

No. 173A



N° 173A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 38th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 38^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 14 May 2007

Lundi 14 mai 2007

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Monday 14 May 2007

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Lundi 14 mai 2007

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): You may recall the September 9, 2004, announcement when the Minister of Community and Social Services decided to eliminate over 2,000 jobs in Orillia, Smiths Falls and Chatham by 2009. The city of Orillia and area are losing 700 jobs and a \$29-million payroll with the closing of the Huronia Regional Centre. Imagine evicting some of the most vulnerable people in our society just so that she could receive a standing ovation from an agency organization that stood to gain nothing financially. Well, we can now be assured that the announcement was a failure, as family organizations and ministry staff have been handcuffed by a mean-spirited and cruel closure process.

But now, that same minister is responsible for economic development and trade. Perhaps she can explain to the Legislature who she is going to try to blame for the loss of 13,000 manufacturing jobs in Ontario last month. Will it be Stephen Harper, George Bush or maybe Mike Harris, who, by the way, created a million new jobs when he was Premier.

The city of Windsor is now close to a 10% unemployment rate. Perhaps the city fathers could meet with the minister in between her global junkets to find out just what Dalton McGuinty and his minister are doing to preserve the good, well-paying manufacturing jobs here in Ontario.

We know that business leaders have lost faith with the scandals that haunt the Liberal government. We know that business leaders see no business plan to help them. They only see more red tape, an erratic and undependable electricity sector and skyrocketing taxes that are driving jobs away. We are now the stalled engine that is dragging down the other provincial economies.

ANN DICKER

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): On Saturday, May 5, the North Bay community lost a beloved member of our community. Ann Dicker passed away peacefully at North Bay General Hospital at the age of 92. Over her lifetime, Ann had made an incalculable impact on our community by sharing her gift of music so generously

with so many. Ann was one of North Bay's most well-known musicians. She gave musical performances for seven decades and was the organist for several years at Calvin Presbyterian and Trinity United Church. She played the piano for Sunday school children up until one year ago.

As a member of the North Bay Rotary Club since 1937, Ann was a member of the Rotary Songsters and played the piano for Rotary meetings each and every Monday for 70 years up until about six months ago. She was the recipient of the Paul Harris Fellowship.

Ann's radio program, Wings of Song, was broadcast live on CFCH radio in North Bay for 16 years. She is also remembered for delivering tapes of her music to shut-ins for many years. In 1998, a scholarship fund was created to honour Ann's contributions to music. In 2004, Ann was inducted into the North Bay Musicians and Entertainers Hall of Recognition.

Today we remember an irreplaceable member of the North Bay community. As Bruce Goulet, Arnie Schmidt, Herbie Brown and Ralph Diegle of the North Bay Rotary Club all expressed to me on Thursday, she was one of a kind. We will be forever grateful for the invaluable contribution she made to our community, and she will be deeply missed.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): April was not a good month for Ontario's economy: 38,000 people lost their full-time jobs; 38,000 people lost their benefit packages; 38,000 people lost their pride and their dignity; 38,000 people will no longer be receiving their paycheques; 38,000 families are left scrambling to make ends meet.

The Liberals will tell you, "But not to worry; we gained 21,000 new jobs in April." What the McGuinty Liberals won't tell you is that those 21,000 new jobs are part-time jobs, jobs with lower wages, jobs without benefits, jobs that will leave families scrambling to make ends meet.

Many of those 38,000 jobs were included in the 13,000 jobs lost in the manufacturing sector, an area of the economy that has eroded steadily since the McGuinty Liberals took over the reins of the province in 2003. According to Statistics Canada, Ontario has lost 137,000 manufacturing jobs since the beginning of 2005. That's 137,000 good-paying jobs gone out the door, just like the McGuinty Liberal slush fund.

Ontario now finds its unemployment rate at 6.6%. That's well above the national average and amongst the

most unemployed provinces. Windsor is the city in Canada with the highest unemployment rate.

While Dalton McGuinty and his ministers litter Ontario with feel-good announcements about the economy and job creation, Ontarians are forced to sit and watch Ontario—once the proud engine of job creation in Canada—diminishing into a part-time economy.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Paul Ferreira (York South–Weston): I rise today to express my dismay at the lack of support for quality public transit displayed by the McGuinty Liberals. Because of this government's inaction, we continue to see inadequate GO train service along the Georgetown corridor. All the communities along this corridor, from Georgetown and Brampton to Weston and Mount Dennis in my riding—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Member for Halton.

I need to be able to hear the member for York South–Weston. That means everyone else should be quiet.

Member for York South–Weston.

Mr. Ferreira: All the communities along this corridor, from Georgetown and Brampton to Weston and Mount Dennis in my riding of York South–Weston, remain underserved by too few overcrowded GO trains each day. This lack of access to good public transit is a severe impediment to the economic and social welfare of these communities and the residents along the corridor. Faced with this pressing transportation problem, what do the McGuinty Liberals do? Do they unbundle the proposed GO train expansion environmental assessment from the assessment for a privately owned, publicly subsidized high-speed Blue 22? Do they unbundle the assessments in order to more quickly and efficiently meet the public transportation needs of tens of thousands of Ontarians along the Georgetown corridor? Absolutely not.

It is high time that the Liberals recognized the vital importance of publicly owned and operated transit for the social and economic well-being of our communities. The neighbourhoods and residents along the Georgetown corridor deserve a government truly committed to meeting their transportation needs. They deserve better. As I am proposing this coming Thursday, the Liberal government should move quickly to unbundle the proposed GO expansion from the Blue 22 air-rail link so that communities along the Georgetown corridor can benefit from improved public transit sooner rather than later.

1340

CITY OF OTTAWA

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): I rise today as the proud member of Parliament for Ottawa–Orléans. Today, as John Tory spends his time explaining his party's legacy of cuts and neglect to the city of Ottawa, I

am proud to be part of the government that has put Ottawa back on the map at Queen's Park. In this year's budget alone, our government has invested \$60 million in one-time funding to the city of Ottawa. Since 2003, our government has provided \$150 million to support the city of Ottawa's bottom line—new dollars.

The leader of the opposition is in Ottawa today, and although he voted against the budget, he has yet to criticize any of these investments. I'm hoping that he will use his time in Ottawa to tell residents which of these investments he doesn't like.

Some of the investments Ottawa received in the budget include over \$46 million from the public transit trust for infrastructure, over \$6 million as Ottawa's share of the housing trust fund and \$2 million for the 2009 World Junior Hockey Championships, to be held in Ottawa.

As a former municipal politician, I know that this government and Premier McGuinty have made a concerted effort to reverse the downloading and divisive politics that the previous Tory governments engaged in. We've uploaded \$9.4 million in land ambulance costs and we've uploaded public health costs to the tune of \$4.4 million. The Premier said it best today in his letter to the Ottawa Citizen: He loves Ottawa and it shows in the investments the McGuinty government is making to improve the lives of all residents in our beautiful capital city.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Over three weeks ago, Dalton McGuinty had an opportunity to act like a leader and call in the auditor to investigate the political slush fund. He didn't. He had an opportunity to show respect for the tax dollars given to him by hard-working Ontarians. He didn't. Over the last few weeks, we've asked 286 questions about the slush fund and we've asked repeatedly for McGuinty to call in the auditor. We tabled a motion in public accounts to have the auditor investigate, but the Liberals voted it down. Newspapers across the province called for the auditor to be brought in. We wrote him a letter and asked him to launch an investigation. It took three long weeks before McGuinty finally did the right thing. It went on so long that the Toronto Star called him "Stonewall McGuinty," which raises the question, why now?

Did it take that long for McGuinty to realize the slush fund was wrong? Does it take that long for polling to come in? If McGuinty is finally admitting that something is wrong, why didn't he ask the minister to step aside during the investigation? Is he going to wait for another month to do that? It is easy to be a leader when times are good, but it is when there is a problem that true character shows through. Maybe Ian Urquhart was right when he wrote on Friday that "McGuinty has left stains on his Boy-Scout image that may still be visible on election day this fall." The people of Ontario will not forget how their tax dollars were treated with lack of integrity.

CERTIFIED MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANTS

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North): It's a pleasure to rise and offer a warm welcome to the representatives of the Certified Management Accountants of Ontario who join us in the Legislature.

The CMA profession includes 20,000 members in Ontario alone, and 47,000 members across Canada and internationally.

As accomplished financial professionals, CMA accountants are involved in every region of the province and in every sector. They provide strategic business advice and lend their financial service expertise and leadership to small, medium and large organizations. They're also found in all areas of the broader public sector, including the Ontario public service and, of course, even amongst MPPs here.

Today is the third annual Queen's Park advocacy day for CMA Ontario. Groups of CMAs will be meeting today with MPPs and government officials to talk about some of the major issues affecting the management accounting profession in Ontario and across Canada. Of course, it would not be a traditional CMA Ontario Queen's Park day without the reception for all MPPs and interested participants.

A number of CMAs have travelled from ridings across Ontario to be here today to let us know how they are making a difference in our communities. I would invite and encourage each and every member of this House to attend the CMA Ontario reception, which will be in the legislative dining room from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., so that we too can learn about the CMA and its issues.

Once again, welcome to them all and congratulations on their continued contribution to the province of Ontario.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): Our government believes that every Ontario family should have a safe, healthy and affordable place to call home. Unlike the previous government, which ignored Ontario's affordable housing needs, the McGuinty government is making progress. We established a comprehensive, affordable housing strategy that is making a real difference in the lives of working families and Ontario's most vulnerable households.

The McGuinty government has invested \$392 million to help low-income households secure affordable housing across this great province. These new investments will achieve our commitment of 35,000 housing allowances and bring us close to our goal of 20,000 new housing units.

In places like Peterborough and Ottawa, we can point to the results. In Peterborough, that means \$15.82 million for the following: \$14.86 million for rental and supportive units, \$243,000 for home ownership units and \$72,000 for 50 units related to the provision-of-housing

allowances/rent supplements. In Ottawa, the first wave of the new Canada-Ontario affordable housing program will provide that city with approximately \$30 million, including \$22.05 million for 315 rental and supportive units, \$2.02 million for 232 homeowner units and \$5.76 million for 400 units related to the provision of housing allowances/rent supplements.

We've also created the strong communities rent supplement program, providing municipalities with a long-term funding commitment of \$50 million over 20 years. That's \$1 billion for rent supplements to assist low-income households across Ontario. The rent supplement program is now helping over 6,600 families.

INFRASTRUCTURE DES TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): Je me lève aujourd'hui pour parler des choses importantes qui se passent à Ottawa, et de l'engagement du gouvernement McGuinty à améliorer le transport dans cette région.

Since 2003, the city of Ottawa has received over \$520 million for transit, highway infrastructure and municipal roads and bridges from the provincial government. Within that funding, we have committed over \$365 million for the city of Ottawa to support public transit because we know it's vital to give commuters and transit users alternatives to get around. We also know that it is very important for our local communities to receive a hand up from the province in terms of important infrastructure projects. Through the Ontario Infrastructure Projects Corp., small communities are able to borrow money for roads and bridge investments at lower rates and under better terms.

The leader of the official opposition is in Ottawa today, where he will undoubtedly try to hide from his party's record of eliminating all support for public transit and forcing the cost of local services on to cash-strapped municipalities. He has even admitted the damage that his party caused and had this to say: "The previous PC government's failures include downloading without adequate preparation and consultation with municipal leaders and without sending"—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you.

VISITORS

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd just like to welcome here to Queen's Park a group of students from Jackman school, in my riding.

Mr. Paul Ferreira (York South–Weston): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to welcome to the House today two great volunteers at the Syme 55+ seniors' centre in my riding: Edith George and Penny Tweedle.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 161, An Act respecting employment agencies / Projet de loi 161, Loi concernant les agences de placement, the title of which is amended to read, "An Act respecting temporary help agencies / Loi concernant les agences de placement temporaire."

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on justice policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 165, An Act to establish and provide for the office of the provincial advocate for children and youth / Projet de loi 165, Loi visant à créer la charge d'intervenant provincial en faveur des enfants et des jeunes et à y pourvoir.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on social policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 171, An Act to improve health systems by amending or repealing various enactments and enacting certain Acts / Projet de loi 171, Loi visant à améliorer les systèmes de santé en modifiant ou en abrogeant divers textes de loi et en édictant certaines lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK ACT, 2007

LOI DE 2007 SUR LA SEMAINE DE LA SANTÉ MENTALE DES ENFANTS

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 223, An Act to proclaim Children's Mental Health Week / Projet de loi 223, Loi proclamant la Semaine de la santé mentale des enfants.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may wish to make a brief statement.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): The bill basically proclaims the first week in May of each year as Children's Mental Health Week. We know that that was last week; I wasn't here to introduce it at the time. But the bottom line is that members will know how important children's mental health issues are and how much this province needs to dedicate to those issues. By keeping it as an annual week's commemoration, we will keep that at the top of mind as being an important thing for this Legislature to put its mind to.

VISITEURS

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): Je voudrais souhaiter la bienvenue à notre pasteur de la paroisse Très-Sainte-Trinité de Rockland, qui est avec nous aujourd'hui accompagné de Rhéal Filion: le pasteur Morin, qui cette année a reçu le Prix du patrimoine Roger-Bernard pour la désignation patrimoniale de l'église Très-Sainte-Trinité et du presbytère de Rockland.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that notwithstanding any other order of the House, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, May 14, 2007, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 354. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1353 to 1358.

The Speaker: All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Balkissoon, Bas	Duguid, Brad	McNeely, Phil
Bartolucci, Rick	Duncan, Dwight	Mitchell, Carol
Bentley, Christopher	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Parsons, Ernie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Fonseca, Peter	Patten, Richard
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Phillips, Gerry
Brotten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldeep	Pupatello, Sandra
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramal, Khalil
Caplan, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Marsales, Judy	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Van Bommel, Maria
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mauro, Bill	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
DiNovo, Cheri	Kormos, Peter	Savoline, Joyce
Dunlop, Garfield	Marchese, Rosario	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ferreira, Paul	Martiniuk, Gerry	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	
Horwath, Andrea	O'Toole, John	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 45; the nays are 16.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

POLICE WEEK

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): Ontario is privileged to be home to the finest assembly of police officers to ever serve any citizens anywhere in the world, so it is an honour to rise in the House today and recognize the beginning of Police Week in Ontario.

The theme for Police Week 2007 is “Safer Communities for a Stronger Ontario.” I’d like to thank Chief Terry McLaren and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. The association has once again risen to the occasion, partnering with the government to develop an appropriate theme for Police Week. Their input is always valued and their assistance is greatly appreciated.

Ontario’s communities are safer and our province is stronger because of our excellent police services and a government that tirelessly supports the challenging job that they do. Ontario’s communities are safer because the government promised to put 1,000 more police officers on the street under our Safer Communities—1,000 Officers Partnership program. I’m proud to report that 999 officers have been hired as of May 2007, and all 1,000 officers will be hired by the end of this govern-

ment’s mandate. Half of these new officers have been assigned to high-priority areas such as youth crime, organized crime and domestic violence. When combined with the community policing partnership program, which the McGuinty government continues to support, we are now investing \$68 million every year in perpetuity to help Ontario municipalities employ an additional 2,000 police officers.

Police Week is a time for communities in Ontario to connect with their police services. It’s a time to show gratitude and a time for reflection. We pause and say thank you to those brave men and women who have served and we honour those who serve still, and hopefully we can inspire a new generation of Ontarians to one day answer the call. But lest we forget, it is a time when we also pay tribute to those courageous and dedicated police officers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

Since 1970, Police Week has been observed in May to coincide with International Peace Officers Memorial Day on the 15th. Ontario’s annual ceremony of remembrance takes place on the first Sunday in May. On that day, Premier McGuinty and I met with some of the families of fallen police officers and attended the ceremony at the Ontario police memorial. There are few experiences that are more moving than to be standing in the midst of a sea of blue and scarlet as police officers from across Ontario come together to remember and to pay tribute to lost colleagues.

Sadly, three more police officers were killed in the line of duty in 2006. Their names have been inscribed onto the memorial wall of honour. They are Constable John Atkinson of the Windsor Police Service, Constable Donald Doucet of the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service and Constable David Mounsey of the OPP Huron county detachment.

The names of three other police officers that historical research tells us were killed while serving their communities have also been added to the wall: Constable John R. Davey of Cornwall, who was killed September 6, 1892; County Constable Albert C. Springstead of Wentworth, who was killed November 29, 1919; and highway traffic officer Miles Campbell of Ottawa, who was killed on June 9, 1929.

More than 160 years ago, Sir Robert Peel, the founder of modern policing, said, “The police are the public, and the public are the police.” The McGuinty government is committed to a police service that reflects both the gender and cultural diversity of the province. We applaud community-driven recruiting initiatives such as OPP Bound and the Ottawa Police Services’ award-winning community outreach recruitment program. These initiatives are successfully reaching out to members of the community who may not have considered a career in policing.

What better way to bring police and the public together than Police Week and the many events and celebrations planned for cities and towns throughout Ontario? I’m looking forward to attending as many of

these events as possible to meet the front-line police officers who keep our neighbourhoods safe and to look into the faces of excited young Ontarians who dream of following in their footsteps.

Policing is a noble profession, bound in duty, honour and service. I invite the members of this House to join me in saluting the thousands of fine women and men who wear the uniform. I hope that all members will use this week to deliver a message to their communities of the individual service these police officers perform on all of our behalf.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Responses.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I'm very pleased to respond to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services on behalf of our leader, John Tory, and the members of our caucus as well.

To begin with, I would like to thank all the police services and all the police officers in the province of Ontario who put their lives on the line day in and day out to make sure that we live in a safe and secure province. Of course, one thing I would agree with the minister on is that there are no finer police services than we have right here in the province of Ontario.

I am involved myself in a number of police service events this coming week. One thing that I thought was one of the more humorous types of events was one that's being held Saturday in the city of Orillia. We have a community-based police officer who works with all the organizations in the community; his name is Constable Gerry Dwyer. Constable Dwyer has arranged to have the Stanley Cup at the Orillia Square Mall and at the Orillia detachment of the OPP on Saturday. The humour is that Constable Dwyer says, "The Toronto Maple Leafs have been trying to get the Stanley Cup for 40 years in Toronto, and on my first try, I brought the Stanley Cup to Orillia." Gerry is very, very proud of that.

The minister referred to the police memorial. Of course, many of our members were there that day: Mr. Miller; Mr. Klees; our leader, John Tory; and myself. We met literally hundreds of the men and women in blue who were present at that service. It was a touching event as we paid tribute to the lives of those men and women who have given their lives for the people of the province of Ontario.

The minister also spoke about the 1,000 police officers program. In one way, I applaud them for delivering on that promise, but I can tell you, it was the work of John Tory and our caucus that put the pressure on this Liberal government day in and day out. All you have to do is go back to the Time for Action report, which laid out the final details of what a John Tory government would have done. Of course, a lot of that followed on the terrible murder of Jane Creba. For the first two years of this government's mandate, they did nothing but announce and reannounce those 1,000 cops. It was John Tory and caucus members Bob Runciman and myself that put the pressure on. I can tell you, it has not gone unnoticed, I'm told day in and day out by police services across the province, who thank us for our efforts in putting pressure

on this government to have one election promise that they actually come through on. And we still haven't seen them all, because our friends in the Ontario Provincial Police are shy of officers. That is the next step: We have to make sure that the OPP have many more officers than they have today.

Interjections.

Mr. Dunlop: You know, it's incredible. You come up here, you stand, you do your best on a statement, and someone is heckling away over there. I didn't say one thing when the minister was making his comments, yet the heckling goes on and on because we keep talking about broken promises. The reality, I will say again, is that the 1,000 cops would not be on the street without this opposition right here today and John Tory and the pressure he put on the government.

1410

Another thing we should not forget when we're talking about Police Week is the way the Ontario Provincial Police have been left like the meat in the sandwich at Caledonia. They've been left to take all the pressure while this government, including the minister and the Premier, have failed at even one attempt to make an appearance at Caledonia and pay respect to the police officers who are on the streets. I would ask that the minister and the Premier follow in the steps of John Tory and take a visit to Caledonia. Maybe do it this week, in Police Week, where there are 124 police officers on duty, trying to do the best they can to protect the people of Caledonia. As I say, they've felt like the meat in the sandwich for this whole 450 days.

Mr. Speaker, as I wind down here, I want to thank you for the opportunity to respond. Again, I want to thank all the police officers in the province of Ontario for the fantastic job they do. They put their lives on the line day in and day out so that we can live in harmony and peace in the province of Ontario. Good luck on Police Week. I would encourage all my colleagues to get out and talk to their police service this week and do some events with them. You'll find some great people out there, the men and women in blue.

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I'm pleased, on behalf of New Democrats here at Queen's Park, to respond. I tell you, we join with others in applauding and thanking and expressing sincere gratitude to police officers, women and men who on a daily basis risk their lives to keep our homes secure and our families safe.

I come from Niagara region, and we are unique in that we have four police services policing us there. We have the RCMP, the Ontario Provincial Police, the Niagara Regional Police and of course the Niagara Parks Police. We see, as a border community, the incredible pressures on police that are unique as well to border communities, like so many other parts of Ontario. We also see the incredible pressure that's put on police forces that are in high tourist areas, where the populations rise dramatically during summer months, for instance. We, the New Democrats, want to join in mourning and paying tribute to the tragic loss of three police officers during the course

of last year: Constable John Atkinson, Windsor; Constable Donald Doucet, Sault Ste. Marie; Constable David Mounsey, Ontario Provincial Police, Huron county.

But I say to this government that it knows, notwithstanding all of the platitudes contained in the minister's statement today, that police services across this province are still hard-pressed to deliver core services, the very basics, the very bottom-line type of policing. Increasingly, as organized crime and illegal drug activity get driven out into smaller-town Ontario, smaller communities which haven't been gifted with gangs-and-guns funding, we find police services hard-pressed, when they can't even deliver core services, to address exceptional circumstances that contribute to the fear, lack of safety and lack of welfare for people in those communities.

I say to the minister that he should go to the ridings of Timmins–James Bay or Kenora–Rainy River and take a look at how hard-pressed police services in some of the smallest, most isolated communities in this province are to deliver any services. I'm talking about one-person, two-person, three-person police forces, police forces that are so under-equipped, so understaffed, that the risk they put themselves in is compounded directly as a result of them being ignored and simply overlooked in the course of day-to-day supervision by this government, policing activities here in the province of Ontario.

Askov in our courts still is a cloud over the criminal justice system as we continue to see cases being stayed or dismissed because of delays in prosecution.

We call upon police officers to perform some of the most dangerous and complex work in this province, and we expect them to somehow maintain a morale when they see charges laid after lengthy, difficult and sometimes dangerous criminal investigations tossed out because the government won't adequately fund crown attorneys and provincial courtrooms to ensure that there's progress through the criminal justice system in a timely way.

Quite frankly, this government has to accept responsibility for the failure to fund legal aid meaningfully in this province, and that's very much related to the effort that police put into an investigation. The fact is that an understaffed, under-resourced, underfinanced legal aid system constitutes a serious impediment in its own right when there is an effort on the part of crown attorneys to prosecute cases. And again, it creates delays, it creates difficulties and problems that the government has ignored in the address today regarding police officers and in its budget earlier this year.

All of us know that police officers are not just active as persons performing their policing duties, and I join the minister in paying tribute and thanking the chiefs of police. I also thank the Police Association of Ontario and those rank-and-file police officers out there, the ones in uniform slugging it out on our streets. These police officers are not just performing policing duties. Inevitably, in any community you go to, they're out there coaching

hockey, doing minor sports through the summer months and the winter months.

Down in Niagara, for instance, the Niagara Regional Police Force has adopted the Special Olympics. On Sunday, May 27, they'll be down at the Auberge Richelieu on River Road with a pig roast and barbecue, raising money for the Special Olympics. I look forward to joining them then.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and it concerns his portion of this government's \$4-billion unbudgeted, unplanned slush fund. Previously in this place, when ministers have found themselves under a cloud or being investigated, they have done the right thing and they've stepped aside until that investigation is complete. This minister is under precisely such a cloud. He and his actions are under investigation by the Auditor General at the request of the Premier.

My question is simply this: Will the minister agree to step aside until such time as the Auditor General has returned his results of the investigation into his actions relating to the slush fund?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I have repeatedly said in this House that we are extremely proud that in the last couple of years we have invested in newcomers like never before. We have expanded programs for bridge training for foreign-trained doctors, nurses, dietitians and social workers like never before. There's much more work to do, because every year 140,000 willing newcomers come to Ontario. It's my job to continue to help them and work with partner agencies to help them. That's what I'm going to continue to do.

Mr. Klees: My question was not related to the good work that his ministry does. It does relate, however, to the fact that he is currently under investigation. I would like to read a quote from Dalton McGuinty when he sat on this side of the House:

"They knew" they were in "trouble on Thursday, the minister didn't resign until Monday afternoon, the privacy commissioner wasn't called until Monday afternoon, so that leaves plenty of time ... for damaging evidence to be tampered with." December 11, 1996.

This government knew they were in trouble three weeks ago, and they stonewalled and they resisted and they answered no questions. That leaves three weeks for important information to be tampered with.

I'm going to repeat my question to the minister: Will you do the honourable thing and at least step aside until such time as the Auditor General has had an opportunity

to investigate the minister's actions and return a decision?

Hon. Mr. Colle: It's clear that the provincial auditor is doing the review of the year-end grants, and he is doing his work. Meanwhile, there's still an incredible amount of work to do in this province, whether it is to help our newcomer communities integrate into jobs or get settlement services or get their fair share from Ottawa. These are the ongoing jobs that have to be done and they continue. There is an unending need for help for newcomers, volunteer organizations, investing in diversity. That's the kind of work that needs to be done and I'm doing it. I'm proud to continue to do it because it's work that not only helps the newcomers, but helps this province prosper and everybody feel better and be part of this great province.

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Mr. Klees: The minister would have us believe that there's no one else in the Liberal caucus who could carry on his work while he steps aside as this investigation takes place. Surely there's at least one member there who could step into the gap.

The Bengali cultural centre: \$250,000 to a group with a member of the Liberal Party on the board, thanks to federal Liberal MP Maria Minna's organization of the meeting. That was the work of this minister. The Iranian-Canadian Community Centre received \$200,000 from this minister: seven directors, seven Liberal donors, four recipients of patronage appointments. That's the kind of work that this minister did when he was overseeing the slush fund.

Even the Premier recognized that that looked suspicious and ordered the Auditor General to investigate the actions of this minister. So I'm simply asking, will the minister do the right thing, respect the office of his ministry and step aside until the investigation is returned?

Hon. Mr. Colle: We're proud of the investments that we've made in organizations big and small, organizations like the Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines Multicultural Centre and the India Rainbow coalition. There is SISO in Hamilton, which is challenged by the fact that it is not only a place of original settlement but there's secondary migration settlement coming to Hamilton. There's now increased migration of immigration into York region and Peel region. We are making investments in those regions, in the community centres, because there's a great deal of demand for those services that for many years were ignored. These are proud investments that had to be made, are being made, and we're going to continue to do that work.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): New question.

Mr. Klees: My question continues to the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship and concerns the slush fund over which he continues to preside even though he is under investigation by the Auditor General. For three weeks this minister stonewalled, refused to answer questions. For three weeks he continued to say that there was no need for the Auditor General to investigate his

actions. Now his Premier disagrees with him. His Premier agrees that his actions are suspect and called in the Auditor General. Notwithstanding the fact that he insisted for three weeks that there should be no investigation, the Premier was forced to call that investigation. So once again, I'm asking the minister to explain to this House why he should be held to a different standard from other ministers who have stepped aside while they were under investigation.

Hon. Mr. Colle: The review is taking place by the Provincial Auditor and his work will continue. As I said, there are many unending jobs to do. Whether you look at the new loan program we've established—many newcomers come here without a cent in their pocket because their life savings went to get here to Canada. When they come here, if they have to take a course or have to buy some books, they have no money. We've set up a loan program for each newcomer who is internationally trained to get a little bit of seed money so they can pay for books or pay for a course. That's the kind of work that I'm continuing to do and believe strongly in.

Mr. Klees: Once again, we are not doubting the good work of his ministry. We are doubting his involvement with overseeing a political slush fund through which he doled out money without an application process, and ignored people in this province who had serious needs and who didn't even know about the slush fund's existence.

The question that he continues to sidestep now, as he did the question about whether the Auditor General should investigate, is simply this: He is under investigation. His actions have been called into question by his own Premier by virtue of the fact that the Premier agreed to ask the Auditor General to investigate. Why will he not stand in his place, do the honourable thing and say, "I will step aside until such time as the unanswered questions about my conduct have in fact been answered by the Auditor General"?

Hon. Mr. Colle: Our government is investing about \$140 million every year in helping newcomers, in programs like the international medical graduate program. We invest more in helping foreign-trained doctors than any other province. We have an ESL program that's now got a full, robust curriculum. We now have bridge training programs for dietitians, for veterinary doctors, for social workers and for pharmacists. These are the investments we are making, and then we have our investments in our settlement program. As a province, we invest \$140 million. We also were successful in getting the federal government to invest in Ontario for the first time after 20 years of neglect of Ontario.

Mr. Klees: Anyone watching these proceedings will note that the question that is being put is all about the integrity of this minister and his respect for the office that he holds. To every question that I put that deals with his integrity and his responsibility to step aside while he is being investigated, we get nothing but an encyclopedic listing of the good work of his ministry. That is not the question.

The question is his conduct, and it is simply, this one final time: Minister, why will you not respect the office you hold and step aside until such time as your actions have been fully investigated, and until this House and the public have the answers to the unanswered questions that continue to call your integrity into question?

Hon. Mr. Colle: As I said, the Provincial Auditor's review is taking place. I would also say to the member opposite that I am very proud and passionate about the work I've done and continue to do. I am very honoured to work alongside partner agencies, big and small, who have felt the pain of all our newcomers, especially those who haven't met success in Ontario. I'm very proud of the fact that I have listened and developed programs, and continue to develop ways of assisting them so they can be truly integrated and truly accepted into Ontario, because for too long they have not been heard and they have not got the help. We now have substantive help, programs and partnerships which finally give our newcomers a fair chance that they've long deserved.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship. After stonewalling and casting aspersions of racism, the Premier was finally forced last week to ask for an investigation of the Minister of Citizenship's slush fund by the provincial Auditor General. This now sets up a bizarre scenario. The provincial Auditor General will do a special audit of the minister's operation of a slush fund, but meanwhile, the minister whose competence and integrity is in question is allowed to continue to keep his position. Minister, this is bizarre, to say the least. You have an opportunity here to do the right thing. Will you step aside while the Auditor General conducts his investigation of your ministry and your responsibilities?

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Hon. Mr. Colle: The Provincial Auditor is undertaking his review, as the Premier requested. He's doing that. I continue to do the work that has to be done, whether it is expanding opportunities for foreign-trained professionals, whether it is increasing settlement services in partnership with the federal government or whether it is ensuring that our newcomers get the support they need when they have social problems and when they need interpreter services. These are the ongoing, everyday issues that I've been helping to work on, to solve. I'm going to continue to do that, and I'm still doing that.

Mr. Hampton: The minister can try to avoid the obvious, but it looks oh so bizarre to people out there because the Auditor General is going to conduct not just an ordinary audit but a special audit of this minister's slush fund. Let there be no mistake: This minister is responsible for that slush fund.

The real question is this, Minister: You don't have any credibility now. Your credibility is, in fact, going to be investigated by the special auditor. The question is this: Will you do the right thing for the office? Will you do the right thing for the government? Will you do the right thing for the—

The Speaker: The leader would probably want to rephrase the question. Please rephrase the question.

Mr. Hampton: Will the minister do the right thing and step down pending the Auditor General's special investigation of your ministry?

Hon. Mr. Colle: The right thing to do is to encourage everybody to do more to help newcomers and to encourage everyone to do their part: governments of all levels to invest in helping our new immigrants. That's what I was doing this morning. That's what I do, and that's what I continue to do, because for too long people with double PhDs have had doors slammed in their faces. For too long we've paid lip service to the great talent of our newcomers, and we haven't done enough. We're all to blame for that. I think it's incumbent upon us to keep on doing more in our schools, partnering with business and government to give newcomers a real fair shot at success in this province. That's what I'm focused on; that's what I'm continuing to do.

Mr. Hampton: The Minister of Citizenship wants to pretend that this somehow is about people out there across Ontario. No, Minister, this is about you. This is about the fact that you ran a slush fund with no public announcement, with no formal application process, with no criteria for the granting of money and with no follow-up evaluation or audit. You broke all the rules of good public administration. That's why the Premier has been forced to call for a special audit by the Auditor General.

My question to the minister is this: Does he honestly believe that he can continue in office after being discovered running that kind of slush fund with no accountability, no application process and where significant amounts of money wound up in the hands of very Liberal-friendly organizations?

Hon. Mr. Colle: We've made investments in communities across this province to enhance our diversity, to enhance volunteerism, to build stronger communities and to respect our heritage. We made those investments because they were good investments. Those were investments that we made that were long overdue, because for many years there was no partnering with these agencies and community groups at all. These are agencies big and small that he characterizes in a very negative way. There are many, many excellent volunteers there, whether it is the United Jewish Appeal, Frontier College or the Maytree Foundation. All these organizations are great workers in helping to build a better Ontario. I was very proud to partner with them, as was our government.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr. Hampton: To the Minister of Citizenship: Minister, despite your attempts to avoid the real issue, I'm going to bring it back to that. Over the years in this Legislature, a standard of ministerial accountability has been established. Here's how one MPP referred, with approval, to that standard of ministerial accountability: "When a staff member of Minister Jim Wilson revealed confidential information, Wilson rightfully stepped aside. Bob Runciman also stepped aside when a matter affect-

ing his ministry was under investigation.... The precedent has been set.” That was his quotation.

Can you tell us, Minister, who that MPP was who spoke so approvingly of that ministerial standard?

Hon. Mr. Colle: Again, this is the leader of the third party who called our investments and partnership with incredible volunteer organizations across this province—remember the words that he used?—“fly-by-night.” He said that the organizations like the Midaynta Somali Community Services, which is a partner; the UJA Federation; the St. Catharines Folk Arts Council; CultureLink; Flemingdon food bank—he calls all these fly-by-night. These are organizations that my ministry has tried to help, and they needed that help, because for too long many of their needs had no one to meet them. We met them as best we could. There are many more organizations that need this kind of help. We’re going to try to continue to do that.

Mr. Hampton: As usual, this minister’s response is shameful nonsense. Minister, I’m going to answer the question that you failed to answer about ministerial accountability. The person who said that was one Dalton McGuinty. Dalton McGuinty said that he believed that a minister under investigation—even under investigation by the privacy commissioner—must step down.

Here’s the reality for you, Minister: You’re under a special audit by the Auditor General. That’s a serious investigation. I guess the next most serious thing would be a criminal investigation. My question to you, Minister, is this: Will you do the right thing, meet Dalton McGuinty’s preferred standard—

The Speaker: Order. I’ll need that rephrased.

Mr. Hampton: Will the minister do the right thing and meet Dalton McGuinty’s oft-stated standard and step down pending the investigation?

Hon. Mr. Colle: The Premier has asked for the Provincial Auditor to do a review, and he’s doing that. He’s undertaking that. The need that I see and continue to work on is to ensure that organizations like the Catholic Immigration Centre in Ottawa continue their good work, to ensure that the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples continues to get support, to ensure that organizations big and small across this province who are doing above and beyond the call to help newcomers and that volunteer organizations that are doing so much continue to get the support of our government, and that’s what I continue to do.

Mr. Hampton: I would say to this minister that he cannot continue in his position, and he knows it. According to the standard set by Dalton McGuinty, the minister cannot stay in his job. According to common-sense standards of public conduct, you can’t continue to be a minister when your ministry is under investigation by the Auditor General because you ran a grant program with no announcement, no formal application process, no criteria, no evaluation or auditing of where the money went or what it was being used for.

I just say to you, Minister: Face common sense. Will the minister do the right thing and meet Dalton

McGuinty’s oft-stated standard for ministerial conduct and step down while he’s under a special audit of the Auditor General?

Hon. Mr. Colle: The investments and partnership that we undertook to make this province a more inclusive province, a truly accepting province in all sectors, were good investments. They were based on those sound principles of enhancing diversity, not just talking about it, of having true inclusion in this province and of building strong communities, whether they be our newcomer communities or established communities. Those are the investments we made, and they were much-overdue investments that for too long were ignored.

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That is the essence of what we did, and we continue to have strong faith in those investments and those organizations that are trying their best to deliver those much-needed services, whether it be large organizations or small ones. They all were trying to do their very best, and we were glad to partner with them.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mrs. Joyce Savoline (Burlington): My question is for the Minister of Culture and it concerns her portion of the \$4-billion McGuinty government slush fund. A couple of weeks ago, the Premier alluded to the fact that the money was being blown out the door—no formal application. Her ministry has a year-end slush fund. I would like to quote. The Premier said, “That money goes out the door just like that.... Year-end money—no application form—no formal process.” That’s what the Premier said.

We learned on Thursday that the total money spent by her ministry at year-end was more than \$142 million. Will the minister please provide us in this House with a full accounting of how this money was spent, to whom the grants were given, and what that application process was?

Hon. Caroline Di Cocco (Minister of Culture): First of all, I’m going to totally disagree with the premise of the question. I know that investments in arts and culture in this province are not something that the previous Conservative government had a very good track record on. As a matter of fact, their track record in investments in the arts and culture was very poor indeed.

First of all, the agencies that have been provided dollars by this government are subject to annual audits. They have boards of directors. They have significant private sector support as well. And—I’ll say this again—it is smart to invest in arts and culture in this province because of the return on those investments and to the quality of life.

Mrs. Savoline: This is really a very simple—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The Minister of Finance will come to order.

Supplementary.

Mrs. Savoline: Again the Premier has been contradicted. It's a very simple question, and I don't know why this government insists on stonewalling at every turn, why they refuse to answer the simplest of questions. One hundred and forty-two million dollars was spent by this minister at year-end in 2005-06 and again in 2006-07: All we want is a clear accounting. Where did the money go? Will the minister please provide us with a list. Given how the Minister of Citizenship handled this slush fund and the Premier's explanation of his standard of handling this slush fund money, will the minister please tell us whether or not she supports calling in the Auditor General to investigate the process where grants were paid out of her ministry.

Hon. Ms. Di Cocco: I certainly know that the actions of this government are not about partisan interest, as the questions are in this House; it's about the public interest. I would like to say that every single penny that has been spent by my ministry and where it has gone is on the website. I'd like to state that there's detail of every single penny that has been spent, and I would suggest that the members opposite bother to click on to the website so they can see where the money has gone.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, the Chinese Professionals Association of Canada received multiple grants from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. The minister has yet to produce any documents detailing the rationale behind the grants. Andi Shi is a former executive director of that organization and sits on the board. My question: Does the minister know Mr. Shi and, more importantly, is he aware of any partisan political affiliations he may have?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): The Chinese Professionals Association of Canada has been helping newcomers for 15 years. They do it, for the most part, on a volunteer basis. They are mostly professionals. They're the ones who spend their volunteer time when many new immigrants come from China who are looking for a helping hand or looking for advice or looking for mentorship. The Chinese Professionals Association, over 22,000 members strong, has been an exemplary association for all those years and has a stellar record of doing many things that government never did. They were doing it on a volunteer basis. They are made up of people of all walks of life, of all parties and they are a great organization.

Mr. Prue: Again the minister fails to answer the question. We are asking this question because concerned members of the public have passed along an e-mail address for Mr. Shi. Perhaps it's an e-mail address you already have. It's andi@ontarioliberalfund.com.

Can the minister explain why a board member at an organization that received multiple grants from your government should have such an e-mail address?

Hon. Mr. Colle: I've said before in this House that, in many circumstances, there have been an incredible number of highly skilled, highly educated, highly motivated newcomers from many countries who have had doors slammed in their face. In the Chinese community, there has been excellent success by many immigrants. But many of them also come with many barriers, language being one of the main ones and also introduction into the business community. This organization, the Canadian Chinese Professionals Association, has been doing great work of helping these newcomers who are highly frustrated sometimes but very willing to work. They have a proud record of doing great work and they will continue to do that because they care deeply about their fellow new immigrants who are coming here who are meeting these barriers. They're the ones I'm focusing on and those are the ones who should be the ones we invest in.

HEALTH CARE SOINS DE SANTÉ

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. Minister, today Ottawa residents are being told the story of a tale of two parties. While John Tory and Lisa MacLeod tour the city I represent, I wonder if they will be telling the real story about the shorter wait times in our hospitals, about the new regional assessment centre for cancer surgery, about the expansion of our hospitals or about the new doctors and nurses in the Ottawa area.

Je me demande toutefois s'ils vont dire aux résidents et résidentes d'Ottawa quels investissements seraient coupés par leur parti, qu'ils planifient couper 2,6 \$ milliards des soins de santé.

Minister, in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell we have seen the progress of our health care system: two satellite community health centres, a diabetes team in the Hawkesbury and District General Hospital and a family health team in—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The question has been asked.

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Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): There's so much good news that the McGuinty government has delivered for health care in eastern Ontario. My hope is that when John Tory and his caucus are touring Ottawa, they're going around to the various sites and hospitals and apologizing for the massive destruction that they brought to the health care system. We all remember when they tried to shut down the cardiac unit at CHEO, and it was because of the leadership of the member from Ottawa Centre and the member from Ottawa South that the cardiac unit is staying at CHEO. Today, we were pleased to announce that the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario can now proceed with the implementation of the east-addition component of its redevelopment

program, another investment in the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

Furthermore, thanks to the good work of Jim Brownell, who has been adamant in ensuring that his part of the province gets health care funding, the Winchester District Memorial Hospital can now also proceed with its redevelopment program—more good news for health care in eastern Ontario.

I hope Mr. Tory says “I’m sorry” when he visits CHEO this afternoon.

Mr. Lalonde: It’s good to hear that the children of eastern Ontario and the residents of Winchester and surrounding area will be able to have access to care closer to home thanks to these investments in hospital capital.

The previous government cut almost \$55 million from Ottawa hospitals in their first five years in office. The people of Ottawa remember the days when there was no way to track wait times and when infrastructure was crumbling. Their party’s record in Ottawa: Grace hospital closed; Riverside hospital closed; tried to close the Montfort; tried to take away the cardiac rehab program from CHEO.

The party opposite wants to take us backwards and take \$2.6 billion out of the health care system. What is our plan to take us forward and continue to deliver a positive outcome for the people of Ottawa?

Hon. Mr. Watson: The honourable member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell summed up very succinctly the sad Tory record when it comes to health care in eastern Ontario. We have invested, under the leadership of Premier McGuinty, over half a billion dollars in health care and health care infrastructure in Ottawa in just the last three years.

Their party was ready to close the Montfort Hospital. We are going to double the Montfort Hospital, which serves the east end of our community.

The Queensway Carleton Hospital that’s located in my riding: an addition of over 15,000 square feet of space, including three new operating rooms.

The Sisters of Charity: the renovation of two sites, St. Vincent and Elizabeth Bruyère.

The Ottawa Heart Institute: Premier McGuinty announced the installation of a fourth cath lab at the institute.

The Ottawa Hospital: The regional cancer centre, because we’ve had a capacity problem in Ottawa, is doubling in size at the General site and at the Queensway Carleton site.

The CHEO cardiac unit: Above and beyond reversing the Tory plan to shut down the CHEO cardiac unit, we’ve also added prenatal screening to—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

MINISTRY OF TOURISM GRANTS

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Tourism, and it concerns his

share of the McGuinty Liberal government’s unplanned, unbudgeted \$4-billion slush fund.

A couple of weeks ago, the Premier acknowledged that taxpayers’ money was blown out the door by this government in a year-end slush fund. Imagine our shock when we learned that the total amount of this government-wide slush fund was nearly \$4 billion. That money goes out the door just like that, year-end money—no application form, no formal process. That is what the Premier said.

We learned on Thursday that the total money spent by this minister at year-end over the last two fiscal years was \$48 million. When will the minister please provide this House with a full accounting of how this money was spent, to whom the grants were given and what the application process was?

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): You know how the minister always gets up and says, “I’m glad you asked that question,” and he really doesn’t mean it? Well, I really mean it this time. I’m glad you asked that question, because when you have your leader touring down in Ottawa, for instance, you’ll know that the Ottawa Congress Centre has been developing plans to either expand or build a new centre or make refurbishments to it. Last year, we provided some \$28 million so that they had a sense of security about that particular project. Of course, we have a board of directors there. That is a facility which is operated by the province of Ontario. There’s an accountable board of directors there. This is something that I think the previous government, the previous Conservative government, gave a commitment for, but actually didn’t flow the money on that particular occasion. I know the member would very much appreciate that, and I know that when I get to the supplementary question that you’re going to ask, I’ll have some further information that I think you will find very favourable to the community you’re going to ask about.

Mr. Arnott: The minister, in his response, talked about how they’d spent \$28 million; I asked about \$48 million. It’s a very simple question. I don’t know why the government insists on stonewalling at every turn, why they refuse to answer the simplest questions about their slush fund: \$48 million spent by this minister at the year-end in 2005-06 and 2006-07. All we want is a clear accounting. Where did that money go, and will the minister please provide us with that list? Given how the Minister of Citizenship handled his slush fund and the Premier’s explanation of his low standard for the handling of this slush fund money, will the minister please tell us whether or not he supports calling in the Auditor General to investigate the process by which grants were paid out of his ministry?

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I can tell the member, first of all, that the Auditor General of the province of Ontario is looking at any and all of the ministries he wishes to at any particular time, but let me tell you—you want to know where the other \$20 million was this year? You’d have to ask your good friend the member for Erie—

Lincoln, because he was praising this particular grant. That was a grant for a new convention centre in Niagara Falls. You and I both know—you've been down to the area many times and you're a good advocate for tourism, I want to say. You would recognize how important it is to have a new convention centre for Niagara Falls to draw even more people. So in this particular year, \$20 million out of the \$35 million that the provincial government has committed for the convention centre, at the behest of the local municipality and people in the tourism business, went to them this year, and it was announced in the budget with a good deal of fanfare and applause. My good friend the member for Erie–Lincoln applauded that, and do you know something? He and I agree with each other on that particular issue.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. Paul Ferreira (York South–Weston): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Andy Shi sits on the executive of the Chinese Professionals Association of Canada, an organization that receives multiple grants from this government. His day job, however, is vice-chair of the landlord and tenant tribunal, a job this government appointed him to in 2005. Did the minister know of any partisan affiliations on Mr. Shi's part when the government appointed him to his job at the tribunal?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): What I do know very clearly, and what I have been involved in very clearly, is a very deep sense of passion for the incredible will to work, willingness to be great Canadians, by so many immigrants who come to Canada, especially those who come from China.

Many of them now come from mainland China. They come with great degrees, they come with incredible expertise, and they want to work in this country. I've listened to their pleas for help. Their agencies, whether it be CSIS or whether it be CPAC—all these organizations and all the neighbourhood groups that work with these new Canadians from China have been begging for assistance in better language training, better mentorship, better job training. That's what they've been asking for.

Mr. Ferreira: I will do my best to try and assist the minister with this. On October 26, 2005, Andy Shi appeared before the government agencies committee concerning his appointment. He was asked, “[O]n your involvement with the Liberal Party, have you acted as a volunteer, canvasser or someone who goes out and tries to get more memberships for the Liberal Party in any way?” He replied, “I think I did once during the last campaign....”

Can the minister explain why a person who only volunteered once for the Liberal Party would have an e-mail address at the Ontario Liberal Fund?

1500

Hon. Mr. Colle: The organization that this member is trying to besmirch is an organization that teams up with

Toronto-Dominion Bank, with Royal Bank, it teams up with Celestica, it teams up with businesses big and small made up of people of all political stripes—over 22,000 members—and has been doing incredible work in the community to help newcomers, and they have been very successful. Even this morning, they opened up their new service centre for newcomers in Agincourt. They are working, they are helping, they are doing what government should have been doing a long, long time ago when they were ignored for the last 15 years by government. We're working with such agencies because when those volunteer agencies put out their time, it's the best way of effecting success for our newcomers. These are incredibly good organizations.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): My question is for the Minister of Education. In 2003, we inherited a broken public education system: 26 million lost school days due to teachers' strikes; \$2 billion in underfunding; increasing class sizes; stagnant test scores and student achievement; low graduation rates. We focused our efforts on fixing publicly funded education. The results are clear: Zero school days lost to teachers' strikes; \$3.5 billion in new investments—we invested more in our first term than the previous government did in their two terms in office; lower class sizes; a 10% increase in grades 3 to 6 test scores; a 73% graduation rate, up from 68%—that means 12,000 more graduates every year.

Minister, I understand that within the framework of success and publicly funded education, there are still financial issues that need to be addressed. Can you please advise my constituents why the SAT was sent in and how their report will help ensure that schools in Ottawa, just like the rest of our schools in Ontario, have the resources they need to ensure student success—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The question's been asked.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): I thank the member from Ottawa–Orléans for his question about the special assistance team. I hope that while the Leader of the Opposition is in Ottawa apologizing to CHEO, he stops by the offices of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and apologizes for eight years of stripping the publicly funded education system. The special assistance team was asked to come into Ottawa by the Ottawa-Carleton board and when Rob Campbell, the chairman of that board, was asked about the SAT, he said, “I want to thank the government for responding so quickly and for their commitment to work in partnership with us to address our budget issues.” If the report of the SAT is implemented, the OCDSB will be in a surplus position. We have continued to invest in the Ottawa board since we came to office—\$84.4 million more since we came into office. That's nearly \$2,000 per pupil more—\$22 million in new investments this year alone.

Mr. McNeely: My constituents will be glad to know that we continue to invest in our schools in Ottawa. I

understand that another success under our government is our Good Places to Learn initiative. Under the previous government, schools continued to defer badly needed repairs. In contrast, we have provided boards with resources to repair our schools—6,771 repairs across Ontario to date. In fact, for the two Ottawa school boards, there's been over \$80 million for over 500 school repair projects completed or under way.

Minister, the members opposite don't seem to share our optimism when it comes to publicly funded education. In fact, the member from Simcoe North, when talking about our Good Places to Learn initiative, said, "If you go to practically any school in the province of Ontario right now, you will see one of the big Liberal propaganda boards. If someone changes a doorknob or they change a mirror in a washroom or they put in a flowerbed, the government rushes out and puts these \$1,000 signs up." The member from Trinity-Spadina said, "We've got a government who says we're spending \$4 billion on capital programs." Minister, I'm certain that this is not the case. Will you please advise the House how we are repairing our schools in Ottawa to ensure that our students learn in a safe environment?

Hon. Ms. Wynne: To date, there have been over 6,700 repairs that have been completed or are under way in our Good Places to Learn. Maybe the members opposite should consult with a member for the Ottawa region. They could talk, for example, to the member for Nepean-Carleton, and they could hear about the repairs at Our Lady of Peace secondary school, \$334,000 for electrical and heating repairs; or Pope John XXIII school, \$533,000 for doors, windows, electrical, heating and air conditioning; or they could hear about the repairs at Sacred Heart Catholic secondary school, \$671,000 for electrical and roof repairs. The list goes on.

In addition to that, we're building new schools: St. Emily, a Chapman Mills elementary school, \$7 million; Berrigan Elementary School, \$11.7 million; Longfields/Davidson Heights for \$11.7 million; and a new Stittsville public school.

We're going so far beyond doorknobs and mirrors. We are rebuilding the public education system, including the buildings.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and it concerns his slush fund. The minister has been asked twice now about yet another partisan link to the Liberal Party on the part of a board member of the Chinese Professionals Association of Canada. The minister has not answered the questions. The clouds continue to gather. The partisan stink continues to accumulate. Why won't this minister admit that he can't carry on and resign?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): What has been awful is that, in a very reckless way, the opposition tries to cherry-pick different

organizations, when I've told the opposite side that if you look at all the organizations, big and small, you'll see members of many different parties on them, all walks of life. What we looked at in many of our investments was the need, the shortcomings there were in certain communities. In this case here, there were underserved areas in the Chinese-speaking newcomer community that were not met for years. That was the shame, that these incredibly motivated, talented people with double degrees, with a willingness to work, were not getting jobs, with an unemployment rate of about 50% in that community's newcomer—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Chudleigh: Those answers are embarrassing. One board member worked in his office. Now it appears another has connections to the Ontario Liberal Fund. This slush fund is getting murkier and murkier and stinkier and stinkier. The minister cannot carry on. He is under a cloud. He should resign. I'm asking the minister if he'll resign until we get the answers to these very serious questions about the taxpayers of Ontario's money.

Hon. Mr. Colle: I'd like to remind the House again that for a decade or more the newcomers who came from South Asia, China, Africa or Europe were not given fair treatment by this country or by this province, and we're all to blame for that. Finally, we've stepped forward to recognize that that was not fair, that if an immigrant went to another province they would get more money than if they came to Ontario. We are proud of the fact that we stood up and said that was wrong.

The member opposite didn't stand up for years and say that was wrong. We said it was wrong, and we've put our investments into ensuring that those newcomers were treated fairly and equitably. That's what these investments have done for those brave, courageous newcomers who are in every community. That's what—

The Speaker: New question.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale-High Park): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Many multicultural groups in my riding find it outrageously insulting that this minister wraps himself in the cloak of multiculturalism, justifying his slush fund. Groups from my riding like the Vietnamese Women's Association, the Canadian Tibetan Association, the Somali Women's Association and the Canadian Polish federation have all come to Queen's Park demanding answers as to the neglect that the McGuinty Liberals have shown them. In my view, the next level of accountability is for the minister to resign and let the Auditor General do his work. So I ask, will the minister resign?

1510

Hon. Mr. Colle: I know the members opposite are making comments about multiculturalism and the fact that I'm proud to say that that is a Canadian value and an Ontario value. When I walk on the streets, or I go to the coffee shops, or I go to the temples or mosques, I'm very proud to say that I'm a Canadian. I'm very proud to say

that I'm a Canadian who was born in Italy and that this country accepted me, and that's what I'm all about.

Ms. DiNovo: With all due respect, what this minister is about is stonewalling and refusing to answer questions. The people of Ontario, I should say, have gained a victory in having the Premier finally admit that his government's year-end slush fund deserves investigating, that the Auditor General should in fact be called in. Mind you, it took three weeks of questioning, over a dozen editorials, pressure from groups that didn't receive a dime and a very funny editorial in the Toronto Star today. The next level of accountability, though, is clear to the people of Ontario, and that is for this minister step aside to let the Auditor General do his job. Will the minister resign?

Hon. Mr. Colle: As I said, it is about who I am, and who I am is a proud Canadian who is very proud to help newcomers. I'm very proud to tell them that this province and this country want them, need them and will try to help them. That's the kind of work that I love doing because they're very appreciative. They don't ask for anything else but a job. That's all they ask. Some of them drive taxis; they deliver pizza; they work in variety stores; they work in factories; they clean offices. They've worked in silence and suffered in silence for too long.

That's who I've been dedicated towards helping. Because these wonderful people, 99.9% of them, deserve our help.

AMATEUR SPORT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): I've got a question today for the Minister of Health Promotion. During the recent announcement in Ottawa about the 2009 World Junior Hockey Championship, I was reminded of your ministry's Quest for Gold program. Minister, the tournament and the Quest for Gold program are obviously both great news for amateur and elite athletes in Ontario. I'm proud of their success, and I know we all wish them well in future competitions.

This government created the Quest for Gold lottery in 2005. Today I would like to ask the minister to tell us how the coaches and the athletes in my riding of Oakville and athletes in Ottawa are benefiting from the Quest for Gold program.

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): The honourable member from Oakville has been a great supporter of amateur sports, not just in his own community of Oakville but throughout the province of Ontario.

We are making some great strides in helping our young amateur athletes. One hundred per cent of the revenues from this fund go to amateur athletes and their coaches: 30% of the funding of the Quest for Gold lottery to coaching and training and 70% directly to athletes. In Oakville, for instance, let me just brag about some of the athletes I know the member is proud of: sisters Claire and Ingrid Merry for snowboarding and sailing, respectively; Mallorie Nicholson for canoeing; Tanya Thomson for

canoeing; Andrew Hurd for swimming and Oskar Johannson for sailing.

In Ottawa, my hometown, we're very proud of Kevin McEwen, paralympic rugby; Kimberly Kerr, ice hockey; Patrick Mars, speed skating; and Emma Miskew for curling.

I just met one of the athletes on the weekend at Lakeview school, who thanked me and thanked the Minister of Finance and thanked the government of Ontario for providing \$8,000. The parents thanked me too, because they understand the cost involved in ensuring that an athlete reaches the podium at the international level. We will continue, thanks to the finance minister's budget, to include an additional \$10 million in Quest for Gold funding for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Flynn: As you know, sport isn't just about hosting tournaments or winning championships. It's also about us all getting in shape and staying healthy. I know that the ministry does great work with your Quest for Gold lottery, and it funds events like the World Junior Championships, Senior Games and the Ontario summer and winter games. These programs all help provide opportunities for the best athletes in Ontario.

In Oakville, I know you've also helped support programs at the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Halton, Kerr Street Ministries, the Oakville Family YMCA and the town of Oakville itself.

As you know, the previous Tory government made it incredibly expensive to even rent a school gymnasium. What has changed since you've come to office? How are communities like Oakville and your city of Ottawa beginning to benefit from programs like the community in action fund?

Hon. Mr. Watson: It is indeed an exciting day in Ottawa as we watch the Ottawa Senators. Most people are going to Ottawa today to watch the hockey game, but where are John Tory and his caucus? They're going to Ottawa to have a fundraiser. I don't know how many people are going to show up at a John Tory fundraiser when the Ottawa Senators are playing, but maybe when Mr. Tory is driving through some of the great communities of the city of Ottawa, he can once again, on his John Tory sorry tour, go and apologize to those young people who were shut out of schools because the rental rates were so high.

It's because of this Minister of Education that we've brought in the community use of schools program. The community use of schools program reduces rent so these young people can play basketball and street hockey and other activities in the gym. We also have the communities in action fund. I'm pleased to say that in the city of Ottawa, over \$2 million has gone into communities in action fund programming, including in the ridings of Nepean-Carleton—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): New question.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. We note that the minister has refused now three times to answer a question that was asked about yet another partisan link to the Chinese Professionals Association of Canada, this in addition to the board member who works in the minister's office. The minister continues to refuse to answer questions relating to this very important issue. My question is simply this: Why, given the continuing revelations that come about in this place regarding the affairs in his office, does he continue to insist to stay in his place rather than do the right thing and step aside until the investigation is complete—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The question has been asked.

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): As I said, there are very good, very worthy organizations that have been doing incredible work in helping immigrants. There are newcomers who for too long were ignored and never given the right resources. This government has made those partnerships, has fought to get the resources from the federal government and has expanded opportunities in programs like the medical graduate program and the bridge training program. Those are the outreaches that we've made with organizations, with school boards and with institutions big and small that were very needed. That's what we've done, and that's what we'll continue to do—

The Speaker: Thank you.

PETITIONS

LAKERIDGE HEALTH

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I have a petition that reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Lakeridge Health should receive full funding to properly implement patient services in the community; and

“Whereas Lakeridge Health is currently facing an \$8-million shortfall as a result of government directives; and

“Whereas Lakeridge Health ranks among the best 25% of hospitals in efficiency performance even when compared to single-site hospitals; and

“Whereas this shortfall would negatively affect many vital programs, including the mental health program, crisis intervention services and addiction treatment services at Lakeridge Health;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide long-term fair operating funding for the important health care services of Lakeridge Health and immediately fully fund the current \$8-million shortfall.”

I affix my signature in support.

1520

GTA POOLING

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I'd like to thank a number of seniors in 3015 Parkerhill Road for having sent it to me. It reads as follows:

“End GTA Pooling: Pass Ontario Budget

“Whereas the city of Mississauga faces a long-term labour shortage, resulting in some 60,000 more people commuting into the city of Mississauga than leave Mississauga to earn their living and support their families each and every day; and

“Whereas 10 years ago the Ontario government of that day introduced the concept of GTA pooling, whereby funds are taken from the municipalities surrounding the city of Toronto and channelled into the city of Toronto without benefit or accountability to the taxpayers of those fast-growing cities, which face big-city needs and issues of their own; and

“Whereas ... pooling places an additional tax burden on the municipal property tax base of some \$40 million each and every year to the city of Mississauga; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario in its 2007-08 budget proposes to completely eliminate GTA pooling during a seven-year span beginning in fiscal year 2007-08, and that as pooling is phased out, Ontario will take responsibility for social assistance and social housing costs currently funded by GTA pooling;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That all parties within the government of Ontario support the swift passage of the 2007-08 Ontario budget and ensure that its provisions ending GTA pooling are implemented.”

An excellent petition. I'm pleased to sign it and to ask page Zane to carry it for me.

LAKERIDGE HEALTH

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): The member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford has a similar one. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has directed Lakeridge Health to cut mental health and addiction services and children's mental health services in order to balance its budget; and

“Whereas the ministry has directed these cuts, bypassing the Central East Local Health Integration Network, whose director has stated ‘there will be no reduction in mental health and addiction services within the Central East LHIN’; and

“Whereas these cuts will likely transfer costs rather than save them, putting additional pressure on Lakeridge's emergency department, Durham police, Whitby Mental Health and social service providers” in the area; and

“Whereas the Central East already receives amongst the lowest per capita hospital funding in the province;

“We, the undersigned, request the Ontario Legislative Assembly to revisit this decision and ensure Durham residents receive appropriate support for adults and children who need treatment for mental health and addictions.”

I'm pleased to sign this and support it on behalf of the constituents of the riding of Durham and present it Safa.

MINIMUM WAGE

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park): I'm reading a petition to raise the minimum wage:

“Whereas more than 1.2 million Ontarians work at jobs that pay them less than \$10 an hour;

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government has failed to ensure a living wage for working families;

“Whereas people who work hard and play by the rules should be rewarded with the opportunity to earn a decent living and the chance to get ahead;

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals were able to increase their own pay by 31%;

“Whereas an increase in the minimum wage to \$10 an hour”—now—“would help Ontario's working families earn a living wage;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario government to pass Bill 150, the NDP's living wage bill, which would immediately increase the Ontario minimum wage to \$10 an hour.”

Of course I agree with this petition and affix my signature hereto. I give it to Salena to hand in.

ROUTE 17

HIGHWAY 17

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): J'ai une pétition qui contient plus de 500 noms provenant de la cité de Clarence-Rockland dont j'ai le père Morin qui m'accompagne avec cette pétition.

«À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que l'ancien gouvernement de l'Ontario a transféré la responsabilité de la route 17 aux municipalités, la ville d'Ottawa et des comtés unis de Prescott et Russell;

« Attendu que les municipalités n'ont pas les fonds suffisants pour l'entretien, la réfection de la route ou des ponts, sans mentionner son élargissement;

« Attendu qu'en 2001, l'administration des comtés unis de Prescott et Russell a estimé à 21 000 véhicules la circulation en semaine sur la 17 à l'entrée de la cité Clarence-Rockland et que depuis, ce chiffre a augmenté à 25 000 autos;

« Attendu que cette artère principale transférée aux municipalités est une route transcanadienne dans un état lamentable et continue à souffrir du temps et de l'achalandage de plus en plus important;

“Whereas the MTO regional staff had recommended and accepted as presented by the management review

board on April 27, 1992, that Highway 17 east of Ottawa be retained as a provincial collector highway following completion of Highway 417;

“Whereas the city of Ottawa continues giving building permits that become a safety issue;

“Whereas the eastern Ontario population demands the same road security services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ontario Ministry of Transportation hereby takes back the responsibility for Highway 17/174 or gives provincial funding for its widening as mentioned during the MTO public hearings held previously.”

I fully endorse this petition.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford): I have a petition I'd like to present to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas Remembrance Day commemorates the armistice signed to end the First World War on November 11, 1918;

“Whereas in Canada, Remembrance Day honours the memory of those soldiers, including more than 116,000 Canadians, who bravely and unselfishly gave their lives in the First and Second World Wars, in the Korean War and in peacekeeping efforts in the struggle for peace and freedom;

“Whereas as a gesture of respect for the fallen, it is appropriate to unite in honouring their memories by observing two minutes of silence each Remembrance Day and to make the day a retail business and school holiday;

“Whereas MPP Joe Tascona introduced private member's Bill 204, entitled the Remembrance Day Observance Act, 2007, which passed first reading in the Legislature on April 12, 2007;

“We, the undersigned, petition the provincial government to give consideration to Bill 204 for Remembrance Day to become a retail, business and school holiday in Ontario.”

I support the petition and affix my signature.

REGULATION OF ZOOS

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I have a petition today from people in Sarnia, Orono, Warsaw and Peterborough to regulate zoos and protect animals and communities.

“Whereas Ontario has the weakest zoo laws in the country; and

“Whereas existing zoo regulations are vague, unenforceable and only apply to native wildlife; and

“Whereas there are no mandatory standards to ensure adequate care and housing for zoo animals or the health and safety of animals, zoo staff, the visiting public or neighbouring communities; and

“Whereas several people have been injured by captive wildlife, and zoo escapes are frequent in Ontario; and

“Whereas these same regulatory gaps were affirmed recently by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his annual report;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP David Zimmer’s bill, the Regulation of Zoos Act.”

I agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): A petition to the Parliament of Ontario signed by good citizens of Cambridge:

“Whereas gasoline prices have increased at alarming rates during the past year; and

“Whereas the high and different gas prices in different areas of Ontario have caused confusion and unfair hardship on hard-working Cambridge families;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“(1) That the McGuinty government immediately freeze gas prices for a temporary period until world oil prices moderate; and

“(2) That the McGuinty government immediately lower their taxes on gas for a temporary period until world oil prices moderate; and

“(3) That the McGuinty government immediately initiate a royal commission to investigate the predatory gas prices charged by oil companies operating in Ontario.”

As I agree with the petition, I will sign same.

PARENTING EDUCATION

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas effective parenting practices do not come instinctively and parenting is our most crucial social role, parenting and human development courses need to be taught to all secondary school students. Parenting education will: reduce teen pregnancies; reduce the rate of costly fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and increase the number of healthy pregnancies; reduce the number of costly social problems related to ineffective parenting practices; and improve the ‘social fabric’ of Ontario to create a more civil society. Parenting education for students is considered to be socially valuable by a majority of adults of voting age and should be included as a mandatory credit course within the Ontario curriculum;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the requirements of the secondary school diploma to include one senior level (grade 11 or 12) credit course in parenting education (students to select one of: living and working with children...; parenting...; issues in human growth and development...; or parenting and human development...) as a compulsory credit.”

I agree and support this. I will affix my signature, and it’ll be taken by page Sridaya.

1530

LABORATORY SERVICES

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition to do with Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare lab services. It’s signed by members from Burk’s Falls, Emsdale, Novar and Huntsville. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the residents of the communities served by Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare ... wish to maintain current community lab services; and

“Whereas maintaining community lab services promotes physician retention and benefits family health teams; and

“Whereas the funding for community lab services is currently a strain on the operating budget of MAHC; and

“Whereas demand for health services is expected to continue to rise with a growing retirement population in Muskoka-East Parry Sound; and

“Whereas the operating budget for MAHC needs to reflect the growing demand for services in the communities of Muskoka-East Parry Sound;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the McGuinty government and the Minister of Health increase the operating budget of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare to permit continued operation of community lab services.”

I support this petition.

PARENTING EDUCATION

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly that’s signed by people from all over southern Ontario, and I thank them for their time. It reads as follows:

“Whereas effective parenting practices do not come instinctively and parenting is our most crucial social role, parenting and human development courses need to be taught to all secondary school students. Parenting education will: reduce teen pregnancies; reduce the rate of costly fetal alcohol syndrome disorders and increase the number of healthy pregnancies; reduce the number of costly social problems related to ineffective parenting practices; and improve the ‘social fabric’ of Ontario to create a more civil society. Parenting education for students is considered to be socially invaluable by a majority of adults of voting age and should be included as a mandatory credit course within the Ontario curriculum.

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the requirements of the secondary school diploma to include one senior level (grade 11 or 12) credit course in parenting education (students to select one of: living and working with children...; parenting...; issues in human growth and development...;

or parenting and human development...) as a compulsory credit.”

I'm pleased to affix my signature and send this petition down with page Zane.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas the price of gas is reaching historic price levels; and

“Whereas provincial and federal governments have done nothing to protect consumers from high gas prices; and

“Whereas provincial tax on gas is 14 cents per litre and federal tax is 10 cents per litre, plus 6% GST; and

“Whereas these taxes have a detrimental impact on the economy and are unfair to commuters who rely on vehicles to travel to work; and

“Whereas the province has the power to set the price of gas and has taken responsibility for energy prices in other areas, such as hydro and natural gas; and

“Whereas we call on the province to remove the 14.7-cents-per-litre gas tax and on the federal government to eliminate the 10-cent gas tax, plus 6% GST, which amounts to 30% or more;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and urge the Premier to take action and to also persuade the federal government to remove its gas taxes.”

I affix my signature.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SAFER ROADS FOR A SAFER ONTARIO ACT, 2007 LOI DE 2007 VISANT À CRÉER DES ROUTES PLUS SÉCURITAIRES POUR UN ONTARIO PLUS SÛR

Mrs. Cansfield moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 203, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Remedies for Organized Crime and Other Unlawful Activities Act, 2001 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 203, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et la Loi de 2001 sur les recours pour crime organisé et autres activités illégales et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mrs. Cansfield, the floor is yours.

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Transportation): I'd like to share my time today with the member from Willowdale and my parliamentary assistant, the member from Ottawa–Orléans.

I rise in the House today to urge passage of a piece of legislation that everyone knows would save lives on

Ontario's roads. Since our government took office nearly four years ago, the McGuinty government has worked tirelessly with our safety partners to improve road safety on Ontario's roads.

Despite Ontario's reputation as a road safety leader, our government knows that one life lost to reckless or dangerous driving is one life lost too many. This bill would target aggressive and dangerous driving behaviours such as drinking and driving and street racing.

These statistics bear repeating: Approximately one quarter of all fatalities on Ontario's roads involve drinking drivers. Each year about 16,000 people are convicted of drinking and driving in Ontario—approximately two people each hour, every day. These people endanger the lives of Ontarians right across this province. In 2004 alone, drinking and driving claimed 192 lives in Ontario.

Ontario's prevention strategies need to be strengthened to target high-risk drivers, first-time and repeat offenders. If passed, this legislation would increase roadside driver's licence suspensions for drunk drivers, it would allow the courts to take vehicles away from repeat drinking and driving offenders and it would establish an early ignition interlock program for Criminal Code offenders. Anyone caught driving with a blood alcohol concentration of between .05 and .08 would face tough sanctions that will get even stiffer for repeat offenders. Roadside driver's licence suspensions would range from three days for a first reading of between .05 and .08 blood alcohol level to seven days for a second infraction and 30 days for a third or subsequent infraction.

The second time someone is caught, they would have to complete an education program. If they're caught again, they'll have to install an ignition interlock device in their vehicle for six months in addition to mandatory education. So make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, we're getting even tougher on people who drink and drive.

This proposed approach also includes civil and criminal measures that could mean repeat drinking and driving offenders would forfeit their vehicles under the Attorney General's innovative Civil Remedies Act.

That's not all. Since 1999, 35 people have lost their lives to street racing in Ontario, often with innocent people the victims of these pointless races. This legislation would also crack down on street racers who choose to race on Ontario's roads.

This legislation would give law enforcement people the power to suspend the drivers' licences and impound the vehicles of drivers involved in street racing and stunt driving. Police would have the power to issue an immediate roadside seven-day driver's licence suspension and a seven-day vehicle impoundment for street racing or for participating in a driving contest or stunt driving. It would increase the minimum fine from \$200 to \$2,000 and would increase the maximum fine from \$1,000 to \$10,000. Our street racing fines would be the highest in Canada, sending a strong message to racers: If you endanger lives, be prepared to pay.

Police officers will also have the tools that they need to stop these behaviours, and it will offer further pro-

tection to them in the line of duty. You know, it's shocking to consider that more police officers are killed at roadside than in any other activity. That's why we're proposing to allow police vehicles to display flashing blue lights in addition to the red lights that already are in use. This change would improve a police vehicle's visibility, which is crucial to the officer's safety, especially at night. This would help protect the police while they're out protecting us.

1540

I also want to emphasize that injury prevention is a driving force behind this legislation. The senseless acts of street racing and impaired driving exact a terrible toll on the people of this province. We as a government need to do all we can to prevent these tragedies from occurring.

I am also pleased to be able to say that this bill truly reflects the views of this House. With the help of the member from Oak Ridges, the bill now includes an amendment passed by the finance and economic affairs committee that proposes a ban of a connected nitrous oxide system while driving a motor vehicle on a highway. Offenders would be fined up to \$2,000 and face six months in jail. To be clear, this amendment will not target drivers of modified or high-performance vehicles that engage in legitimate racing or exhibitions of driving skill on racetracks or, having obtained the necessary approvals from a municipality, on closed roads.

Bill 203 would build on what we've already achieved, advancing this government's commitment to improve road safety. This bill is proof positive of the McGuinty government's commitment to ensuring that Ontario's roads remain safe for those who use them.

Our government is proud to have passed laws that make booster seats and child safety seats mandatory, that require every occupant in a motor vehicle to be buckled up properly while travelling in Ontario. We are proud to have tough laws that create sanctions for drinking and boating and that deliver longer licence suspensions for repeat offenders who speed 50 kilometres or more over the limit.

Our government has made road safety a priority. This proof is before the House. So I urge all members to give this legislation their enthusiastic support, and I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale): I rise in the House today to speak in favour of support of Bill 203, the Safer Roads for a Safer Ontario Act.

This is very important legislation. If passed, it is going to do a tremendous amount to prevent injury and death as a result of drunk drivers. Anything we can do to eliminate the scourge of death and injury caused by drunk drivers, this House should do. Impaired driving in this day and age, in May 2007, still remains by far the largest criminal cause of death in Canada. When you sit back and think of that—drunk driving is still the largest criminal cause of death in Canada—it behooves us to do something and to do something immediately.

It's also, the statistics tell us, the largest cause of criminal death in this province. We hear much about

guns and gangs, but criminal death caused by drunk driving is still the leading cause of death in Canada and in Ontario.

Bill 203, if passed, is going to protect Ontario families from individuals who put other people's lives at risk by driving while impaired. The bill is going to do a lot of things, but I just want to touch on a few of those things. Among other things, it's using a mix of criminal and civil law tools to help keep our roads safer from drunk drivers.

Let me speak for a minute or two about some of the initiatives on the criminal law side. We are introducing amendments to the Highway Traffic Act that would establish an early ignition interlock program for convicted offenders. This early ignition interlock program is going to help prevent repeat drinking-and-driving offences, because it's actively going to prevent offences from occurring in the first place.

Research tells us that while in use, ignition interlock is extremely successful at preventing re-offending. I've looked at the statistics and I've analyzed them myself, and I'm convinced that this idea of having an interlock mechanism in a car for an offender who's probably at a high risk of re-offending—if we can stop them from starting that car in the first place, we have gone a long way to prevent death and injury.

So how does this system work? An interlock ignition device is an alcohol breathing screen. It's a little gadget that's hooked up to the ignition of the car. It sits on the dashboard of a car. It's installed in the vehicle. It prevents the vehicle from starting if the device detects alcohol concentration at a preset limit.

We have someone who has a history of drinking and driving; this piece of equipment is in their car, hooked into the ignition system. When they get in the car, before they can turn the ignition and start the engine, they have to blow into the little box, and it does a reading. If the reading is higher than a preset level, the ignition won't start. In fact, as I understand it, a great bell, a sort of mini-siren, goes off, and it is an embarrassingly loud sound. It causes a great fuss. In any event, the car won't start.

Before starting the car, the driver has to blow into that device. I've said that the ignition won't start if there's a reading over a certain limit. As long as the car is running—let's take an example: They've got in the car, blown in the gadget, they haven't got alcohol in their breath, the car starts and they're on their way down the road. Somebody takes a drink while they're driving, or stops the car with the ignition running, goes into a pub, has a couple of drinks and comes back out. That machine, that gadget, is set up so that, randomly and periodically, at any time that the car is in motion, the machine comes on and the driver of the car is required to blow into the device. Again, if the device detects alcohol beyond a preset limit, guess what? The car shuts down, and it shuts down with bells and whistles blowing.

If a sample is not provided—if someone tries to start the car without providing the sample—or if the alcohol concentration rises above the preset limit, that device that

I've talked about issues a warning. Internally it records the event, activates various alarms, flashing lights, horn-honking, and the ignition is automatically shut off.

Under the proposed early ignition interlock program, convicted offenders could apply to reinstate their driver's licence early if they participate in the program. This program is geared for someone who has been convicted, they've paid their fine or done their time in jail, and they want to start driving again. They've got to have this interlock system on their car. If they participate in the program successfully, they can apply to have their driver's licence reinstated at an earlier time.

The length of the ignition interlock period and the criteria for how offenders could qualify are going to be authorized by regulations in the legislation.

I can tell you that according to Mothers Against Drunk Driving, commonly known as MADD here in Canada, upwards of 60% of convicted drunk drivers continue to drive with a suspended licence. These repeat offenders are obviously not deterred by the current sanctions against impaired driving. The bill, if passed, would increase the sanctions available to us when dealing with these kinds of irresponsible offenders.

We're proposing a new civil forfeiture law to take drunk drivers and their vehicles off the road. Bill 203, if passed, would amend the Civil Remedies Act. What it's going to do is to allow the civil courts, on application by the Attorney General's office, to impound and forfeit vehicles that have been used or are likely to be used—and that's key here, “or are likely to be used”—by people who have had two or more previous licence suspensions within a 10-year period for drinking and driving.

This gives us a tool to be pre-emptive. We have someone who has a history of drinking and driving, and if we have reason to believe that they might continue to drink and drive, we can pre-empt it by seizing their car or any car they may drive.

1550

This bill, if passed, would also allow the civil courts to impound and forfeit vehicles used by those who have continued to drive while their licence is suspended for drinking and driving. The bottom line here is: You can't drink and drive if you don't have a car. If we think there's a risk that someone is going to be drinking and driving, this legislation enables us to pre-empt them, to take the car away before they can get behind the wheel.

Under these proposed amendments, the civil courts would also be given power to release a vehicle if the offender agrees to certain terms and conditions. So there's a mechanism to oversee this process of forfeiting cars and the seizure of cars and so on. These conditions would include fitting the vehicle with the ignition lock I've referred to or an undertaking by the owner that the vehicle would not be allowed to be driven by persons whose actions have resulted in the forfeiture application.

Our goal is to make the roads of Ontario safer for Ontario families; our goal is to stop people who put other people's lives at risk; our goal here under this legislation is to be pre-emptive, to do what we can to stop drinking

drivers before they get behind the wheel. This legislation is going to do that, and I encourage all members from all sides of the House to support this legislation.

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): This worthwhile package of legislative measures proposed by the Minister of Transportation will, if enacted, save lives. As the minister said, despite Ontario's role as a leader in road safety, we must do more. We want to protect Ontarians from drinking drivers. Drivers who repeatedly blow in the .05 to .08 blood alcohol level would face increasingly severe treatment. The reason for that is that research has shown that drivers with a blood alcohol level of .05 to .08 are eight times more likely to be involved in a collision than drivers who have not been drinking. That source is the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Our proposal will get impaired drivers back on track while protecting innocent, law-abiding people. For those who are repeatedly convicted of a Criminal Code impaired driving offence, they would face the possibility of having their car ordered forfeited by the courts under the provisions of the proposed legislation, as was discussed by the previous speaker. If passed, the bill would improve safety by keeping drinking drivers and those who street race off Ontario roads.

We're also working to get street racers off our streets as quickly as possible by giving the police the power to issue an immediate roadside driver's licence suspension and a seven-day vehicle impoundment if you're caught street racing, participating in a driving contest or stunt driving. This bill would deter and hopefully prevent many tragedies from happening.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the member from across the House for his amendment to ban nitrous oxide. There are those who say that people can't get past party politics, but this amendment is proof positive that when it comes to protecting Ontarians, there are no party politics, only common interest.

This legislation would make our roads safer for everyone, for the people who use them, especially for the women and men who risk their lives to patrol them: the police. Our government asked them what they thought would help keep them safe. They told us that they felt their visibility would be increased if they were able to use a combination of flashing blue and red lights. Our government has listened and agreed. Reducing the chances that Ontario's police officers could be involved in a roadside fatality and helping protect them while they're protecting us is the least we can do, and I'm glad to see everyone here agrees.

Motor vehicle collisions exact a huge toll on Ontario, both in terms of lives lost and in massive economic costs. Indeed, motor vehicle collisions cost Ontarians \$9.1 billion annually in social and health care costs. That is simply unacceptable. I know the members of the official opposition and the third party are very supportive of any measures that would further protect the lives of Ontario's citizens. This bill is exactly that kind of measure. With everyone's help, we can ensure the fast passage of this

legislation. We can give the police the tools they need to stop street racers, we can prevent injury through reduced collisions and better visibility for police officers, and we can get street racers and drunk drivers off roads, preventing further loss of life through these senseless acts.

As a government, we can take pride in what we've already accomplished. In addition to what the Minister of Transportation said, the McGuinty government's road safety record includes the doubling of speeding fines in construction zones when workers are present; nearly doubling the fines for speeding 30 to 34 kilometres per hour over the limit; requiring every school bus in Ontario, including old and new, to be equipped with a safety-crossing arm on the front bumper; and charging vehicle owners as well as drivers for illegally passing a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing, regardless of who was driving the vehicle at the time of the incident.

I call on my colleagues in this House to support this legislation and urge its speedy passage. Let's work together to make Safer Roads for a Safer Ontario a reality.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 203 and to address the comments made by the Minister of Transportation, the member from Willowdale and the member from Ottawa–Orléans. I would concur that this is an important piece of legislation for public safety, and it is a welcome sign that all parties are working together on this piece for the protection of the public.

I would say that it's sad but true that this legislation is necessary. Even today, as I was driving here to Queen's Park, I was listening to a radio call-in show. While the vast majority of the people calling in to this show were certainly aghast at the thought of street racing, and especially young people participating in it, there were still a few callers who had some unbelievable ideas about specifically what young men should be able to do in cars. They really didn't see anything wrong with having these nitrous oxide systems and these souped-up cars and didn't see it as a problem; it was sort of a manly thing to do. I was completely appalled, as were many of the other callers into the show. But sadly, that sort of view of the world persists, and it's necessary, I think, for the protection of the public that we do proceed with legislation of this nature.

Of course, it does assist the police with their investigations in terms of allowing them to impound vehicles and so on. It also allows them a combination of criminal and civil remedies in order to make the system work and for the legislation to be enforced, and it enhances the fines and terms for people convicted of these crimes and the penalties that they're going to be subjected to. It also brings forward and enhances the legislation that allows the civil remedy and allows the vehicles to be seized and to be sold as proceeds of criminal investigations. It certainly is welcome news that

this will be able to be used for a fund to protect the public and to be used for victim services in the future.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park): Certainly, we in the New Democratic Party caucus support any measure that keeps drinking and driving from our streets and any measure that makes it more difficult for those who would do so to engage in extreme driving. I'd like to mention that it is really "extreme driving"—the term—rather than "street racing," which has some glamour associated with it in certain sectors of our society.

Some concerns as well, of course: the enforcement of this bill. I know that our police forces—and particularly I acknowledge our police forces, as this is Police Week—are already strained with what we require of them, never mind that they're now going to be required ever more so on our highways and byways.

Also our victim services: It's interesting that the Ontario Network of Victim Service Providers sent me an e-mail just recently, and apparently each hour of victim services is funded at the estimated rate of \$9.70, not even the \$10 minimum wage rate. So we would love to see some of the funds raised by these increased fines going toward victim services, toward the victims of these crimes, and there have been many victims of these crimes. I'm glad to see that the member from Oak Ridges's amendment was added, because that certainly strengthens this as well.

Furthermore, of course, we know that no matter how much education you do, crimes will still be committed. But quite frankly, when we watch some of the ads on television about some cars that are being sold and we see the stunts that are being performed in those ads, with a disclaimer at the bottom saying, "Don't try this at home," we want to ask—these are the ads that our children are seeing, that our teenagers are seeing, ads that make it look cool to drive at unnecessary speeds in extreme driving circumstances. So I'd like to have members across this House look at the media and its impact on extreme driving as well.

1600

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): I'm very pleased to rise today in support of Bill 203. I commend all members of the House, because there seems to be a sense of co-operation and support as we hopefully pass this bill before too long.

About 20 years ago I was involved in an accident and hit by a drunk driver on my way back from a meeting and was nearly killed, the police told me. My car was a write-off. I guess our experiences colour our view of these things. That's why I was so pleased when Minister Cansfield brought in this legislation that would toughen up already tough drinking and driving laws in the province of Ontario—I'm very supportive of that—and also clamp down on repeat drunk drivers. There's nothing more frustrating for my constituents in Ottawa West–Nepean, where they see these individuals who seem to be back on the street the next day and they're not

being punished as a result of being intoxicated while driving.

On the issue of street racing, I commend the member from Oak Ridges for his amendment with respect to nitrous oxide. There's no reason in the world why a car on a highway or street needs that kind of equipment to make it go even faster. This legislation will be amongst the toughest in North America. Street racing is not only extremely dangerous, but I know that when I was a city councillor in Ottawa it was extremely annoying for people who are close to those streets. The noise and non-stop grinding and spinning of wheels and burning of rubber was extremely frustrating for people who were trying to get their children to go to bed or other individuals who were trying to enjoy a backyard barbecue—to have this constant horrible noise, let alone the risk to individuals in our community.

This Bill 203, Safer Roads for a Safer Ontario Act, is long overdue, and I commend all members of the House for putting aside partisanship in the spirit of co-operation to get this bill passed.

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I'm pleased to rise to add some comments to Bill 203 after the minister's speech, and the member from Willowdale and the member from Ottawa–Orléans. I know the former Minister of Transportation, the member from Oak Ridges, will be speaking next.

Certainly the PC Party supports this bill and supports getting tougher with drinking and driving and bringing in new rules to do with street racing. I have some members of my family who enjoy racing, but I would say that racing is something that should happen only on the track. That's the appropriate place for it.

The member from Willowdale talked at length about the ignition interlock devices that are covered by this bill. I agree that we need devices for those repeat offenders so that they have to install these on their vehicles and blow into this device to be able to operate the vehicle. He also, last year, brought in a private member's bill, which I supported, that ties drinking and boating to your driver's licence. We're right about the time of year when people in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka will be getting out and enjoying the beautiful lakes around the area, so it's important to remember that just as now we don't accept drinking and driving, we should not in the future accept drinking and boating as well, because you can have tragic accidents when you mix booze and boating.

I look forward to hearing from the member from Oak Ridges, who will be the next speaker on this bill. I also commend him for the work he did on his private member's bill on street racing, which is now a part of this Bill 203.

The Deputy Speaker: Two-minute response, the member for Ottawa–Orléans.

Mr. McNeely: I would like to thank the member for Whitby–Ajax, the member for Parkdale–High Park, the Minister of Health Promotion and the fourth member who spoke to the comments made by the minister, myself

and the PA for the Attorney General, I believe; is that correct, Mr. Zimmer?

Mr. Zimmer: Yes.

Mr. McNeely: I was very fortunate to work with the minister on this through the meetings we held to get comments from the public and through the clause-by-clause, which happened, I think, last Thursday.

I think there's generally good support for this from the other parties. We were able to change the bill to accommodate the nitrous oxide for street racing, and I think it's a stronger bill as a result of that.

It was interesting as well to see the police officers come in to put on a demonstration of what the difference is going to mean with the visibility of their police cars and with their protection when the flashing blue lights are added with the flashing red lights. There are a lot of jurisdictions that have that already, and we're bringing Ontario into that same position for the police officers who are out there to protect us. This was certainly very important to them, and we were very pleased to include that in the legislation.

One of the things I'd like to mention: I worked with Vince Bevin, the police chief for the city of Ottawa, for three years when I was a councillor and often spoke with him. I'm sure, and the Minister of Health Promotion has confirmed, that they're very much in favour of this legislation, which is going to help them do a better job on our highways. When you get all those red flashing lights at night, when the traffic is stopping, it's very difficult to know whether there's a police vehicle there or not. With the flashing red and blue lights, we're going to be able to see the police officers. That protection is needed, and I'm very pleased that that's part of this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I'm pleased to participate in this debate. I believe this bill is an example of what can happen when all parties find common ground on a very important issue. It is also an excellent example of a bill being strengthened as a result of contributions from members of the opposition and what can happen when, in fact, those amendments are taken seriously by the government of the day.

I'd like to, at the very outset, dedicate the results of this bill to my former constituents Rob and Lisa Manchester and their daughter Katie Marie Manchester, who is now an orphan. The Manchesters really were my inspiration for drafting the private member's bill that would deal specifically with the criminal act of street racing.

Rob and Lisa Manchester were both killed on May 27, 2006. They were a young couple and had their entire lives ahead of them. Their lives were snuffed out because of the irresponsible act of someone who chose to get into their vehicle and, rather than use it responsibly, chose to make a very bad decision. That bad decision resulted in the loss of two lives and a young girl who will never know her parents. That incident brought back to me the importance of government taking its responsibility to

ensure that there are consequences for irresponsible actions.

I've said many times in the course of debate on this issue that we cannot legislate responsibility, so, unfortunately, there will always be people who will do the wrong thing and who will make the wrong decision. Whether that's regarding drinking and driving or whether that's street racing, there are going to be people who make those wrong decisions and, as a result, there will also always be the consequences.

Some of those consequences are going to be very obvious, and that's to the victims of that irresponsible decision. Unfortunately, those people, in some cases, will either lose their lives or their lives will be permanently changed as a result of injury.

Two individuals who fall into that category are Allison Hickey and her fiancé, Mark Radman, whose lives will be forever changed as a result, again, of the irresponsible acts of an individual who chose to engage in street racing.

1610

We are going to have consequences of those acts, but our purpose here in bringing forward this legislation is to ensure that there are also consequences for those individuals who choose to engage in that irresponsible activity, whether that be street racing or drinking and driving.

I want to thank the government, I want to thank the Minister of Transportation, I want to thank the standing committee for accepting the amendments to the legislation that I proposed regarding the use of nitrous oxide. I do believe that was a very important component of this legislation that sends a signal, again, to those who would be engaged in recreational racing, against which I have no objection at all. But let's make sure that we do that on a racetrack under circumstances that are appropriately monitored and where we have safety precautions in place. If someone wants to soup up a vehicle to get that additional horsepower in the context of a racetrack, I believe that should be their right, as long as it's being dealt with in a responsible way. But to take that vehicle and to have that equipment connected in a vehicle that's on a public highway is wrong, and we needed to send the message that there will in fact be serious consequences.

To this point, I want to clarify that it's not just simply for the purposes of preventing that additional dangerous and killer speed that nitrous oxide can inject into that vehicle that I put this forward, but it's also for the benefit of police officers and emergency personnel or firefighters who would often be the first on scene at a traffic accident that may have been caused by and involves a vehicle where there is nitrous oxide present. The reality is, if a vehicle is involved in an accident and there is a fire, the explosion that can result from a nitrous oxide tank would take not only the lives of the people involved in the accident but also of those emergency personnel who are there to attend to the scene. So it was the right thing to do, and I want to thank the government for responding accordingly.

I want to also take the opportunity to thank the many individuals who supported this initiative over the course of the last number of months, beginning with the introduction of my private member's bill and subsequently the round table that was hosted by the Minister of Transportation, and the many stakeholders who participated in that to provide their recommendations in terms of what measures would be appropriate to deal with the issue of street racing. I want to also thank Adrienne Seggie, whose son, Matthew Power, lost his life to street racing in November 2006 in Hamilton—again, a young man who had his entire future ahead of him, and his only mistake was that he was an innocent bystander ready to cross the street when someone took his life in a very, very brutal way.

Adrienne Seggie, instead of simply mourning the loss of her son, took it upon herself to launch a campaign to convince legislators here at Queen's Park, as well as in Ottawa, to do something about this and to take action. She initiated a march that started in Hamilton. I welcomed her here. We had a press conference in the media studio here in Queen's Park. She appealed to our government, to every member of this House, to take action on this important issue. I mention her because it represents another example of how individuals can, in fact, effect positive change and for her to be able to see a purpose in an event that was so tragic in her life. As she said many times, if the death of her son can at least contribute to legislators taking a positive step to ensure that other lives are saved, she will take solace in that. So today we say to Adrienne Seggie, thank you for your efforts on behalf of this issue.

Finally, I want to say thank you to members of this House, because we are taking an opportunity here to implement legislation that will have the effect of saving lives. And whether it be the measure for street racing or whether it be the additional measures inherent in this legislation that will once again send a message to people that drinking and driving is unacceptable in this province, it is a piece of legislation where we, as legislators, have found the common ground. We have debated areas of the legislation that we felt could be improved. There was give and take. We found that the standing committee performed its function, acted responsibly. There was evidence that the Legislature and the legislative process actually can work if we allow it to.

To that end, I want to now move on beyond the legislation and say, with this legislation as a platform, it is now up to, again, this House to ensure that these provisions are properly enforced, and that those who contravene this legislation, in fact, experience the full measure of the consequences that we intend, as legislators, to have implemented in the real world. I'm concerned that we have far too many examples in this province of police officers on the front lines doing their job, laying the charges, bringing people into the courtroom, and then our justice system fails the very people who it was intended to protect. We have far too many victims of justice in this province. We advocate for

victims of crime; it is time that we also looked in this Legislature at the victims of justice. What I mean by that is the fact that there are far too many people who are caught in our legal system, which is falsely referred to as a justice system, because for far too many people it is difficult to access justice. They enter a legal system where there are high legal costs, there are procedures and procedural hoops that people are asked to jump through, and those with the ability to afford the best legal representation, notwithstanding the legislation that we intend here, never experience the consequences.

1620

I want to give you an example of that breakdown. I'm going to refer to our court system in York region. I have here a report that comes to me now on a weekly basis of what happens in our courts. I'm going to read this into the record, because it's important for my colleagues here to understand what is happening and that we are very careful to ensure that we not only celebrate the passage of this legislation, but also challenge the Attorney General to ensure that the courts are resourced sufficiently to ensure that we can support and in fact enforce the legislation as we intended.

On March 28 this year, the Tannery court in Newmarket, the T1 court, was closed. No procedures took place in that court on March 28. There were 14 officers scheduled. Forty-one charges were involved—four major vehicle convictions involving five civilian witnesses. They were all scheduled to be there and were in fact there in person. The court never did proceed. The reason was, very simply, there was no justice of the peace scheduled for that day.

On March 29, the next day, again in the Tannery court, it was short one justice of the peace, and here were the consequences to justice that day: The police were unable to swear in any new information or subpoenas. Thirty-six charges were scheduled for first-attendance hearings involving 28 civilians, who were all there and all had to be rescheduled.

On March 30, the next day, the Tannery court, the T1 court, was closed again. The reason? They were short two justices of the peace. Eleven police officers involving 38 charges were on-site, two major vehicle charges involving five civilian witnesses were there, and no new information or subpoenas could be sworn in that day.

On April 4, the Tannery court was once again short one justice of the peace. The result? The adjournment of a serious trial involving five civilian witnesses.

On April 5 in the Richmond Hill court, there was one justice of the peace to manage the court on that occasion. The result was that the intake office was closed and an additional three matters were put over to another day.

I wanted to read that brief schedule into the record so that we had an understanding of what is taking place. Put yourself into the shoes of those police officers who are scheduled to attend at the court. For every police officer who is in a courtroom, we don't have them on the street. It's a waste of their time, it's a waste of resources, and it all comes down to the resourcing of the court system. If

the government wants to put an additional 1,000 police officers on the street, they simply have to make sure we resource the courts. Get them out of the courtroom, wasting an entire day waiting for a case to be called, put some efficiency into our court system, and those police officers, instead of wasting their time in a courtroom waiting for a case to be heard, can be in and out and back on the street. It's a simple formula.

What about the witnesses, those individuals who feel that, first of all, it's their duty to testify? Often they're called from out of town. They lose their day on the job, they have travel expenses, they show up in court, and the case is never heard. And they're called back, often repeatedly. What is the signal that people are getting about our justice system? When I talk about witnesses, I'm also talking about victims of that particular incident. What are we saying to them about our justice system in this province? I'll tell you what they are saying. They're saying, "It's not working."

We have a responsibility to ensure not only that we pass legislation such as the bill before us today, but we have the important responsibility of ensuring that the laws that we pass here can be appropriately and effectively enforced—not only enforced by our front-line police officers, who we celebrate for the work that they do, but then that they are also appropriately dealt with in an efficient justice system through courts that are properly resourced so that the right decisions then can be made and the consequences of this legislation can be fully realized, both by the victims as well as those who have made the irresponsible decisions to engage in either street racing or drinking and driving.

With that, I conclude my remarks. I do want to, just in closing, express my appreciation for everyone who has been involved in bringing this legislation to the point where we are now at third and final reading and, subject to the vote yet to take place, to be enacted. It's the right thing to do. It is a solid piece of legislation that we can all support and will. It is a good day in this place. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms. DiNovo: I listened with interest to the member from Oak Ridges, always an impassioned speaker, particularly about this area, where he has had unfortunate first-hand experience and also has had the intelligence to put forward a needed amendment.

There are a few questions still, though. I would like to ask him about the ignition interlock system, because I'm not completely familiar with it. It strikes me that one of the aspects that perhaps might be a little weak in this bill is the disarming or overriding of that system. I would be interested in hearing his comments about the possibility, for example, of getting somebody else to breathe into that system before you drive off in your car. Again, it would be interesting to hear his comments about how you would get around that, because you know that those who are so inclined will try everything they can to get around it.

There are also problems of enforcement that I touched on before. Again, with an overworked, understaffed police force, certainly when you see some of the cars on the roads—the Ferraris, the Porsches, the others—you know that most people who buy those cars do not buy them with the hopes and expectations of always going under the speed limit. I think of our poor police officers and what they contend with. These are not roads that are set up specifically for racing; these are our highways and byways. You've all seen them zipping in and out, risking other people's lives.

Finally there are two federal pieces of legislation that I would be interested in comment upon: One is C-32, and one is C-19, both under the Criminal Code. C-32, MADD has asked that this be passed very quickly; they just sent out a release on Mother's Day. My concern about this Bill 203, although we support it, is that it might, in effect, play into the hands of those who would plea bargain their way out of a civil offence, into a provincial offence out of a criminal charge. Certainly, we all in this House want to see those who commit crimes charged criminally.

1630

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): I want to take a couple of minutes to commend and thank the member from Oak Ridges for his speech, but also for his good work in this area. I would like to remind all of us that several private members' bills helped to compile the end story on this bill. The member from Simcoe North, I believe, worked very hard on the interlock system; Chatham-Kent-Essex; Thunder Bay-Atikokan—I offered the doubling of the fines in his private member's bill back when I was in opposition. I believe that doubling the fine in a construction zone should take place. There was a tremendous amount of thought by an awful lot of the members put into how to make our roads safer and how to improve the circumstances, because we know that it's a dangerous place to be. Even though statistically—and I say this with respect—Ontario has probably the safest roads around, we still need to make them safer, and I agree with him.

I also wanted to thank him for mentioning Ms. Seggie. She's a constituent of mine from Brantford. It was her son who was killed. I met with her; we talked about the petitions, the walk and everything else that she's done. I supported her wholeheartedly and I thank the member for offering his thanks to her for her dedication. Particularly when you lose a son—that is not supposed to happen. He was 21 years old, Matthew Power. When I say his age, one might assume that he was involved in racing, but guess what? He was simply crossing the street. That's all he was doing, just crossing the street. Wrong place, wrong time.

For these idiots out there who are doing those things for the thrill of it, I want to ask those street racers: Do you think it's a thrill to take somebody's life, because you think it's neat? I commend everybody in this House for saying: "We're not going to take it." And I commend all of those people out there who have worked tirelessly for a long time to get to this point. My congratulations to

each and every one of you. I'm proud of this House for doing this type of legislation.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I too would like to congratulate my friend and colleague the member from Oak Ridges and, in this case, the Minister of Transportation, Donna Cansfield. A need was perceived by my friend from Oak Ridges, who initiated a bill regarding initiation of higher penalties for speeding. The need was there and he attempted to meet it with his private bill. He was joined by other private bills by other members of this House. The government, in particular the Minister of Transportation, recognized that need and acted swiftly to do something about it. As a result, we are at third reading on a bill that had input from many of our members from both sides of this House.

For once, if I might say so, the system seems to have worked, because we even had an amendment that was accepted by all persons on the committee, whether they belonged to the official opposition, the third party or the government. They recognized that this amendment did make sense and they acted on it. That's the way system is supposed to work. Unfortunately, in 90% of the cases, it does not work in the spirit of co-operation and partnership which has taken place here.

So I think all persons should be congratulated in regard to this bill. Our aim is merely and mostly to save lives. I think this bill will save the lives of innocent individuals in the future, and that is to be commended.

Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent-Essex): I'm pleased to rise and add my comments. I did make some comments at second reading on this particular bill. It's a very worthwhile endeavour put forward by the Minister of Transportation and I commend her for her hard work and consultation in bringing this forth. I do know that in my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex, the issue of drinking and driving is a topic of conversation that people raise often, and I know that they're pleased with the new initiatives that the minister has put forward to deal with this very issue. Interlock systems are something that people recognize as a valuable tool in trying to bring about some kind of sanctions against people who, for one reason or another, continue to drink and drive. It is very disconcerting that people don't seem to understand this very dangerous habit that they have.

Street racing, I've mentioned in the past, is not a particular issue in my riding, but that doesn't mean it would not exist. There are places throughout Chatham-Kent Essex that have these white lines on the road that seem to me would indicate you start here and about a quarter mile from that you end. They do exist, but it's not an overriding issue. But it can be in certain areas of the province, and the minister has addressed that.

The issue of justices of the peace was raised. I know that our minister is working diligently at that, trying to rectify any concerns that people might have about the numbers of JPs here in Ontario. There's real good work going on in that regard.

At the committee hearings I saw a video put forward by the police showing us the advantage of having blue

lights on cars. It really is quite amazing how well they can be seen in certain conditions over red lights, so I'm pleased that this is also included in the bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Oak Ridges, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Klees: I want to thank the member for Parkdale–High Park, the member for Brant, the member for Cambridge and the member for Chatham–Kent Essex for their comments.

In summary with regard to the street racing issue, here is what this legislation, when passed, will do. It will empower our front-line police officers to deal with street racing on the spot. It empowers them to issue on-the-spot licence suspension for those they suspect have been involved in street racing. It will empower them to issue on-the-spot impoundment of the vehicle that they suspect has been involved in that activity. It increases fines and it increases jail terms significantly so that the message is there very clearly that, while you may choose to be irresponsible, if you are, there will be serious consequences to you.

Finally with regard to the nitrous oxide component, this legislation will ensure that anyone who does have nitrous oxide equipment in the car—it must be not be connected on a public highway. The connection must be clear both externally and internally on the car so that any police officer or emergency worker can see whether or not nitrous oxide is present. Again, any transgression of that is going to have serious consequences.

In closing, I want to thank my colleagues for their support for this legislation. We look forward, as I've indicated previously, not only to having the law in place but that the Attorney General ensure that our courts are resourced so that this law can be fully enforced.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): It's my pleasure to address the assembly on this issue this afternoon. For those who have joined us and for our new guests who have just come into the gallery, we're debating today Bill 203, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Remedies for Organized Crime and Other Unlawful Activities Act, 2001, and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

This bill, at its heart, is not a controversial bill in this Legislature. You've heard the member for Oak Ridges and the member for Ottawa–Orléans speak about the matters before us dealing with drunk driving, dealing with changes in regulations or legislation regarding lights that can be used by vehicles on the roads and dealing with street racing. Those matters are, generally speaking, ones that all those in the House agree have to be dealt with and, for the most part, they are comfortable with the direction that's set out here.

What I want to say, however, is that this act on its own without a larger context will not deal with all of the issues that are before us, will not deal with the full range of human and social costs that arise from these activities, because no act without action in a variety of areas can in fact deal with addiction and drunkenness, can in fact deal

with the sorts of irresponsible and dangerous behaviour that we see in street racing. So when we talk about Bill 203, we need to talk about the larger context of actions that have to be taken in this society to protect ourselves and to protect other members of our community.

1640

I had an opportunity about two weeks ago to go on a walk with the Hellenic Home for the Aged supporters in Scarborough. There's a gentleman who's quite central to the development of Hellenic Homes for the Aged, a Dr. Oreopoulos, well known in the Greek community and a very thoughtful man. In the course of the walk, the four or five kilometres we walked to raise money for the Hellenic homes, we had a talk about the health care system and the problems that he faced. It was interesting to me. The problems that he was talking about, the difficulties he was facing as someone who managed patients who needed dialysis, were very similar to the issues that we are facing in this bill. He deals with dialysis patients day in, day out. He sees a constant group coming in. He sees people getting sicker. He sees people who die from the complications related to kidney failure. When I asked him what needed to be done, his first response wasn't, "I need more dialysis." He said, "What I need is people to take action on those sources, those causes, that damage people's internal organs, that damage their kidneys." Forty-five per cent of his patients are people who have developed diabetes. He said, "That's where we need to go. We need action to deal with that source problem, that root problem, so that I'm not dealing with it at the tail end." It was very clear that diabetes was a problem that not only caused people to have kidney failure and brought them to his office, but that provided unwanted work to cardiologists, vascular surgeons, to people who dealt with a wide range of human health problems—urologists. He wanted us to get at the root.

Here again, when we look at the problems that we have with people dying on the roads, Bill 203 tries to deal with drunkenness; it tries to deal with dangerous and irresponsible behaviour. But it's very clear from looking at the statistics that relate to Canadian injuries and to Canadian deaths that a big part of our problem is simply the fact that our society—our cities, our towns—is structured in a way that people have to drive, and they have to drive a lot. So even before we go to this issue of drunk driving and street racing, if far more people could reliably travel on foot or on transit, then these risks would be substantially reduced. The number of deaths of people riding on public transit is negligible. The number of deaths of people injured by streetcars, buses or subway trains is negligible. But the more cars we have on the road and the more kilometres we have to drive, then clearly the more risk there is for people. That's a crucial first piece, that change in our mode of transportation so that there's less risk in the first place.

It was interesting to see some statistics recently from Canada Mortgage and Housing cited by the columnist John Barber in the *Globe and Mail*. John wasn't thinking

about Bill 203 when he wrote, but he noted that for people who lived in Markham, their greenhouse gas emissions were twice those of people who lived in downtown Toronto, primarily because they drove a lot more. So it isn't just that people are causing environmental problems; they are at greater risk from the low-density development that we encourage, that we fund, that we enable in every way, shape and form. I think if we're going to have a comprehensive program, and if we're going to see this Bill 203, this legislation, be part of that comprehensive program to deal with these injuries and deaths which plague our society, then we have to think about that bigger picture of more pedestrian-friendly, more transit-related cities.

We also have to invest in our children to prevent addiction, something I commented on when I spoke at second reading and I want to comment on again. When you deal with people who are drunk drivers, you are dealing with people, very commonly, who have problems with alcohol. I'll delve into this further in the speech, but one of the correlations that you find when you look at studies of drunk driving in North America is that the jurisdictions that have the largest Alcoholics Anonymous programs tend to have the least problem with drunk driving. They have adult addiction reduction programs that have an impact, more so than policing. That is a positive factor that reduces death from drunk driving.

If we want to deal with adults—and through Bill 203, we're trying to deal with adults in a punitive way, and I think that has to be there. But if we want to deal with it in a preventive way, we also have to deal with children and children's mental health. When you look at what causes addiction in people, I've had reason recently to talk to a doctor in my riding who deals with people who have addictions beyond alcohol, and time and time and time again what he finds is that those addictions are rooted in childhood abuse, a childhood lack of warmth or caring in the home, or a childhood feeling of being at risk, threatened. We need to invest in those children so that later on we are not faced with a situation where we lose our lives or our children lose their lives because of someone's addiction leading to drunk driving.

I was at an event in my riding on Sunday, the dedication of a park to a young man, Kempton Howard, who was shot to death in the Blake-Boulton neighbourhood in 2003. His death had nothing to do with driving, but the pain that was evident at that event reminded me of the human toll that is paid when people lose their parents, their children, their grandparents. What we deal with here today is of great consequence, is of great substance. So when I say that this bill needs to be part of a larger constellation of efforts, it is because I know that the toll, the price, is extraordinarily high.

In the action that's taken on those who engage in street racing, there is a part of the solution. But another part of that solution has got to be programs, social marketing that changes the culture so that people don't think, as the member for Brantford was saying, that it's wonderful or neat or cool to be engaged in an activity that threatens the lives of people all over.

That comprehensive approach is what's needed if we're going to take the next step forward. The member for Oak Ridges was correct and the member for Niagara Centre was correct in comments made today, and that is that we can put in place as many laws as we want—in fact, we should enact laws—but until we have the enforcement capability to make those laws come to life so that people are arrested when they're behaving in a way that's dangerous, so that action can be taken as is expected by the drafters of this legislation, we won't have happen what has to happen.

I talk to parole officers in my riding. They deal day in, day out with people who break parole conditions. Those of us who are not part of the criminal justice system, of the enforcement system, tend to think that if you break parole, you go to jail. Normally, the sentence for breaking conditions of parole is that you get more parole, which causes tremendous frustration on the part of parole officers but, frankly, also says to people who have flouted the law that really it's not a big deal. So bringing in tougher legislation in and of itself is something that's useful, but without enforcement, without the machinery and the mechanism there to make it actually have an impact on people's lives, it will mean that we aren't going to have the impact we want.

1650

Let's take a look, if we can, at the human cost this bill hopes to address. In 2004, the injury surveillance program, Health Canada, put out a study, Road Safety in Canada. They talk about the reality that in Canada, one of the largest countries in the world, we have a population density across the country that's very small. Frankly, even here in the GTA we're in a situation where public transportation is limited and, as I've said, where people have to rely on their cars. Because they rely on their cars, because they don't have transit systems to rely on, we rely more heavily than most other jurisdictions in the world on private motor vehicles. In fact, we had in 2004 almost 19 million vehicles on our roads—21 million drivers on 900,000 kilometres of road.

One of the fallouts from that reality is that we have a large number of collisions. Even if everyone were a good driver, if people didn't get drunk, if there was no street racing, we'd still have collisions and deaths. Simply, with that number of objects moving around, on occasion they're going to bump into each other. We have a large number of fatalities and we have a large number of collisions that result in hospitalization.

In 2001, there were almost 2,000 deaths in Canada from motor vehicle collisions. There were 24,400 hospital-related admissions that resulted from traffic collisions. Many of the victims are young. Traffic collisions are a leading cause of premature death and disability in this country. That's a big impact: thousands of people in hospitals and thousands dead from an activity and a mode of transportation that we rely on. So it makes sense that we take action to try and deal with those fatalities, to deal with those injuries. When we do

take that action, we need to make it as effective as we possibly can.

Vehicle occupants account for approximately three quarters of all road users killed and seriously injured during the year. The remaining victims are vulnerable pedestrians, motorcyclists and bicyclists, but the bulk—three quarters—are occupants of motor vehicles. When we talk about road safety, we're talking about an issue that touches on life-and-death issues for large numbers of people in this country.

In this study that was released in 2004, the health care costs, property losses and other factors were put together, and I assume there was an accounting model that looked at the annual cost in Canada from collisions on highways. It put the cost in the range of \$25 billion for the country as a whole. That's an extraordinary expenditure. Twenty-five billion dollars is a huge loss of wealth, a huge drain on this country's economy. We have a responsibility to address a loss at that level.

When you look at other developed, industrialized countries within the OECD, Canada has the fifth-lowest rate of traffic deaths per billion vehicle miles travelled. That's a good thing. I wish we were at the absolute lowest, but we're the fifth lowest. We have the 13th-lowest rate when measured as deaths per 100,000. Our rates in death of injury are comparable to those of other developed countries. In other words, we're not a particularly bad player. We're not an outrageous country in terms of loss compared to others, but we have a significant burden. We in this Legislature, we in this province, have a responsibility to take action. Bill 203 addresses part of that. As I said at the beginning of the speech, there are other things that need to be put in place so that this act can contribute to the overall improvement of safety on our roads.

Since 1982, the death rate on highways in Canada has declined by about 50%. That's pretty impressive. That has happened even while we've had a very significant increase in the number of cars and people on the roads. I think that's an achievement that we should recognize as admirable. This country has seen that there's a problem and has actually made the investments in the design of cars and the regulations to keep people safe. I note that a variety of governments have brought in the regulations needed to make that happen. No one party, no one government, can claim particular virtue; it has been across the board. The biggest difference, the biggest impacts on mortality have been things like mandating seat belts, child restraints, more stringent drinking and driving laws, public education, more enforcement campaigns, safer vehicles overall and investments in road infrastructure. All these things together have meant fewer people killed on the road and fewer people injured on the road. But we still have rates of death and injury that are high and are not acceptable to us, not acceptable to this society, not acceptable to our voters, to our constituents and to our families and friends, and we need to move forward to go beyond that 50% reduction to continue reducing the risks to our health and to our lives.

When you look at the stats that bear directly on the context of this bill, drivers account for more than half of all road users killed. You can look at a variety of things that lead to deaths: driver inexperience, health limitations, health limitations amongst elderly drivers, single-vehicle crashes on undivided rural roads—often connected to drinking—and, obviously, non-use of seat belts. In fact, approximately 40% of all fatally injured occupants are unrestrained. Beyond those, we have questions of alcohol and excessive speed that are recognized as important contributing factors in many collisions.

It's interesting that 40% of all fatally injured occupants are unrestrained. We have a law in place and there are a number of jurisdictions that have laws in place, but we still have large numbers of people driving around without their seat belts on, driving around without occupants of their cars having seat belts on. We need to ensure that those laws are enforced, that what we already have on the books are pressed in place so that we further reduce the loss of lives and health.

The two groups that are at greatest risk are people at either end of the age spectrum. Youth aged 16 to 19 and elderly drivers 75 years and over have significantly higher death rates than those in the middle—for youth, 27 deaths per billion kilometres travelled, and for the elderly, 20 deaths per billion kilometres. In a number of provinces, we've taken action on young drivers, introducing graduated licensing programs, which have proven effective in reducing collisions. We've taken action on people who are drinking and driving, which is one of the central pieces of this bill, Bill 203.

We have to know that we've seen a decrease in the number of people killed because of drinking and driving. It's much less now than it was a decade ago. It's a good thing. We've had cultural change. We've had enforcement. We've had the RIDE program in Toronto. We've had action by police forces that see this as a significant problem, not as a minor issue.

We have a proposal in this bill that we'll be voting on: use of the alcohol ignition interlock, which actually was discussed a number of years ago. We have proposals in the act for programs for rehab, training and assessment that have been introduced in other jurisdictions. Those are things that we have to do here. I think they should have been done earlier. I think that years have gone by when they could have been in place, but they're here.

1700

In 2001, Ontario reported the lowest fatality rate in Canada, so obviously something has been right over the last few decades. We've been headed in the right direction. In 2001, we had the lowest number of people dying on the road than any previous year since 1950, even though in that year 845 people died. So, consistent with what has been said by the minister in the past, we're seeing improvements.

There are a number of factors in Ontario that are directly related to fatalities and injuries: 149, or 18%, of Ontario road fatalities in 2001 involved speeding, going above the speed limit, going too fast for conditions; 72

fatalities involved drivers who failed to yield the right of way; and a number involved drivers who disobeyed traffic controls. Speeding—a very significant factor. Even setting aside the whole question of street racing, speeding itself is a significant risk factor. From 2001 to 2004, we've continued to see drops in road fatalities. In fact, drinking and driving fatalities in Ontario decreased by more than 10% between 2001 and 2004. We're continuing to see that improvement in safety conditions on Ontario roads, and it's to our advantage to keep that rolling along.

But when we talk about this bill, let's keep in mind very clearly that we're not talking about simple administrative or clerical matters, that we're not talking just dollars and cents, though that's certainly there; as I've said, we're talking about lives. We're talking about deaths and tragedies that come to families. There's a huge personal cost.

There's an organization called Transport 2000 that earlier in this decade tried to put a more personal face on the issues that our society was confronting. They talked about spine and brain injuries arising from vehicle crashes. They didn't want to just spend their time on the numbers, although that was part of their study; they actually did case studies of people's lives and what happened to them as a result of being involved in traffic accidents.

Their focus, their goal, was to see a much greater investment in transit and rail to get people out of cars. But their findings, their study, were useful to us nonetheless in what we're debating today.

They talked about the level of deaths, about 840 fatalities a year and 82,000 injuries per year. Obviously, not everyone who is injured requires hospitalization. That is a lot of injuries and a lot of people suffering in the course of a year, and a \$25-billion cost to Canada as a whole for injuries and fatalities on roads. When you look at Ontario alone, they cited a 1990 study of \$9 billion as the burden on Ontario's economy. That's quite substantial: About 10% of the provincial budget is the cost that we carry, the burden that we carry, from fatalities and injuries related to traffic accidents.

When they talked about the numbers, their arguments were impressive enough, strong enough, but they talked about, as I said, individuals whose cases they traced through spinal cord injuries and brain injuries. These are stories of people whose lives were turned upside down, people who'd gone from being athletes in tremendous shape, competitors, people who were at the peak of their health, who were rendered paraplegic because of these accidents; people who'd gone from being full-time mothers looking after their children to having to be looked after themselves; people who had been fully employed who could no longer work; people whose lives had been full and who had had them essentially taken away from them, who'd been put into limbo.

Even though the numbers are declining, even though things have been improving over the last few decades in Ontario, the price that individuals have to pay, the price

that families have to pay and the price that society as a whole has to pay is extremely high. We need to look at these measures to see what can be done. So what's in the bill before us? What are we being asked to vote for? What changes were made in committee? What has come back to us?

In the bill, the first section is giving the government increased authority to impose fees for administration costs for impaired driving and road racing. There's authority to impose consequences when fees or penalties are not paid. That was remarked on by those speaking earlier this afternoon. There are exemptions from payment under certain circumstances. Those circumstances will be set out in regulation, and I look forward to seeing those introduced soon. It's important for the minister to make sure that we, as legislators, know very soon exactly what those regulations are so that we have a full sense of what this legislation is actually going to accomplish.

Bill 203 provides for increased roadside suspension of licences of impaired drivers. Police can stop vehicles and do a breath test with an approved calibrated screening device or instrument. If the blood alcohol concentration is .05 alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood—that's .05 in the course of this debate. If those levels are detected and indicated by a "warn" or "alert" diagnosis, the roadside officer can suspend the licence of the person who's been pulled over. The blood alcohol threshold for suspension has been reduced from .08 to .05. I think there's general agreement in the House that it makes sense to do that. We don't see any good reason to have people continue dying on our roads because some have been drinking and then have gone driving. It makes sense to us that action be taken.

The period of suspension for those who are found to be violating the standard is, for the first offence, three days, for the second offence seven days and the third offence 30 days. It's interesting that previous suspensions won't be considered if they occurred five or more years previously. Whether this is material or whether it weakens our bill, I'm not sure. It's a fair length of time. But it's interesting that the officer may also impound the vehicle of an impaired driver at the expense of the owner of the vehicle. It makes sense to me and it makes sense to most people in this House. If you're irresponsible and you've been out drinking, if you're putting yourself and the lives of others at risk, then it makes sense to me that not only should you be suspended but that your vehicle should be impounded. I think you'll probably find a fair amount of support for this in the House and for these measures as this bill goes forward, and there was certainly that support in the committee.

It should be noted that even if people have their licence suspended three times at the roadside, there's no guarantee that there will be a conviction after that. Obviously, the judge has the discretion to decide who will and will not be convicted. We should know that the more severe penalties don't flow automatically from these simple suspensions. As I understand it, if they flowed automatically from these simple suspensions,

there would be a substantial legal challenge to the act, so we have to live with what we have. There's no certainty that a repeat offender will lose driving privileges over the long term. That's something the minister or the minister's representatives can speak to as we go through this third reading.

If a driver is convicted, then licence suspension is increased: first conviction, one year; second conviction, three years; and third conviction, indefinitely. It was noted earlier in this debate that the bill provides for an ignition interlock condition that will make it easier for offenders to apply to get their licences back early. If they agree to a conduct review program along with this interlock installation, they may actually be able to get their licences back. The interlock device, as it was explained, is a device that analyzes the breath of the driver before they put the key in the ignition, before they're allowed to drive away. It would be interesting to have commentary from the government side about the penalties should one override or disable in some way that mechanism.

1710

There have been a lot of comments on this bill, and one of the comments provided to us before committee hearings was a letter from Mothers Against Drunk Driving. I just want to read their letter into the record.

"May 3, 2007

"Dear committee members:

"Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD Canada) wishes to express its support for Bill 203 and, at the same time, raise certain issues that disappoint our organization relating to very important driving safety initiatives not found within this legislation."

So there's no question that Mothers Against Drunk Driving, one of the pre-eminent road safety groups in this country, wants to see this kind of legislation move forward, this comprehensive approach to drinking and driving problems, but they feel that the bill could have gone further, could have been substantially stronger.

"Foremost, MADD Canada supports the legislation," as I said, "and hopes to see Bill 203 passed before the Ontario Legislature recesses.

"However, we are disappointed that the government did not take this opportunity to enhance its graduated licence program with a zero BAC"—that's blood alcohol content—"limit for new drivers for five years. Other jurisdictions like Manitoba and Nova Scotia have introduced zero-BAC-for-five-years laws. Zero and low BAC limits have been introduced for all drivers under 21 in the United States and this has resulted in significant reductions in impaired driving fatalities."

I'd like to ask the government representatives, when they address this matter: Why didn't they take the steps, why didn't they adopt the approach of other jurisdictions to further reduce the deaths that we will see in our young people? Why did they not simply adopt those laws that have proven themselves to be effective in other jurisdictions? To me, it makes tremendous sense that we would simply copy them. So I'd like the government to

address this issue when they speak again. Why did you not take the steps that were recommended by Mothers Against Drunk Driving? Why did you not take the steps that have proven to be effective in other jurisdictions?

"In MADD Canada's report *Youth and Impaired Driving in Canada: Opportunities for Change*, we make a compelling case for introducing enhanced graduated licensing programs and a zero-BAC limit for five years. Here are the facts:

"—Despite the progress that has been made, young drivers are still dramatically overrepresented in alcohol-related fatalities. While 16- to 25-year-olds constitute only 13.7% of the Canadian population, they account for 32.1% of the alcohol-related traffic fatalities"—32%. That's double their numbers in the population—very high.

There's an obvious solution in legislation that has been adopted and put in place in other jurisdictions and that we could have used here in Ontario, that should have been in the bill and was not.

"—Young people have the highest reported rates of daily, weekly and monthly heavy drinking, and binge drinking. They also have high reported rates of driving after drinking and being a passenger in a vehicle of a drinking driver.

"—While 2002 per capita rates of federal impaired driving charges are relatively low among 16- to 17-year-olds, they rose sharply among 18- to 20-year-olds, peaked among 21-year-olds, and then fell gradually with age."

The last point:

"—Traffic crashes remain the largest single cause of death among Canadian youth, accounting for almost one third of all deaths. Even conservatively estimated, over 45% of these traffic deaths are alcohol-related."

This is information that was available, that could have been introduced to the bill, should have been introduced to the bill. Mothers Against Drunk Driving—actually, Andrew Murie, their chief executive officer—goes on, "Extensive research from Canada and abroad establishes that zero-BAC limits for new drivers significantly decreases alcohol-related traffic deaths among this vulnerable population."

On another matter, Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada "had also hoped the government would have followed the advice of its own transportation officials in extending the administrative drivers' licence suspension period to seven days, not to 72 hours as proposed.... 'Ontario's officials participated in a national review of most effective licence suspension practices....'"

So our people know about this. Our people in Ontario are well aware of practices in other jurisdictions and the opportunities that those jurisdictions have pointed out for reducing fatalities, for reducing injuries.

"There was a consensus that longer driver licence suspensions were needed to effectively alter a drinking driver's behaviour. All provincial and territorial officials recognized seven days as a meaningful suspension period."

I think the government responsible for this legislation, having sent its officials to take part in these discussions, should speak to why they didn't take more effective action.

"Although it is good to see the government announcing a 72-hour licence suspension, we hope that eventually Ontario and the remaining jurisdictions across Canada will implement the recommended seven-day licence suspension for impaired driving."

So on one hand, Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada is very pleased to see this legislation being so quickly dealt with by the committee and hopefully passed by the Legislature in the weeks ahead. On the other hand, the legislation could have had a greater impact on reducing impaired driving on Ontario roads had it contained a zero-BAC limit for new drivers for five years and a seven-day administrative driver's licence suspension period. The opportunities were there; our officials were aware of it. I assume that the minister's office was aware of it. The government did not bring it forward.

"If there are any questions MPPs may have regarding Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada's policy comments, please don't hesitate to contact their national office.

"Sincerely, Andrew Murie, chief executive officer, Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada."

Mothers Against Drunk Driving has endorsed the act with some very heavy qualifications. They see the value in taking this legislative action, they see the need for this legislative action, but they also see opportunities that were missed, opportunities that should have been taken by this government, that should have gone further, should have been more effective so that the number of tragedies and the dollar volume of costs that we're dealing with that arise from those tragedies would be substantially reduced.

One of the things that I came across in the course of preparing for this debate was a piece of research done that the Addiction Research Foundation had posted on their website, and it was entitled Factors Influencing Aggregate Indicators of Drinking-Driving in the United States, which is a bit of a long title, but what these researchers have done—and I alluded to this earlier in my speech—was they looked at the drinking-driving statistics in a number of jurisdictions in the United States during the period from 1982 to 1990. What they tried to do was look at all the different factors that interacted, all the different factors that had an influence on drunk driving statistics to see what were the steps that made a difference, what were the actions that made a difference.

When you look at those statistics, a clear picture of the kinds of actions that actually provided relief on highways were teased out by the researchers. Their goal was, obviously, to reduce the staggering burden of human and financial cost. They looked at a number of items like specific efforts to prevent drinking and driving or other alcohol-related problems.

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They admitted in their study that they often found it difficult to get data. They looked at different prevention-

relevant measures. They looked at traffic fatality rates. They looked at per capita consumption of alcohol and the rates of drinking-driving arrests. They looked at the levels of alcohol abuse treatment in the different jurisdictions and at AA membership. They looked at the numbers in these periods and how different programs actually gave answers to legislators and decision-makers like those of us here today dealing with this bill. What they found was that the total fatality rates were very much related, very much connected to per capita consumption of alcohol and drinking-driving arrest rates.

So if you have a society that is a heavy-drinking society, regardless of other factors, regardless of enforcement, you're going to have more drunk driving problems. It's interesting to me that there was a submission to the committee that heard this bill from Spirits Canada and they were concerned about drunk driving. It's clear there is a general acceptance that there needs to be moderation in drinking. There is a general acceptance that drinking and driving is not culturally acceptable.

One of the things they found that was interesting was that membership in Alcoholics Anonymous had a definite correlation with reduced drunk driving fatalities and injuries in the societies that they were studying.

It's interesting to see this because so much of the work that's done by Alcoholics Anonymous is done in not particularly well-funded circumstances. I go to public meetings in a church in my riding. The church is sparsely well maintained but not luxurious, and the folks from AA meet in the basement. I know others in my riding who have done their best to fight addictions of all kinds and, generally speaking, these efforts are not well funded. But it's very clear that if we want to deal with health care costs, if we want to deal with property loss, if we want to prevent tragedies in families, that adequately resourcing adult addiction treatment and prevention is key, is a highly effective measure and something that we have to do.

When this study looked at the impact of enforcement and deterrent activities, they found a much weaker relationship than they expected. They noted that in places where there were more arrests for drinking and driving, that tended to reflect the fact there was a very high level of drinking and driving. The number of arrests didn't necessarily drive down the overall incidents of drinking and driving. That doesn't mean to say that we shouldn't enforce. Obviously, if there are people out there who are drunk in cars, we should be trying to get them off the road. But it's the preventive step that has the bigger impact.

We have to look beyond the deterrence effect that we expect to see from this act. We have to go beyond that to invest, first of all, in our children so that they are raised in a way that doesn't predispose them towards addiction. Then we have to invest in programs that reduce adult addiction so that far fewer people are out there getting drunk and driving. So I would say, proceed with the tougher penalties that are outlined in this bill. I would say that impounding cars makes sense and making sure

people aren't driving around, but invest in the other matters as well.

In Canada, \$25 billion a year; in Ontario, \$9 billion a year—that's a cost. In Ontario, of that \$9 billion a year, roughly a third of those costs are related to drinking and driving: \$3 billion a year. If you think, for several hundred million a year—and I'm just picking a number out of the air, but a number much smaller than \$3 billion—you could be driving very effective addiction rehabilitation programs in this province. When I talk to people who work in the addictions field, they're constantly telling me about waiting lists for people to be taken care of. They're constantly telling me about the lack of resources. Yet we pay for that lack of resourcing very directly: in deaths and dismemberments on the road, in direct dollars.

The first really major part of this bill deals with drunk driving; I've had a chance to address that. The second part of this bill deals with street racing. I think it was a very good thing that the opposition introduced an amendment to the bill on the use of nitrous oxide to make cars perform at a much higher level; really, to supercharge them so that for street racing they would be far more competitive vehicles. I think that the opposition was entirely responsible in introducing that amendment and I'm glad that all three parties were able to support it in the clause-by-clause because, frankly, who in this House can defend a technology that underwrites, that supports, that encourages people to drive recklessly and irresponsibly?

We've talked about the overall human cost of street racing. We've talked about the larger context within which a safety program has to exist. But street racing itself does exact a human toll. Last year the CBC did a very big piece of research on street racing in Canada. It's a phenomenon that has been a problem for decades here in Toronto. We've had something like 35 deaths in Ontario since 1999. In terms of the hundreds who die every year on the road in Ontario, it's a smaller number. But for those who are victims of it and those who are aware of those who have been victims, it's particularly horrifying.

It's interesting, in the course of this past weekend, when I was at the event that I referred to earlier—the commemoration of a death of a young man in my riding—I had an opportunity to talk to the local police superintendent about street racing and his experience. He's with the division downtown. There is some street racing downtown, but much more of it is seen in the suburbs where you have wide roads, straight runs and far fewer cars. One thing he said to me—he's a fairly straightforward guy; I assume he was telling me the truth—he said that he has talked to his colleagues who have seen 400-series highways essentially taken over by street racers, where racers will block cars coming on on the entry ramps and block other cars on the road, which slow down and eventually stop so that the racers can just zoom ahead on an empty highway, which I find extraordinary—absolutely extraordinary. I think it's madness enough on an avenue like Steeles or Finch or

Sheppard, one of those wide, car-oriented streets in the northern part of the city where people would irresponsibly go forward, but to shut down a highway for this says that this problem is far bigger than I had thought in the past.

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There's no question that in this society we have a culture of powerful cars moving at very high speeds. It's fed in movies; it's fed in video games; sometimes, frankly, it's fed in advertisements for new cars. You can watch, any night on television, cars going at extraordinary speeds with a warning just faintly across the bottom of the screen saying, "Closed course; professional driver. Do not do this." It's sort of like those bits of advice we used to have on television shows for kids—"Kids, don't do this at home"—when you'd see someone do something particularly dangerous and stupid. We have a cultural problem that leads to a physical problem, a physical problem of people driving very dangerously in races on our streets. We know that it isn't just a question of statistics when we talk about people dying on our roadways; there are names, there are faces, there are people.

In 2002, RCMP Constable Jimmy Ng was killed instantly when a car that was involved in street racing came through a light and hit him. It rammed his car; he died on the spot. He was a young man. He was doing his job, a job that was necessary in this society, and for no good reason, died. He was killed out of stupidity. We all feel the human impact of that kind of loss.

Closer to home—the member from Oak Ridges spoke to this earlier—Rob and Lisa Manchester died in a suspected street racing incident in May 2006, just north of Toronto. They left behind their seven-year-old daughter. They had been out celebrating their 17th wedding anniversary.

It's clear that there are very disturbing, very troubling tragedies that arise out of this kind of behaviour, and clearly, we in this Legislature have to take action to the extent that it's possible to root it out, to end it, to stop it. There are actions that have been taken here in Ontario. There's a program called ERASE, Eliminate Racing Activities on Streets Everywhere. That's a joint project of a variety of police departments that are trying to deal with this problem. When you contact them about their experience, they say simply that in Ontario, the number of people dying from street racing is rising.

In Canada as a whole, there's not a specific law against street racing. There are penalties for speeding and for reckless driving. If someone is killed or injured, there are a number of Criminal Code sections that would apply: criminal negligence causing death, obviously; dangerous operation of a vehicle; criminal negligence causing bodily harm; and dangerous operation of a vehicle. But the reality—and this is quite disturbing—is that it's very unusual for street racers to be caught or to be, in any substantial way, penalized. Constable Taylor, who's working on the ERASE program, says that, to his knowledge, he knows of no "convicted street racer who's

served more than five months in jail.” That’s an astounding thought: No one who has been convicted of this crime that is potentially so deadly has been given more than five months in jail. I would say that for this Legislature and for this society, that’s not acceptable. You know that when you’re doing that, you’re putting a whole lot of people’s lives at risk.

One of the examples that has been cited by Constable Taylor from the ERASE program was noted by the CBC: “In November 2000, street racers in Vancouver killed 52-year-old Irene Thorpe, a pedestrian, and were convicted of criminal negligence causing death.” There were two teens involved and they were given conditional sentences of two years less a day and placed under house arrest. And rightly, this was a sentence that outraged people, because when you see this kind of irresponsible behaviour leading to the death of innocent people, no one has any sympathy for those who are engaged in that activity. No one thinks that they should simply be under house arrest.

We need to do things, as I said earlier, beyond simply punitive laws, beyond simply enforcement. We know that it’s often hard, frankly, to find those street racers. If a police officer sees two cars going at high speed down the street, it can be hard to establish whether or not they’re actually racing or just simply two cars going at high speed down the street. When you actually read the literature, so often the police say that they find out about racing afterwards. And far more often, I think, we find out about racing when a tragedy occurs, rather than it simply being caught in the course of it going on.

In Vancouver, one of the things they’re doing is redesigning streets. They’re putting up medians and curbs on narrow roads that were used for drag racing. So it simply became far more difficult physically to engage in these races.

One of the things that we’ve done here is put in the nitrous oxide section of this legislation. That’s something that has been done in BC, where they’re targeting drivers who have modified their cars, and those cars are subject to special police attention.

We need to assume that often we won’t catch people. We should assume that we have to get at the people who are doing this in the first place. One of those things that we need to do is counter-marketing. If film and video games and some car advertisements are promoting irresponsible driving, we need to invest in marketing to change people’s thinking.

There was an interesting article in the latest edition of *New Scientist* about a response called “reactance.” That’s the psychological process of people rejecting a message when it comes from a particular place: young people—anyone who’s lived with a teenager will know this—who will specifically do something because you tell them not to do it. If we’re actually going to change the culture, we have to do it in a far more sophisticated way than we’ve done with things like anti-smoking advertising, which in this society, when it’s aimed at young people, is, generally speaking, worse than laughably ineffective. It often

causes young people to feel defiant and to want to smoke. If we are actually going to engage in that cultural change, let’s do it intelligently so that we do it in a way that has an impact.

In the United States, there are a number of American police forces that have actually done things like set up drag strips in controlled areas so that they can get people off of the streets and out of areas where they will put innocent pedestrians at risk, get those young people away from areas where a lot of drinking will go on, and actually reduce the potential risk to the young people and to the population as a whole.

Speaker, we’re beginning to run low on time. I want to note that enforcement is going to be a problem. We have an ongoing difficulty with the fact that our police forces are overextended. I think the key issue here in dealing with overextension of police forces is changing the conditions that create crime in the first place so that there are far fewer crimes for the police to react to. I expect that will be far more cost-effective and, really, the better way to go. I want to emphasize that when we deal with this problem, this Bill 203 should be seen as a small part of a larger program. I call on this government and whichever government is in power after October 10 to look at this in a multidisciplinary way: to deal with addictions, to deal with adult addiction rehab, to deal with addiction prevention by investing in our children, to invest in development and densities in our cities that dramatically reduce the need for car travel and that increase the use of transit and foot traffic. We need to take action on cultural change, as I’ve just said.

I want to thank the Legislature for their patience in hearing my remarks, and I hope the government is willing to go further than this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I listened intently to the excellent speech from the member for Toronto–Danforth covering a number of issues that are contained in Bill 203.

I want to acknowledge a lady in Peterborough, Lily Rosebush. She was the founder of Peterborough Against Impaired Driving. A number of years ago, she lost her son. Her son was the victim of an impaired driver. After that, she took her time to organize a committee in Peterborough to look at ways to make our roads safer. She chatted with me on many occasions. She was in that courtroom when the drunk driver was going through the trial. She had to provide a victim’s impact statement on her and her remaining children, her family. It was always quite moving. She took that experience to be out in the community and other communities across Ontario to talk about drinking and driving and those irresponsible people who continue to participate in that activity.

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The key message in this bill is to crack down on drinking and driving and street racing, but I do want to compliment those organizations that encourage safe recreation racing in Ontario. I think of Brighton Speedway, operated by the family of the good member from

Northumberland, and Peterborough Speedway, which just recently had its 40th anniversary—venues in Ontario that provide a safe facility for recreational racing, something we should encourage.

Certainly we can see that there is a consensus building on this bill on all sides of the House. We heard Mr. Klees talk about it today, and now the member from Toronto–Danforth makes some very excellent points on how we have to get out and counter this business of drinking and driving each and every day to make our roads safer for all citizens in the province of Ontario.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline (Burlington): It's my pleasure to address this bill. I want to thank the member from Oak Ridges for the kind of thought he put into the issues that need to be addressed here and thank the member from Toronto–Danforth for the excellent remarks he made.

Preventive ways of stopping senseless behaviour are a good thing to do, but when the behaviour actually occurs, the penalties must meet the crime. This bill is a good beginning to move in that direction. It is the right direction to move in.

In dealing with this bill, it's important to say that we must make sure there are the roadside licence suspensions, the on-the-spot impoundment of vehicles, the stiffer fines and stiffer jail sentences our residents have been asking for for years and years. These are the residents who have not been personally touched by the senseless acts that occur when both street racing and drunk driving occur. This is a good day for Mothers Against Drunk Driving, who have been taking up this cause for years and years. I want to particularly thank Stephanie Dooley, who has spearheaded the Halton Mothers Against Drunk Driving, for the work she has done to bring to us her personal experience so that those of us who have families and children don't have to suffer the same experience she did.

Increasing the minimum fines is a step in the right direction, increasing the time to stay in jail is the right direction, but I think we can go further.

Ms. DiNovo: I listened to the member from Toronto–Danforth and it was a privilege to do so; it always is. Many salient points were made in that hour-long lead. I want to focus on a couple of them briefly.

(1) It's fascinating to me that this is a province that does not have a drug strategy. Ontario does not have a drug strategy. In fact, the city of Toronto has a drug strategy, and a very excellent one. We in Parkdale–High Park have a round table trying to replicate that in our riding and perhaps do a template that we can bring forward to the province. But I think he absolutely touched on a nerve there and made some excellent points: that prevention of course is always the way to go, and the first step in prevention, one would think provincially, is to have a strategy to deal with addiction. We do not have a provincial strategy to deal with addiction.

(2) The other point is about deterrents. Certainly for young people—and we were all teenagers ones—deterrents are not what they're cracked up to be in terms of preventing crime. People who engage in antisocial and

sociopathic behaviour usually only stop when they get caught. It's getting caught that stops you from doing a crime, usually; it's not the threat of a deterrent. Herein lies the problem with this bill and why we would like to see it be a lot stronger, and that is, it's going to be very, very difficult to actually enforce this bill. Street racing is very sophisticated. You never know where they're going to do it or when they're going to do it. You've heard testimony to that. You've heard the member from Toronto–Danforth talk about how difficult it is to catch someone and then that they only had a five-month maximum penalty given to somebody street racing or extreme driving. This tells you that enforcement isn't working.

Hopefully, if I get a few minutes on this bill, I'd like to talk about that and, again, how we can move forward in a meaningful way to really prevent the deaths that are happening on our highways and byways.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): I'm really pleased to hear that the member from Toronto–Danforth is supporting this bill. Let me tell you that I have lived quite an experience with street racing. Going back, on October 7, 1989, I was in my backyard washing my car with my nephew. His father had just purchased a car because Marc Charron was registered at the Ottawa university. He said, "Uncle, I'm just going to go for a drive on the main street." It just happened that all of a sudden we started to hear sirens. There was a gentleman who had stolen a car in front of the Giant Tiger. He was racing on the main street and all of a sudden the police started to chase these people, going around to the main highway and back on the main street. It ended up that my nephew was killed right on the spot, just driving slowly with his little dog in his car. Really, his father had just purchased the car so he could go to university. When I got the phone call at my place to go back about a kilometre from my place, that there was a very important issue that the people wanted to see me about, the people around the area knew that this kid came from my backyard and was washing up his car. But all of a sudden, there was this street racing and also a police chase.

Today, I see there are four main issues in the bill, but the thing that I'm really concerned about and about which I'm extremely happy is part four of section 58 of the bill, which will be repealed. It's very important today that we get an independent body looking after those incidents that do occur when they happen to a real innocent person who gets killed.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Toronto–Danforth, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Tabuns: First of all, I want to thank those members from Peterborough, Burlington, Parkdale–High Park and Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for their comments on my lead.

The comments from the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell—obviously a very troubling and painful experience. I don't want anyone to go through that. I think we owe a lot to those who, like Mothers Against

Drunk Driving, have actually spoken out in society and have done what they could to change the culture of this society and move things forward.

I spoke to this at the beginning of my one hour, but I just want to mention again the event that I was at on Sunday—the renaming of Eastview Park to Kempton Howard Park in memory of the young man who was shot in my riding—with his mother, his grandmother, his brother and his neighbours. It's at those moments that the full weight of the loss is impressed upon you. It's at those moments that a distant statistic becomes very much a core, heartfelt loss. The loss that mothers and fathers across this country feel when their children—or nephews or nieces—are killed on our roads unnecessarily is extremely painful, very painful. It is incumbent on us to do what is within our bounds, politically and legislatively, to ensure that very few parents ever have to deal with this.

Joan Howard, who was there, talked about the day as bittersweet: bitter that she had lost her son; sweet that he was recognized and the park renamed. It's my hope that mothers will only have to deal with the sweet and not with the bitter, so I hope we take action to ensure that in future.

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The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. DiNovo: It's a privilege to speak for a few minutes on Bill 203. As I said at the outset, certainly we in the New Democratic Party are completely vested in making our streets safer places and, of course, vested in trying to prevent extreme driving in all its manifestations and ultimately trying to prevent death, because that's what this leads to.

I want to highlight first and foremost—we all spoke about some of the victims of these crimes. One name wasn't brought forward and I want to bring that forward: Tahir Khan. He was a Pakistani immigrant. He was a driver for Diamond Taxi who died in January 2006 and was killed by two young people around the age of 18 who were drag-racing up Mount Pleasant, of all places. They weren't even on a highway; this was an inner-city accident. This tragedy was compounded by the fact that he was just prepared to bring his family over from Pakistan and, of course, compounded by the fact he had worked so hard to get as far as he had, only to lose his life with such a senseless crime.

You heard also, of course, of Rob and Lisa Manchester leaving an orphan behind, the inspiration for the member for Oak Ridges's amendment and originally his private member's bill, and Adrienne Seggie, from the member for Brantford's riding, whose son Matthew Power died. Certainly many, many lives are lost. You heard from the member for Toronto–Danforth, who spoke at length about the fact that deaths are going down on our streets and we're becoming safer, but one death is one death too many. It's incumbent upon all of us to do everything we can to prevent even that one death.

I know, as a rural minister for two years after ordination, the cost of drinking and driving. In my first

year in the country I buried four young people. I and all the clergy from around the area inveighed upon our youth, "Please, if you've been drinking, don't drive. Phone us—2, 3, 4 in the morning; we don't care—we'll come and get you," to no avail. Every year they did a phenomenal job through the DARE program and, I just heard from the member for Toronto–Danforth, through the ERASE program, at the local high schools to try to prevent those deaths. They brought out the mangled remains of cars, they showed videos, and yet somehow it kept going on and on and on.

I spoke earlier about the role of the media and I think, really, we have to call our media to account. There are ads still, as you heard, that are placed every night about new cars. They're just the average family sedan, but the way that they show them handling and driving too fast, driving on the edge of precipices—why is this necessary? Again, with a disclaimer at the bottom of the screen, but why is that necessary? Kids grow up playing Grand Theft Auto. There's a video game that inspires extreme driving. It's about extreme driving and encourages young people to do extreme driving. Some of the manufacturing of our cars—why does a car need to go as fast as some of the models that are out on the roads? Certainly we've come across this with motorbikes. Motorbikes are produced that can go outrageous speeds, speeds that are definitely against the law in all jurisdictions. Again, why?

Young people get their messages from the screen, they get their messages from the ads, they get their messages from video games. As my friend from Toronto–Danforth showed in the anti-smoking campaigns, they're not particularly effective. Why aren't they particularly effective? Because you just watch any Hollywood movie and you'll see the young and the hip, the cool and the chic, lighting up. As soon as you see that, it negates everything else governments do that's positive in terms of trying to reach a certain age level. It's incumbent upon the media, it's incumbent upon advertisers to do something. It would have been nice to see something like that.

The other problem, of course, as we've talked about, is enforcement. I said that it's not really the punishment that's the deterrent for young people, in particular, to engage in criminal activity; it's actually getting caught. So if you don't have a system set up that will catch the perpetrator of the crime, those engaged in anti-social behaviour, then really you're saying, "Go for it." We don't have a system like that and, despite all the best wishes and the best work that's gone into this bill, we still don't have a system like that.

The member for Oak Ridges talked about those victims of the justice system. We do have victims of the justice system. We have victims for lack of the justice system, if you will. I went on a drive-around with a wonderful commander at 14 division, Ruth White, and it was one of the most terrifying experiences of my life, because you sit there in the police car, you look at the computer flashing, and it's flashing red—these are crimes in progress—and you see about 10 of them light

up at once. I said to the sergeant I was driving around with, “Well, where are we going first?” He said, “We only have 20 cars on the road for 100,000 people. We’ll maybe make two of these.” These are crimes in progress.

Now we’re asking our overworked, understaffed police forces to enforce yet other legislation, which they don’t have the person power to do. They don’t have the person power right now to just keep up with what they’ve already been charged to execute. We need more community policing; there’s no doubt about it. We need more money into our police forces. So there is that.

Then, of course, is the prevention aspect which you heard my colleague from Toronto–Danforth speak about so eloquently. As I said, there is no Ontario drug strategy. We should all be personally ashamed of that. Addiction is a growing problem in all of our communities, whether urban or rural, and we have no systematic way of dealing with that.

I know that in my riding of Parkdale–High Park we are quite well serviced in the area of addiction research, and we’re trying to get better at it. We have a round table, as I said, that’s hoping to develop a template for the province. We have St. Joe’s and CAMH and other providers sitting around a table, trying to figure out what we can do and where we can go from here, including 11 division and 14 division at that table, but we don’t have one in the province. We don’t have any structured way of dealing with addiction and preventing addiction. That’s an incredible piece that’s missing from this strategy. You can make all the laws you want and pass all the

legislation you want, but if you don’t prevent that behaviour, you’re chasing after the fact always.

I talked about the Criminal Code and the work the federal government has done. There are two bills, Bill C-32—which is what Mothers Against Drunk Driving is asking in their Mothers’ Day release to have passed and clearly feel it’s a much stronger piece of legislation than the provincial. My fear is that what will happen in plea bargaining—we all know that this takes place—is that people will be plea-bargained away from the criminal repercussions of their action down to the provincial act, which in effect actually makes the Criminal Code a little less meaningful.

Hopefully, this is not just a “me too” bill, but hopefully one will look to the federal legislation as well and see how both will work together. We’ll only know that in the way this bill is enacted.

My hope is that it is enacted. My hope would have been that it be stronger, that more teeth be given to this bill. You heard the member from Toronto–Danforth talk about the other concerns of Mothers Against Drunk Driving in terms of what could have been, what should have been, what would have been had that happened.

It’s a delight to speak finally on something that we all agree on at least as a first step, but I rest with saying it is only a first step.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1758.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (Ind.)
Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Nepean–Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Guelph–Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
		Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay–Superior	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L) Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	Timiskaming–Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L) Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L) Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / vice-premier ministre, ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Ottawa–Vanier	Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Toronto–Danforth	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Parkdale–High Park	DiNovo, Cheri (ND)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L) Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Waterloo–Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Elliott, Christine (PC)
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L) Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L) Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Ferreira, Paul (ND)
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse		
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)		
Scarborough–Agincourt	Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L) Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux		
Scarborough–Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L) Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, government House leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		
St. Paul's	Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L) Attorney General / procureur général		

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.

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