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Tuesday 16 October 2001

Mardi 16 octobre 2001

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 16 October 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

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The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

VITAL STATISTICS
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT
(SECURITY OF DOCUMENTS), 2001
LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LES STATISTIQUES DE L'ÉTAT CIVIL
(SÉCURITÉ DES DOCUMENTS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 15, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 109, An Act to enhance the security of vital statistics documents and to provide for certain administrative changes to the vital statistics registration system / Projet de loi 109, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des documents de l'état civil et prévoyant certaines modifications administratives au système d'enregistrement des statistiques de l'état civil.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): It's a pleasure to join this debate tonight. It's my belief that this bill is going to make a material contribution to greater safety of our communities and our province. In order to demonstrate that, I'd like to describe briefly the threats that I see to our public safety and security; describe what I believe to be valid strategies to combat those threats; and then explain how this bill, I think, materially assists in dealing with those threats.

One of the greatest threats we have to our community safety is that of organized crime, and by my definition organized crime includes terrorism. It's something that's a relatively new phenomenon for us to be concerned about in Ontario, but I think it is important that while we may hear talk about others being attacked and so on, we recognize that every country in this world is to a greater or lesser extent a potential target for terrorists. And if any of us think that we can be complacent and think that threat does not apply to us, we're making quite a serious error.

In splitting the two threats, we have of course the terrorists, who basically are those who engage in criminal acts primarily for some political or ideological purpose. We also have the more conventional organized criminals, who engage in crime, violence and so on for the purpose of profit. I'd like to speak a bit about both of these be-

cause this bill is going to address problems posed by both of them.

False identities are very important to anyone who's going to engage in a terrorist act. It goes without saying that that's important. Most of them prefer to operate anonymously. Most of their so-called operations are better performed if the perpetrators are not identified as who they really are. The theory of how to avoid this is to deflect you as a target. So the more difficult we make it for people to gain false identities and to use false identities from Ontario, the better it is in terms of the community safety we have. It's a commonly accepted practice.

What I would draw to the House's attention about this is that what you really do when you're fighting terrorism is erect a number of levels of defence. We all know what they are, say, with respect to aircraft. You have the intelligence, you have the ground security, you have the air security. In the case of what happened on September 11, with respect to three of those four flights all the systems failed; on the fourth one, the final, informal system actually worked, where the passengers took things in hand and avoided the terrorists being able to accomplish their purpose of crashing into some target in the area of Washington.

My point in raising the principle of layers is that each of these layers is important, and in the successful deterrence of terrorism one of them actually works. What we have in this bill is one more layer—or two more layers, or three more layers, depending on how you want to look at it. I would like to emphasize that what we're doing here will significantly increase the security of Ontarians.

1850

My comments, in a somewhat altered form, can be applied as well to organized crime, ie, for-profit crime. They need false identities to do their work. The more difficult you make it to get a false identity, the more difficult you make it to do all the things they want to do, the more likely they are to do something else and hopefully do it somewhere else or, most hopefully, not do it at all. This is a pretty standard theory of how one increases public safety and deflects potential wrongdoers from a target.

I think this bill adds a number of layers that are going to be significant in enhancing the safety of Ontarians. By the way, it's not just Ontarians we're enhancing the safety of but everybody in the world. If they're trying to get a false identity here and they can't, it's one more difficulty they have in trying to perpetrate a crime.

The bill of course points out that Ontarians are going to be obliged to report lost, stolen or destroyed birth cer-

tificates. That's important because we want to know when a birth certificate should no longer be considered valid. Of course, in the overwhelming majority of cases it really has been destroyed or lost and there's no security threat. In a small number, someone may have stolen a birth certificate for a criminal purpose and the reporting could be quite crucial in avoiding the perpetrator actually being able to commit the crime.

As it stands now, there is no obligation, and people can't guess. They have to be given some guidance as to what has to be done. This legislation is doing that. Of course, once it's reported, that birth certificate is no longer a valid birth certificate. That may make the difference. They may not be able to get the passport. They may not be able to get across the border. They may be identified as a criminal when they're passing the border or applying for a passport. It's those relatively innocuous types of defences that can make all the difference.

The information on the deactivated document is going to be shared with other government identity programs, such as the federal passport office. This again introduces another layer of security. Obviously terrorists particularly, and to a lesser extent organized criminals generally, do cross borders. Some of them have to cross borders to do what they do. By and large, people are asked for a passport at the border. If we can make it more difficult for them to get one, if we can make it more difficult for a forged one to be accepted, that's another level of security.

Another feature of this bill which I think is a good one is the provision that says Ontarians can be issued only one birth certificate at any one time. Right now, and possibly for valid reasons, whatever they may be, people could have a number of birth certificates. The problem with that of course is that somebody can steal it and you don't even know it's gone. Someone can be going around engaging in illicit activities with a birth certificate that is actually a valid certificate.

As we change the provisions of our law as is proposed in this bill and as we significantly increase the fine for wilfully providing false information when applying for vital documents, I think we're going to see a significant improvement in the level of our own security.

We have to admit the fact of human nature, where certain people will commit what they think is petty crime in order to make a few dollars. That's a reality of human nature. In increasing the penalty provisions in this act, we're saying to the people, "This is a serious offence," and it's a serious offence because in what seems like a relatively "innocent" crime, you can be helping someone who is in fact a terrorist.

We can think back 30 years when spy agencies from the Soviet bloc used to engage sympathizers to go out to cemeteries and write down the names of people who had died shortly after birth. That seemed like a pretty innocent thing to do. All you're doing is going out to a public place, making a note of something that was a public record and giving it to a foreign government. That seemed very innocent.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): That's what Tories used to do for voters' lists.

Mr Wood: I heard they got the idea from the Liberals, but that's another matter.

The act, of course, appeared relatively innocent, but what the person who did that was really doing was providing an identity for a spy who was going to enter Canada or the United States or some other friendly country. So what appeared quite innocent in fact was quite serious. I think the most important reason for us to support raising the fines is to make it clear to people that this, while it seems like a relatively small crime, can have quite dramatic consequences.

I'm not going to go beyond my allotted time of 10 minutes because I know the Minister of Correctional Services has some even better points to make than I have made. We'll judge that in a couple of minutes. However, I do want to say that this bill does significantly enhance the safety of all the communities in this province and the province as a whole and also enhances the safety of people throughout the world. I commend the bill to the House and invite them to engage in quick passage of this bill so it can become law and do some good for all.

I'm sharing my time, I believe, with the Minister of Correctional Services.

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): I was expecting my honourable friend to continue a little bit further since he was well into the subject, but I'm happy to pick up where he left off, which is really to talk about—

Mr Bradley: What does Guy Giorno have to say about this?

Hon Mr Sampson: I'm not sure, but I say to the member for St Catharines, what I try to do is listen to what my constituents have to say about this, because of course those are the people who have asked us to come here and represent them.

I want to tell you something. What we're really talking about here, at least as it relates to the average Ontarian, is modifications to the way in which one will get access to a birth certificate in this province. Those of you who are watching tonight who have not had the chance and the privilege of representing constituents here in the Legislature won't know this, but perhaps some of the most frequent phone calls and visits to constituency offices are around one's birth certificate: they've lost it, they can't find it, they never had one to begin with, and those sorts of things. So what's happened here is that we've tried to make the law more applicable to the way in which those birth certificates are issued, and they're pretty important pieces of information.

I remember—perhaps the member for St Catharines will be interested in this—before I got involved in this business I was a bit of a baseball fan and I used to go to quite a few games in Detroit. Of course, to get across the border, Windsor to Detroit, you always had to have your birth certificate. It was an important piece of documentation that determined who you were and where you came from, and that was what they wanted to see: "Show me

your birth certificate.” I went one time with somebody who took his passport with him, which is a bit dangerous, because one never knows in the area around a ballpark whether you can actually keep that in your pocket long enough. A birth certificate you can actually stick in your front pocket, inside your vest pocket, and it’s probably going to be there at the end of the day. But that’s what they wanted, your birth certificate, a very important piece of who you are as an Ontarian.

Mr Bradley: When you went there, was it to Briggs or Tiger Stadium?

Hon Mr Sampson: It was Tiger Stadium.

Interjection: Holy smokes.

Hon Mr Sampson: You’re right. No, no, no—well, I am old. I’m old enough to know that Tiger Stadium was a great place where baseball was once played. Of course, again we’re talking about birth certificates, and that’s how I got to speak to Tiger Stadium, not the interjection from the member for St Catharines.

You’ve got to make sure this stuff is appropriately obtained. All these phone calls we’re getting to the constituency offices are around this very important information, this very important documentation of who you are. Clearly we need to make sure we have a process that makes sure that a person gets his or her birth certificate and not five of them or 10 of them or somebody else’s, God forbid. We need to have the process to deal with that.

The member for St Catharines, I’m sure, when he stands on his feet in this Legislature this evening, will say that this was the brainwave of the members of the Liberal Party. Indeed, it was something that was brought to our attention well before they had thought of it and something that various ministries of the crown had been working on for some time. Frankly, the events of September 11 have brought to our attention that the security audit that was done around this issue is something that should be addressed with haste, which of course is why we have this bill in front of us.

1900

The procedures being put forward in this bill and the regulations that will come after to establish the final procedures to get your birth certificate—I say to the people watching tonight and listening and reading—probably will not make it easier for you to get this document. I say with frankness, that’s probably a cost we’re all going to have to be prepared to accept in order to protect the integrity of the system that issues us this very important piece of who we are in this province.

Checks and controls are going to be necessary to make sure that the right people get the right document at the right time. These things aren’t permanently attached to you. You do lose them as you move and as you go from place to place, so when it is lost, the old certificate is cancelled so it can’t be reused by somebody in an illegal fashion, and a new one is issued to you, as opposed to somebody who might be impersonating you. So after this bill is passed, should the Legislature deem that this bill should be passed, Ontarians will only have one birth

certificate, either in the long form—I’m not too sure I’ve ever seen a long form of a birth certificate—or in the short form. I don’t know if I have mine here. I probably don’t have it here, but it’s a little plastic card, the wallet form certificate.

Lost or stolen cards will have to be reported by the owner of the certificate to the registrar so the procedure to cancel it and prohibit and stop the illegal use of that document can proceed. By the way, information about deactivated or lost certificates, and that information recorded, will be shared with other government entities so that people, for instance, crossing the border at Detroit to go and see the ball game can’t take a stolen certificate that is mine, for instance, and pretend to be me as they cross the border back and forth because that certificate will be cancelled, and when they present it to the customs officer or the security officer at the border they’ll either read it electronically—and that procedure has now been put in place in many jurisdictions—or they’ll record the number and it will pop up as stolen.

Forms requesting these new certificates will resemble the forms that many of have gone through and had to fill out to get our passports. You’ve got to get the picture identification—many of you have had to do this, I’m sure. The picture on the back is signed by yourself and then there’s this person called a guarantor. We’ve never had to have a guarantor to issue a birth certificate before. Should this bill pass, the signature of a guarantor will be required in order to process the application. A guarantor, much like the passport one, must be somebody who has known the applicant for two years, must be a Canadian citizen themselves, and come from a profession such as that of a judge, a police officer, a mayor or a lawyer.

Somebody came to my constituency office about six months ago and asked me to be the guarantor for their passport application. I said, “Sure, I’d be happy to do that.” I flipped it over and scanned down the list of people who are entitled to guarantee passport applications and noted that MPPs are no longer on that list.

Mr Bradley: I don’t think they ever were.

Hon Mr Sampson: I think they were at one time. I say to the member for St Catharines, they were at one time. I think this was changed a year or so ago.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Sampson: It’s not on the form, interestingly enough. So when it lists those who are allowed to do it, it doesn’t have MPPs and it used to.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Only opposition MPPs are allowed to do it.

Hon Mr Sampson: It may well be only Liberal MPPs. That could be what’s happened. I’m sure we’ll get this one right because the intent is to make sure that those who can authorize them should be allowed to do that. So there must be a specified profession: a judge, a police officer, a mayor or a lawyer, and maybe an MPP, who knows? We’ll have to ask the member for St Catharines his view on that.

Was there somebody to follow? I don’t think so. I’m going to continue anyhow.

Interjection: You're on a roll.

Hon Mr Sampson: I'm on a roll here and I've got a minute and 24 seconds and so much to talk about. Let me just say that an important part of this bill has to be the penalties that are applied for the misuse of this very important document that many of us use for such commonplace things as going to a ball game for an afternoon of entertainment. It's such a fundamental piece of who we are and what we are in this province, such a fundamental piece of other documents that are subsequently issued, like passports, that we've got to make sure that those who want to get around the law and abuse their right to be a citizen of this province should be properly penalized.

So the bill has in it sizable penalties, up to \$50,000, for instance, or imprisonment for up to two years less a day, which would mean they would come under the jurisdiction of the minister of corrections of the day, whoever that is. These are sizable penalties, as they should be.

As I close, I say to the members here, this is a fundamental piece of who we are in this province and we have to make sure we have the legislation to protect its integrity. That's what this bill does.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Questions and comments?

Mr Bradley: I know a judge who would do one. The member for Ottawa West-Nepean, if he were to sign it, I tell you, you would get your birth certificate for sure.

Hon Mr Sampson: But he's a judge.

Mr Bradley: He's the person who probably has the most authority in this House to do so. I would ask him; if I had to get a new birth certificate, I'd make sure I asked the member for Ottawa West-Nepean.

I say this particularly to the Minister of Corrections: I'm glad you gave credit where it was due to Dalton McGuinty, the Leader of the Opposition, who—

Hon Mr Sampson: But I didn't.

Mr Bradley: I thought I heard you say that. I'm glad you gave credit to him, because when he asked the question in the House, I well recall my good friend Norm Sterling was startled by the question and kind of dismissed it by saying, "That can't possibly be the case." Then, to his credit—I like to give credit to people where credit is due—he did a full retreat. He went back to the ministry, found out that the Leader of the Opposition, Dalton McGuinty, was right and he came back in here and said that indeed there were problems with the system and there was going to be an effort to correct them, after the Leader of the Opposition had raised it in the Legislature.

So I like the generosity of the minister of corrections in allowing that it was the Leader of the Opposition who gave them yet another idea to implement in the Legislature. This is the kind of bipartisanship that we in the opposition are prepared to engage in from time to time. The other day I wanted to have the OPP investigate, because the government was stealing so many policies from the opposition I thought it warranted an investigation for thievery. I say that in the nicest terms, not in other terms.

But I can say to the Minister of Corrections that I am delighted he agrees that the Leader of the Opposition initiated this legislation.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I'm pleased to rise and comment on some of the remarks made by the speakers. I'll just say to the minister of corrections that it's interesting that one of the first points, and one of the ones where he really started to show a little passion toward this bill, was when he got talking about penalties. I would just say to the minister that, having walked in your shoes, one of the things you've got to watch is that you don't get too caught up in the whole issue of penalties, discipline and retribution. That job can do some strange things to you.

Let me also say to the member from London West—and I never thought I'd be commenting in this direction to the member, given his usual leanings on the matter of law and order—I thought he was being far too kind to individuals who are asked by foreign powers to go to graveyards and literally take down tombstone information, particularly on citizens who died shortly after being born, and provide it, suggesting that these poor innocents were being led astray and that it wasn't as innocent as it looked. I would suggest to you that anybody stupid enough to think that this is an innocent activity ought not to be trusted with the information they bring back.

Let me also say that I agreed with the member from London West when he talked about the fact that duplicate certificates will no longer be allowed. Often, some of the major problems that exist are quite surprising when we actually take a look in this place at legislation we otherwise wouldn't, and don't, for long periods of time. I would think, had we any other reason to look at this bill before, we would have seen the glaring difficulty of allowing individuals to have more than one birth certificate. So I agree with him that ensuring that individuals have only one original birth certificate makes a lot of sense and is a good part of this bill.

1910

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to comment on the debate. Certainly, this piece of legislation has very stiff penalties with respect to the activity that needs to be dealt with. I think the member from Hamilton Centre—

Interjection: West.

Mr Tascona: West—pointed it out very clearly. I wouldn't want to give the member from Hamilton Centre any credit, but the member from Hamilton West certainly pointed out, as the Minister of Correctional Services did, the activity that the minister is trying to deal with in terms of birth certificates.

I would say that dealing with this type of issue is a very serious issue, because all the members have dealt with birth certificate applications in their offices, and everybody knows that's the fundamental document you need to get a passport. I think my office was the busiest office in the province in terms of dealing with birth certificates, and the minister who is responsible for this bill, in his wisdom, put it into a more uniform process to

be dealt with at our local registry office. I can say I've heard nothing but praise for that process, to give people the access they need. Because it's amazing the number of people who do need birth certificates, either through losing them or any other means of having to get that information.

So I would say that this is a very, very calculated and measured response to deal with the issue. The penalties are very directed in dealing with the activity.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I think it's interesting that the debate we're having tonight on this bill really reflects directly on the events of September 11. The world changed then, and I think we as members all see the activity we have in our offices. As the member said, the application for replacement birth certificates is one of the functions that MPPs provide throughout the whole province, in all of our offices. I don't know whose office is the busiest, but we all have very busy offices and we have great staff who do a lot of good work on behalf of the people of Ontario. It might be a good time for all of us to thank the staff for all the work they do on behalf of the people of Ontario.

Much of that work is helping people out with their government documentation and, as the previous speaker said, applying for a passport. I usually find in my office that a lot of the people in my riding certainly aren't world travellers, but maybe a vacation comes at the right time in their life or there's a sickness in the family and they have to travel overseas, and all of a sudden the need for a passport now occurs, which maybe never had occurred before. People start to look through their records and see that they do not have a birth certificate.

It's something that we just issued in our forms and applications on a basis of trust. I guess that's where the world has changed since September: we can no longer just trust everybody at face value, unfortunately. There are, as Mr Bush would say, evildoers in the world and we have to be more vigilant and tighten up the requirements for documentation that proves people are who they say they are. That's why we need more stringent regulations.

The Deputy Speaker: Response?

Mr Wood: I was interested in the exchange between the Minister of Correctional Services and the member from St Catharines. And by the way, I'd like to thank all the members who offered questions and comments on what was said earlier. But I was interested in the exchange between those two members. I'm not that concerned about who thought of this first, but I should share with our friends across the way a principle that this government follows with respect to such matters. It was set out by the late Premier Leslie Frost. He said, "I always listen very carefully to what the opposition says and then steal all their best ideas." So if you folks did mention it first, you're on notice that we have stolen the idea. When it comes to good ideas, I admit to being a thief, because that's where I get most of mine.

The member for Hamilton West made reference with respect to penalties. I think the purpose of penalties here is to serve notice to those who might do it. I would like to

assure him, by the way, I'm not in any way being kind to those who took the information off the tombstones. I'm merely pointing out to the House that a lot of them didn't understand the gravity of what they were doing. What they did was a major blow to the security of this country and other countries, and I'm not in any way white-washing it or justifying it. There was reference by one of the speakers with respect to the importance of balancing security and access, and I think that is absolutely correct. I think the bill does a reasonably good job of that. It may be that experience will tell us we have to make some further changes, and I for one am open to that if that's what is needed.

There's also reference made by one of the members to the fact that the world has changed. I think that's an important observation that all of us have to keep in mind. It is different. We have to respond to that and make sure we keep our communities and province safe.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Bradley: Thank you for the opportunity to debate the McGuinty bill on birth certificates. I well recall the day I was in the House, listening to the leader of the official opposition rise and ask a question of my friend Norm Sterling, the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. He asked him about the birth certificate and Mr Sterling kind of dismissed the question. He said, "I do not believe that to be the case." That was when Mr McGuinty had indicated how easy it was to get a birth certificate in Ontario. As I said to the Minister of Correctional Services, I'm always prepared to give credit where credit is due. The minister beat a retreat the next day, waved the white flag and said, "Yes, Mr McGuinty, you were absolutely right on that issue, and I'm now prepared to bring in legislation to deal with it."

This is what I like to see. I like to see this spirit of bipartisanship. I've seen it so often. I've seen the government steal all the good ideas that the opposition proposes, dress them up as their own and then try to take credit for them. There's not a patent on them, so we can't prevent that from happening. I think it's a form of a compliment to the opposition when you steal those ideas.

Hon Mr Sampson: The NDP stole our tax cut idea.

Mr Bradley: You're right: the NDP has stolen the tax cut idea from the Conservatives, which really has turned things upside down.

I want to tell you that there has been a problem with birth certificates for awhile and there's been a problem with a lot of things for awhile, but I think it's unfair to point the finger at governments of all levels because of something that happened on September 11.

Since September 11, we expect that governments are going to react in a very drastic way to what happened and that our way of life is going to change. Many people in Canada like the fact that there wasn't much of a hassle at the airports. Unlike the border at Detroit, very often at the one at Buffalo or Niagara Falls or Lewiston there was no identification that was required when a person was crossing. I think we liked that. We liked that open border concept and we liked the fact that we didn't have the security that others felt they had to have.

I've had people tell me that they have travelled in some significant, large airports and major cities in Europe and have seen for the first time in their lives—these are North Americans, particularly Canadians—people with automatic weapons standing in an airport—quite shocking to them—and signs that would say, “Do not leave your baggage unattended or it will be blown up.” We kind of liked that atmosphere, and I think many in our country and our province wish we could continue in that vein, but things changed.

1920

That's why I think you will find that while we want to point out areas where there's a need for action, there is not going to be the kind of partisan finger pointing about what happened before September 11, because we recognize how much the world changed on that occasion.

You know that the Leader of the Opposition asked questions about security around nuclear generating stations. There was an incident where a person was able to approach the Bruce nuclear generating station, get into the property and make a telephone call. I recall asking a question somewhere around 1979 about somebody gaining access to one of our nuclear generating stations. I think it was Bruce. At the time I was asking Jim Taylor, who was then Minister of Energy in this very Legislature, about how that could possibly happen. I think in that case it was a couple of environmentalists who wanted to point out a problem in terms of security at the plant. But we have to ask these questions now.

We have to know that since September 11 there is going to have to be an expenditure of financial resources that was not contemplated a year ago. This is why it's going to be important for the government to have the necessary revenue flow to be able to meet those new obligations without cutting in other areas where essential services are less than what the public would like today, let alone what they might be with some severe cuts.

I happen to believe that it is not wise for the government to be proceeding with a huge tax cut for corporations in this province—over \$2 billion in corporate tax cuts. That is not going to generate economic activity as the government contemplates it. Any generation of that activity will be minor as a result of these tax cuts and the government is going to lose millions—in this case, a couple of billion dollars—in revenue. We're going to require that, because justifiably, the Solicitor General, perhaps the corrections minister, the Attorney General, the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Health, all of these people are going to be coming to Management Board of Cabinet, which approves all expenditures, and asking for more resources to carry out their responsibilities.

This government is going to be in a real crunch mid-year, as Mr McGuinty mentioned to the Treasurer of this province, Jim Flaherty. He said, “Mid-year you're going to be into a major constraint,” that is, a major slashing of government expenditures. I'm concerned about that. I can see problems with the health care system and I can see problems with the environment system, because we have to have security for our water supplies.

The member for Thunder Bay may well want to engage in debate this evening. He was asking me earlier if I thought I would go the full 20 minutes. Two of my colleagues have been asking me if I am going to go for the full 20 minutes, hinting that perhaps I should be sharing my time with the member for Thunder Bay, which I certainly am prepared to do.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): No need to.

Mr Bradley: No need to, he tells me. That's good to hear.

I think there is a time now where various levels of government have to work together. I was very surprised, because I think the Solicitor General has contemplated this working together—contemplated, at least. There is no full agreement signed, as our justice critic noted today. But I heard the member for Northumberland up in a rant against federal legislation, which goes far further in terms of removing personal liberties than many who are concerned about personal liberties would like. He was in a full rant.

This is a change. This is a difference from America. Right now the bipartisanship in the United States is something to behold. It's not that there's total compliance with what the President wants, but there is considerable support out there and a willingness to work together and to take one another's ideas and put them into effect.

We see some of that here. We see some of that in Ottawa. But I get concerned when I see the buck-passing and the finger pointing. I asked a question of the Solicitor General about water safety, along with Michael Bryant, the member for St Paul's. As soon as I said “the security of the water supply,” immediately he was ready to palm that off on municipalities. I notice with this government that the ministers are first in line to accept the credit and last in line to take the responsibility. When there's good news, they are there to make that announcement. When there's some difficulty to be met, their finger is pointing at Ottawa, at the municipalities, at the weather, at the opposition, at the three governments previous, something of that nature, trying to avoid that kind of responsibility.

We are also going to need money that is now being expended in other places. This government has now spent over \$240 million on self-serving, self-congratulatory advertising. The last time I saw that was the full-page ads. We saw them midweek this week and then in the Saturday papers. If they were entirely informational, I suppose one could say they could be justified, but right there in the ads is the back-patting from the government, the self-congratulatory message using again taxpayers' dollars to promote the Progressive Conservative government. If the Conservative Party had paid for that advertisement, I could not complain, quite obviously, but when hundreds of millions of dollars are now being expended on self-congratulatory advertising, I think that money could be better used in the health care system, to increase our security, in the education system or elsewhere where it will be much more productive.

I recall asking a question in the House—and unfortunately we have to do that these days. Back on Septem-

ber 27, I asked the Solicitor General if he was prepared for—wait for the word—anthrax. Nobody seemed to know what anthrax was at that time. Certainly our good friends in the news media did not consider it to be a matter of great interest. Four or five days later, everybody was talking about anthrax and smallpox and people who might get licences to drive dangerous materials around the province. Unfortunately, these are the things we have to look at now. That's why a special effort has to be made in terms of security, and a good deal of that responsibility will fall within the purview of the provincial government. We will be vigilant on this side, as is our job, to ensure that all of those bases are being covered.

I want to say as well that I don't know whether our hospitals would be able to handle a major occurrence such as happened in the United States. I may reword that to say I'm fairly confident we would not be able to. Right now, there's a redirect on. When an ambulance heads for a hospital and asks if they can bring the patient to the hospital, that ambulance is redirected elsewhere, and that is a problem. It seems to me that we will be in the position, post September 11, of having to add, as our leader has said in his questions in the House, many additional beds in our hospitals. We had hoped that—

Interjections.

Mr Bradley: I should say to my friend John O'Toole, through the Speaker of course, that those hospital beds were needed in any event. If you want to know how I can bring in the CCACs to this argument, the community care access centres, let me tell you how I can do it, Mr Speaker. You'll be interested.

The last person who had any money for the Niagara area was our good friend from Burlington when he was the minister responsible. Since then, we've been abandoned in various parts of the province in terms of the genuine needs of the people of Ontario.

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Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): How many millions did we give you, Jim?

Mr Bradley: The member for Burlington knows where Niagara is. Some people don't seem to know where Niagara is. The member for Burlington knows where it is.

Let me set the scene for you. If we are to have sufficient beds in our hospitals to be able to handle a major emergency, that means people have to have the home care they need so that when they are discharged from hospital, they are not brought back to a hospital because they were discharged too early. Right now it's appalling, in some circumstances, the state of illness people happen to be in when they are thrust out of a hospital. We have to have those essential services in the community—we're referring now to home care—in order to ensure that those beds are freed up for emergency and acute care. Secondarily, some would say—I say primarily—we need service for people in any event. So you

can see, Mr Speaker, how community care access centres are affected by this piece of legislation.

We have to understand as well that included in a package dealing with security has to be the ability to cross borders. The minister of corrections has made a couple of references to crossing borders. Because of the volume of business we do with the United States, it's essential that people and goods be able to pass the border in a timely fashion. I think we can contemplate what would happen if that were not the case. Many companies that now locate in Ontario and Canada might feel that if the border is a major obstruction, then they should have the jobs south of the border; in other words, their operation south of the border. Those of us who represent automaking and auto parts manufacturing in Ontario recognize probably as well as anyone the importance to move product and people across the border.

There is no question that we can have an impact. As the economy is hit by this particular downturn—we were already in a downturn to a certain extent, but hit even more in this downturn—it's going to be important, as they have in the United States, that we have an economic stimulus package. I don't think that can be contemplated in terms of a \$2-billion tax cut for corporations. Rather, I think—and each one of us knows this; each minister would know this and each one of us in our communities would know this—that we can accelerate some capital projects. That is, not something we've dreamed up, not something that doesn't have to be done, but projects which have been planned in various ministries can be advanced in their date and the money invested and flowed at an earlier point in time to generate direct economic activity. There is a spinoff in terms of revenue for government. People are employed; businesses feel that extra impetus from these kinds of investments on the part of government. I think that would be extremely helpful to our economy, because we recognize that we're in turbulent and difficult economic times now.

Why is that? We in the opposition have said for the past five years or more that the American economy has been booming and Americans have been purchasing products from Ontario. Therefore, we have benefited from the economic policies of Bill Clinton and the Congress with which he dealt. Now, when there's a major downturn in the United States, we're going to feel the impact again. It may be that while those of us in the opposition were not prepared to give you the credit on the other side for the boom in the economy, we might be happy to give you the responsibility for the downturn. But of course that would be unfair, and I don't want to be unfair to members on the government side.

In terms of the legislation itself, there are going to be some difficulties; we recognize this. A couple of members who have spoken have talked about some of those difficulties. One of the questions is, what did you weigh at birth? I wonder how many people in this Legislature would know what they weighed at birth. I suspect not many.

Hon Mr Jackson: I do. I know the minute I was born.

Mr Bradley: The member for Burlington knows.

Hon Mr Jackson: At St Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton. One of 10 brothers and sisters.

Mr Bradley: And how much did you weigh?

Hon Mr Jackson: Seven pounds, nine ounces.

Mr Bradley: Seven pounds, nine ounces, he happened to weigh at that time.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: The member for Sudbury had an interjection which I will ignore in this particular case.

Hon Mr Jackson: When you were born, what was your birth weight?

Mr Bradley: I was normal at that time: seven—

Interjections.

Mr Bradley: At this time, a little heavier than I'd like to be, I might say, as is probably the case with most people. I think I was about seven and a half pounds then, and since then I've put probably 140 pounds on, something like that.

Anyway, I do want to say I'm going to be waiting for the intervention of the member for Thunder Bay-Superior North, when he in his two-minute reply indicates, indeed if he does, how important this bill is.

Let me, in wrapping up on this piece of legislation, say the following things. You've made an unwise decision on the governing side to give a huge tax cut to corporations, because it's going to deprive you of the revenues you're going to need to implement new security services and to meet the existing needs of the province of Ontario. That's something you've done that is wrong.

Something you've done that is right is that you've adopted the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition, Dalton McGuinty, that legislation of this kind is required to tighten up birth certificates. We all know of instances we've read about where people have falsely obtained birth certificates. The consequences today are far graver and greater than they would have been pre-September 11.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Christopherson: I'm pleased to respond to the comments of my friend from St Catharines. First of all, let me say that I agree with him entirely in his closing remarks when he talked about tax cuts and the fact that you've made them so severe that whether or not there's enough money to adequately deal with all the security issues we have is a serious question.

But having said that, let me say that at the end of the day I doubt that this government would not find the money, which also then suggests that when they say, "No matter how much we might care about our hospital system, no matter how much we might care about the homeless, about people in poverty, about the lack of an Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the services they need, we just don't have the money. We want to do it but we don't have enough money to do it," it sort of stands that on its ear, because when it's law and order, which fits nicely with the image at least that you want to project, boy, the money's there.

But I think my friend from St Catharines was saying the money would be there with a lot greater ease and

without having a lot of the damage—dare I use the term "collateral damage"?—that's been done to an awful lot of people and families along the way. So I want to underscore the point that he made. I thought it was an excellent one, as are most of the points that member raises.

He also talked about the co-operation necessary between the different levels of government and talked about the anthrax scare and what that means for our hospitalities. All partisanship aside, that makes a great deal of sense. But what it means is—and this is the point he was making—that the almighty dollar can't be guiding policy. Policy, when it comes to security, needs to be first, and then find the money; make sure the money is there. Without that co-operation, we're going to find ourselves short.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's always a pleasure to respond to the member for St Catharines because I know he has put considerable time in here and has a great deal of experience. So I do try to attend when he comments on a bill.

I was quite disappointed, for the first time, that he really commented on everything else but the bill. I think for the sake of the viewers it's important to recognize that we're dealing with the vital statistics act, Bill 109, and it is dealing with the birth certificate and the process to make sure, in hindsight, that we have a secure system. It's a very important document. It really is the initiating document, not just for birth but for many other subsequent documents.

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I have to commend Minister Sterling. We're looking at Bill 109, and I'm holding it up here for the members who want to look at it and actually read it. It's important to note here that the minister introduced this on October 11, a month to the day of the tragic events in September. I commend Minister Sterling.

I should say as background to this that these bills don't just come out of a simplistic question by the Leader of the Opposition, however well intended. He probably saw a draft copy of this bill. They do get a lot of leaked copies for some reason. There is no other insight he would have.

There was an OPP audit a year ago that Minister Sterling initiated, and from that there were 95 recommendations. For the record, of those 95 recommendations, 59 have already been implemented. This bill really completes that task. Between the initiation of September 11 and October 11 when this bill was introduced, clearly the job—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Gravelle: I feel under enormous pressure because, as members of the House know, I was supposed to have half of the 20 minutes that the member for St Catharines was going to have.

The truth is, I'm glad it worked out the way it did because I think the member for St Catharines covered everything I was going to say, and in extraordinarily good fashion, including the fact that we have Dalton McGuinty to thank for this piece of legislation, for his

alertness, for his sharpness. Despite the fact that the minister at first was rather slow to concede that point, he did indeed concede that point, and it is important legislation. There were the points the member made, quite relevant, to the fact that the government went out last week and spent over \$1 million on advertising which could have been spent in a far more useful fashion. Dalton McGuinty was in Thunder Bay last week visiting in my constituency and that of Lyn McLeod, the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan. He made the point that the money that was used for advertising could have been used to speed up the process by which foreign-trained physicians could now be practising in Ontario. We all know about the doctor shortage. So I think the member for St Catharines covered all those points in an extremely effective fashion.

One has to also look at the fact that when one sees the decision being made by the government, the stubbornness of the government in terms of maintaining their determination to go ahead with their \$2.2-billion tax cut to corporations when indeed we are under extraordinary new stresses financially now that, quite frankly, have not yet been calculated, we may not be able to meet that as a result of those stresses, yet the government still insists on going ahead with what clearly are not well-thought-out corporate tax cuts.

I feel pleased to have the opportunity to make some comments relevant to this particular piece of legislation. I'm glad it has come forward. I thank Dalton McGuinty, and I certainly thank the member for St Catharines and all my colleagues in the Liberal caucus, for giving me this two minutes to respond to make my points in support of this bill.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I am always happy to comment on the remarks that are offered so very well, so very succinctly, by the member for St Catharines. I thought he made a number of salient points. If they weren't to the bill, they certainly were to very important matters that affect all Ontarians.

With regard to Bill 109, as my colleague from Thunder Bay-Superior North has indicated too, we have a great deal to thank our leader for. Later on this evening, when we have further debate on Bill 109, I intend to make more comments about the role of the opposition. But it is appropriate that we recognize this evening as well that a loophole was exposed, and this bill is intended to address that loophole.

It's important for all of us to be on guard, particularly after the events of September 11. There are forces about around the world, including Canada, including Ontario, that require us to be more vigilant about the way we carry on our business. This of course is going to contribute to that vigilance.

In our role as MPPs, the provision of birth certificates is something that we are very regularly required to assist. I've already had conversations with my staff about the importance of ensuring that when people come in for this service, they understanding the importance of it, and that

we do all we can in our role as MPPs to ensure that the security of that document is considered and ensured. I do have more points to make on that later on.

The Deputy Speaker: Response?

Mr Bradley: It's very nice of all the members to bring a different point of view—Mr O'Toole, Mrs Dombrowsky. The member for Hamilton West, Mr Christopherson, offered some salient points, as well as Mr Gravelle. Again, a lot of good suggestions are coming forward now from various sources. This is the way this Legislature should work.

It's going to be particularly important in the weeks and months ahead as the government is in total disarray because the leader has stepped down. We know that at the present time—I don't say this in a nasty sense at all—everything is run from the centre, from Premier Harris's office. Now that he is stepping down, we can expect total disarray and disintegration of the government benches.

I am awaiting some brown envelopes coming from various rivals for the leadership. They will send a question over that might be embarrassing to the other rival in the leadership race. That might well happen if things get—

Hon Mr Jackson: How would you know about that?

Mr Bradley: I just assume that, looking at the intense rivalry happening. It's going to be extra important, while the government is in total disarray and disintegration, that we in the official opposition provide to the government some new good ideas for legislation. They've adopted this particular suggestion from the Leader of the Opposition. I know they've adopted some other policies that we've suggested. I can absolutely assure the members that we on this side, and I'm sure the New Democrats—at least the member for Hamilton West, if not the New Democrats—will provide that kind of suggestion to the government. I hope that in matters of these kinds we can work in a bipartisan, positive sense and help out at a time of disintegration of the government.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): It's my pleasure to join in the debate this evening on Bill 109, the Vital Statistics Statute Law Amendment Act (Security of Documents), 2001. I'm certainly happy to see all parties working together this evening on this bill.

We all wish the tragic events of September 11 had not happened, but it is not possible to go back in time. We learned a lesson that day. We have seen that in societies such as ours the protection and control of vital documents could be stronger.

While we have no evidence that Ontario vital documents have been misused to assist in any acts of terror, the government has decided to move quickly to increase security. Not acting quickly would be dangerous and would be opening the door to identity theft. With this bill, the government of Ontario is responding to the responsibilities on all fronts. Protecting vital documents is essential if we want to protect the freedom of the people of Ontario.

Contrary to what the member for St Catharines said, the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services started a

security overhaul and implemented the recommendations of an OPP security audit long before the terrible events of September 11. We have heard the Honourable Minister of Consumer and Business Services, Norm Sterling, tell us of one of the main sections of this legislation, which states, "If the registrar general considers it necessary to verify information or to determine if any document issued or that may be issued under this act is being, or may be, improperly used, the registrar general shall collect, directly or indirectly, such information as he or she considers necessary from such persons and institutions as he or she considers appropriate."

This legislation will allow the office of the registrar general the ability to confirm the validity of birth certificates by sharing information with law enforcement agencies. The events of September 11 are forcing us to take a long look at what we think the ideal balance is between public safety and privacy protection. The legislation allows the registrar general to obtain and share information where the registrar general believes a person is making, or may make, improper use of any document that has been or may be issued under the act or for the purpose of verifying information.

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"If the registrar general considers it necessary to verify information or to determine if any document issued or that may be issued under this act is being, or may be, improperly used, the registrar general shall collect, directly or indirectly, such information as he or she considers necessary from such persons and institutions as he or she considers appropriate."

The legislation amends the act to expand the list of persons who are bound by secrecy provisions.

"No division registrar, sub-registrar, funeral director, person employed in the service of Her Majesty or other prescribed person shall communicate or allow to be communicated to any person not entitled thereto any information obtained under this act, or allow any such person to inspect or have access to any records containing information obtained under this act."

Every government is learning that new information technology and new information processes create new concerns about privacy. Privacy can be protected most effectively if we treat it as a broad public concern. Therefore, as we expand the responsibility of the registrar general to verify information, it is only fair that we make sure that this information remains confidential among individuals, agencies and organizations whose responsibility it is to verify that the information provided is right. The act contains a provision to increase fines to \$50,000 for individuals and \$250,000 for a corporation and/or to impose a jail term of up to two years less a day.

"Every person who neglects or fails to give any notice or to register or to furnish any statement, certificate or particulars respecting the birth, marriage, death, stillbirth, adoption or change of name of any person, as required by this act, is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not more than \$50,000 for an individual or \$250,000 for a corporation."

This shows the seriousness with which the government is treating the security of vital statistics.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: Is there a quorum present?

The Deputy Speaker: Is a quorum present?

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

Mr Miller: Everybody will agree that it is difficult to put a price on safety and security. Given the value of vital documents, we want the maximum fine to reflect the level of care that consumers must take with these documents. We recognize that not all situations will result in charges being laid or maximum fines. However, the value of vital documents must be stated clearly and therefore the fines must reflect the care we must all take with these documents.

The legislation amends the definition of, and references to, "division registrar," to allow the office of the registrar general to specify persons other than municipalities to report information and registrations.

There are complementary amendments to regulation-making powers. This ensures regulation-making authority for all new prescribed items. This legislation gives the registrar general the flexibility to phase in the implementation of new methods of registration.

As a further step, the minister has written to his counterparts in other provinces and territories and has promised to be in touch with his colleagues at the national level to bring together a working group on vital document providers. This group will be dedicated to making the falsification or improper use of documents much more difficult within our borders and those of our neighbour.

The process and system used to issue Ontario birth certificates were developed before the identity-theft problem became a growing concern. Advances in processing and technology now allow the government to meet the challenge head-on.

It is time to take action to protect Ontarians and their families. This legislation is a good balancing act to keep a society such as ours open while protecting it from potential harm. For this reason, I am proud to ask for support from all members of this House for this bill. I look forward to testing out the procedure as I apply for my new birth certificate, having misplaced my birth certificate in the last while. I'll pass on to the other member now.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): It's a pleasure to rise and speak to the Vital Statistics Statute Law Amendment Act, obviously an important piece of legislation, which will provide for the integrity of vital statistics documents in Ontario. This legislation will improve service so that Ontarians can register and get certificates for the most important events in their lives in a secure and reliable manner, avoid identity theft and increase the validity of our current data.

The security measures proposed in this bill for the issuance of birth certificates are necessary. They are necessary to protect Ontarians and their families against identity theft and other criminal activities. These new security measures are responsible and prudent.

I must stress that most of these changes, as my colleague before me also pointed out, have been in the works for some time. A security audit undertaken last year prompted the implementation of several security measures. Today with this bill we are actually accelerating those remaining measures. I think the minister made that apparent upon introduction of the bill and, as the member from St Catharines stated several weeks ago, after the September 11 attacks on America, the question was raised in the Legislature, and indeed the minister talked about the need for reforming our system of getting birth certificates.

I know the member from St Catharines—I listened to his speech earlier—talked about the ease with which Canadians and Americans have crossed the border for many, many years; he and I have done that all of our lives, going over the border for the odd dinner at a restaurant or going over to see a football game or a hockey game or for some other reason—

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation): Chicken wings.

Mr Maves: Chicken wings and so on. And he's right: quite often, I've gone over the border and probably not even had a wallet with me, not even had any identification. I left the house knowing that I didn't have the wallet, but knowing that so rarely would they pull over and ask you for identification in crossing the borders that you don't worry about it.

Mr Christopherson: You broke the law. Tories don't break the law.

Mr Maves: Of course, that driver's licence was always in my vehicle, in my glove compartment, to the member opposite.

Quite often, we've grown accustomed to this ease. Now we're concerned—

Mr Christopherson: Now everybody knows where you keep your wallet.

Mr Maves: My licence, to the member opposite. The members opposite are concerned about my not leaving my wallet on my person, so I will take them up on their advice and try to make sure it's with me at all times from now on.

However, as the member from St Catharines said, that's something we've become accustomed to, but no more. In fact, in earlier conversations with my colleague Mr Hudak, the very able Minister of Tourism from the riding of Fort Erie—he was actually at one point known as Inspector Hudak, as he worked for Canada Customs at the Fort Erie bridge. I think people back home would be proud to know that when he was Inspector Hudak he actually led the Fort Erie bridge in seized vehicles two years in a row. So there was someone who was on the job, paying very close attention to what he was doing and taking seriously his job of security in the province of Ontario.

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But I digress slightly, as the members from St Catharines and Hamilton West threw me a little bit and got me off my line. This is an important bill and I shouldn't digress, because one of the important things the bill will do is limit the number of certificates and certified copies of registration issued to Ontarians. Not more than one certificate and one certified copy of a registration may be issued in respect of a birth, with certain limited exceptions.

Unbeknownst to me, apparently in this province you've been able to get several copies over the years of birth certificates. One can see how several copies of a birth certificate for one individual could lend itself to fraud, and perhaps has indeed done that. Now mind you, we've inherited this system. It was one we inherited when we came to office in 1995, and it's something that we, over the past six years, probably didn't pay close enough attention to, nor did the governments before us. But I think now it is important to pay closer attention to things like this.

You must note that public and private sector organizations rely on birth certificates as evidence to access programs and services. As I said, there's no restriction on how many of the same birth certificates an individual may request. There is a restriction on the number of other documents, such as OHIP cards, social insurance cards and passports, obviously. One wonders why our government and the previous governments before us didn't see this loophole of multiple certificates and act on it earlier. So I think it's very important, obviously, when it's now in front of us, that we do deal with this. This bill will do that.

In this bill we've also given a new fraud protection and detection mandate for the office of the registrar general who, by the way, for the people at home, are the ones that actually handle all of the data collection and the production and delivery of birth certificates. Again, this is an important new mandate that they will have. The registrar general, in his or her sole discretion, in what he or she considers an exceptional circumstance, may permit an additional certificate or certified copy of registration to be issued. As I said before, right now you can apply for as many as you want. We've recognized in the bill that there may be exceptional circumstances, and that will be left to the registrar general. The bill provides the registrar general with the flexibility, as I said, to issue it in exceptional circumstances only.

Effective immediately, the registrar general will be tracking the number of applications received for an individual birth certificate. Again, it's something that should have been done in the past, I think. If someone having a look at the system had any concerns whatsoever, that would be something top of mind and common sense.

The legislation adds a provision obliging people to report lost, stolen, destroyed or found certificates to the registrar general. If a person finds a certificate or a certified copy of a birth registration, he or she must

notify and forward it to the registrar general or deliver the document to the police or to a lost-and-found service.

The registrar general is really also in need of a mechanism, I believe, to encourage people to report loss or theft to ensure that these certificates or certified copies can be deactivated, preventing unauthorized use. Again, I have to confess, several times I believe my wallet is in one suit and it's not, and look for it in the car in the glove compartment and it's not there, and sometimes I'm a little bit lax about it; I think it'll turn up or maybe I left it in the office or maybe I left it somewhere else. My wife's the opposite. If I let her know that I haven't found my wallet in a day or two, she's quick to want to cancel whatever credit cards I may have, to cancel those types of things. But I don't even think my wife would think about cancelling a birth certificate, which is in the wallet. So maybe now Ontarians will keep the importance of those cards a little bit more top of mind: the OHIP card, your licence and your birth certificate. This bill is going to help with that.

This legislation adds provisions to allow the registrar general to cancel and deactivate certificates and certified copies of registrations if they have been reported lost, stolen, destroyed or found. Obviously, this is going to be very important because if you lose a credit card or something else, you call in and cancel the credit card and there's the ability to deactivate that card. As I said, the registrar general currently doesn't deactivate birth certificates even if they're reported as lost or stolen, and this bill gives the ability to the registrar general to do that.

There are a lot of important aspects of this bill. As I said, it's a system we inherited, but for this past several years had not really recognized some of the problems in the system. The minister undertook a bit of a security survey, I understand, a year ago in this area and was planning on some of these changes. I believe it's fair to say that the events of September 11 probably expedited a lot of these changes in this bill, and I think that's OK. As I said earlier, and some of the members opposite have said also, the security of a person's identity is really not something that Canadians in general, not just Ontarians, have really spent a lot of time worrying about over the years, but we can see now why it is obviously something to worry about. Closing loopholes in the birth certificate process is an important part of that, and that's what we're doing here tonight.

One last thing that I think is relevant before I close is that the act is amended to require a signed statement from a guarantor for applications to the registrar general. That's also important. Of course we've all dealt with guarantors on other documents. It makes perfect sense that when someone applies for a birth certificate, we ensure there is a guarantor, someone who has known the person applying for it for a good length of time, so that we can be sure obviously of that person's identity when applying for a certificate.

I applaud the initiative of the bill. I applaud all members of the Legislature for speaking in favour of the bill and I hope for its quick passage so that we can close

this loophole to improve the security of birth certificates disseminated throughout the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael Gravelle): Questions or comments?

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I'm pleased to make a few comments on the previous speakers. I guess when anyone is elected to office—the Ontario Legislature, municipal or federal—they would like to think they try to make things better. If there was a mistake made and it was brought by the government and the official opposition, they both have to have credit because I think any person who's elected is here to protect families and constituents to the best of their ability.

In our office we fill out applications for hundreds and hundreds of birth certificates. Having been elected for some 30 years, I always strike up a conversation. I want to know who their relatives are, where they work. I'm very confident that any that were issued in our area went to the right places. I guess governments have to protect people not only on birth certificates that could be used wrongfully, but they have to protect our water, air and food too. We can see some of the changes that were made after what happened in Walkerton. That's something that all parties have to put their heads together to make sure doesn't happen again, and to quit taking credit for issues because, as Bob Rae said one time, we come from all parts of the world but we're in the same boat now.

Mr Bradley: I think he sang that.

Mr Cleary: Yes, he did. We have to work to that goal. I know that if this is going to make things better and cause fewer problems for everyone in Ontario, I will be glad to support it.

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Mr Christopherson: I say to my colleague close by, John Cleary, that while we still sing that song, it's not with quite the same vigour that we once did.

Let me just say to the two speakers from the government benches, the member from Niagara Falls and the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, that as much as I was heckling and needling, especially the member for Niagara Falls a bit when he was talking about his personal experience, I do want to say that the honesty from both of them is very refreshing. You do take a risk around here when you open yourself up in any way; there's usually some smart aleck on the other side of the House who wants to take advantage of that. But I think the fact that you both talked about what has happened—in the one case, one is misplaced, and in the other case, the member for Niagara Falls talked about the fact that he may leave it in his glove box or really not be sure where it is—will probably ring true with an awful lot of people who are watching. I think that again speaks to an issue that we've all commented on here this evening, and that is that a lot of things have changed in our lives post September 11. I want to just say to them that I think they're bringing a real element of everyday reality to this

debate that is likely one that we're not going to see any further.

I think in 50 years, if anyone should happen to look back and read this debate, they'll try to fathom a day when we could, as supposedly very responsible members of society, be so careless with something so important. Yet those of us today know that that really is the way most of us treat things like birth certificates, which were not deemed to be such a huge deal. But from here on in, they are, and hence the importance of this bill. So for all the heckling and needling I did, I do want to congratulate both for being honest enough to talk about real-life issues here.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments? The member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): Mr Speaker, you've done very well, because it is a tough name of a riding.

Mr Bradley: We've got to shorten that name.

Mr Gill: Yes, BGMS, that's another way; thank you.

It is a pleasure for me to join in this debate with the esteemed members from Parry Sound-Muskoka, Niagara Falls, Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh and of course Hamilton West. I also have an experience whereby, when I used to go to Rochester once in a while to attend some meetings, I remember at one time, at the last moment, as I'm leaving to drive to Rochester, I leave my jacket, saying, "That's not the right jacket. I'm going to change my jacket," and left all the credentials in the jacket because I'd changed it.

Of course, it used to be very simple: "How long are you going for? When are you going to come back?" Even going and coming back was not a problem. But since then, considering many events, including especially the September 11 event, naturally the border security has been tightened and very importantly so.

Once you started looking at different security issues, you found that perhaps there were some loopholes; and perhaps it is time, from time to time, to keep reviewing your procedures. In light of that, that is why we are trying to tighten some of these important documents, including the birth certificate, just like a passport.

As you know, when we apply for a Canadian passport, there has to be a guarantor to vouch for the person. Similarly, a guarantor will be needed. If anybody is doing any fraudulent practices, there are very hefty fines: \$50,000 individually or \$250,000 for a corporation. So I think it's time to perhaps tighten some of the loose ends and make it much safer for everybody to get the proper documents.

Mr Bradley: By the way, the member for Niagara Falls has initiated a program of an exchange between American legislators and Canadian legislators which has been quite valuable. He's had representatives from the state Senate and representatives from the state Legislature and other officials from the US who have met with officials from Canada. Being from a border constituency, as is the Minister of Tourism, both of them recognize, as we do in the Niagara Peninsula, and people in Windsor

and other places do, the importance of people being able to move across the border. People are not going to be able to move across the border unless we on our side and the Americans on their side are satisfied with the kind of identification that we can present.

Because this bill tightens the security around birth certificates, and indeed then, in a multiplier effect, tightens security around such things as social insurance cards and health cards and other forms of identification, such as passports, our American friends are going to feel more security in accepting our document. We're going to feel more security in accepting their documentation as they tighten up on their side, because those of us who represent areas that are near the border recognize the great importance of being able to move those goods and services across the border. Those of us in the Niagara Peninsula, if I can be parochial, have always welcomed the opportunity to have our American friends visit and to have us visit the US for various reasons.

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): And no lineup for the traffic.

Mr Bradley: And no lineup for the traffic. That's what we all require.

The Acting Speaker: Two-minute response?

Mr Miller: It's my pleasure to respond to the member for Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh. I'm happy to hear that the member is supporting this bill. He pointed out that this is making things better. I think we're all in agreement that that's the case.

The member for Hamilton West seems to be in a very good mood this evening. It's nice to see that; very complimentary this evening. He also pointed out that a lot of things have changed post September 11 and I think certainly we would all agree with that point that he was making.

The member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale talked about his cross-border trips and how this might affect getting over the border. The member for St Catharines also talked about how important it is to be able to cross the US border.

Certainly we're all in favour of this bill that's going to tighten security in this province and make this province a safer place to be. That will be occurring through the substantial fines that are going to be implemented with this bill. It makes it clear that birth certificates and other vital documents must be treated very carefully now in this new world that we're living in, but it also provides for flexibility for technological change as we balance public safety with privacy.

I look forward to this bill passing quickly and I thank all members for their support on this bill this evening.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mrs Dombrowsky: I am happy this evening to enter into this debate. I believe I am sharing my time with the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, but I'm not exactly sure on that.

First of all, if I might begin, I have a couple of points that I would like to make. The first one: I think it's very important for the people of Ontario and for the public

record to reflect why we are dealing with Bill 109 tonight. It is because the leader of the Liberal Party, Dalton McGuinty, asked a very important question in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services.

After the events of September 11, of course, political leaders around the world searched their souls and reflected and reviewed their communities to try to understand how they might bring forward change that would prevent the terrible atrocities that happened in the United States on September 11. Dalton McGuinty, when he reviewed some of the practices in our own province, immediately recognized that there needed to be some changes made to the way Ontarians were able to access or acquire a very important document, and that was a birth certificate.

So my leader asked of the minister on September 26, "I want to bring something to your attention which I believe you will want to act on immediately....when it comes to applying for a birth certificate today in Ontario, we only need to provide the name, place of birth, mother's name at birth"—her maiden name—"father's name, and nothing further. There's no identification of any kind required. This is submitted by mail with \$15."

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Dalton went onto say, "I'll tell you why it's so important: because once you get a birth certificate, that's an important step along the way to a passport. As well, to get into the US, in many, many cases all you need is a birth certificate."

He further went on to say, "I think there's a loophole there, Minister," and when the minister responded, he indicated, "I do not believe that to be the case." However, Dalton McGuinty pressed the minister, "If you apply to the source in Thunder Bay, you can apply by fax or by mail and all you need to provide is this form and \$15." Again, the minister said, "I think there may be either an unintentional or intentional effort here to confuse the issues."

In fact, Dalton McGuinty was not confused. He was very clear on the process and the issue, and I would suggest it was perhaps the minister who was confused.

The next day, he returned to the Legislative Assembly and made the following points. This is what the minister said the next day: "Yesterday, the member for Ottawa South"—Dalton McGuinty—"asked what I consider a very good question about birth certificates in this province, and I promised to bring in more details today." So the minister at that time, the next day, after being pressed by the leader of the Liberal Party, recognized and indicated to the Legislative Assembly and the people of Ontario that indeed there was a loophole and there was a requirement that his ministry act expeditiously to ensure that that loophole was closed.

He further said in his statement that he intended to introduce a bill in the Legislature in the very near future that will discuss all of these matters. So that is how it is that on this day, October 16, we are debating Bill 109, which is the vital statistics amendment bill. It was be-

cause of the issue that came to the floor of this Legislature by the leader of the Liberal Party. In fact, the minister, Norm Sterling, in his concluding remarks on that day indicated, "I want to say to the member opposite that I want to thank him, and I would like to invite other members of this Legislature to make suggestions to either me or to other ministers in order to improve our security systems."

I am very grateful that the members of the government recognize the importance of the role of the opposition. From time to time, I am asked, or it is suggested, that perhaps being a member of the opposition—people question, "What do you really do? You're not a member of the government." I think this is an excellent example of efficient opposition that is able to expose weaknesses in legislation, procedure, policy and process.

In this particular case, Dalton McGuinty was able to do it on an issue of great importance and concern for the people of Ontario. It certainly was incumbent upon the members of the government to listen to the point he was making and act as expeditiously as possible to ensure that measures were introduced so that these very important documents, such as birth certificates, could not be accessed so easily.

I have to say that when I was first elected to the Legislature and established a constituency office, I was really very surprised at the volume of requests that came to an MPP's office for birth certificates. I know in my own constituency, my assistant Diane Remington is particularly responsible, although other people who work with me assist in acquiring those documents, but Diane Remington does an exceptional job in my constituency office, providing that service to the people in my riding. I know from the beginning she has been very thorough and has worked very hard to ensure that the document was secure.

I think it's important and that we should take this opportunity to focus on another issue for the people of Ontario, and that is the issue of identity theft. So often when we think about theft and things that can be stolen, we think about those things that are tangible. We even think about computer theft and technology theft, but identity theft has now been exposed. It has been exposed in a way that has made us all sit back and think and understand the importance and the value of our own identity.

It's rather ironic for me, because I grew up in a tradition where I was taught that our name is something that is so very precious and in our lives we conduct ourselves in a way that will bring honour to our family name. I would suggest that what we've now come to realize is that many others who may not have a good, solid name have recognized it could be theirs for the stealing. That is what happens when pieces of identification are stolen, when people are robbed and their birth certificates are taken.

I know for some time now in my office we have been advising people when they acquire birth certificates that it is a very precious document and we have recommended that it's not something they should probably

carry with them on their person. Or, if the purpose for which they have obtained the birth certificate is that they are travelling to the United States—and that would be the only other country outside of Canada I believe where only a birth certificate would be required—in those instances, when people have obtained birth certificates for that reason, we have indicated to them that they need to be very careful about that document, that it might be something they would not put in their wallet, as wallets are regularly lost and/or stolen, and that to have a birth certificate replaced can be a very trying and difficult process.

We also know that birth certificates are required for individuals to obtain a passport. That document is received simply by filling out a form, submitting some photo ID that has been guaranteed, and submitting an original birth certificate document. So it is another reason why we have become aware of the significance of the birth certificate document.

It's interesting how the events of September 11 have affected us in so very many ways that we probably would not have imagined a few short weeks ago. It has required us to be more vigilant, to think in a very different way, to recognize the importance of our identity and that once it is stolen, while you have your name and no one will ever take that away from you, the paper proof of that is something very different. It can become a very complex and complicated affair if you have the great misfortune of losing or having your identity stolen. I have been made aware. Some constituents in my riding have had that great misfortune.

Just to conclude, I want to take this opportunity again to thank Dalton McGuinty for bringing the issue to the floor of the Legislature. It's truly significant. I'm very happy to say that as a member of the Liberal caucus, I will be supporting this legislation.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I am pleased to participate in this debate and speak to Bill 109, the Vital Statistics Statute Law Amendment Act. I'm sure, as my colleagues have said, there is some inclination on our part to refer to this as the Dalton McGuinty act, since it's a direct result of our leader having raised a concern about a loophole in the ability to get birth certificates and the fact that people can get birth certificates with very little identification. I'm not going to call it the Dalton McGuinty act, because I want to raise a couple of concerns about the bill that's in front of us tonight.

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I think some of what the government has done here is very appropriate. It is appropriate that we ensure, particularly our neighbours to the south, that we are taking steps to deal with identity fraud, with the fact that people can potentially have more than one birth certificate because they can obtain them relatively easily. I think it's important that we assure our neighbours to the south that we are taking the steps to guarantee that when people cross the border and are asked to produce their birth certificate as their identification—

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Can we check to see if we have a quorum present?

The Deputy Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

Clerk at the Table: Quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: Quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

Mrs McLeod: I do think that this is an important piece of legislation to bring forward. There are important steps being taken to guarantee that we are taking action to ensure that when somebody crosses the border, they are in fact truly legal, legitimate residents of our country and therefore should be able to cross into the United States without there be undue questions or concerns.

So, for example, providing guarantors when somebody applies for their birth certificate, just as you have to have a guarantor if you're looking for a Canadian passport, seems to me to make a lot of sense. However, I noticed that the government, in its almost once again, should I say knee-jerk reaction to needing to do something about a problem the opposition has identified, appears to have made some changes to the application form before they brought forward this legislation.

I noticed that one of the changes is that you have to give the weight of the child at birth. I guess if you're applying for a birth certificate, you're supposed to put down what your weight was when you were born. I have to tell you that I have four children and I would not be able to tell you what the weight of each of those children was. So even though I am present and accessible for my daughters to get information, I don't think I could help them apply for a birth certificate under the new rules. I think we have to be sure that what we're putting in place is well founded and legitimate but doesn't present impossible barriers to getting a copy of your birth certificate.

The other concern I want to touch on is one I raise regularly in this place and which I want to raise again around Bill 109. I want to raise it and I hope there'll be an opportunity to discuss it. I don't know whether it is a significant concern, but it's certainly one that needs to be addressed, and that's the issue of the access to confidential information which is provided to the registrar general in this bill.

As you know, we have had some considerable discussion about privacy bills in committee. I've been particularly involved in the discussions about health privacy bills. There was a lot of concern at that time related to a bill that the Attorney General had brought forward that gave the Attorney General access to confidential health information. That was a significant point of debate. We know that the Attorney General has changed that bill in order to take out the provisions that would have given the Attorney General almost blanket access to confidential health records in the name of pursuing victims of crime.

Because that was such a significant issue, it does give me pause for concern when I see the registrar general has

been given the authority to collect information that's necessary to verify information on a birth certificate application and that that authority appears to give him access to information that is now considered absolutely confidential. I recognize that there may need to be some provisions, I recognize the privacy commissioner of Ontario has been consulted about this and that there are some safeguards built into the bill, but in the absence of any privacy legislation in Ontario, particularly health privacy legislation, I think we need to ask some questions about how secure the safeguards are and whether or not the registrar general, as the recipient of what may be highly confidential, fairly broadly based confidential information, is going to be considered a secure custodian of that information and legally not able to pass that information on in any way.

The health privacy bill would have provided some reasonable safeguards. We had a lot of concerns with the health privacy bill, but I think in the absence of that bill coming forward, and it seems the government is not prepared to bring it forward, if the health minister, who is in the House this evening, would provide me with some assurance that we will see health privacy legislation before the session is out, I might be less concerned. But in the absence of that health privacy bill, I think we need to raise some questions about the safeguards that are built into Bill 109. I know the Ontario public had considerable concern about giving any ministry blanket access to confidential health information.

In the very few minutes I have left, I want to go on to recognize that we appreciate the fact that this bill has come forward in direct response to a concern raised by our leader, a concern that at the time the minister responsible felt was a somewhat misguided concern. They didn't think it needed to be addressed, but we're glad to see he recognized that it is a concern and he brought forward the legislation quite quickly.

Despite that, there are still a great many issues that we don't believe this government has addressed which need to be addressed. We are very concerned, and I'm sure my colleagues have spoken to this, that in the wake of the September 11 tragedy, when all of us are trying to focus on renewed—maybe new—concerns of the Ontario public about personal security, terrorism and bioterrorism, what we've primarily had from the Minister of Finance, Mr Flaherty, is an escalation of the battle between Ottawa and Ontario. That just doesn't seem appropriate at a time when I think the Ontario public and people across this country are saying that what we really need is to have provincial and federal governments working together to deal with these issues that are of great concern to Ontarians and Canadians relating to their personal security.

I think it's ironical that the Minister of Finance has called on the federal government to produce a new budget to increase funding for health care. We've been trying since September 11, when our economy took such a tremendous blow, when industries that create huge numbers of jobs in this province are reeling, to call on the

Minister of Finance to present an economic statement so all of us can have a sense of what the new economic realities are. We all know that measures have to be taken to address the job loss, which we were already starting to experience in this province and which has now been significantly accelerated by this disaster. But we haven't been able to get our own Minister of Finance to produce an economic statement so we can all be addressing this very critical issue.

We were concerned today to learn that Ontario is the only province that has not signed off on an agreement with the federal government dealing with counterterrorism measures. You wonder how, as much as we appreciate Bill 109 coming forward in response to a concern raised by the opposition, this government could not be more aggressive in wanting to reach an agreement on issues that all other provinces and the federal government are addressing with their counterterrorism measures.

In the few seconds I have left, I am also going to want, as health critic, to raise a concern I feel is a significant security concern: the concern about our inability to deal with any emergency situations we might face in Ontario. We know, for example, that there was a woman in Kincardine who was severely burned and there was no place for her in Ontario hospitals. She had to be flown to the United States. We can't afford to have that kind of lack of preparation in emergency situations.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Christopherson: It's my pleasure to comment on the excellent remarks of my colleagues from Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, and Thunder Bay-Atikokan. The member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan, consistent with the kind of debate, or discussion, really, that we've been having this evening, talked about personal experience and looked at the bill from a person's day-to-day existence point of view, and I was struck when she, I won't say fessed up, but acknowledged, that having had I believe she said four children, if somebody asked her to name the weights of each of them, she would never be able to get them all accurate.

It made me think immediately of my mother, who for 47 years now has had a great deal of difficulty remembering exactly what day I was born. Because she went in on one day and I was supposed to be born that day and wasn't—and members would appreciate that I was late—and it wasn't until four in the morning the next day, she's always been confused from that day forward whether it was the day she actually went in, or did it actually slip over into another day? I have such fun with her on that to the point where she actually has to call other family members in order to get the accurate date.

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I raise my experience to tie in with what the member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan had said, which ties into where the members from Niagara Falls and Parry Sound-Muskoka were in terms of talking about this from a day-to-day existence point of view, as I've already mentioned. That is so important, because this is not about

who gets credit. I'm going to comment on that when I get my opportunity to speak to this in a very few moments. But that's not what this is about. The issue is far too important. It's about the security of our citizens and ensuring that as a government we have procedures that meet that security. I think the two debates we heard here today contribute to that in a very significant way.

Mr Gill: It is a pleasure once again to rise and share some time in this debate. The member from Hamilton West said, properly, that it's not who gets the credit, because from time to time when you revisit some of these things you might have set up—I remember, as I'm sure all of us do, that the driver's licence used to be a piece of paper. Now we have the proper picture on it and we have the credit card style. There's much more security in that. Similarly with the OHIP card, or OHIP paper, if you want to call it that, it used to be a greyish piece of paper. There you are. In today's day and age, with laser printers, with all kinds of technology, those things would be so much easier, with the mind of a criminal, to duplicate. So I'm very happy that we are revisiting these things.

There are things to be done. We talk from time to time about the federal government from the immigration point of view starting new ID cards. I remember looking at my mom's immigration paper. It's about a two-inch by three-inch piece of paper, because she got her immigration in 1968, 33 years ago. Yes, there are things we can do to make it much more secure in terms of the safety point of view.

While we do that, perhaps at some point in time the discussion should be—again, I don't want to get into the privacy issues and everything else—perhaps smart cards. There is so much information, there are so many PINs, so many code numbers and all kinds of things we are carrying, that we forget what they are. Why not have a smart card with all the data on it? The data is available somewhere. Perhaps I'm getting into some security issues or privacy issues, but nonetheless it's something to think about.

Mr Gravelle: I want to compliment the members for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, and Thunder Bay-Atikokan for their very helpful remarks as well. I think this is a very good example of a piece of legislation that we're all trying to work together on to make into a better piece of legislation and one that is really important, certainly as a result of what happened on September 11, in terms of increasing our security, and also doing it without too much of an encumbrance to people.

In that regard, it reminds me of something my colleague from St Catharines said to me in passing, and I know he'd like an opportunity to speak once again as well in that regard. This is an important piece of legislation. It needs to go forward. It is going to be perhaps more difficult now to get birth certificates. But one hopes that this isn't used as a means for the government to increase the fees. We watched them do that. This government has certainly done this in the past in a variety of ways. This simply makes them less accessible for people. So we have to watch that one. It's probably a point worth making.

I want to say again, and I think it bears repeating, that this is an example of how the opposition members can work to improve government in this province. It was Dalton McGuinty who originally asked the question of Mr Sterling, the Minister of Consumer and Business Services, and although the minister at the time did not react, I think, in a particularly graceful manner, afterwards he did acknowledge, I believe—

Mr Bradley: He backpedalled.

Mr Gravelle: He backpedalled. Mr McGuinty was indeed the person who is responsible for it, and thank God he did that. There are other examples of that as well. For those of us from northern Ontario, who have battled so long and so hard to get some improvements to the northern health travel grant, and the 40,000 people who signed petitions and worked extraordinarily hard getting some improvements last week, although it isn't going all the way, we considered that a triumph for the people of the north who worked so very, very hard. So you can get things done by continuing to work hard on behalf of people, and sometimes the government at least partially listens.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I just wanted to bring some information to the attention of the member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan, and I know she has her intentions in the best place. I guess she had some concern about the weight of the child at birth, and she's right. If you're applying for somebody many years later, and you're a parent, it's difficult to remember, particularly if you don't have original documents.

But I think it's important that we remember that there are up to 20 different elements as part of this form that really contribute to the checks and balances of the applicant for the replacement birth certificate. If there is a large number of them there, together with the element of a respected guarantor, this truly should be sufficient for the discretion of the deputy registrar to be able to issue the replacement birth certificate. I think those are important elements to remember. But I think some of the comments that the members have made have been quite valid, and we appreciate that.

The Deputy Speaker: Response?

Mrs Dombrowsky: I appreciate the comments that have been made by the members from Brampton Centre, Hamilton West, Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, Thunder Bay-Superior North and of course my colleague, who shared my time, from Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

If I could draw our attention for this part of the debate to two really important issues, the one, of course, is that we have here a piece of legislation that has come to the Legislature from the leader of the Liberal Party. He brought it to the floor of this Legislature because he is profoundly concerned about the security of the people of Ontario. As a leader, he recognized an area that needed to be addressed and needed attention immediately and acted on that. So I'm especially pleased and proud to stand here this evening in support of a piece of legislation that was from this side of the Legislature.

The other issue I wanted to make some comment about, and that I did in my remarks—and I know that

during the course of the debate on this matter we've heard about it—is identity fraud, and that the people of Ontario need to be aware. I know that many are, but I believe that the events and the aftermath of September 11—when the issue of identity fraud has come to the attention of people around the world through the media, we need to be ever vigilant. We as Ontarians need to take some responsibility and protect our identity and do all that we can to co-operate and ensure that the identity of individuals is managed in a secure and reasonable fashion.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? The member for Hamilton West. This is the leadoff speech?

Mr Christopherson: It is. Thank you, Speaker.

The first thing I want to do is to thank my colleagues for the courtesy of standing down the leadoff from last evening to this evening. It's much appreciated.

Second, I would just say to members present that I was a little concerned as I was going through my list, we're all getting along just so well here this evening. Next thing you know we're all going to be holding hands, singing Kumbaya. I got concerned as I was adding up the issues—

Hon Mr Sampson: I don't think so.

Mr Christopherson: You don't think so? The minister of corrections doesn't think that's going to happen.

Hon Mr Sampson: I don't think we can go that far.

Mr Christopherson: OK. I think you're probably right.

I'll say to the minister of corrections that I was going through my notes and found that I'd gotten to the point where I had three concerns I was going to raise, but that was more than offset by the fact that I had three complimentary comments, and as I started to panic, I realized that it's OK, I broke the log-jam: I have one good, serious, severe criticism that tilts the balance and makes me feel OK about delivering this speech this evening.

The first thing, though, before I get into those points that I'd like to raise, is this whole issue about, should this be called the Dalton McGuinty bill and was the government working on this before or not? It really is a shame that we're getting into that sort of thing, first of all, because the NDP is not a part of that discussion at all. That's the first shame of it.

Second though, and more important, it does detract from whether or not this is the right thing for the public.

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But on the issue, let me say this, as one who is not involved in either of the caucuses that want to take all the credit and also as someone who was in the House when the initial question was asked and when the response was given, I believe the following day. It really did appear, when the question was asked by the leader of the official opposition, that the minister was a little bit shook. In hindsight now, I think it was more a matter—what it looked like to me, and I could be way off base—of it being something that the minister knew was on a schedule. There was either a briefing that was scheduled to come the next day or it was actually scheduled the day

before and got cancelled for one reason, and there was then a realization that there were a number of details about the question being asked that the minister would otherwise be able to answer but at that moment, for whatever reason, couldn't.

I say that in looking at the bill and listening to the minister say he doesn't want to take—I'm paraphrasing—that much credit for actually generating a bill in the time between when the leader of the official opposition raised it and when the bill was actually introduced in the House. I suspect that, like most things, the truth lies somewhere in the middle to the extent that on the detailed question the leader of the official opposition asked, the minister didn't have the details at his fingertips. But when you look at the bill and the subsequent response that he gave—and the certainty of a number of issues and the explanation that it goes back to studies that had started last year—I suspect that indeed that's the case. It just wasn't something the minister had dealt with right off the bat.

However, all of that aside, what matters is that this Legislature has identified an issue that the government was working on, and September 11 and the ensuing question did accelerate its presence being here. That's a good thing, given the security issues that we are all very much preoccupied with. That's why we are having the kind of debate that we are this evening. I know some of my colleagues on the government benches like the kinder, gentler Christopherson, but don't get too used to it. It is only the bill that's before us; my nature still hasn't changed.

Now, let me begin with a couple of things that we support and that I want to compliment the government on moving directly toward clearing up.

I mentioned this in the two-minute responses, but I would like to put it on the record during my official leadoff. The fact that we, as Ontarians, will now only be allowed one birth certificate at a time makes an awful lot of common sense. Given the critical role that birth certificates play in the acquisition of passports, drivers' licences and a number of other important pieces of personal documentation, it makes a whole lot of sense that, like drivers' licences and passports, you're only allowed to have the one. I think that's a good move that will make a difference. I suspect that in the number of cases of fraud where a fraudulent birth certificate is at the source, in many cases that would be found to be because individuals were allowed to have more than one birth certificate, and from there you can do an awful lot of things.

Also the penalties: perhaps one of my colleagues earlier may have misunderstood my comments when I directed my remarks to the minister of corrections on penalties. This is a good thing. That fact that you've gone to penalties of \$50,000 for individuals and \$100,000 for corporations makes a great deal of sense. If this is serious enough to take the time, energy and expense of this place, then it is important enough to ensure that there are penalties in place to have the law that's passed here upheld.

Enough of being nice; time to go to some concerns. I want to move to the application. If there are answers to a number of these concerns, and indeed there might be, I very much welcome government members responding and providing information or clarifying if there's something we have missed here. But these are legitimate concerns that we've got and that we want to raise and put on the record.

The first one relates to the bottom of the new form. Each of us in our packages has a copy of the new application form. Of course, it's over the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services logo, and it's just headed up "Request for Birth Certificate." Right at the bottom it says, "Statement: To the best of my knowledge and belief, the statements made in this application are true. I am a Canadian citizen and," and then there are two boxes, two choices to be ticked off. One is, "I belong to one of the listed professions"—and by the way, it's been noted that MPPs were not listed in the documentation that was provided. It's my understanding that this was merely an oversight and that indeed, like our federal counterparts and mayors, lawyers, doctors, we would be in a position to do this for our constituents. That's a good thing. But it says, "I belong to one of the listed professions. I have known the applicant personally for at least TWO years," the "TWO" being in capital letters, "and I have knowledge of the child (if applicable); or"—and then there's the second box—"I am not one of the persons listed as a guarantor. I have known the applicant personally for at least five years."

I take it from the way that's laid out that what it's meant to do is to say that you can go to this list of professionals and any one of them would be acceptable in terms of their making a statement and a declaration and putting their signature and reputation on the line that they know the individual who is putting the information on here and have known them for at least two years. The second one is there because if you have someone who doesn't, per chance, know anyone on the list, you can go to someone else who will claim five years' knowledge and again put their personal name and reputation to that document to state that as far as they're concerned, the information is accurate.

I see one of the ever-diligent staff people in the back nodding their head and I'm getting the OK. I'm assuming I've got that right.

Fine as far as it goes—

Hon Mr Sampson: He's doing attendance.

Mr Christopherson: He's doing attendance. Why? Don't you people like to do your job? Do they have to hold a whip over you?

Hon Mr Sampson: No, your attendance.

Mr Christopherson: Oh, my attendance. Don't you worry about us.

Here is our concern—and as I say, so far, so good. Our concern is that given the number of new Canadians, legitimate, welcomed new Canadians, it is entirely plausible and not that great a stretch that someone could be here for, let's say—actually, it could be any amount of

time. They come over and a child is born here and they've only been here a few months. We've already acknowledged, by virtue of the two boxes on the application form, that someone may not have known anyone on the list of professionals for two years. If it's possible for that to happen in an ordinary case, then where you've got a wrinkle to it, being that someone is new to the country, it's quite plausible that they also may not have known anyone who is on the list of professionals for two years. If they've only been here a few months and then the child was born, it's further plausible that they wouldn't know anyone else for five years. Again, I don't think that's going to happen every day, and we're not saying this is some horrible plot on the part of the government to do some sort of evil, but we are raising it as at least again a plausible circumstance that could likely happen and that would leave someone in a bit of a bind.

Given that what we're doing is racheting down the process—let's face it: the more you tighten up a process, the more everything has to go tickety-boo for you to get to the end. When you're dealing with large bureaucracies and large processes, you start to get into exceptions to that and you could get into all kinds of entanglements.

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Again, for somebody new to Canada—it is also quite possible English may not even be their first language—suddenly, what is a fairly routine, straightforward matter for most could become a major bureaucratic nightmare and a source of real concern, almost fear on the part of someone new to Canada simply because perhaps we didn't take enough time to make sure that was looked at.

I raise that as an issue that my researcher Chris Watson, having gone through this on my behalf and on behalf of our caucus, identified as a concern. I think it is a legitimate one. If there's something that we are missing, then please let me know what it is. If not, then maybe it is an area that, when we get into clause-by-clause, through amendments we can identify some means of trying to head off an identifiable problem.

Another concern that we had was if, for whatever reason, your certificate is cancelled. Again, I'm raising a concern, not in the instances where there are no problems, because if there are no problems then there are no problems and we don't need to spend a lot of time on it. However, let's assume, for the sake of argument, that you've gotten yourself caught in a bit of a process glitch and that a birth certificate, either your own or that of a family member, has been cancelled and it shouldn't have been. No matter how much you get on the phone and talk to individuals about trying to get it straightened out, you keep running into this roadblock that the last official word that was given about the birth certificate in question was that it was cancelled.

When we looked at the bill as tabled by Minister Sterling, we don't find an appeal process. This doesn't need to be an elaborate, lengthy, expensive, difficult process. But we are raising the concern and suggesting that there needs to be at least some kind of a first crack at an appeal, a first quick process to identify, in an arm's-

length fashion from the original decision-maker, where you've got an obvious glitch. I don't think we want to get into a whole process that goes on and on forever and a day. This shouldn't be that complicated.

All the members who have spoken so far have acknowledged that we continue to have a balancing act as lawmakers even if the central point in that balance has shifted somewhat. By that, I mean the balance between our rights as citizens to have as much freedom from government interference as possible, with the necessary protection that government has an obligation to provide to the public at large and that, of course, the centre of that balance has shifted somewhat. We still need to be cognizant of it, that we don't just go rushing in.

Those are some of the concerns that are being raised about the federal legislation. It is good that there's a public debate going on about whether or not that balance is being struck in a fashion that is consistent with Canadian values. It is in that context that we, the NDP caucus, raise the concern that there be some kind of an appeal process where there is a dispute on the part of a citizen over a cancelled birth certificate. We would ask the government, either now or during the committee process, if they would either advise us where that's already there and somehow it just hasn't been explained to us or pointed out. It is certainly not in the legislation. It may appear in the regulations. Again, maybe we need to make some actual amendments to Bill 109 itself before it becomes the law of the land.

The next concern I'd like to raise takes me to section 12 of Bill 109. By the way, if I can, just as an aside, it's interesting that the name of this bill, An Act to enhance the security of vital statistics documents and to provide for certain administrative changes to the vital statistics registration system, is one of the few times I've actually seen a bill this government has labelled do what it says it's going to do, as opposed to your usual track record where the bill says one thing in the title and then the actual wording of the bill itself goes way over in another direction. I'm referring, of course, to things like the environmental protection law, labour improvement legislation and things of this nature, where you've done exactly the opposite of what the bill says. Maybe this is the beginning of a turning of a corner. Who knows? One can only hope.

Mrs Dombrowsky: The Victims' Bill of Rights.

Mr Christopherson: The Victims' Bill of Rights; there's one of the best examples one could think of. Don't get me going on that one, because I'm trying to avoid a rant this evening, if I can.

I said that I was going to move to section 12 of Bill 109. Section 12 of Bill 109 amends section 53 of the act. Section 12 of Bill 109, that is to say the proposed changes to section 53 of the current law, under 53.1(3), would say the following:

"Duty to disclose information

"For the purpose of verifying information or determining if any document issued or that may be issued under this act is being, or may be, improperly used, the

registrar general shall disclose such information as he or she considers appropriate to such persons or institutions as he or she considers appropriate."

I suspect members of the House will understand and appreciate where we're going with this concern. We're not concerned with the idea that information is being shared at all. For instance, the section above, subsection (2), reads:

"Duty to assist

"On the request of the registrar general, an institution in Ontario shall provide information from its records to the registrar general that may assist him or her to verify information or to determine if any document issued or that may be issued under this act is being, or may be, improperly used."

That's information in Ontario going to the minister, so it's not the whole idea that information, in and of itself, may go from point A to point B.

The concern we're raising in subsection (3) is the lack of defining with more specificity who is going to receive the information. This is so wide open. Given this government's propensity for feeling rather loose, in our opinion, about personal information being provided to private interests—and there are a number of examples that have been raised in this House in recent days and months to support that allegation—it's with that in mind that we have some concern about the fact that it is not specified who is being talked about, or what institution or, for that matter, that it stays within the confines of our province.

Again, if it were between Ontario and the federal government for purposes of security, if the feds needed to have a verification that said a birth certificate is legitimate in terms of being the proper birth certificate of the person who is presenting themselves as that individual, that's one thing. But if there's going to be a holus-bolus release of information to private corporations—and bear in mind, corporations are playing a role here; you saw fit to provide a fine to corporations of \$100,000, so obviously it was anticipated that corporations would play some kind of a role in this bill—under this kind of language, for all we know, it could very easily be sold to private interests. And further to that, as far as we know, it could be non-Canadian.

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I want to emphasize, in the interests of the climate that we're in and the way things have changed, if there's a legitimate security issue and you've got a connection between the legitimate intelligence community, for instance, in the United States, working with the federal government in Ottawa, and an Ontario birth certificate is part of the investigation in terms of its validity, that is a whole different matter than whether or not private interests that have nothing to do with government interests or security are somehow getting access—either by paying for it or not—to private, personal information belonging to Ontarians.

I'm not raising this as some big conspiracy and that I'm here blowing the lid off it this evening. It's more a

matter of saying we've gone through this and identified this as an area where we have some concern and we think it needs to be looked at a little more closely.

That may be as simple as a guarantee and then eventually seeing in writing that this is covered off in the regulations. We'd prefer to do it in the law itself, but that does go against the grain of how this government likes to do business. As you know, right from the days of the omnibus Bill 26, the bully bill that brought this place to a close, all the way through a whole host of bills, this government has taken business that rightfully belongs on the floor of the Legislature, where the public can watch, either by being here personally in the galleries or at home through the parliamentary TV network, and moved it into the cabinet room, where of course there is no public and there are no cameras. Cabinet meetings are, by definition, secret meetings.

In the absence of a satisfactory explanation or clarification that puts our mind and concern at ease here, our preference would be to see an actual amendment to this bill so that the assurance that not just the opposition members but the public need is there and it's transparent. The government talks a lot about and uses the word "transparency," but in practice they don't use it nearly as much as they would like to have people believe.

If that can be answered satisfactorily this evening, all the better, but if not, then we would hope that if not the minister then certainly the parliamentary assistant—the parliamentary assistant is not here. OK. I just wasn't sure who the parliamentary assistant was. But hopefully that will get addressed.

There are a couple more points in the time I have remaining. I think it's a good move that in this bill citizens have a requirement by law to report lost birth certificates. We had to sort of think about this one because, again, any time the state is stepping in, you want to be careful. You only want to do that when you have to. It seems to us in the NDP caucus that it makes sense that if we're going to make the whole issue of individuals only having one birth certificate rather than a multitude and if we're going to put serious penalties in place—\$50,000 for individuals and \$100,000 for corporations—as part of that, we would also say that if one of these important documents, much like a passport, is lost, then you have a civic and now a lawful responsibility to report that loss.

I know the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, having acknowledged that he seems to have temporarily misplaced his birth certificate, if this bill were law today, would immediately make that report. But as it is now, under the current law, that's not necessary. There is no violation of the law to have lost it and just apply for another one. Then, if three weeks from now, you're going through a suit jacket, as his colleague talked about, and you find your birth certificate, well, guess what? "I've got two. That's great. I'll keep maybe one in my wallet and one in the glove box. And you know what? It might not be a bad idea to get a couple more and stash and squirrel those away in various different places."

So it makes sense that we go to a system that says one per individual. If for any reason you've gotten one in a fraudulent fashion, there's a serious penalty for that. Further, if you lose or misplace your birth certificate, you have a lawful obligation to report that loss.

Let me just say, parenthetically, that it is heart-breaking, I think, for all of us here that we feel obliged to take these actions on behalf of the citizens we represent, but what are we going to do? If we don't take these actions, then we leave ourselves vulnerable. I think we've already shown that we're too vulnerable as it is. While all of us resist change, particularly dramatic, fast change, in this case delay is our enemy.

Let me just say to the government that, notwithstanding the concerns we've raised here and the hope that the concerns we've raised will be addressed in committee, we intend to see this legislation go through this House as quickly as is practical. Unless these issues are not addressed, then it is our further hope that we can support this bill, because at the end of the day the issue of security and protection is the responsibility of all of us; not just the government, not just cabinet ministers, but all members of the House, including opposition members.

Let me just raise one last issue in closing. It was originally raised by my friend from St Catharines, who talked about the regret he felt over the fact that this government has made such a priority of tax cuts, particularly when we now see a need that maybe wasn't identified—certainly it wasn't identified to the degree it was pre-9/11—that being matters of security. No matter what, the money to do the job—and I'm assuming this. I'm assuming that the government will take the position, as I think they should, that whatever money it takes to make the public safe, they'll spend.

My friend from St Catharines was pointing out that that job would be made a lot easier had the government not redirected and given back to people who, quite frankly, in many cases don't need it, billions of dollars that would have been better spent on hospitals, CCACs, our education system and, yes, on government procedures.

Which raises the point, isn't it interesting that here we are tonight debating a bill that does something this government says they were opposed to from the day they were elected, and that is, more government? As soon as you take a government application form and make it more complicated, you've got more government. You've probably got more people who are going to have to be involved in the process, verifying things. You're definitely going to have to have people spend more time doing the job they would have done before—assuming you want it done adequately, and I have no reason to think on this issue that you don't. And yet this is a government that likes to say over the years, time and time again, "We want smaller government. Government is evil. We've got to get government off the backs of people."

I see one of my friends across the way nodding his head up and down very fervently. He's one of those who had two glasses of the Kool-Aid when it was being

handed around. He is a believer, and yet here he is today—he was on his feet earlier—one of the biggest fans I've heard this evening of Bill 109, and it means bigger government.

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What it says to me is that it's really not an issue of whether bigger government is good or bad; it really depends on what are your priorities, and where you have a priority, if it's necessary to have a bit bigger government, so be it.

What is unfortunate for the vast majority of Ontarians is that the things that you didn't consider a priority—and therefore you were quite pleased to have that part of government shrink—happened to be some of the most important quality-of-life issues that affect our citizens: health care, education, environmental protection—do we all hear “Walkerton” when that is spoken?—labour rights, worker rights, health and safety rights, paying more than lip service to the issue of homelessness. How about rights for the disabled that you've espoused and promised since 1995, that you still haven't delivered on?

How come you don't move on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act as quickly as you moved on this? Why? Because this is a priority to you. Fair enough. But don't tell us consistently and with a blanket policy that all smaller government is good, because here you are today enlarging government, and you're saying it's a good thing, and you're getting the support of all the members of the House, at least as far as I can determine from our debate tonight.

It's a shame. It truly is a shame that in the last six years, during the biggest economic boom in the history of Ontario—never has our economy been as strong—you moved away from the areas that made this such a great place to live.

How many opposition members does it take to stand in our place and say to you that our CCACs, the organizations that provide community health care to sick and ill Ontarians, need more money? That's not a priority. But, boy, when there's a crisis that you acknowledge is a crisis—the rest of us are telling you, and have been for six years, that the issues of hospitals, public education, protection of our water supply, protection of our air and land and workers' rights are all in crisis, and we only wish that you had responded to those crises the same way you're dealing with this crisis.

It reminds me of—in the five minutes that I have left—the 1930s. Back in the 1930s, for those who were unemployed, it was a guaranteed ticket to poverty. There were no social services. There was no public health. There was no unemployment insurance. There was no social assistance to speak of, not in terms of the system we used to have before you folks came along. The economy was flatter and deader than it had ever been in the history of North America, and what changed all of that overnight, in a blink? War. War broke out. Men—and it was men—left the factories and were shipped

overseas. Our economy, in terms of the demand on our productivity abilities, suddenly shot up to more than 100%. Prior to that, in a blink, you had factories lying dormant, you had machines collecting dust.

In a blink, those factories were expected and needed to put out top productivity, and what an interesting study: what happened when the men vacated the factories? Government said, “Well, we've got to have the productivity. We've got to get the munitions, we've got to get the tanks, we've got to get the planes built, we've got to get these things built and we've got to get them to our boys overseas to win the war against Hitler.” And if the men were all gone, guess what? They had to bring the women into the plants. But you know what? That was tough to do when the kids were at home. So you know what they did because they wanted and needed women in the factories? They provided on-site child care. Suddenly, in a blink, we went from no jobs, no hope, no future, to 100% productivity; full employment; women, who could and wanted to, working in factories, with child care being provided on site.

What was it about? It was about priorities and recognizing what was important. It was dealing with a crisis. So yes, in terms of Bill 109, in terms of our support in this Legislature as part of responding to the crisis, we're there, understanding that we have some serious concerns that I've articulated this evening.

Nonetheless, there are still other crises out there that tens and hundreds of thousands of Ontarians are facing. We raise this now; we've raised it earlier. We've even made suggestions to you. Yes, at the risk of your taking the shots that you do, we've said, “You know, there ought to be a temporary cut in the provincial sales tax in certain key areas: school supplies, restaurants and winter clothing, and for everything else a 3% holiday, for three months, just to help those key areas.” Nothing from this government. All they want to talk about is more corporate tax cuts. It's the only thing they want to talk about.

While this crisis gets dealt with, the crisis in health care does not get addressed, the crisis in our public education system does not get addressed, the crisis in our environmental protection and water doesn't get addressed. Why? Not because this government can prove that bigger government is bad in terms of dealing with those issues, but because you don't consider those crises, and that's a shame. It's a shame, because the very same people you want to help in terms of providing security with Bill 109 are hurting in all those areas that I've mentioned, and I'd love to be standing on my feet talking about a bill that supports and addresses those crises as well as the ones resulting from 9-11.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 2129.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

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Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, Hon / L'hon R. Gary (PC) Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip, deputy government House leader / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Education, government House leader / ministre de l'Éducation, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling
Gilles Bisson, Alvin Curling, Gerard Kennedy,
Frank Mazzilli, Norm Miller, John R. O'Toole,
Steve Peters, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Marcel Beaubien
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Doug Galt
Marcel Beaubien, David Christopherson,
Doug Galt, Ernie Hardeman, Monte Kwinter,
John O'Toole, Gerry Phillips, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Norm Miller
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle, Garfield Dunlop,
Steve Gilchrist, Dave Levac, Norm Miller,
Michael Prue, Marilyn Mushinski
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: James J. Bradley
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Michael Gravelle
James J. Bradley, Leona Dombrowsky, Michael Gravelle,
Bert Johnson, Tony Martin, Frank Mazzilli,
Jerry J. Ouellette, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

Chair / Présidente: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Carl DeFaria
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Michael Bryant,
Carl DeFaria, Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos,
Lyn McLeod, Tina R. Molinari
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Margaret Marland
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Julia Munro
Ted Arnott, Marilyn Churley, Caroline Di Cocco,
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Margaret Marland, Julia Munro,
Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: John Gerretsen
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Bruce Crozier, John Gerretsen, Raminder Gill,
John Hastings, Shelley Martel, Bart Maves,
Julia Munro, Richard Patten
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**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Rosario Marchese
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Claudette Boyer, Garfield Dunlop,
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Morley Kells,
Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin, Bill Murdoch,
Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Alternative fuel sources /
Sources de carburants de remplacement**

Chair / Président: Doug Galt
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Marie Bountrogianni
Marie Bountrogianni, James J. Bradley, Marilyn Churley, Doug
Galt, Steve Gilchrist, John Hastings,
John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette, Ernie Parsons
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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