to keep our communities safe.

In Peel region, we've had major investigations into violent carjackings, home invasions, auto theft, extortion and drug trafficking. Earlier this year, I attended a Peel regional anti-extortion summit highlighting the need for co-operation between governments and police services, especially when criminal networks operate across several regions.

Last month, the Peel Regional Police announced the result of Project High Guard, an investigation into violent carjacking and high-end vehicle thefts across the GTA. Police investigated 21 incidents involving threats, weapons and assaults. They arrested 10 individuals, laid 128 criminal charges and recovered four illegal guns and 15 stolen vehicles worth $1.4 million. Again, this investigation was supported by the funding from our government through the criminal intelligence service. In Project Cadetta, announced just a few weeks ago, Peel Regional Police laid 231 criminal charges and recovered another 96 stolen vehicles valued at $4.5 million.

Speaker, these criminal networks operate across borders. That's why the federal government has a critical responsibility. As this motion says, Canada border enforcement and federal police must have the resources, the intelligence and the technology we need to stop firearms smuggling, fentanyl trafficking and other organized crimes.

The province has also taken action with Operation Deterrence, strengthening provincial enforcement along our borders, but we can't secure our international borders through provincial action alone. We need strong co-operation between the OPP, the RCMP, municipal police and the Canada Border Services Agency.

Speaker, the final part of motion 79 is about another serious challenge: the devastating impact of addiction. This is a deeply personal issue for many families in many communities.

In August, I was honoured to speak at the International Overdose Awareness Day gathering at the Lakefront Promenade park. Again, I want to thank Christine Inrig for the opportunity. We need to prevent dangerous drugs like fentanyl from reaching our streets.

At the same time, people struggling with addiction need access to treatment, mental health support and real opportunities for recovery. That's why our government has moved to close supervised consumption sites and replace them with a different model of care. Through an investment of $560 million, our government has opened 29 HART hubs, including one in Peel region, to connect people with mental health services, addiction treatment, recovery support and assistance with supportive housing, because people living with addiction deserve compassionate care.

Speaker, I want to return to the families I spoke about at the beginning, families from Lorne Park, Port Credit, Lakeview and Mineola, who came to our public safety meeting because they are worried about crime in their neighbourhood. Even right around the corner from my own house, I had a few home invasions occur during the time there. I noticed that the families were distraught from what had occurred in their neighbourhood, not believing that this is happening right in their own neighbourhood.

I want to just thank everyone, all our police forces and everybody that has contributed to working and protecting our communities.

1640

Motion 79 sends a clear message. It says that Ontario stands with victims and with law enforcement. It says we stand with families who are tired of catch-and-release bail and just want a safe neighbourhood for their children.

Speaker, our government was elected with a mandate to protect Ontario. Protecting Ontario means supporting safe streets. It means ensuring that dangerous and repeat offenders face real consequences.

Ontario has taken important steps, but we can't do it alone. We need the federal government to continue strengthening our Criminal Code, to provide the resources we need for border enforcement and to work with the province to help make our community safer, because every family deserves to feel safe, every victim deserves to be heard and every police officer deserves to come home to their family every night.

On behalf of myself and everyone on this side of the House, my condolences to all the police officers that have passed away over the last couple of years to protect our communities and our neighbourhoods. I just want to thank them all here today.

Thank you for giving me the chance to speak on this motion.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to speak in the House, and today on the government motion which was amended by the official opposition and amended again by the official opposition. We will get to that later.

First, I would like to follow up on the member who just spoke—his remarks regarding police officers. I'd just like to put on the record that we fully, fully support what the police do in our communities. They're the first people you

call if you think there's a problem—fully, fully support. The risks they take and, sadly, sometimes the price that they pay and their families pay—fully support. I'd like to thank the member for reminding us all again of that.

The member also talked about protecting Ontario, but the original motion didn't really talk about that. It talked about bail conditions, but it was all federal; basically, that the opinion of this House is the federal government should build—so the federal government should do all these things.

In one of our comments, one of our members said, "Well, basically you're writing a letter," and the government House leader took umbrage—I don't use that word very often—but took umbrage to the remark, "It's just a letter."

So my question to the House leader is, okay, so the federal government should build—so if you're going to make a recommendation to the federal government, how are you going to do it? We would assume a letter; perhaps an email. Perhaps you will do it encrypted: You will get the Premier to speak French on a video and send it to the federal government, and you could send some secret messages. Because that's basically what "in the opinion of this House, the federal government should build on"—right? They're all federal issues.

So it's great so you can spend an afternoon talking about things, but there's actually nothing in the government motion about things that the province should do. The last time I checked, we are the provincial Legislature. So why we amended the motion was actually to focus on things that we should not only be discussing as a provincial Legislature, but that the provincial government could be doing and—returning to the member who just spoke—could be doing to help not only the citizens of Ontario, but to help first responders, to help the police. Because the issues that are happening in our province—the police are the ones who often have to deal with it, but it's often beyond their control.

I'll give you an example in my riding. The government's motion talks about bail reform—and again, that's federal. But in my riding, I've got the Monteith correctional centre. I've toured it twice. Over 75% of the people who are currently incarcerated in the Monteith correctional centre have never had their day in court. They didn't get bail, but they've never actually had a day in court to see if they're charged with a crime.

That is a provincial responsibility. You don't think that the province could maybe do something to speed up the courts so people who are actually charged with a crime can have their day in court, and either be proven guilty or proven innocent? A lot of those people, probably, are innocent. And then, that will free up space in Monteith and other places. And then, the court system will be more reluctant to allow bail because there will be space in the facilities that hold people. How about we talk about that?

Interestingly enough, the Solicitor General gave impassioned remarks about this, and he spent quite a bit of time actually complimenting the current federal government on the steps that they were taking. So I wondered, as he was speaking, what the purpose is of—so, I guess it's going to be a complimentary letter: "Thank you for what you're doing."

That is why we amended the motion. Quite frankly, I was a bit surprised that the government didn't amend the motion themselves to prevent us from amending the motion. That's how it works, right? But they didn't take that opportunity, so we took the opportunity to refocus the Legislature of Ontario on issues that actually can be enacted upon by the Legislature of Ontario, by the government of Ontario.

We all know, Speaker, that there are big, big issues out there. I think every community is dealing with homelessness. It used to be a big-city thing. You know, people in the country—that's one of the reasons we shied away from big cities. It's all these big city problems. But they're all over now. There are encampments all over. There are drug addiction problems all over. There's discussion about forced treatment.

Well, before we discuss forced treatment, how about we ensure that if someone wants treatment, they can access it? What's the average wait, I believe, in this—

Interjection: One hundred and forty days.

Mr. John Vanthof: How long?

Interjection: One hundred and forty days.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, 140 days. So if you want treatment, your wait time is 140 days. Someone who wants treatment doesn't have 140 days.

You want to ensure—you want to try and make the province better. We all do. I don't think anyone runs to make the province worse. I would doubt that. But how about we talk about ways so people can actually access treatment? "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"—how about we do things like that?

Something else I'd like to dispel, at least—I don't know exactly the conditions in the GTA or metropolitan Toronto, but I can tell you, in Timiskaming–Cochrane, a lot of the people who have big-time drug dependency are not the people that you assume. They're construction workers, they're miners, they're people who work hard and who, through aches and pains, tried something, and they're stuck. Their lives and their families' lives blow apart. Now, if those people could get immediate treatment, they wouldn't end up on the streets, because that happens through no fault of their own—except, maybe, to try and fix some of their pain. So how about we talk about that? We expand community-based treatment. Let's talk about what's actually happening. We all want to fight crime, we all want to support the police, but we need to have programming to actually support what the police are doing.

1650

One time, I was actually the critic for the Solicitor General for a while. I had to speak to the Ontario police association. I walked from here to the Sheraton, where they were holding their meeting. In that walk, I saw—and

I said this in my speech to them—eight unhoused people. I saw five of them that were having interactions with the police. It was a bad day. But if there's no treatment, if there's no place for these people to go to try and make their lives better—because everyone wants to make their lives better—having a police officer move them from corner to corner doesn't help anyone. It doesn't. In many cases, this government isn't really taking the opportunity to tackle this issue.

We're not opposed to HART hubs. We actually think there should be more support for HART hubs. There should've been more consultation in how they implemented them so that they actually serve more people—and that you didn't cancel the system that we had before for ideological reasons and then hope that this new one works, because there's a lot of things that are not working right now.

That is my personal—and I think our party's—biggest problem with government motions like this. This is a majority government that has the power to actually implement good legislation, to actually try and tackle these issues. Now, we disagree with a lot of their legislation. I really disagree with how it's put forward in omnibus bills, all kinds of different issues; there's always a poison pill.

I don't think they actually look at the legislation themselves. There was a bill introduced today, and we're going to be debating it tomorrow. Come on. I don't know if the MPPs on the government side have seen this bill for a month so they can actually think about if it's going to help or hurt their communities. Maybe they just see it the same day as well. There's something wrong there both ways.

It's our job to provide good criticism. We vote against things that we think are going to hurt Ontarians. We vote for things, regardless of who puts them out, that we believe are going to help Ontarians. But when you have a government that puts thing that they know the opposition has to vote against, or should vote against, you're not actually putting forward legislation for Ontarians.

When you're forcing members to debate bills that they've seen for a whole day—or not even a day—they're not expecting quality debate. They don't want debate. It actually debases our whole system. It really, really does. The way our system is supposed to work: You should drop a bill, have some time for both the government side and the opposition to look at it, and have some debate and actually take the time. That's what this place is designed to do.

But the current government has changed the rules several times so that they can do it in much less time. They used to use time allocation all the time. The current government House leader doesn't use time allocation a lot; he's using more of the omnibus bill, with all kinds of different things.

And what's even worse—not even worse; this is pretty bad government. It's not that they don't know this. I commented to Bill 109, an agricultural bill. The Minister of Agriculture is here, I see, and the previous Minister of Agriculture. That's a good bill. It has different issues in the bill, but they have a core theme. That's a good bill. It was travelled, and as a result, it sailed through this House—sailed.

I'm not going to say every bill is going to sail through this House, but when you put issues in a bill that, when you look—"Wait a second. Something here doesn't fit"—you're going to have troubles, and then you're going to have issues in the House.

You've changed the rules so much that you can still ram it through the House—great. But in the end, often it's bad legislation and you end up in court and you lose in court. To have legislation end up in court and then to have it come back here and be rescinded, that's not a failure of the Legislature; that's a failure of the government.

So far, you haven't been paying the price yet, but Ontarians have been. We had a debate today about nurses and health care workers being laid off. A lot of that stemmed from Bill 124: "Oh, that's an easy thing to do. We'll just freeze everybody's wages at 1%, and that's how we're going to stop government spending." What you didn't think about is that people whose wages are frozen move with their feet and they go work for nursing agencies. You didn't do anything about nursing agencies—not you particularly, but as a group.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ric Bresee): Address the Speaker, please.

Mr. John Vanthof: You didn't do anything about nursing agencies, and then the same hospitals end up paying way more to get the same people back. Do I blame those nurses? Not at all. But you should have known this.

Again, people were trying to tell you, but you put this through so fast that you didn't take the time to actually—or—and the other of the "or" is worse: that you knew it was going to happen and you wanted the nursing agencies to do this, because everyone knew this was going to happen. Everyone knew.

We should be having these kind of debates, real debates. Instead, the government puts forward a motion telling the federal government what it should do—a lot of things the federal government is actually doing. The Solicitor General actually complimented the federal government on some of the things they were doing. I applaud that. Sometimes I give the Solicitor General the occasional praise when he does something I think he should be doing.

But I don't understand, then—and this is why we amended the motion—why we are telling the federal government what to do instead of actually doing the things that we can do ourselves, like making sure that—75% or more of the people in Monteith have never had their day in court. That's something we could do something about, and that's something that we choose not to.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: The government House leader is still a bit upset that I called him out on his letter thing. He's still a bit upset. He must prefer email or maybe Messenger. Maybe he's an Instagram—I don't know much about Instagram.

But anyway, I think I've said my piece. If I could—

Interjection: Carrier pigeon.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, carrier pigeon, smoke signals.

Hon. Steve Clark: That's not appropriate.

Mr. John Vanthof: I cleared that with Sol. We're fine.

In closing, I think I understand what the government's doing here. We don't sit here very much. How about we actually take the time to debate real legislation and try and make—you have a majority. You get to put your agenda through. How about you actually take the time to make sure that the legislation you put through actually benefits Ontarians? How about we do that for a change?

1700

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

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I am pleased to rise today to participate in this debate over government order 79.

I want to begin by saying something that should be obvious to everybody in this House: Everybody wants safer communities. Everybody wants to see fewer violent crimes. Everyone wants to see fewer people falling victim to home invasions, carjackings, extortion. Everybody wants to see fentanyl trafficking disrupted. Everyone wants to see illegal firearms kept out of our communities, and everyone wants organized crime networks dismantled. And everyone should want people struggling with addiction to have access to treatment and supports that they need. These should not be controversial propositions.

But when we look at this motion—or letter-writing campaign to Ottawa—before us, there is a very important question that needs to be asked: What exactly is the government of Ontario being asked to do? Because this motion spends an enormous amount of time telling the federal government what it should do: strengthen bail; strengthen sentencing; increase federal policing resources; increase border enforcement; disrupt fentanyl trafficking; disrupt illegal firearm smuggling; disrupt organized crime. And then, at the very end, we get reference to focusing on investments on treatment: supportive housing, recovery services etc.

I want to ask a very simple question: Where is the same urgency for things that this government actually controls? Where is the same urgency when it comes to treatment, when it comes to housing, mental health services and when it comes to making sure that someone who is ready to seek treatment can actually get treatment? Because those are not Ottawa's responsibilities; those are responsibilities that fall substantially within the jurisdiction of this government and that is the central weakness of this motion. The government wants to tell Ottawa what to do, but Ontarians also want to know what their provincial government is going to do after eight long years in power.

Let's start with the government's own language, Speaker. The motion says the federal government should build on the Ontario government's work. Well, that's quite a statement. Before we ask someone else to build on our work, shouldn't we make sure the work is actually being done? Shouldn't we ask whether Ontario has enough treatment capacity? Shouldn't we ask whether someone struggling with addiction can get the help that they need? Shouldn't we ask how long they have to wait or whether there are enough detox beds, enough residential treatment, enough outpatient treatment, enough supportive housing, enough mental health services?

Because if those things aren't available, we haven't finished the work, and people in Ontario know that. They know because they see it in the consequences. They see people struggling on the streets. They see people cycling through emergency departments. They see police responding to mental health and addiction crises. They see families desperately trying to find treatment for loved ones. We see municipalities trying to manage the consequences of problems that extend far beyond their ability to solve them.

So I think the government here needs to answer a very basic question: If treatment is part of your public safety strategy, where is the treatment? I want to spend some time on that question, because I think it's the most important one in this entire debate.

The government says it wants to focus investments into treatment, supportive housing and recovery services—fine, then let's make that real. Let's talk about access, timelines, capacity, whether someone can walk into an emergency department in crisis and actually get connected to appropriate treatment that day. Let's talk about whether someone seeking detox can access it within a meaningful period of time. Let's talk about whether someone who needs residential treatment can get a bed before that window of opportunity actually disappears. Because there is a difference between saying that treatment exists and saying treatment is accessible. There is a difference between saying someone technically has access to a service and saying they can get that service when they actually need it.

And, Speaker, addiction doesn't operate according to government calendars. A person doesn't decide on, say, a Monday that they're going to be ready to get treatment and then remain equally ready six weeks later. Sometimes that moment comes after an overdose. Sometimes it comes after family intervention. Sometimes it comes after someone realizes that they can't continue living the way that they've been living. And then, when that person says, "I am ready," government needs to be ready too. But if the answer is, "We can put you on a wait-list," we should not be surprised when the opportunity is lost. That's why access matters and timelines matter, and that's why the government needs to be more specific about what it actually means when it supports treatment.

Speaker, this is also why the government's decision to frame so much of this motion around Ottawa is so frustrating, because the federal government can be responsible for bail law; it can be responsible for border enforcement; it can be responsible for federal policing; it can be responsible for the Criminal Code; but Ottawa cannot run Ontario's addiction treatment system for this government. Ottawa cannot provide every treatment bed in this province. Ottawa can't provide every supportive housing unit; it can't provide Ontario's emergency departments, help them work properly; it can't provide the mental health

services that Ontarians need. And Ottawa cannot be the scapegoat every time this government encounters a problem that requires provincial action.

Speaker, if the government wants to call on Ottawa to strengthen bail laws, that's its prerogative, but let's not pretend that stronger bail laws are any kind of substitute for a functioning provincial health and social service system. So if somebody is repeatedly coming into contact with police because of an addiction or an untreated mental illness, changing those bail conditions isn't going to solve an underlying problem.

If someone is released from custody and returns to the same unstable housing or untreated addiction that contributed to their previous interactions with the justice system, we shouldn't be surprised when that cycle continues.

And if someone repeatedly ends up in emergency departments because there's nowhere else for them to go, then that's not a bail problem; that's a system problem, and this government has responsibilities within that system.

I'm not suggesting that treatment replaces accountability at all. It absolutely does not. There are people who commit violent crimes who need to be held accountable. There are repeat offenders who pose serious risk to the public. There are organized criminal networks that, yes, must be dismantled, and people trafficking fentanyl and illegal firearms who need to face serious consequences. Public safety requires enforcement, but enforcement alone is not a public safety strategy. If we want to reduce repeat offending, we have to reduce the circumstances that contribute to repeat offending.

That means treatment. It means mental health care. It means housing. It means rehab. It means making sure people leaving custody have somewhere to go to and some form of support. That's not being soft on crime; that's trying to prevent the next crime.

I think, Speaker, that that distinction is important because there is a temptation in debate sometimes to reduce everything to who can sound toughest, but toughness isn't a policy. Being tough isn't a measurable outcome. The question is whether the policy works. Does it reduce crime? Does it reduce repeat offending? Does it reduce emergency department visits? Does it reduce the number of people cycling through the justice system? Does it reduce the number of people dying from addiction? And does it make neighbourhoods safer?

I want to talk about supportive housing for a minute. The motion mentions supportive housing, but again, it doesn't tell us what the provincial government is actually doing to deliver it. Supportive housing isn't simply a roof for people with complex mental health issues and substance use needs. Housing has to be connected to services. It has to be connected to treatment and connected to mental health care. It has to be connected to case management and community support.

The provincial government has to take responsibility for expanding community-based treatment matters. If we're serious about reducing pressures on hospitals, providing alternatives to hospitals has to be there. If we're serious about reducing pressures on police, we need alternatives to police intervention. And if we're serious about making communities safer, we need interventions before a crisis becomes a crime.

That's what prevention looks like, and prevention is public safety. I want to repeat that because I think it gets lost in these debates, that prevention is public safety. Treatment is public safety. Mental health care is public safety. Supportive housing is public safety. Recovery is public safety. These aren't separate from a public safety conversation; they are absolutely a part of it.

1710

The motion, Speaker, also calls for the feds to "increase policing and border enforcement resources." Again, nobody should object to stopping illegal firearms and fentanyl from entering Canada, but we have to be honest about what happens after those drugs and firearms enter communities. We need police services with the resources to investigate. We need prosecutors with the capacity to prosecute. We need courts that function efficiently. We need correctional services that are properly resourced. And we need a provincial health and social services system that prevents people from becoming trapped in the cycles of addiction and criminalization.

Every part of that chain matters. We can't simply focus on the border and pretend the work has been done once the border is secured. We can't simply focus on bail and pretend the work is done once the bail hearing is over. And we can't simply focus on policing and pretend the work is done once the police leave the scene. Public safety is a continuum, and every government has a responsibility somewhere along that continuum. If the government believes that treatment and recovery are essential to public safety, then it has a responsibility to make those services available. That means timely access to detox, residential treatment, outpatient programs, mental health care, supportive housing. It means ensuring that when someone is ready to seek help, they can actually get it.

It's not enough to say that treatment is the answer; this government has to make sure that treatment is available. It's not enough to talk about recovery; this government has to invest in the services that make recovery possible. It's not enough to point to a program or a hub and say that help exists; this government needs to demonstrate that people can access that hub or that help when they need it.

We also have to talk about the municipality, Speaker, because municipalities are often where the consequences of these failures are more visible. Police services deal with calls. Paramedics deal with overdoses. Firefighters deal with emergencies. Shelters deal with homelessness. Municipal governments deal with encampments. Libraries and community centres deal with people who have nowhere else to go. And then the province comes into this chamber and says Ottawa needs to do more. Ottawa may need to do more, but municipalities are also looking to this government. They need provincial leadership. They need provincial funding. They need housing. They need mental health services and addiction treatment. They need a government that understands that public safety doesn't stop at the edge of a provincial jurisdiction.

This is really relevant in my riding of Toronto–St. Paul's, Speaker, where people care very deeply about safety. They want safe streets. They want safe parks. They want safe transit. They want small businesses to feel secure. They want seniors to feel secure. They want young people to feel secure. They see people struggling with addiction and homelessness, and they understand that simply moving people from one part of the city to another isn't a solution. They want this government to solve the problem, and solving the problem means providing the services that people need. Intervening earlier means giving police the support of a functioning health and social services system, and it means making sure people can get treatment when they're ready for it and making sure that that recovery is actually possible.

I want to return, Speaker, to the government's own wording one more time. The motion says "the federal government should build on" Ontario's work. Well, I would suggest that Ontario should build on its own work too, even though they've had eight long years in power to build and build and build.

If this government believes that treatment is part of public safety, then let's expand treatment. If it believes supportive housing is part of public safety, let's expand supportive housing. If it believes recovery is part of public safety, then let's expand recovery programs and invest in it. If it really believes those HART hubs are part of the answer, then let's make sure those hubs have the resources, actually, and the capacity to really deliver. Let's establish clear standards for access, because government should be able to tell Ontarians what they can expect—not just that help exists somewhere, but when they can get it, where they can get it and what happens when they walk through the door. That, Speaker, is what accountability looks like. It means setting targets, measuring them and publishing those results as well. It means admitting when something isn't working and changing course when necessary. It doesn't mean passing a motion or starting a letter-writing campaign to Ottawa and moving on.

I believe we can have, Speaker, serious public safety conversations in this Legislature without reducing it to partisan slogans. We can support police, we can support victims, we can support strong action against violent offenders and we can support efforts to disrupt organized crime. We can support stronger border enforcement and we can demand that people struggling with addiction receive treatment. Those positions aren't contradictory; they are responsible government.

Responsible government means that every level of government takes control and responsibility for what it controls. The federal government, yes, has responsibilities. Ontario has responsibilities. Municipalities have responsibilities. We should be demanding that all of them meet those responsibilities. So start with yourself.

I support the goal of safer communities, Speaker; I support action against violent, repeat offenders; I support efforts to disrupt fentanyl trafficking and illegal firearms smuggling; I support action against organized criminal networks; and I support meaningful treatment, supportive housing and recovery services. But I cannot support the idea that Ontario can simply point at Ottawa and say, "You need to fix it," because this government has work to do after eight long years.

The people of Ontario are entitled to ask this government. When someone needs treatment, how long do they have to wait? When someone needs detox, where do they go? When someone needs treatment, is there a bed? When someone has a serious mental health and substance use disorder, is there supportive housing? When someone leaves custody, what supports are available? And when police respond to a person in crisis, what alternatives exist? I can't say it enough times. Those are provincial questions, and Ontarians deserve provincial answers.

Speaker, the strongest public safety policy is not the one that sounds the toughest in this chamber; it's the one that actually works outside of this chamber. It's the policy that prevents the next overdose, the policy that prevents the next emergency department visit, the policy that prevents the next interaction with police, that prevents the next victim of crime, that gives somebody the chance to recover before their addiction becomes a permanent cycle of crisis. It's the policy that allows police officers to focus on crime instead of being asked to compensate for failures elsewhere in government. This is what public safety should mean.

So instead of a blame-shift letter-writing campaign, let's invest again in treatment, let's expand supportive housing, let's expand health services, let's provide timely access, let's build a system that supports recovery and let's measure whether it is actually working, because Ontarians don't need another government motion telling them that their governments care about public safety.

Ontarians need to see the results. It's not too much to ask for safer streets, functioning hospitals, access to treatment, housing, mental health support. They need police to have the resources and the alternatives they need, and they need governments that are willing to take responsibility instead of passing the buck. That is the standard I believe we should apply to this motion: not whether it sounds tough; not whether it produces a good headline or a distraction from, say, some scandals in government; not whether it allows one government to point to another, but whether it actually makes Ontario safer.

1720

If this government really, truly believes that treatment, supportive housing and recovery are part of that public safety strategy, then it should be prepared to make those commitments concrete. Because the people of Ontario deserve more than a promise that somebody somewhere should do something.

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

MPP Billy Denault: I really appreciate the opportunity to speak on this motion—well, the amendment to the amendment of the motion. I was speaking on the original motion moved by the Solicitor General just last Thursday, so you can colour me a little bit surprised to return back into the chamber and see the NDP had made some changes

to the motion. It's a new thing for me. I didn't know that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane wanted to hear me speak so much, but I appreciate the opportunity to do so again. I didn't know he liked the sound of my voice that much, but anyway.

I'm going to reiterate some of the things that our government is doing to really focus on public safety. First of all, I want to talk about something I didn't get to talk about in my last remarks, which is about HART hubs. I am very fortunate in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to have access to a HART hub. The government of Ontario is funding the HART hub in Pembroke for an annual $6.3 million in operating funding in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

I had the chance not too long ago, during the summer, to go to Recovery Day, which was an event hosted in Renfrew, to talk to some of those who are critical to protecting and ensuring that those most vulnerable in our community have access to care when they need it most. That includes the HART hub and the Mesa HART hub program that is run by the county of Renfrew and funded in partnership with the province of Ontario.

In talking with the staff at that facility, they said it was a game-changer. Out of their so many years of service in the social services sector, they indicated that this investment is making a real change in people's lives and ensuring that those most vulnerable are protected and having access to care. And it's ensuring that more communities in my riding—because the HART hub services all of Renfrew county, which, to those that don't know, is the biggest municipality in the province of Ontario—it's making all of those communities that are underneath the county even safer.

So I want to thank the government of Ontario for funding the HART hub in my riding. It's a really great investment and initiative, and we certainly really appreciate all the work that they do in my community.

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 we've invested more than $1 billion to support police officers and give them the equipment, technology and resources they need.

I think that is an investment that shows it's not just words, it's actions. We are making the investments necessary to protect Ontario.

I'm going to reiterate some of the investments that were made and we talked about when I was last talking about this motion. But first, I want to talk about some of the critical infrastructure investments that have been made, and I want to compare that to the history and the record of the Ontario Liberal Party when they were in government.

First of all, once we were elected, our government took action, initiating one of the most ambitious correctional infrastructure and modernization plans in the province's history. We completed renovations at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, increasing capacity by 110 spaces; the expansion of the Quinte Detention Centre, which brings another 90 spaces on board; upgraded and close to reopening tower D at the Toronto South Detention Centre, adding 320 spaces. Meanwhile, we are close to finishing work on the new Thunder Bay Correctional Complex, which means another 117 spaces.

Those investments are outstanding, but the Ministry of the Solicitor General is also working on new facilities like those in Brockville, new facilities like those in the St. Lawrence Valley, which together will add almost 300 spaces. If you compare that history, that record, to that of the previous Liberal government, they closed eight jails: for example, in 2014, the Chatham-Kent jail, the Toronto West Detention Centre and the Don Jail—all closed. In 2012, the Brantford Jail closed. In 2011, the Owen Sound Jail and Walkerton Jail closed. In 2004, the Renfrew jail closed. In 2003, the Burtch correctional was closed. This is a record that shows that, in one hand, we're building the infrastructure needed for our growing province, and the previous Liberal government shut down the infrastructure needed for the province of Ontario.

I want to talk about bail compliance because I think we've heard from the people of Ontario that enough is enough. Ontario is tired of lawlessness, and we can't have a system where violent and repeat offenders are arrested one day and roaming the street on bail the next. It's critical that federal law meets the standard Canadians expect, cracking down on crime and keeping violent repeat offenders behind bars where they belong.

That's why this motion is so essential, the motion calling on the federal government to "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 toward supplying illicit drugs, and instead focus investments into treatment, supportive housing and recovery services, including HART hubs"—the same HART hubs that, as I said, are making a real difference in people's lives in my community and in communities across the province of Ontario.

After advocacy from our government and collaborative efforts with other provinces, the federal government introduced proposed reforms to the Criminal Code to strengthen the bail system in October 2025. And our government will continue to advocate for and work with the federal government to strengthen bail-related measures in the Criminal Code, because under the leadership of Premier Ford, we're working every day to protect Ontario.

That includes over $110 million in new funding to strengthen enforcement and stop repeat violent offenders from threatening our communities. We have also put

millions into grants to support police services and ensure they have the tools and resources needed to keep our province safe.

I want to talk about a couple of the other investments that our government is making in a number of protective services, because they're really important. Last year, Speaker, our government doubled the Fire Protection Grant from $10 million to $20 million. This is an investment that is extremely important for fire departments across the province of Ontario, like those in my rural riding in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

I have 19 lower tiers—well, lower and single tier, I should say; I should get the number right if I'm going to be talking about it in this House. There are 20 municipal governments in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, and many of them, if not all of them—

Interjection.

MPP Billy Denault: The member from Lennox and Addington has just said that he has 22. Well, I guess he's got me beat. I have 20 municipal governments—21 if you include the First Nations community of Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn. All of them, if not all, have a fire department. So this grant, this Fire Protection Grant, and the doubling of it from $10 million to $20 million, is an extremely important investment because all 380 eligible municipalities received this funding to improve firefighter health and safety, to strengthen responses to lithium-ion battery incidents, and upgrade essential infrastructure equipment and communications. This government has also extended this vital program to this end of fiscal year 2026—an amazing investment.

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But that's not all, Speaker. We are also expanding the mobile live-fire training unit program. It's a kind of portable classroom that provides skill-enhancing opportunities to fire departments across the province, including those in rural and northern Ontario like those in my own riding, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, but also those, like the member from Lennox and Addington—

Hon. Steve Clark: Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

MPP Billy Denault: Hastings–Lennox and Addington—I apologize—or there's many different—like the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka over there, who I see is also from northern Ontario.

But I also want to talk about emergency preparedness because it also means supporting the people who respond when lives are at risk. Our government is making proactive and responsible investments in this fashion by investments through the Mental Health Supports for Public Safety Personnel Program, which is backed by more than $32 million. This program provides peer support training, wellness programs and other services tailored to the realities of front-line public safety work.

We as a government have 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. This is an investment in ensuring that the people who serve on the front line of our emergency services are getting the care they need when they need it most.

I do want to expand on a couple of different items. The Ministry of the Solicitor General is also responsible for several specialized organizations that are critical to ensuring that the people of Ontario remain safe. The Centre of Forensic Sciences provides scientific analysis and supports police investigations and Ontario's justice system. The Office of the Chief Coroner and the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service: They investigate deaths, identify systemic public safety issues and make recommendations aimed at preventing future deaths. There's the animal welfare service, enforcing provincial animal welfare legislation across this great province, while the Inspectorate of Policing strengthens accountability and ensures police services and boards comply with provincial standards. These investments and these services reflect the breadth and depth that is provided by the Ministry of the Solicitor General. It's important because they ensure Ontario has the services needed for this province.

Our government's approach is certainly straightforward. We are investing in the people, the infrastructure and the resources needed to prevent crime in this province, to respond to the emergencies that occur across the province of Ontario, to hold offenders accountable and protect Ontario's streets, individuals and the communities—communities like those in my own riding across Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

We're fortunate to share Ontario's public safety mandate with some of the province's most respected institutions, including that of the Ontario Provincial Police, including that of municipal and First Nations police services.

I'm just going to take a little bit of a detour here on those municipal police services. For those that don't know, actually, the Deep River Police Service is the smallest municipal police service in the entire province of Ontario. It offers and provides outstanding service. The people of Deep River love the service that they provide in community policing. I know, in working with them, they have a new chief of police. I'm really looking forward to working with him and ensuring that the community of Deep River and the communities across my riding with the OPP, that are OPP policed, remain safe, because this motion is about that. It's about ensuring that the province of Ontario is working with our federal partners to make sure that Ontario is remaining safe. That's what it is about, Speaker.

We also have, in terms of sharing Ontario's public safety mandate with those of the 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; the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service; as well as animal welfare services and the Inspectorate of Policing. These organizations all have distinct responsibilities, but they connect to a common purpose. They connect, ensuring that we're protecting Ontario through responsive services, accountable institutions and continuous improvement.

My goodness, I only have four minutes left. Time flies when you're talking about some really important topics, Speaker.

I just want to go back to the HART hubs, because I'm a big believer in what they provide to the people of my riding but also to those across the province of Ontario. I want to talk about some of the investments that our government remains focused on, like those of expanding access to treatment and recovery while not enabling the continued use of illicit and illegal drugs. As part of our $3.8-billion Roadmap to Wellness, we have invested over $1 billion in new annualized funding for mental health and addictions services, including those in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Across the province, we are investing a historic $560 million to build 29 homelessness and addiction recovery treatment—HART—hubs, replacing the failed approach of drug injection sites.

We are taking bold and innovative action to ensure Ontarians can connect to the care they need where they need it most. And I want to say again, these investments are having an impact on the people in my riding. They are ensuring that the people who need assistance, who need help, who are most vulnerable in our community are getting the care that they need when they need it most. I've seen it myself; I've taken a tour of the HART hub in Pembroke. It's remarkable, the services that they're doing.

But we want to also talk about some of the other aspects of that provincial and federal work that we're doing in terms of decriminalization. We as a government are, of course, pleased to see the federal government has declined Toronto's misguided application to decriminalize simple possession of illicit drugs because our government has been clear: We are not interested in the failed decriminalization experiment anywhere in Ontario. We will never support a project that jeopardizes the public safety of Ontarians. Decriminalization in BC led to increased opioid use among youths and a higher rate of relapse among successfully treated individuals with addictions.

Our government has made monumental investments through the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health to ensure that anyone struggling with addiction is going to be able to get the help they need when they need it most. And that's clear, Speaker. That's clear. The HART hub model is working. It's working for the people of Ontario. It's working for those who are most vulnerable.

Of course, we have to remember that this motion and our government's moves, our government's investments, are about protecting people from violent offenders, because those who break the law should be held accountable—like those that commit things like home invasion, because every Ontarian deserves to feel safe in their own home. People who are confronted by violent criminals in their home should have the right to reasonably defend themselves and their families.

That's why we've called on the federal Liberal government to strengthen the Criminal Code, protect victims, hold violent offenders accountable and keep our communities safe: Because this government will continue standing up for Ontarian families and pushing for a justice system that puts public safety first.

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While I start to close off, this is about community. This is about safety. This is about making sure that our community remains safe and that the people of our community feel safe in their own backyard.

That's why our government is calling on the federal government to do these changes, that's why we are putting this motion forward and that's why we expect all members of this House to support this motion: because it's a commonsense motion.

I look forward to seeing how all parties vote in response to it and its continued success.

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

MPP Mohamed Firin: I'm honoured to stand in this House today in support of this important motion, alongside my colleagues, to reaffirm one of our government's most important commitments, which is keeping Ontario safe.

Speaker, I want to begin with something that should matter to every member of this House: Every person in Ontario has the right to feel safe, whether they are at home with their families, in their neighbourhoods, taking their children to school or travelling on public transit. They should have confidence when an emergency arises and they call 911 that help will be there when they need it. They should be assured that when police apprehend dangerous offenders, our justice system will ensure those individuals are held responsible for their actions. Above all, they should know that when criminal activity threatens our communities, the safety and well-being of innocent, law-abiding Ontarians will remain our first priority.

Speaker, these are basic expectations. They reflect the fundamental duty of any responsible government. Under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, our government has consistently demonstrated that protecting Ontario families will always come first.

The people of this province entrusted our government, Speaker, with a historic third mandate, and their expectations were clear. They want a government that will stand up for their safety and security. That is exactly what we're delivering, not through empty rhetoric, not through promises without action, but through significant investments, strong legislation and meaningful measures that support the dedicated individuals who work every day to protect our communities.

Speaker, the difference between our government's approach and that of the opposition is clear. While the previous Liberal government closed correctional facilities, our government is expanding correctional capacity. While others challenge the investments made in law enforcement, we are ensuring that police services receive the resources that they need. And while some continue to support an approach to criminal justice that allows dangerous repeat offenders to return to our communities, our government continues to advocate for stronger measures to keep violent criminals behind bars, because for our government, protecting Ontario is not simply a commit-

ment we make; it's a responsibility we act upon every single day.

This brings me to the motion before the House and the amendment proposed by the NDP. The original motion calls on the federal government to strengthen bail and sentencing laws, increase policing and border enforcement resources, combat fentanyl trafficking and illegal firearms smuggling, and support treatment and recovery services. It recognizes that protecting our communities requires action on several fronts.

However, Speaker, the amendment proposed by the NDP would remove the provisions calling for stronger bail and sentencing laws, enhanced border enforcement and greater accountability for violent and repeat offenders. It would also remove the call for federal action against fentanyl trafficking, illegal firearms smuggling and organized criminal networks.

Speaker, these are not minor details; these are essential elements of the original motion. The NDP's amendment would retain the focus on treatment, supportive housing and recovery services, while removing the motion's calls for actions on several serious criminal justice and enforcement challenges. The government views this as an incomplete approach to public safety, and it is important to understand why.

There's no question that people struggling with addictions deserve access to appropriate treatment and recovery services. Our government recognizes the importance of these supports, including through our investments in the HART hubs. But treatment and recovery must be accompanied by efforts to address the criminal activities that threaten our communities. We must support individuals who need help while also confronting those who traffic dangerous drugs, smuggle illegal firearms and commit violent offences. We must address the needs of vulnerable individuals without overlooking the rights and safety of victims and law-abiding families. And we must recognize that stronger enforcement, criminal accountability and access to treatment are all important components of public safety.

From our government's perspective, removing the enforcement and accountability provisions reflects the NDP's soft-on-crime approach. The original motion brings these priorities together, and that comprehensive approach is what our government believes Ontario families deserve.

I want to begin by recognizing those who serve on the front lines of public safety across this province. Our police officers are an essential part of keeping our province safe. Every day, thousands of dedicated officers report for duty, leaving their loved ones behind and accepting the risks that come with protecting the public. Their responsibilities place them in difficult and often dangerous situations. They respond to serious and violent offences. They confront individuals carrying illegal weapons. They investigate and disrupt sophisticated criminal organizations. And they work tirelessly to protect victims and ensure that offenders are brought before the justice system.

When individuals dedicate their careers to protecting others, they deserve to have the proper equipment, professional training and operational support required to carry out these responsibilities. Our government understands that obligation. That is why we have committed more than $1 billion towards policing and community safety initiatives, including investments that strengthen recruitment, improve enforcement capabilities and support safer communities.

Through the Community Safety and Policing Grant, our government is allocating approximately $91.2 million in 2025-26 to help police services respond to local safety concerns, address criminal activity and better serve the communities that they protect.

We've also directed resources towards combatting gun and gang violence, organized retail theft, vehicle theft and other criminal activities that pose serious risks to Ontarians.

And, Speaker, we're seeing the impact of these efforts. In September, the Solicitor General announced a further $6-million investment through the Preventing Auto Thefts Grant, building on initiatives that have helped achieve a reported 36% reduction in auto theft across Ontario. This reflects the importance of providing law enforcement with the resources needed to respond to emerging criminal activities.

But our investments do not stop there—we're also strengthening the future of policing in Ontario. Our government removed approximately $17,000 in tuition fees previously required for basic constable training at the Ontario Police College. We have ensured that tuition-free training will continue until 2029. We've introduced an additional annual intake and increased class sizes, creating the ability to train twice as many police officers each year. And through an investment exceeding $1 billion, we're expanding and modernizing training facilities at the Ontario Police College in Aylmer and the OPP Academy in Orillia.

These investments are designed to ensure that police services across the province of Ontario can recruit and train officers needed to respond to emergencies, investigate criminal activity and protect the public.

Our government understands that safer communities depend on strong, well-supported law enforcement institutions.

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We cannot expect police services to meet growing demands without giving them the resources required to do their job. We cannot strengthen public safety while failing to invest in those responsible for protecting it. And we cannot expect Ontario families to have confidence in their safety if our front-line officers do not have the support they need.

Our government remains firmly committed to supporting the men and women who serve in uniform. And we will continue to stand behind them.

Speaker, supporting our police services means doing more than expanding recruitment and training opportunities. It also means equipping officers with modern tech-

nology and the operational resources necessary to respond to increasingly complex criminal activities.

That is why our government established the Joint Air Support Unit, supported by an investment of nearly $200 million to enhance police aviation capabilities. Through this initiative, seven helicopters will support police services operating in the greater Toronto area, Ottawa, Windsor and Niagara. These resources will strengthen the ability of police to locate dangerous suspects, respond to violent carjackings, address auto theft and provide critical assistance to officers responding to incidents on the ground. They will also improve the ability of police services to respond to offenders who exploit major highways, move between jurisdictions and take advantage of international borders to evade law enforcement. Modern criminal organizations operate across boundaries. Our law enforcement agencies must have the capabilities to respond accordingly.

Speaker, when we speak about criminal networks operating across jurisdictions, we must also address the importance of protecting Ontario's international borders. Our government has taken important steps to strengthen border enforcement and protect our communities from cross-border criminal activity. Ontario shares several major international border crossings with the United States. These crossings are vital to our province, but they can also be exploited by organized criminal networks attempting to move illegal firearms, fentanyl and other contraband into Ontario. The consequences of these activities are serious. An illegal firearm entering our province can place innocent lives at risk here in Ontario. The trafficking of fentanyl creates further dangers for individuals and communities already affected by the drug crisis. And organized criminal groups operating across international boundaries pose an ongoing threat to public safety.

This is why our government introduced Operation Deterrence and allocated $32.5 million to enhance border security and enforcement.

These investments are helping police services obtain the technology, equipment and operational capabilities required to identify and disrupt criminal networks and intercept illegal firearms and drugs. And coordinated enforcement efforts are producing important results. Provincial border enforcement operations have resulted in substantial seizures of illicit drugs, firearms and other illegal goods, as well as hundreds of criminal charges. These outcomes demonstrate why coordination between law enforcement agencies remains very important.

But the province cannot carry this responsibility alone. The federal government has an essential role in safeguarding Canada's international borders. That is why the motion before this House calls on Ottawa to provide additional federal policing and border enforcement resources. We need closer co-operation between enforcement agencies. We need stronger intelligence coordination. And we need sufficient resources to confront fentanyl trafficking, illegal firearms smuggling and organized criminal networks before these threats reach Ontario neighbourhoods. Our government is taking action within its jurisdiction. The federal government must fulfill its responsibilities as well.

Speaker, this is why the NDP's proposed amendment raises such important questions. The original motion specifically calls for greater federal enforcement resources to disrupt the trafficking of fentanyl and illegal firearms, along with organized criminal activity. Yet the amendment would remove that provision. It would also remove the call for stronger bail and sentencing laws to protect communities from violent and repeat offenders. It would also remove the provision seeking greater accountability for those responsible for home invasions, carjackings and extortions. These are serious criminal offences that have real consequences for victims and their families here in Ontario, and our government believes that any comprehensive approach to public safety must address these concerns. We believe that stronger criminal accountability and enforcement must remain part of the discussion.

Speaker, the NDP amendment would replace the original motion's federal public safety requests. That represents a significant change in the scope of the motion, and from our government's perspective, it leaves out several measures necessary to address serious crime. We believe Ontario needs an approach that addresses prevention, treatment, enforcement and accountability together. These responsibilities should reinforce one another; they should not be treated as alternatives.

When we examine the work our government has undertaken, our priorities are evident. We've directed more than $1 billion towards policing and initiatives that strengthen public safety across Ontario; we've expanded the province's police training capacity while removing financial obstacles for new recruits; and we've committed approximately $191 million towards new policing helicopters to strengthen enforcement capabilities.

These commitments represent significant action. But more importantly, they reflect the kind of Ontario our government is working to build: an Ontario where families can go about their daily lives with confidence in their personal safety; an Ontario where police officers are properly equipped to carry out their responsibilities; an Ontario where those who commit serious violent offences face appropriate consequences; and an Ontario where the government remains committed to protecting law-abiding residents and supporting victims of crime.

Speaker, the Ontario Liberals may continue to challenge our investments, but the record of our government is clear. And when it comes to the responsibilities of the federal government, the House must deliver an equally clear message. Ontario cannot independently secure all of Canada's international border crossings on its own, nor can the province make unilateral changes to federal criminal sentencing legislation. These matters fall within the federal jurisdiction.

That is why our government continues to call upon Ottawa to take meaningful action. We're asking for stronger bail and sentencing laws. We're demanding greater accountability for violent and repeat offenders. We're calling for additional federal policing and border enforcement

resources. And we're urging stronger action to disrupt trafficking in fentanyl, illegal firearms and other dangerous contraband.

These are the very priorities that the original motion seeks to advance, and these are among the provisions the NDP amended and would have removed. For our government, that difference matters, Speaker. A commitment to supporting treatment and recovery is important, but it does not replace the responsibility to confront violent crime, strengthen border enforcement and advocate for criminal justice reforms. That is why our government continues to emphasize the importance of a comprehensive approach to public safety.

Speaker, as I conclude, I want to return to the principles that guide this entire discussion. Every Ontarian deserves to live with a sense of safety and security. This should be shared as a responsibility across the Legislature, regardless of political affiliation. The people we represent expect their elected officials to take that responsibility seriously. Meeting those expectations requires more than statements of concern. It demands sound decisions, sustained investments and the willingness to stand firmly behind those who work to protect our communities.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to these responsibilities. We continue to take meaningful steps to confront criminal activities that threaten Ontario families.

Speaker, we continue to support law enforcement and strengthen public safety resources. We continue to call on the federal government to address gaps in bail and sentencing laws, enhance border security and take stronger action against organized crime. Our government does not accept a future where criminals feel emboldened while innocent families live in fear. We will not accept a justice system that fails to adequately protect victims or hold dangerous offenders accountable.

And we will continue to advocate for the training, resources and equipment needed by police officers to perform their duties effectively.

Safeguarding Ontario is one of the most important responsibilities entrusted to this government. It is a commitment we take seriously. And it is a responsibility the people of this province expect us to fulfill.

Our government believes that protecting Ontarians means addressing the full range of challenges facing our communities. That includes supporting individuals who need treatment and recovery services. It includes disrupting criminal networks and preventing dangerous drugs and illegal firearms from entering our province.

Speaker, with that, I urge all members of this House to consider the full scope of the original motion and the importance of maintaining a comprehensive approach to public safety.

The Acting Speaker (MPP Andrea Hazell): Seeing the time on the clock, the House is adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow, November 24.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du troisième parti
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Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
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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
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Fairclough, Lee (LIB)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	

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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
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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	
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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
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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	