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des débats
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Tuesday 2 December 2008

Mardi 2 décembre 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 2 December 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 2 décembre 2008

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CORONERS AMENDMENT ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES CORONERS

Mr. Bartolucci moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 115, An Act to amend the Coroners Act / Projet de loi 115, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les coroners.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: On October 23, I was pleased to introduce Bill 115, the Coroners Amendment Act, 2008. Today, I have the privilege of rising in support of this legislation which, if passed, will significantly strengthen Ontario's death investigation system. The proposed amendments to the Coroners Act are part of our ongoing efforts to ensure that our death investigation system has the appropriate checks and balances to prevent a future situation similar to the one that led to the recent public inquiry.

Since 2003, a great many changes have been made to ensure the quality of death investigations in Ontario, especially in criminally suspicious cases. The chief forensic pathologist has developed detailed guidelines for the conduct of autopsies in criminally suspicious cases. In each of these cases, the autopsy now undergoes a peer review process to make sure that everything that should be done has been done, and has been done correctly. Now, when a pediatric autopsy is required, it is performed in one of four centres: Hamilton, London, Ottawa or Toronto. This ensures that complex and specialized pediatric autopsies are conducted by the most experienced and knowledgeable pathologists.

In June of this year, after an extensive international search, we appointed a new chief coroner, Dr. Andrew McCallum. Dr. McCallum is uniquely qualified to lead Ontario's death investigation system through this period of change. In addition, just last month we announced the proposed site for a new forensic services and coroner's complex. The new complex will house the Centre of

Forensic Sciences, the Office of the Chief Coroner and the Provincial Forensic Pathology Unit under one roof. It will provide state-of-the-art technology and laboratory facilities to meet the province's forensic needs now and in the years to come. By moving this project forward, we are addressing Commissioner Goudge's recommendations of a new modern facility to house the Office of the Chief Coroner and related forensic sciences. We will be seeking public input on the proposed site over the coming weeks.

Earlier, I mentioned Commissioner Goudge's recommendations. Without a doubt, the most important step we have taken so far was to ask Justice Goudge to form a commission of public inquiry into pediatric forensic pathology in Ontario. His detailed report, released this past October, has provided us with the information we need to help prevent a similar tragedy in the future. His report imparts that information, and its recommendations have provided us with a road map for future improvements to the death investigation system.

The resulting legislation now before this House is guided by Commissioner Goudge's recommendations and has a very clear objective. If passed, this legislation would lay the foundation for a death investigation system that, one, has greater oversight; two, improves public accessibility; and three, is more transparent and more accountable.

Each of the proposed amendments to the Coroners Act meets the intent of the legislative framework recommended by Commissioner Goudge's report and builds on the progress our government has already made to strengthen Ontario's death investigation system.

I'd like to spend the next few minutes reviewing some of the key amendments we are proposing. Let me deal first with defining the purpose of death investigations. It is important that everyone understand why a death investigation is held and what we hope to learn from it. Everything else about the system flows from the answers to these fundamental questions.

The proposed new legislation would establish in law for the first time the purpose of a death investigation. The proposed legislation would set out in clear and simple terms that each investigation conducted in the public interest answers five basic questions about the death—Who died? How did they die? When did they die? Where did they die? By what means did they die?—and further, that the results of an investigation are to be used to determine whether recommendations are needed to prevent similar deaths, or whether the death requires the additional public scrutiny of an inquest.

I want to deal for the next few moments with the item of establishing effective oversight. It's clear from Commissioner Goudge's report that establishing effective oversight of the death investigation system is the key to winning back public confidence in the system. In keeping with our efforts to strengthen the system, the proposed legislation would create a death investigation oversight council. This new council would oversee the work of the chief coroner and the chief forensic pathologist and hold them accountable for the quality of death investigations in Ontario. Under the legislation, Ontario's Lieutenant Governor would appoint members to the oversight council. Members would include representatives from the judicial, medical and government communities. In this way, the council would contain the specialized knowledge, expertise and experience needed to effectively advise and oversee the chief coroner and the chief forensic pathologist.

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I think it's important to spend a few moments talking about the way we are going to be strengthening the complaints process, because we must never forget that if a death is being investigated, a family has lost a loved one. This is a time of profound sorrow, stress and anxiety for the families, and while our coroners are experienced professionals, there exists a risk of misunderstanding and miscommunication in such situations. A strong death investigation system is a transparent death investigation system that is not afraid to listen and respond when a family expresses concern over how the investigation into their loved one's death was handled.

Under the proposed legislation, a new complaints committee would be established that would report to the oversight council. The committee would track complaints made about the handling of a particular death investigation or about the conduct of a coroner or a pathologist during an investigation. In general terms, complaints concerning the medical roles of coroners and pathologists would be directed to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, while complaints related to their roles in a death investigation would be directed to the chief coroner and chief forensic pathologist respectively.

The new committee would ensure that the chief coroner and the chief forensic pathologist respond to complaints promptly and thoroughly. If a complainant is not satisfied with the response provided by the chief coroner or the chief forensic pathologist, the complaints committee has the authority to review the complaint. Any complaints made against the chief coroner and the chief forensic pathologist would be handled directly by that committee.

It is critical that we ensure a high quality of forensic pathology services. In his report, Commissioner Goudge identified the vital role that forensic pathology plays in Ontario's death investigation system. Several of his recommendations were directed at improving the oversight of forensic pathologists, defining their roles and ensuring quality within the system. The proposed legislation addresses those recommendations and would, for the first

time in Ontario, establish in law the roles and responsibilities of a forensic pathologist in the death investigation system, as well as establish the framework needed to hold pathologists fully accountable for their work.

The proposed legislation would establish the chief forensic pathologist as the head of forensic pathology in the province. This would allow him or her to ensure the quality and consistency of services being provided by pathologists in the death investigation system across the province.

To further safeguard consistency, accountability and oversight, a new forensic pathology service would bring together in one system all of the province's forensic pathology services. These services are currently decentralized and run by regional forensic pathology units and other hospital facilities where autopsies are performed. The new service will report to the chief forensic pathologist.

The chief forensic pathologist would also be responsible for maintaining a registry of pathologists authorized to perform autopsies in Ontario. To be included on the register, a pathologist would have to demonstrate appropriate qualifications and credentials and continue to meet the strict performance requirements set out by the chief forensic pathologist.

As well as answering questions about the circumstances of a particular death, the chief coroner has a responsibility to protect public safety. Under the current legislation, the coroner is permitted to release the results of death investigations only to family members of the deceased. The current law does not allow the coroner to release the results to the public.

The coroner has a need to share certain information when not doing so would put the public at significant risk. For example, if widely used medical equipment were faulty and caused the death, the public would need to be informed. The proposed legislation would provide the chief coroner with the clear authority to decide when it is appropriate to share information to improve public safety.

There have been recent cases where families who have lost loved ones have called upon me as minister to direct the chief coroner to call an inquest. As minister, I currently have that authority under section 22 of the Coroners Act. Each of these cases has been compelling. As a father and a grandfather, I have nothing but deep sympathy for the pain these families have suffered through the loss of their loved ones. As minister, I recognize that the decision to hold an inquest must be based on scientific evidence and in the public interest, not on political considerations, however well-intentioned.

The intent of the proposed legislation is to build a stronger death investigation system, based on the principles of professionalism and accountability. It is the chief coroner who has the experience and expertise to decide when a death investigation warrants an inquest. And the chief coroner should be free to make that decision without political interference. That's why the proposed legislation would repeal section 22 and thereby remove the power of the Minister of Community Safety

and Correctional Services to order an inquest. While these powers would be removed, strict checks and balances would be in place to ensure that the decision whether or not to hold an inquest is a solid, defensible one and is in fact the right one.

That's not to say that a decision regarding an inquest cannot be questioned or reviewed. Decisions pertaining to inquests routinely undergo three levels of review within the office of the chief coroner. This includes the local investigating coroner, the regional supervising coroner and the inquest committee. The chief coroner can review the case if the family of the deceased is unhappy with the decision. The chief coroner's decision regarding an inquest could still be the subject of a judicial review if there is a desire to appeal his or her ruling.

When we talk about a strong death investigation system, we mean a system that delivers a consistent, high-quality service to everyone in Ontario, regardless of where they live. In his report, Commissioner Goudge recognized that delivering a consistent high-quality service is challenging in some areas of the province. The current shortage of doctors in certain northern, First Nations and remote communities results in longer response times in the event of a death, and sometimes it is very difficult for a coroner to attend the scene in an acceptable timeline.

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As recommended by Commissioner Goudge, the new legislation would provide for the appointment of individuals other than medical doctors or police officers to perform a coroner's duties. For example, paramedics or nurse practitioners might be appointed to fulfill the role. These details would be set out in a regulation. Of course, all death investigations would continue to be supervised by a regional supervising coroner. If passed, this amendment will give coroners the flexibility to meet the local needs and provide improved services to northern, First Nations and remote communities.

Making the best use of available resources is of paramount importance in the delivery of public services, and death investigations are no exception. The current legislation requires an inquest must be held any time someone dies while in the custody of a correctional facility. Over the years, it has become apparent that inquests into in-custody deaths that result from natural causes rarely provide meaningful recommendations to improve public or inmate safety. Under the proposed legislation, an inquest would no longer be mandatory in the case of an adult who dies from natural causes while in the custody of a correctional facility. This amendment would allow coroners to focus their resources on those complex cases where an inquest could result in meaningful recommendations to make Ontario safer.

Let me be very clear: All deaths of adult inmates in correctional facilities are, and will continue to be, thoroughly investigated by a coroner who is able to make recommendations to prevent similar deaths. As well, the coroner would still be able to call an inquest in such cases if he or she believes a person may not have died of

natural causes. All deaths in police custody or of minors held in a secure custody facility will remain the subject of a mandatory inquest.

I want to spend a few moments on recommendation 77 of Commissioner Goudge's report, regarding tissue retention. Retaining tissue samples, including whole organs, is a crucial part of the death investigation process. Testing done on retained tissues can help determine the cause of death and can contribute to public safety. Although coroners and forensic pathologists may need to retain tissues following the burial or cremation of a body for reasons such as criminal proceedings, there is currently no explicit legislative authority to do so.

In 2004, the Office of the Chief Coroner established a policy requiring family members to be notified when organs were retained and to be consulted about the final disposition of these organs. Commissioner Goudge acknowledged the current policy of tissue retention and in his report recommended that we retain that policy. The legislative amendments ensure that recommendations can be made to further develop and formalize the current policy of tissue retention.

In summary, the proposed legislation builds on the progress our government has already made to strengthen Ontario's death investigation system by laying the foundation for future improvements. If passed by this House, the amendments contained in this bill will allow us to create the more effective, more transparent and, above all, more accountable death investigation system that Ontarians demand and deserve.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to add some comments on the minister's speech on Bill 115, An Act to amend the Coroners Act. I might point out that I have just had the chance for a cursory read of the bill so far. I believe we're going to be discussing it in caucus later today, and we'll be hearing from our critic very shortly with his perspective on the bill. I believe we're generally supportive of the bill.

The minister did prompt me to think of some questions to ask him, which perhaps he can respond to in his two minutes. Specifically, section 22 of the act, which authorizes the minister to direct a coroner to hold an inquest, is repealed. I guess I would ask the minister, first of all, how many times has this power been used in the past number of years? As far as I understand, it's been very infrequent—maybe once or twice—but could he let me know exactly how many times this power has been used, and has the power of the minister to order an inquest been abused? If it hasn't been abused, then I wonder why this section is in the bill. Why would we want to remove this discretionary power? Is it so that the government can avoid the opposition raising questions and demanding an inquest? You could just say, "Well, I don't have the power to order an inquest." I would like a response from the minister specifically on that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm pleased that the government is responding to the Goudge inquiry. We all know the circumstances that led to that inquiry, and the situations that families were put through, to say the very least, were tragic. There are a number of elements in this bill that the NDP critic feels are positive, and he will speak to those when he does his lead—I understand he won't be doing his lead today; we're going to ask that that be stood down.

We are very concerned about renouncing the power of the minister to call inquests. I understand that it could be extremely inconvenient politically, and that question was pursued by my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka. But the simple reality is that in the end this is a parliamentary democracy. People have to be able to hold a government to account and a minister to account. I think that retention of that power for you, Minister, or for future ministers, is important, because coroners can make mistakes and may take a political read and say, "You know, my masters may not be happy with this; I'm going to let it lie."

In the end, that coroner reports to the minister, to the government of the day, not to the people. To withdraw that power from the minister, to set up a barrier between the people and those who actually make the decisions about what are, in the end, very significant events that can change the course of justice in this province and change the course of people's lives, I think, is a mistake. I'd ask the minister to go back, look at the act and reconsider that section in particular, because in a parliamentary democracy, we have to have accountability.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Levac: I want to first thank the minister for a very meaningful, thoughtful and well-structured presentation about what the report was about and what our government's bill is about. It sounds to me like some people are going to zero in on one particular in that piece of legislation. Just to kind of put that in context, I want them to understand that the authority that is being talked about has been used once in this Parliament—once only—and has been asked for numerous times.

I want everyone to focus on exactly what we're asking for. What we're asking for is to have us remove any kind of action on a political level from the scientific and the practical. Does this minister have expertise in child forensics? Absolutely not. Do I? No. There are probably one or two people in this room who actually have any expertise in this area. So I caution us about saying this is democracy being lost.

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Quite frankly, this is not about us. I want to remind us that this is not about us. This is about finding answers to questions about the death of an individual. None of us in this room, except for maybe two or three, have that expertise. To assume that that expertise is not going to be used because of fear of political masters, I would say, is questioning the expertise and professionalism of the in-

dividual. So please, let's be careful of what this debate is going to turn into.

I would ask us to focus in on the wonderful report that has been done by the commissioner. All the improvements being made in that particular document are going to be adapted to the best of our ability in this bill and in further bills to come. I keep reminding this House that absolutely no one has a monopoly on the right answer and on writing the perfect bill. What we're trying to do here is move the bar higher and further for those people who need those answers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'll be speaking on this bill in just a moment, and I want to reassure the parliamentary assistant that there's no question: We won't be zeroing in on that. We want to know some answers to it, and we'd like to have a good explanation of the power of the minister to call an inquest, but overall I think we're very pleased that Commissioner Goudge came forward with this at an appropriate time. We've got some questions to ask, obviously, and we've got a lot of things to put on the record. However, in the end this is about people's lives, about transparency and about coming up with answers to questions that many people have asked in the past.

I look forward to the debate. I look forward to hearing the families who come forward and the professionals who will come forward in our debate at committee. I'm not going to ask for the committee to travel all over Ontario. I think we can probably hold most of the meetings right here at Queen's Park and find out the kind of interest that is here as well. I look forward to speaking for a while in a few short minutes, and will have a lot to add to the debate today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Community Safety has two minutes to respond.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I do want to respond to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka with regard to section 22. Section 22 has only been used once, as the member from Brant mentioned. We believe—I think the general public believes—that the decision to call an inquest should be based on science and what is in the best interests of the public. I don't think there should be political intervention or political interference in the process. We believe that the legislation we are proposing, in fact, treats the calling of an inquest in as fair a manner as possible, based on science and public interest.

Member from Toronto–Danforth, there is still the oversight; there are still the levels. A person first asks a local coroner for an inquest. If that is denied, then he or she can appeal to the regional coroner. If denied, he or she can appeal to the chief coroner. If not satisfied, there is a judicial overview that is still in place that that person can access.

Finally, I want to thank the member for Brant, who will, as parliamentary assistant, have carriage of this bill through the House and at committee. I want to thank the member for Simcoe North as well for his comments and

for the comments he will deliver in a few short moments and during this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm very pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 115, An Act to amend the Coroners Act. I want to point out immediately that this bill—I won't read all the parts of the explanatory note, but certainly there are a number of amendments to the Coroners Act: amendments respecting pathologists, amendments respecting post-mortem examinations, amendments respecting oversight and complaints, amendments respecting coroner's investigations, amendments respecting the determination to hold an inquest, amendments respecting inquests and amendments respecting administrative matters—so there are a few housekeeping amendments as well.

I think the minister mentioned just very briefly in part of his comments today, "A strong death investigation system is a transparent death investigation system..." I think you said that a little earlier, and I wanted to point out that I hope that, in the end, this is what we are trying to resolve here.

I want to congratulate Justice Goudge for the recommendations he made. I know this whole area of this particular ministry, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, crosses over a lot into the Attorney General's office, because it was the Attorney General who appointed the commission. But in the end, we're dealing with some very, very sensitive issues here, and this is no time for any of us to play partisan politics. We want to make sure that what we're providing here with Bill 115 is something that is good for Ontario and for the future of the families in Ontario.

There are a number of things that I want to put on the record here today. There are concerns and questions that need to be debated in committee. However, we are pleased that the government has thoroughly addressed the concerns presented by Justice Goudge. Accurate, professional and accountable forensic pathology is a very important element within the administration of justice and vital to ensuring that justice is done.

I want to give background on it from our caucus's perspective. In November 2005, Dr. Barry McLellan, the chief coroner of Ontario, announced the scope and format of a review into 44 criminally suspicious and homicide cases dating back to 1991 where Dr. Charles Smith had performed an autopsy or provided an opinion in consultation. The purpose of the review was to determine whether the conclusions reached by Dr. Smith in his autopsy or consultation reports or during his testimony, where applicable, could be supported by the information and materials available for independent review.

On April 19, 2007, Ontario's chief coroner released the results of a review of the cases handled by pediatric forensic pathologist Charles Smith and determined that there were problematic scientific findings in 20 of the cases, 12 of which involved convictions and one in which the accused was declared not criminally responsible.

An Inquiry into Pediatric Forensic Pathology in Ontario was established by the government of Ontario, pur-

suant to the Public Inquiries Act, on April 25, 2007, and it was originally due to be completed by April 25, 2008. However, that date was later extended to September 30, and it was of course headed by Justice Goudge.

The inquiry's mandate was to conduct a systematic review and assessment of the policies, procedures, practices, accountability and oversight mechanisms, quality control measures and institutional arrangements of pediatric forensic pathology in Ontario from 1981 to 2001, as they relate to its practice and use in investigations and criminal proceedings. Individual cases were not to be examined, although the 2007 review of cases examined by Charles Smith was referenced as evidence of serious problems within the current system. The Inquiry into Pediatric Forensic Pathology in Ontario report was released October 1, 2008. The Coroners Act was before the House for first reading shortly thereafter, on October 23, 2008—just a few short weeks ago.

I would also like to zero in on the coroner and the forensic pathology from our research on this. The Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario is part of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and acts pursuant to the Coroners Act. Currently, there's no mention of the role of forensic pathologists in the act.

There are approximately 7,000 forensic post-mortem examinations performed in Ontario each year; this includes approximately 400 cases which are initially investigated as criminally suspicious or homicide cases. There is a worldwide shortage of properly trained and accredited forensic pathologists, and in Canada there are no domestic postgraduate training programs in forensic pathology. This has meant that students have been forced to go to other countries for training.

Nevertheless, despite failing to recognize forensic pathology programs in Canada, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada has formally recognized the subspecialty of forensic pathology.

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"The purpose of forensic pathology is to assist the state in finding out why its citizens die. The medical dimension of forensic pathology involves the study of disease and injury in a deceased person, using the basic principles and methodologies of pathology to determine, if possible, the cause of death and to address the timing of injuries or other medical issues that help explain the death. Its legal dimension is to assist the state's legal systems, most importantly the criminal justice system, to understand how the death occurred by explaining the relevant pathology.

"Forensic pathology typically involves the performance of a post-mortem examination, also called an autopsy, which entails the dissection of the body, an examination of organs and tissues, and ancillary investigations including X-rays, laboratory examinations and toxicology testing.... In summary," forensic pathology "focuses on interpreting the post-mortem findings to assist in the end point of the death investigation required by the state, which may include a criminal trial, an inquest, or a coroner's finding of cause and manner of death made without an inquest."

I have the executive summary of the Goudge report with me today. According to the executive summary on page 4, "For the community at large, failure in such traumatic circumstances comes at a huge cost to the public's faith in the criminal justice system—a faith that is essential if the justice system is to play the role required of it by society. The cases we examined at the inquiry demonstrate how vital the role of the forensic pathologist can be in the success or failure of the criminal justice system in coping with the sudden, unexpected death of an infant in criminally suspicious circumstances."

The report identifies three areas that lead to the systemic failure from 1981 to 2001: weakness in the oversight and accountability mechanisms, inadequate quality control measures, and defective institutional arrangements for pediatric forensic pathology and more generally for forensic pathology.

There were 11 themes in which 169 recommendations were made. They are: (1) professionalizing and rebuilding pediatric forensic pathology; (2) reorganizing pediatric forensic pathology; (3) enhancing oversight and accountability; (4) improving the complaints process; (5) best practices, (6) effective communications with the criminal justice system; (7) the roles of coroners, police, crown and defence; (8) the role of the court; (9) pediatric forensic pathology and potential wrongful convictions; (10) First Nations and remote communities; (11) pediatric forensic pathology and families.

I want to now zero in on some quotes that we've seen here, and then go to a personal note from some folks who are in the audience here today. I wanted to put these quotes in because they came out of the press releases from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, but this is one from Minister Bartolucci: "Commissioner Goudge gave us the road map to a stronger, more accountable death investigation system. This legislation takes us a long way down that road. If passed, it would ensure that we have the checks and balances in place to prevent a similar tragedy in the future."

Also, I want to add, "This legislation would provide us the framework we need to truly revitalize the system and help us build on the work we've already done to earn back the trust of the people of Ontario," said Ontario's Chief Coroner, Dr. Andrew McCallum.

I go back now to when the inquiry was originally announced in April 2007, and I read this from, at that time, the Attorney General, Michael Bryant. I want to read this quote from him because it ties into my comments in a letter I would like to read from folks.

"Justice Goudge will spend the next year reviewing and assessing the systemic policies, procedures, practices, accountability and oversight mechanisms, quality control measures and institutional arrangements related to the practice of pediatric forensic pathology and its future use in investigations and criminal proceedings. Under the Public Inquiries Act, this commission of inquiry will have the power to issue a summons for testimony and for documents. Justice Goudge will deliver a report with recommendations within a year from today,

the goal of which is to enhance public confidence in pediatric forensic pathology." Of course, we know that was delayed somewhat.

"We need to improve the system and prevent this from recurring. These pediatric pathology reports may be only one element of the justice system, but one significant mistake in one report is unacceptable

"There can be nothing more tragic than the death of a child. Many families have already been through so much more than many of us could imagine. So, too, are miscarriages of justice tragedies for our justice system and for the individuals affected."

That takes me to a letter I'd like to read into the record today from the Farlow family, and the Farlow family is with us today. Tim and Barbara Farlow are in the members' gallery, along with their children Rob, Jack and Jenn. I'd like to welcome them here today. They have been very, very strong advocates on a case involving their little sister and daughter. I think if this legislation can prevent what happened to the Farlows from happening to other people, then it will be a success. The letter reads:

"Dear Mr. Dunlop:

"We would like to share our family's experience with the Ontario coroner's office at this critical time when the Coroners Act is being amended.

"The motto for the coroner's office is, 'We speak for the dead to protect the living.' Thank you, Mr. Dunlop, for providing a voice for our baby daughter, Annie. The coroner's office has failed to do so.

"Three years ago, our 80-day-old daughter"—and that's 80 days—"died at an Ontario hospital under a very disturbing set of circumstances. We raised the issues with the hospital and received letters of apology from hospital executives and from its chief of critical care. However, we could not resolve the problems with effective recommendations.

"We became aware that the hospital was in violation of the Coroners Act and once we alerted the president of this, the coroner was notified immediately.

"This is when our dealings with the coroner's office began. We first met with Dr. Jim Cairns in June 2006 and we placed blind trust in his expertise and integrity and that of the coroner's office.

"Dr. Cairns told us that the pediatric death review committee would investigate Annie's death. He said, 'Don't worry, I carry a big stick. I foresee that I will chair a meeting between you and the hospital once the review is finished in two or three months.'

"We had two goals: (1) to understand why or how Annie died, and (2) to obtain recommendations from the coroner to ensure that another child would not suffer and die in the same way.

"Our daughter was born with a serious and complex condition. We expected to make 'best-interests' decisions for her, and with the advice of her doctors.

"Something went very wrong with Annie's medical care. She died in a tragic set of circumstances within 24 hours of arrival at the hospital. Annie developed respira-

tory distress and the doctors told us it was pneumonia. A few hours after arrival, our daughter had a respiratory crash.

“When this happens, everyone is supposed to come running from all directions. For over one hour we stood there alone with the therapist, who was bagging Annie to help her breathe, until finally, the doctor called the critical care unit.

“Annie died 16 hours later. They told us she needed a type of surgery that she would not survive. Of course, we trusted and respected the doctors.

“When Annie stopped breathing we did not want her to be put on life support because we were told there was no hope.

“Days after our daughter’s death, we realized that many things didn’t make sense. We obtained a copy of the medical records. Our instincts were confirmed when a nurse with 10 years experience in a critical care unit reviewed the records. She said, ‘I’m sorry, what happened wasn’t right.’

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“Here is what we learned:

“—A ‘do not resuscitate’ order had been placed in the records before we gave consent;

“—No diagnostic tests had been done. There were many things that could have been wrong with Annie and many were treatable.

“—The final medication report was missing.

“We were in shock. We were so sad that our daughter died in this way.

“After nine months the coroner’s review was complete. There was no meeting chaired with the hospital as Dr. Cairns had told us. The report stated that the care provided in the final 24 hours was not appropriate but before that the committee thought that Annie’s care was reasonable and appropriate. The diagnosis for pneumonia was not definitive. No specific cause of death could be determined, but the report stated that the death was natural. It also stated that it was not certain that our daughter needed the stressful surgery. The committee made only two recommendations. The first was that they should do a forensic audit of the narcotic cabinet from the day that Annie had died. The audit was done and the report stated that all the narcotics were accounted for and that no active steps were taken to bring about Annie’s death. The second was that the hospital should make sure other hospitals knew about their patient-centred care policies.

“We were very upset. These recommendations would not change anything.

“We met with Dr. Cairns. He refused to answer our questions about what happened on Annie’s last day. We asked, ‘How much narcotics were signed out for Annie?’ Dr. Cairns said he did not need to tell us that. He became angry with our many questions and refused to answer them. He told us, ‘The committee determined that your daughter’s final care was not appropriate. You can go to the college or the civil or criminal court. That is not my call.’

“That was not what we wanted. There was something wrong with the system, not just one doctor. We believe that there was a problem with the medical care provided to children like Annie. All we wanted was to understand what happened and ensure changes were made. The coroner’s office is the only body that has the expertise to review medical deaths and make recommendations.

“Besides, children like Annie have no protection in the legal system and a senior crown prosecutor told us that no matter what, they would not investigate.

“We decided to appeal for a coroner’s inquest.

“We met with leaders from most of the major disability groups and with Senator Sharon Carstairs, who had authored many studies on end-of-life care. The groups understood our concerns and supported us. They all wrote letters to the coroner in support of our appeal for an inquest. The letters represented tens of thousands of vulnerable lives.

“The executive director of Community Living Ontario wrote a letter to the chief coroner. It stated: ‘Nothing (the parents) have learned and communicated to us convinces either them or us that an inquest is unnecessary in this tragic case. In fact, the persistent attempts to close the book on this matter convince us all the more that it ought to be fully opened to public scrutiny.’

“Meantime we obtained copies of the narcotic sign-out sheets through freedom-of-information legislation. Dr. Cairns had refused to tell us how much narcotics had been signed out for Annie.

“We learned that in the final hours, two lethal doses of narcotics were removed from the narcotic cabinet with no doctor’s order. We were very concerned.

“We decided to have a medical expert review our daughter’s records.

“The reviewer informed us that our daughter endured continual and progressive asphyxiation from the fifth day of her life. He wrote, ‘I am in complete disagreement with the coroner’s reference that the early management of treatments and care of Annie’s respiratory insufficiency were reasonable or appropriate.’

“With respect to the missing narcotics and the missing medication records, the reviewer wrote that the coroner’s committee took ‘a dismissive and cavalier view of the violations.’ He wrote, ‘Unless there are adequate and sufficient explanations, aren’t we left with uncomfortable but plausible and suspicious speculations?’

“Our medical reviewer also documented 14 material errors in the 19-page coroner’s report.

“In June of this year, we received a letter telling us tersely that our appeal for a coroner’s inquest was denied. There was no justification and no answers to our questions.

“We wrote a letter to the new chief coroner, Dr. McCallum, asking him how it was determined that the narcotics were accounted for.

“Dr. McCallum wrote that there was no provision in the Coroners Act for him to review the case subsequent to the denial of an appeal for an inquest.

“He added, ‘The matter is therefore concluded from our perspective.’

“After three years, we find it difficult to believe that we do not know how or why our daughter died or why it cannot be determined.

“Annie’s death raises three major concerns related to the system.

“(1) There is a need to review the prenatal genetics program and the effect of the treatment of infants with genetic conditions.

“(2) Transparency is required regarding the admission criteria to the intensive care unit and the manner in which narcotics are used.

“(3) There is a need to review why there is no protection in Ontario for vulnerable lives like Annie’s.

“On September 24 of this year we wrote a letter to Minister Bartolucci. We questioned the conduct and accountability of the coroner’s office. We wrote that we were looking for proof and assurance that our daughter’s death was natural and inevitable. We are still waiting for a response.

“All that we asked of the medical system was to give Annie a chance if it seemed to be in her best interests. Otherwise, we wished for her to have a peaceful and dignified death. When a child suffers without need and dies in this manner, something is very wrong.

“Hubert Humphrey wrote: ‘The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, needy and the handicapped.’

“Mr. Dunlop, we feel the coroner’s office failed us. We are of the supportable position that the coroner is deliberately withholding the truth. With the scathing conclusions of the Goudge inquiry, all Ontarians are left with justifiably shaken confidence in the accuracy of the coroner’s office reports.

“We feel the coroner’s office has proven to be incapable of policing itself and ask that you propose adequate checks and balances are installed to ensure the coroner’s office can meet its mandate.”

That’s signed by Barbara and Tim Farlow. They are members of Patients for Patient Safety Canada. I want to thank them for being here today and for their persistence in this case. It’s people like the Farlows who bring about the reason for change and the reason why we’re here today. What I would like to say as we move forward with this is that this shouldn’t happen to any family. In the end, the results of the inquiry and the passing of Bill 115 have to make sure that that transparency is in place so all of these types of questions are answered.

With that, I wanted to say there are a number of questions that we have to ask in the House today. These are questions that I can put on the record that will probably come up at committee, or maybe from some of the presenters.

The first question is, why has the requirement to issue a coroner’s warrant for an inquest been removed?

Number two: Considering subsection 28(4), why can’t the pathologist wait for the warrant, and what if their reasonable assumption is incorrect? How will this section ensure an investigation scene is not inadvertently tampered with? Are there ethical concerns raised by examining a body without a warrant?

The third question is: Will the annual report to be submitted to the minister, pursuant to section 8(7)(8), be made publicly available?

Fourth question: Will the annual report by the complaints committee, and submitted to the oversight council pursuant to subsections 8.4(15) and (16), be made publicly available?

Although the crown will still receive the results of an inquest pursuant to subsection 52(1) of the act, and despite clause 4(1)(d) and section 18.1, could the administration of justice be hindered by not, in the first instance, making the crown aware of the decision of the coroner pursuant to new sections 18, 19 and 29 of the act?

So there will be questions to be asked in this House and at the committee level. We do want to make sure, since this hasn’t been amended in a number of years—I believe it was 1970. The parliamentary assistant mentioned that the question about the power of the minister to call an inquest has only happened once ever; that’s something that I think we’ll deal a lot with in committee, but it won’t be the emphasis of the committee to zero in on one topic. If it’s only been used once, I guess the question would be, why would we take it away, if it’s that small a matter?

I think I’ve been very fortunate in my life. I’ve never had any problems in my family; my kids have been healthy. I have three little granddaughters and they’re all healthy. But I can tell you that when people go through the trauma of losing a loved one, it does have a major, major impact on their lives. I lost a little sister at the age of seven. She died in a bus accident at a very early age, and for the next 30 years, before my parents passed away, it had an impact on their lives from that point on. They were never really ever the same. There was something missing in their lives, and it was her.

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As we look at the cases before the people in Ontario, as we look at people like the Farlows here today, there’s something missing in their lives. And when there are questions unanswered about it, that’s even more reason for us as parliamentarians to make sure that we get legislation right. We have to make sure we get it in a very positive light to answer these questions.

This is an area of our Parliament that I feel very strongly about. As I mentioned earlier, the coroner’s office is one of those areas that a lot of people don’t want to talk about. I would suspect that if you looked across the province today and you did polling on, “What was the Goudge report?” there would be very few people interested or very few people who would even know what we’re talking about. But the reality is that it could happen to anyone at any time, to people and their families, and they may require that transparency and that ability of the

coroner's office to perform at a level second to no other organization, because people do need answers and they do want transparency.

Mr. Speaker, that's really all I had to say today. As I said earlier, it's not the type of committee that I think should be travelling to Sudbury and Thunder Bay and all over the province. I think what we need to do is have a thorough discussion in this House and make sure that we get the appropriate people to come before the committee. I'm not sure what your plans are for committee on this right at this particular time, but I do think it's important that we move forward in a positive manner so that Bill 115 becomes very positive legislation and creates a very transparent system for Ontario.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to speak to this today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm going to comment, in some ways, more about the earlier remarks made by the member from Brant. When he talks about essentially turning this whole process—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Sorry to have to interrupt the member for Toronto–Danforth, but your comments are supposed to relate back to the speech that was given by the member for Simcoe North.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you for the correction, Speaker.

With regard to the comments from the member for Simcoe North, I think we always have to remember that what is before us is a political process, that any suggestion that this simply is a process that can be reduced to scientific analysis is one that can't hold water. We've gone through a process, an inquiry, showing that in fact there are tremendous limitations to science, tremendous limitations to the people who practise science and that, ultimately, steps have to be taken to ensure that science, which only deals with a small part of assessing reality, is actually carried out properly. It can be carried out in ways that are scandalous. It can be carried out in ways that are exacting and precise.

The determination as to whether or not good science is being put in place has to be ultimately in the hands of the government. The bill that's brought before us has to reflect their accountability and their ultimate responsibility to ensure that the coroners' system is a sound one, that the assessment of coroners' abilities is good and that the decisions made by coroners reflect the will of the people of this province.

To say that one can reduce that simply to a scientific analysis of a limited number of facts doesn't hold water.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Levac: The member from Simcoe North and I have had many discussions back and forth over public safety and security. I was on the other side as critic and his party on this side, and we've engaged in some conversations. Never once have I ever gotten the

impression that he, nor anyone in this House, has ever forgotten that this is about people.

Before I make my comments to him to respond, I think we should be continually and almost all the time expressing our sympathies to those who have had to go through the process and who have not been able to bring closure to a death in the family. That is incomprehensible to most people whose families who have not gone through it. My sympathies, along with those in this House, I believe, would be appropriate to send to those families.

That said, I remind the member that some of the things he was talking about are actually what the bill is trying to do, and I think he has acknowledged that, and that is to improve the oversight and accountability on the death investigation system so that those answers can be provided. The oversight council is going to be created in order for them to review that process, to ensure that the information that is available is provided to the families—a complaints committee that allows somebody to have a voice inside if they feel that they're not being listened to.

The Goudge report coming out has tried to cover off those pieces of information that unfortunately keep popping up throughout our history in making legislation, because sometimes, in a lot of times, it's usually a reaction to some things that have happened that have gone awry. We need those types of checks and balances put in, into this House, into this Legislature, that the other member is talking about. It's not to depoliticize; it's to ensure that we're doing the right thing in order for us to move forward. The judicial review is now inside, so that when the minister removes that process, they have the judicial review to respond to. I look forward to this in committee, and answering some of those questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I do appreciate the member for Simcoe North reading into the record this letter with respect to Annie, and I find that story disturbing.

I also find it disturbing that there have been allegations in the media with respect to Dr. Charles Smith and a number of autopsies. Some of these stories go back to 2005. This is 2008. I find it disturbing that it has taken the government this long to address this issue. I also understand that the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada is now doing something with respect to medical education and standards with respect to forensic pathologists.

But some very serious allegations have been in the media for a number of years now with respect to Dr. Smith and the mishandling of evidence: leaving police evidence in a desk drawer; evidence that did not come forward until, as I understand it, there was a police search to bring the stuff forward; the losing of evidence—again, evidence that was later discovered through a search, probably by somebody else. My question is, again, why has this not been addressed earlier by this government?

I commend especially the minister but I commend the member from Simcoe North for putting a personal face on this story as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment.

Mr. Mike Colle: First of all, I want to commend the Farlow family, all five of them who are here, for having the courage to be here at this time. It's incredibly impossible, almost, to do what you're doing, I know. You just think of what it is to lose a loved one, especially a baby, and then at the same time having to go through the agony of finding out what caused your little daughter's death. All of us here are really very impressed by your courage and wish you strength in the days ahead. I know the member from Simcoe North mentioned that, and I think he did it in a very astute and very personal way.

We sometimes forget, as we're trying to make laws here, that we're talking about some very tragic circumstances. I commend the member from Simcoe North for not politicizing it and not trying to say, "Well, when did your government"—I mean, this type of challenge has faced many governments for many decades.

At this point, the minister, with the guidance of Judge Goudge, is trying to ensure that we do much better as a government, as a people, as a province, because we are all part of the solution, and today we are trying to take steps to do that. We've got to put our best minds towards this solution, because we can't allow families like the Farlows to go through this kind of agony in the future. There has been too much of it in the past, and at least we are taking steps to do what is right. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Simcoe North has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I want to thank the member from Toronto—Danforth, the member from Brant—who is also our parliamentary assistant—the member from Haldimand—Norfolk and the member from Eglinton—Lawrence for their words.

I guess, in the end, I want to congratulate the Honourable Stephen Goudge, the commissioner of this inquiry. I think he brought forward some key recommendations.

As we move through this process—we're just at the very beginning of second reading—it will be key to watch the committee and to listen to other comments that come forward. I think this bill will bring people out to make comments, that it will have a great deal of interest—and probably a lot of key ideas and recommendations that might be somewhat different from some of the legislation that we have in front of us.

But, in the end, as parliamentarians, we have a job to do here. We have to make our system as perfect as it can be. I think every Parliament wants their jurisdiction to be as good as any in the world, and we want forensic pathology in the province of Ontario and the office of the coroner to be a model for the planet. I think it's possible to do that.

I look forward to the future comments, but I also look forward to the committee hearings, the clause-by-clause and getting it into law so that this office has real teeth to work with and so that in the future we don't have to have people like the Farlows coming forward and having to

spend a day of their lives under the kind of stress that they are under here today. Thank you. It is an honour.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Given the fact that it's close to 10:15, this House is in recess until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. James J. Bradley: I would like to introduce a member of the 33rd Parliament of Ontario for the riding of Brock, a regional councillor and chair of the regional municipality of Niagara, Mr. Peter Partington; his wife, Betsy Partington; and Neal Roberts, his executive assistant.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome back to Queen's Park.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'd like to introduce, in the west members' gallery and the public galleries, members of the York University student body who, since they didn't have anything else to do with their time, decided to come down to Queen's Park and observe question period. Welcome, students. As always, you have my support.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to introduce the family of our page Sarah Ratzlaff: her aunt Katherine Holmes; her uncle Dave Woodward, and her cousins Ben and Matthew. They're in the west gallery.

Mr. Charles Sousa: Today I'd like to introduce the family of Sahara Douglas, our page, here today from Mississauga South: her mother, Nina Douglas; and her brother Liam Douglas. They're in the public gallery.

Mr. Jim Brownell: I'd like to introduce Uma Madan, a former teacher colleague of mine and a former special education teacher at Longue Sault Public School.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I, along with the member from Guelph, want to introduce young Sammy Cross. He's a student from Aberfoyle Public School. His artwork was actually used in a brochure in a campaign to encourage law students to practise child protection law. He's 8. He's here in the east gallery with his father, Dr. Michael Cross; his mother, Dr. Tracy Hughes; his brother Ben Cross, and his aunt Patty, who works in the Office of the Chief Justice.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TOBACCO SMUGGLING

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is for the Premier. It deals with the current estimate that your government will run a \$500-million deficit this fiscal year and the necessity for putting that added burden on the backs of future Ontario taxpayers.

We recently saw published reports that almost 50% of the cigarettes smoked in this province are illegal. Pre-

mier, can you tell us how much tax revenue you're losing because of the illegal cigarette trade and what steps you're taking to collect it?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I will answer that briefly and refer it to the minister.

There's no question that contraband tobacco impacts on our revenues. It is difficult to get a specifically accurate measure of that. You can see in public accounts year over year what has occurred, but we are continuing on a variety of fronts to arrest that decline in those revenues and continue new enforcement measures that my colleague will have the opportunity to speak to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Any objective observer would have to question this government's commitment to come to grips with this particular challenge. We only have to look at Haldimand county, where illegal smoke shacks are operating with impunity—one, unbelievably, on government-owned land. Talk about rubbing it in your face.

Minister, you and your colleagues are the 100-pound weakling here. Where's Joe Weider when we need him? Premier, Minister, why would you rather burden future taxpayers with a \$500-million deficit than enforce the law?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I can assure you I'm not 100 pounds, but I will turn that over to my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: And I can assure you I'm not Joe Weider. But this is a very, very serious issue; it needs a serious response and it needs a serious, coordinated effort. That's why the former Public Safety Minister, Stockwell Day, announced with the RCMP an action plan to stop the trade of illegal cigarettes. We know that 90% of illegal cigarettes come from across the border, from the United States.

We know we have a part to play in this. That's why the OPP is a partner in law enforcement with regard to fighting contraband tobacco, and we've had some successes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: The minister didn't have to assure us he's no Joe Weider. There's not one Joe Weider over there.

We're advised that next week's report from the Auditor General will say that the government is losing at least \$500 million a year in tax revenues as a result of the illegal cigarette trade. Some estimates peg it as high as \$1 billion a year. We're in difficult economic times. Families are suffering, food bank line ups are growing, and your government is looking the other way as illegal activities siphon off at least \$500 million a year. This is truly shameful.

Premier, Minister, when will you muster the intestinal fortitude to challenge these lawbreakers?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I think we have, and I think we're doing a very, very effective job. It's never enough until every illegal cigarette is off the market.

Let me just talk about a few of the coordinated successes we've had with the RCMP and the Canadian Border Services Agency. On October 22, we seized 332 kilograms of fine-cut tobacco; on October 28, 200,000 cigarettes; on October 29, 200,000 cigarettes; on October 29 again, 199,600 illegal cigarettes confiscated; on October 29, we seized another 200,000 cigarettes; on October 29 again, we seized 302 kilograms of illegal tobacco; and on October 30, another 500,000 cigarettes.

Yes, there is a problem—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister. New question.

REGISTERED DISABILITY SAVINGS PLANS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. This past Sunday you quietly issued a news release saying that you intend to adopt my private member's bill, which I introduced in June, to prevent clawback of ODSP and Ontario Works payments for people who set up a registered disability savings plan. I understand you will be introducing regulations to allow for this change. Will you table those regulations in this House so that organizations and groups can review them to provide their input?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: That's an excellent question. I was very pleased on Sunday to issue a press release on the RDSP. We have worked with the community; we have worked with our stakeholders. We have listened to them and we have moved in the direction that our customers want, that the parents of disabled children want, and also those who are disabled, to ensure that their future life will be a lot better than it used to be.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I think the minister forgot the question. It was, will you table the regulations in this House so that we can review them, and the organizations who have supported my private member's bill, like the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario, Community Living Ontario, the Canadian Mental Health Association, OASIS—the Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs—and hundreds of parents who have been asking for this change? These organizations work every day with individuals who have disabilities and they would like to provide you with the best input on what the regulations should look like. Again, Minister, will you table those regulations in the chamber?

1040

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me thank the member for Dufferin–Caledon for her support for the disabled community. Thank you very much. I would also like to thank the parents out there and all these groups that are lobbying on behalf of those with disabilities. I'm very pleased that they came forward. We've listened to them and we've improved the registered disability savings plan. And to answer her question, no, we're not going to table the regulations in the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I do not understand the minister's reluctance. You know under Bill 94, my private member's bill, it would have been a legislative change and not quietly done through regulation, which, quite frankly, next week you could change again. Minister, I ask, will you support Bill 94, which would legislatively impose the change and ensure that families that are trying to save for their families' futures will be protected?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'm going to say to the member from the opposite party that she would be very pleased to see the results. She would be very pleased that we have answered the call of parents and families who want to save for the future of their disabled children. They were very supportive of what we are moving forward with. We want to ensure that these people living with disabilities—developmental disabilities or other disabilities—will be able to have a better life than what they used to have in the past. So the parents will be able to put money aside for their children or family members, and I'm pleased that the federal government moved forward with such a plan and the parents will be able to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

POVERTY

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier. With each passing day, layoffs mount, good jobs are lost and more Ontario families lose the financial means to support themselves. A new report from the Ontario Association of Food Banks shows that in just one year, food bank usage in Thunder Bay is up 29%; in St. Catharines it's up 24%.

When will the McGuinty government begin to respond to what's happening? People are forced to use food banks because they don't have a job anymore or because they don't have a good job anymore. When are we actually going to see a response from the McGuinty government that starts to take this on, rather than more talk?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I welcome the question. Unhappily and not surprisingly in times of economic challenge, it is not unusual for a greater call to be made upon our food banks and our other charitable organizations that are there to lend additional support to our families. As people lose their jobs and as those with jobs have fewer working hours they will, in some cases, look to their food banks. That is a difficult reality for all of us.

I'm pleased to say, though, that we have been doing much to provide greater support to our families on an ongoing basis. We've been doing that for some five years now and I'll be speaking to that in a bit more detail in the supplementaries.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier talks about greater support. If that's the case, why are food bank numbers up in Orillia, Lindsay, Cornwall, St. Thomas, Stratford, Oshawa and London, in addition to Thunder Bay and St. Catharines? Why do we have another report from the Children's Aid Society of Toronto, which has

found that in the last 15 years, in the greater Toronto area, the number of children living in poverty has doubled?

The Premier says the McGuinty government is doing more and has made a difference over the last five years. Why do all the studies say that in fact people are facing more and more difficult situations, more children falling into poverty, more people forced to food banks?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Clearly, the global economic crisis has had an impact on Canada; it's had an impact on Ontario. It has affected our economy in a negative way and it's hurting our families. I think people understand that.

We have been moving on this for some time. Among other things, Minister Matthews will be shortly announcing our poverty reduction plan, but along the way we put in place a number of other measures to help our families, including our Ontario child benefit, which provides a monthly annual payment to families, including our working poor, which never existed before; we have increased the minimum wage five times now; we have increased social assistance several times over; we've introduced a brand new dental program for families in poverty; and we have doubled the funding for our student nutrition program to help out kids who are coming to school and who are hungry. Those are some of the measures that we've already put in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier pats himself on the back for a minimum wage which is below the poverty line. The Premier pats himself on the back for a dental plan which the government announced over 15 months ago and has not put one penny into. The Premier pats himself on the back for an Ontario benefit plan which so far has only had the effect of taking the back-to-school clothing allowance away from the poorest kids in the province and taking the winter clothing allowance away from the poorest kids in the province. That's what is happening. The McGuinty government continues to talk, talk, talk. In the meantime, conditions grow worse.

Again, where is the action for affordable housing? Where is the action for more child care? Where is the action to ensure that more people don't lose their jobs? We hear the McGuinty government talk every day. Where is the action plan that's actually going to make a difference in people's lives?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm not surprised that my honourable colleague is not prepared to recognize the work that has been done so far by our government, but I am asking him for his support as we move forward on Thursday of this week with the announcement of our poverty reduction plan. It is something that I can tell you has not been an easy thing to do. It's one thing to move forward on the poverty front in good times, and it is quite another to make that heroic effort in difficult economic times. We're going to do that. I'll be asking for the support of my honourable colleague and his party as we find ways, find the necessary funding, invest new resour-

ces, put in place targets and a strategy to help us achieve those targets. We are going to reach far. We'll do the best that we can given our circumstances. But we are determined, beginning on Thursday of this week, to move forward with Ontario's first real poverty reduction plan.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Howard Hampton: Again to the Premier: We've heard the Premier talk for years now about poverty reduction. We still don't see the action plan.

But it's not just the people who are suffering. Hospitals across Ontario are being forced to make deep cuts in health services and deep cuts in nursing because of chronic underfunding. The Ontario Health Coalition, in its report today, says that we have a growing province-wide problem of underfunding of our hospitals. Communities like Ajax, Hamilton, Toronto, Waterloo and London have already witnessed hospital services being cut over and over again.

Can the Premier tell us why, when the McGuinty government says that it is doing such a good job in health care, so many hospital services are being cut from one community to another across the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I welcome this question as well, and I think it's important for all of us to recognize the facts. We have increased funding for health care overall by some 37% in the last five years; hospitals have received funding increases of just over 30%. So the fact of the matter is that we continue to provide more funding on an annual basis to our partners who are working on behalf of Ontario families in all of our hospitals. We have made it clear that we will continue to find ways to provide them with growing resources on an ongoing basis. That's the fact: more funding every single year.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: The real fact is that more and more of the money which was supposed to be going to hospital health services under the McGuinty government is actually being siphoned off by profit-driven Bay Street corporations, which are involved in Ontario's hospitals like never before. In North Bay, a new hospital built as a public, not-for-profit entity would cost \$400 million; in the hands of Bay Street profit-driven corporations, the cost will now be \$1 billion. The McGuinty government says they're putting more money in. More money is going to profit-driven corporations; less money is going to the health services that people need.

Isn't that the reason that we're seeing cuts—more money for Bay Street; less money for the health services that people actually need?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: That's just not true.

We're involved in over 100 hospital construction projects in Ontario. My friend is suggesting that we use an old method of financing construction. If we did that, we couldn't proceed as quickly as we are.

We think it's absolutely essential for Ontario families that we revitalize the hospitals in their communities.

Where new hospitals are needed, we are building those. Where old hospitals need to be refurbished, we're doing that as well. Where they need to be expanded, we're doing that as well. We've found a way to pay that cost over an extended period of time. We understand that there is a long-term repayment schedule associated with that, but those families need that health care right now, and that's why we've built those hospitals.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Premier, here is the reality: If a hospital in Sarnia had been built according to a public, not-for-profit model, it would have cost about \$120 million; put in the hands of a Bay Street profit-driven consortium, it now costs over \$300 million. North Bay: \$400 million to \$1 billion. Brampton: a hospital which has cost many hundreds of millions of dollars more in profit-driven Bay Street hands. That's the reality on one side. On the other side, physiotherapy has disappeared from a hospital like Kincardine. The acute care foot clinic disappeared from Peterborough. Publicly funded hospital labs are being cut and eliminated and hundreds of beds are disappearing.

Premier, when will you admit, yes, the McGuinty government is putting hospital money in the hands of Bay Street corporations? Meanwhile, the health services that people need from their—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I say to my honourable colleague that I can't agree with him. Those facts just aren't the case; they aren't representative of the reality.

I think Ontarians are entitled to ask themselves where we find ourselves five years later, after we've had a Liberal government with the privilege of serving all Ontarians. Well, we've got 100 hospital construction projects under way or completed. We have wait times down, whether you're talking about cataracts, knee replacements or cancer surgery. We have 630,000 Ontarians who didn't have access to a doctor who now have one. We have some 9,000 more nurses working in the province of Ontario. We've expanded drug coverage. We're expanding home care, expanding long-term care, expanding community mental health, expanding public health protection. Those are all the kinds of things that are real and meaningful to Ontario families.

We have invested a considerable amount more into our health care system—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Premier.

UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is to the Premier.

The CUPE 3903 strike at York University will be four weeks old tomorrow. That may not be long enough for you, Premier, but it has been far too long for York students who have had their academic year jeopardized,

who face lost employment opportunities and ruined plans for postgraduate studies. We, on this side of the House, cannot understand how you can justify your inaction on this issue.

Later, I plan to introduce a private member's bill that will call on the Minister of Labour to table back-to-work legislation before this Legislature can rise for the winter break. That private member's bill includes a provision for a legislated settlement and a three-year contract for the striking employees.

Premier, will you support my bill and have your minister table back-to-work legislation? Will you support the students who are here today asking for my help, for your help, to salvage what's left of their academic year? Or will you continue to stand on the sidelines and let the union trample the academic goals these young people work so hard to achieve?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. John Milloy: I think all members on all sides of the House are very concerned with the situation at York University and appreciate the frustration of the students, of the teachers and of everyone involved. That's why we continue to call on both sides to put the interests of the students at York first, to return to the bargaining table and seek an agreement.

As members are aware, there's a Ministry of Labour mediator who is working to try to get both sides to come to an agreement, and we continue to call on them, as I say, to take the interests of the students in hand and to come to a quick agreement so they can get back to the classroom.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: It's good to know for once where the McGuinty Liberals stand—too bad it's not with the students.

Incidentally, I have a box of letters from these students and I will ask a page to deliver them to the Premier before he leaves. I am just an MPP, just one voice, although I represent thousands of constituents. It's easy to say no to me, but as you answer this question, Minister, do not look at me, look at the students who are here today in this chamber and tell them why you are willing to prolong this injustice and why you're willing to let it happen again in 2010. Instead of getting an education in their lecture halls, they are here learning why they cannot count on their government to stand up for them and for what is right. You look at them, Minister, and you tell them why they can't count on your government.

Hon. John Milloy: We welcome the students from York University here today. As I said, we appreciate the frustration that they feel. But the honourable member does not have a monopoly on concern for what's happening at York University. That's why we continue to call on both sides to put the interests of the students who are here with us today, the interests of the students at York University, front and centre and come back to the negotiating table and reach an agreement.

As I said, the Ministry of Labour has appointed a mediator who is working with both sides, and we con-

tinue to encourage them to come to an agreement quickly so these students can return to their classroom.

UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The McGuinty government has dramatically raised tuition rates; the government has increased class sizes and allowed Ontario to languish at number 10 in per capita funding; the government's indifference has created hardship for students and has led to the strike at York University.

Does this minister think it is fair that the workers who do more than 50% of the teaching at York get only 7.5% of its \$848-million budget?

Hon. John Milloy: I'm a bit disappointed that the honourable member is playing politics with this very serious situation. The fact of the matter is, as I said, we're all frustrated with the situation at York University, but let me correct the record for the honourable member. In 2008-09, the government is projected to allocate \$2.997 billion in operating grants to the university sector. That's an increase of \$1.1 billion, or 57%, over the base operating funding provided to universities in 2002-03. University per-student funding is projected to increase from \$6,718 in the year we took office to \$8,109 per full-time equivalent. We have dramatically increased support to our universities, and once again we call on both sides at York University—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to remind the minister that your Reaching Higher plan has been reaching deeper and deeper into the pockets of students, has created more and more contract teaching jobs, as opposed to full-time jobs, and has left this province last in per capita funding across Canada.

This minister may not like to hear it, but this government's lack of leadership is creating turmoil at York and at every other post-secondary institution across Ontario.

When will this government provide the funding required to end the turmoil and fairly compensate those who do most of the teaching at our universities?

1100

Hon. John Milloy: I was very proud to be part of a government that introduced the Reaching Higher plan: \$6.2 billion, the largest investment in post-secondary education in 40 years.

As I mentioned, this year operating funding for colleges and universities will have increased by 57%. We have 100,000 additional students in our colleges and universities and we've significantly increased per-student funding as well as dramatically increased aid to students.

I think the honourable member should look long and hard in the mirror before asking these questions, and talk about his record. When the NDP were in power, they cut student aid by nearly 50%. They cut funding to post-secondary education. They promised to eliminate tuition,

and instead increased it by 50%, and then had the gall to cut upfront grants.

DISABILITY BENEFITS

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question today is for the hard-working and dedicated Minister of Community and Social Services. Like many in this House—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Your time is running.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I've heard from concerned parents, Community Living Peterborough, concerned about the future of their children. Many have been looking hopefully towards the new federal registered disability savings plans to help make a better life for their kids and plan for their future when mom and dad may not be around.

Minister, will you tell us what our government is doing to help the parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, friends and family of those with disabilities? What is the government doing about RDSPs?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me say thank you to the member from Peterborough. He's a very hard worker on behalf of his community.

We all know someone with a disability, and many know the anguish of those—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Hamilton East—it goes both ways. I want to be able to hear the question, and I want to be able to hear the answer, and I would encourage you to do the same. I just ask the member from Hamilton East to come to order.

Minister?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: We all know someone with a disability, and many know the anguish of those concerned for their future. I was very pleased yesterday to issue a press release on behalf of the McGuinty government to announce that it is fully exempting RDSP asset contributions and withdrawals from eligibility for social assistance. This announcement means that an individual can continue to benefit from basic income support, employment support and health benefits, while also being able to take advantage of additional income through their RDSP. This also means that a person with a disability can use their—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thank you, Minister. This is wonderful news for Ontario families and great news for those in the disabled community. I know Community Living Peterborough, the board members and their families will thank this minister for her great work.

In addition to the McGuinty government's announcement on RDSPs, can you tell this House what other measures have been taken by your ministry to improve the lives of the disabled community each and every day in this province?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to encourage all those who are eligible for a federal RDSP to apply.

To answer the question of my colleague, yes, the McGuinty government has done a lot to improve the lives of people with disabilities by introducing the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and we are moving ahead with that commitment. On January 1 of this year, we reached a milestone with the coming into force of Ontario's first accessibility standard, the accessibility standards for customer service regulation. Four additional standards are being developed for transportation, information and communication, built environments and employment. Currently, the information and communication standard is out for public review and I invite everyone to give us their—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Minister of Transportation, and it relates to his proposed Bill 126, legislation which will affect young drivers in this province. I want to first of all compliment the minister and the government for bringing forward that section of the bill that provides for a zero blood alcohol level in young people. However, I want to bring to the attention of the minister—we've had this discussion—that we stand with young people and parents across this province who strongly oppose that section of the bill that restricts young drivers from having more than one passenger 19 years of age or younger in the car. We believe that is impractical and will in fact create a great deal of hardship for families across the province. Will the minister agree to withdraw that section of the bill before it gets to second reading, so that we can in fact focus on the more—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I want to thank the member first of all for a very constructive question. He is constructive in his approach to these matters, and helpful.

I do consult with my critics in the opposition, or the official spokespersons for the party, and with other members of the Legislature, and I want to say to the member that we evaluate all of the input that's coming in from those who are in favour of certain measures within the bill and those who are opposed. We think it's very important that we have that kind of public input, that kind of dialogue. I think the member has been a strong advocate of this because he knows that it makes legislation even better. So I look forward with anticipation to the continuing information that is provided in this regard, and I know that there are going to be very extensive public hearings that will be taking place on this bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: I don't know of any legislation that had more public response even prior to second reading than this bill. There is no question—we are hearing from young people, we're hearing from parents from across the province—that this cannot happen. We cannot allow

this legislation to be passed with that restriction in place, and the minister knows that. Mr. Robert Kennedy from Aurora is one of many parents who has written to me asking me to bring this to the attention of the minister. I'm simply saying we know how this place works. There can be a great deal of attention focused on this section of the bill that is negative. Why not withdraw it now, and allow the Legislature to focus on the substantive aspects of Bill 126, many of which we will support? But let's remove this section now. Will the minister undertake to do that before we move forward into even second reading of this legislation?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I am interested in the information that you've provided and the letter that you have read. I think I get letters on both sides of the issue. For instance, Rob and Jan Perry of Thornbury, who lost a son—and the resolutions coming in from council supporting what they wanted—who called home; there was no one home for a ride. He got into a vehicle with four other boys and they were killed, caused by excessive speed, apparently. It was a very tragic day for them. I know they have written to me.

I know that Carolyn Swinson for MADD Canada and Don Forgeron, vice-president of the Insurance Bureau of Canada; Peter Christianson, president, Young Drivers of Canada; Andrew Murie, CEO, Mothers Against Drunk Driving—I'm interested in all of them. The point I'm making is I'm interested in all of the input that we have coming in. I think it's extremely helpful. I have invited people, in fact, to provide that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Yesterday, the child advocate reported that he made his initial request for the investigation report that he was asked to get by a young person who made a complaint, not on November 5, as the minister said in this House, but rather four months before that, on July 24. Why has it taken more than four months and legal action for this minister to give the child advocate the information he's requested?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me begin by expressing again the enormous respect I have both for the advocate personally and for the position he holds. I can report that this morning, the advocate received the information in question.

But let's take a minute to review the facts. In July, the former advocate requested information regarding the case. Within days, she was provided with an investigation summary, as was standard practice and in line with privacy requirements. In the interim period, the new advocate took office and we began working with him on an information-sharing protocol to ensure he got the information he needed as quickly as possible and in line with the legally mandated privacy requirements. The formal request for the full investigation report—not the sum-

mary; the full report—was made on November 5. As the protocol has not yet been signed by the advocate, the ministry proceeded with the request under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and it required—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

1110

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This minister is blaming the advocate, when it's the advocate who has been trying to do the work on behalf of children in this province. In dealing with this ministry, the children and youth advocate said that he's "struggling ... to build working relationships within the ministry itself" and, "... it's hard to tell what's smoke and mirrors and what isn't." That's what the advocate says about his relationship with you and your ministry. The advocate can't even get an item as simple and straightforward as a list of licensed Ontario group homes in this province.

Why is this minister making excuses like "internal protocols" to stonewall the advocate and keep him from doing the job that this Legislature has hired him to do?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I had a good conversation with the advocate yesterday. I renewed my commitment to work as closely with him as possible because I have such respect for him and his office. I also said to the advocate how important it is to get that information protocol signed as soon as possible so we can get the information he needs in line with privacy requirements. As soon as we did get the signed consent of the youth in question, we released the report to him.

We have a good relationship. It's important that we give a voice to the most vulnerable kids in this province, but we also must abide by the privacy of third party requirements. We can and we will do both, but we need the advocate to agree to the protocol so we can proceed as expeditiously as possible.

DERTOUR TRAVEL ACADEMY

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: My question this morning is for the Minister of Tourism. The tourism industry in Ontario, like many sectors, has been facing challenges beyond its control. I'm aware that the international tourism market is an opportunity for growth in the province and it has been noted by the Ministry of Tourism that international arrivals are expected to double by 2020.

I've recently been informed that Ontario has been chosen as the host of the 2008 DERTOUR Travel Academy. Would the minister tell this House more about this group and the opportunities that this provides for the tourism industry in Ontario?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: The member for Kitchener-Conestoga is correct. We are presently hosting the DERTOUR Reiseakademie here in Toronto and in Ontario from November 27 to December 10.

This involves 700 travel agents from across Germany and Austria and 120 travel suppliers who are visiting Ontario and experiencing all that Ontario has to offer. It's an

annual training event for the DERTOUR travel company and it provides both experiential and academic training for their travel agents from across Germany and Austria.

Together with the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp., we are hosting it at the Delta Chelsea. We have partners in this: Tourism Toronto, Ottawa Tourism, Niagara Falls Tourism, Jonview Canada and the Canadian Tourism Commission, as well as Air Canada.

I was delighted to attend their opening night last Thursday. It was a great event out at the Science Centre. We got to actually showcase all—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: DERTOUR seems like a great opportunity to showcase the great tourist attractions that this province has to offer. In my own riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, we have several wonderful tourist attractions and offerings that would be of interest to visitors from Germany. For example, the world-famous Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival and academic training through the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier and Conestoga College. As such, I would like to hear more about the DERTOUR Travel Academy. So could the minister please tell us what sort of experiences will be showcased for them while they are touring the province, and how can this result in more visits to Ontario?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It really is an exciting opportunity for Ontario. DERTOUR owns 850 travel agencies in Germany and Austria, and has vendor agreements with another 9,000 travel agencies. They represent about 25% of the total German visitors to Canada, so we're excited at the prospect.

While here, our 700 visitors are visiting the CN tower, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Distillery District and Huronia, where I understand they visited yesterday in the snow and it was candlelit and simply spectacular; and on Thursday, they'll be visiting St. Jacobs, right in your neck of the woods. So we're very excited about all that they're going to get to see.

I think it's important for the members of this House to recognize that in 1992, when Toronto hosted the DERTOUR Reiseakademie, travel to Ontario by German visitors the following year increased by 33%. This is an incredible opportunity for our province, for our regions, and we're very excited to welcome all of these German travel agents to our region.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. Last Friday, Ottawa council voted resoundingly in favour of a new transportation master plan. This critical infrastructure project will include a \$1.7-billion investment into Ottawa in its first phase. This includes construction-ready bus rapid transit for Fallowfield, Baseline, Moody, and getting the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge on line, all to the tune of \$278 million.

The city is in, and the federal transportation minister indicated yesterday that they will put their portion in.

Will this Liberal government commit today to invest in the \$278 million in construction-ready projects which are consistent with your five-point economic plan and imperative to our city's overwhelmingly endorsed transportation plan?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Let me say that I congratulate the city council for adopting a plan. We've had \$200 million on the table for close to two years now. I think the folks in Ottawa, my hometown, know that we are very much committed to investing in public transit, ensuring that there is an alternative to the car that is affordable and that is user-friendly.

We are now going to take the time to give some very careful consideration to this plan. I have said for some time now that our original investment of \$200 million would very likely be less than adequate, given the nature of the work that has yet to be done in the city of Ottawa. I think the appropriate thing for us to do at this point in time is to take a long, hard look at the plan and make sure that we are on the right track together. We'll obviously keep that \$200 million on the table, and then together we'll see where and how much further we can go beyond that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Premier, Metrolinx is the \$17.8-billion public transit plan for central Ontario. The cost of that plan is borne by the province and the federal government alone. Property taxpayers in the GTA will not be required to share in that cost.

The public transit plan for eastern Ontario is embodied in the \$4.7-billion Ottawa transit plan. Premier, will you offer the same degree of support for this plan for eastern Ontario and your hometown of Ottawa as you have for Toronto and central Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question from my colleague, but I think that if he takes a close look at the numbers, he'll see that there are some additional costs which he has not incorporated into his question, which are properly the responsibility of some Toronto area municipalities.

Having said that, we have made it no secret whatsoever that we are absolutely committed to moving ahead with public transit in the city of Ottawa. We think it's important not just for our economy and not just for the environment but for the quality of life of the people who are living there.

I have also said that I don't believe the \$200 million will be adequate in the long term as we work together to develop a long-term vision and nail down a solid plan as we move forward.

So, again, we're delighted there's a plan in place, delighted to finally receive that. We will now carefully consider that and look forward to moving forward together even beyond that.

ONTARIO SECURITIES COMMISSION

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Minister, in the wake of the stock market

meltdown, hard-working Ontarians who have seen their life savings and pensions shrink are looking for ways to strengthen our financial system.

In 2004 an OSC report, the Osborne report on the fairness committee, concluded that the OSC's dual role in prosecuting and adjudicating securities cases created the appearance of a conflict of interest and a perceived bias and that they should be separated. The all-party committee on the five-year review of the Securities Act made the very same recommendation.

Four years later, why hasn't this government moved to separate the OSC's conflicted adjudicative and prosecutorial roles?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member raises a very good question. With respect to the complexity of all this, we have recently wrapped up discussion of the long-term response on particularly the current situation with pensions. We will have more to say about short-term pension issues.

Finance ministers are scheduled to meet next week. My hope is that that meeting will continue on as we examine these short-term issues, which are enormously complex but enormously important to the stability of the financial system and the security that pensioners feel and so on. So we will continue to move in that direction, always, always having, first and foremost, the interests of those who pay into pensions and those who receive pensions.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: I'm not sure what pensions had to do with my questions. I was talking about the Ontario Securities Commission. In any event, when Ontario securities watchdogs are plagued with inherent conflicts of interest, it's no wonder so few securities violations are prosecuted in this province.

Self-regulating organizations are another case in point. They regulate themselves and act as a trade association. In 2004, the all-party review committee recommended the establishment of a task force to review the role of self-regulating organizations, including whether their trade association and regulatory functions should be separated. Four years later, why hasn't this task force been established?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Again, I want to caution the member, just remind him of a number of initiatives that have been undertaken with respect to enforcement. I don't think I would concur with what I believe to be the premise of his question, that there is a compromise here.

First of all, we have more than doubled enforcement staff since 1997, from 40 to 100. We added 16 new people to the enforcement group in March. We've issued 11 cease trade orders and 11 director and officer bans. We've issued seven interim case cease trade orders affecting 23 corporations and 17 individuals. The Ontario Securities Commission boiler room unit, which was established last year, has secured eight interim cease-trade orders against 22 firms and 48 individuals.

There's no doubt there's more to do. The member raises a valid point that I know the Legislature has raised

before. We will continue to implement the kinds of changes that we believe are in the interests of people who participate in the capital markets in Canada and Ontario.

FOOD SAFETY

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, there has been some media attention lately associated with the sale and distribution of raw milk. Ontario has required pasteurization for over 70 years in order to kill pathogens which can flourish in raw milk if it's not properly handled. Advocates have suggested that our law banning raw milk is antiquated, as new technologies are now in place that could allow raw milk to be safely produced, sold and distributed to consumers across the province.

Minister, can you explain the government's policy on raw milk and why we should continue to not allow it to be sold in this province?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm delighted to have the opportunity to address this issue that we have been reading about in the media a good deal in recent weeks and months. Food safety is a priority of the government of Ontario. I appreciate the arguments that have been made about consumer choice, but I think it is very important that the government take the responsibility very seriously.

In order to reduce the presence of food-borne bacteria, we do require that all milk that's sold in the province is to be pasteurised. A little bit of history on this: It was the rural women in Ontario, through the Ontario Women's Institute, who went to then-Premier Mitch Hepburn—and I know you know that great character in Ontario history—and convinced the Premier of the day why it was important to reduce illnesses and deaths of Ontario citizens by requiring that milk in the province of Ontario be pasteurized before—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: I certainly appreciate that the government strives to protect the health of all Ontarians, and I think all members of this House stand united behind support for government doing all that it can to protect public health. However, these same people will argue that times have changed and that things are different now from when Premier Hepburn was in power. They will also say that they have the ability to sell and distribute raw milk, and it could open up new market opportunities for our farmers. Minister, does the government have any plans to study this issue before closing the door on raw milk products?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'd like to make two points on that. First of all, I'd like to quote from Dr. Murray McQuigge, who is the medical officer of health for the Grey Bruce Health Unit, who said, "To be blunt, there were no good old days when it came to the harm that raw milk inflicted on thousands of people.... To bring in legislation to allow the sale and distribution of raw milk would be tantamount to manslaughter" in the prov-

ince of Ontario. That's from the chief medical officer of health.

The other thing I think that people in Ontario need to be aware of, one thing that has not changed, is that E. coli bacteria is deadly, and we in the province of Ontario don't have to look back very far in our history to know that. It is for that reason that our government remains absolutely committed to ensuring that we have legislation in place that will make sure that all milk and milk products sold in the province of Ontario will have been pasteurized before they are made available to the public. This is good sense.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Premier.

This morning, the Premier received a letter from our leader suggesting the Legislature strike three all-party select committees to look at three areas of the economy to help get the economy back on track. They are: rebuilding our manufacturing and resource economies; strengthening small business; strengthening cities and towns.

Premier, will you ask your House leader to start discussions to create these three all-party committees?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We welcome any constructive ideas from anyone who brings them forward. We have had a debate, as the member will know, on the economy here in the Legislature.

The Standing Committee on Finance and I are undertaking early pre-budget consultations. Indeed, I was in the great city of Thunder Bay yesterday, meeting with Michael Gravelle and Bill Mauro and hearing the concerns of the people of the northwest of Ontario, always a very important opportunity.

We welcome any constructive suggestions that can assist in updating a budget policy, and we're delighted that the Standing Committee on Finance has agreed to travel earlier this year so that we'll have their advice earlier, in terms of construction of a budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm going to go back to the question. I do feel this is a very important issue, as our people in this province struggle to make ends meet and continue to lose their jobs.

We've been calling for this non-partisan approach now for some time, and we're going to try one more time. We do believe that people in this province expect us to work together in a non-partisan way. We are suggesting three select committees to focus on three specific areas and to do so in a non-partisan way.

So I ask you again, Premier, will you agree to consider and take action on our proposed select committees solution to help struggling Ontarians?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'd remind the member opposite that they just voted against allowing the Standing Committee on Finance to travel and do hearings. That's where that should happen.

With respect to the three select committees:

The member opposite referred to the manufacturing resources committee. We have an AMIS program loan committed of \$90 million, generating \$884 million in new investments, creating over 4,000 jobs. That member and her party voted against it.

With respect to cities and towns, we are uploading Ontario Works benefits, saving municipalities \$425 million by 2018. That was stuff that the member opposite and her party downloaded. We just gave \$1.1 billion in infrastructure to those same cities and towns. That member and her party voted against that initiative.

Finally, with respect to attracting new businesses, the Ideas for the Future Act, in third reading—a 10-year corporate income tax exemption. That member and her party voted against it.

Their game is partisan.

This government's interest—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. The strep A outbreak in Thunder Bay is ongoing. Why are there still no clear communication guidelines on how public health units notify Ontarians of infectious disease outbreaks?

Hon. David Caplan: I think the member has raised this with the chief medical officer of health for the province of Ontario. In fact, there are very clear guidelines to advise the medical officer of health, who will make the determination what steps need to be taken for the public to be able to protect themselves.

In the case in Thunder Bay, I know that the medical officer there made a determination in fact some time ago to issue a press release to let people within Thunder Bay and northeastern Ontario know. Fortunately, we have seen a containment of the strep A outbreak. We have not seen cases proceed throughout the rest of the province. It looks like the measures that have been brought into place by the public health unit and the medical officer of health have worked.

1130

I would say to the member opposite that any recommendations, any suggestions to strengthen the public health network are very welcome, and I would look constructively at any of those suggestions.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I just want to remind the minister that the medical officer of health position in Thunder Bay has been vacant. There was an acting medical officer of health who also left, and it is one of the 13 health units in Ontario that don't have a permanent medical officer of health.

In late November, a couple of days ago, Operation Trillium Response saw over 1,500 people descend on Thunder Bay for an emergency preparedness exercise. That's a lot of people. None of them were told that there was an active strep A outbreak, despite many of them being front-line health care workers who deal with the most at-risk populations.

Why does the minister continue to ignore the need for clear communication guidelines from his ministry to the public health units during an infectious outbreak—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister?

Hon. David Caplan: I couldn't disagree more with the member opposite. In fact, there are very clear guidelines. I know this member has had the opportunity to speak to the provincial chief medical officer of health, and I know he has explained this to the member on a couple of occasions.

First of all, I think it's most important that we express our condolences, our thoughts and our sympathies to those who have been affected.

The member, in her question, unfortunately says that there was an emergency response exercise in Thunder Bay—the strep A outbreak is confined to a particular population and has not spread, and for the member to suggest otherwise is simply irresponsible. I would hope that the member would not engage in that kind of speculation, because the people of Thunder Bay and the people of Ontario are ill served by such an approach. I would caution the member from taking that kind of an approach. It should be based on fact, not on the kind of idle and unnecessary speculation—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister.

DIGITAL MEDIA

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a question today for the Minister of Research and Innovation. The innovation agenda outlines the importance of colleges, universities and research institutions in fostering innovation in this province. The agenda lays out digital media as one of the ministry's key areas of focus, and the agenda states, "Leadership in digital media requires excellence in wireless technologies, software, content creation, broadband communications, art and design," and they're all areas of strength in Ontario. "The projected global market for the digital media sector alone is projected to reach"—\$1.5 trillion by 2009.

Sheridan College, located in my riding, provides a hands-on, project-driven program and also provides a benchmark of excellence for Canadian and international media studies. I'd like to know what the Ministry of Research and Innovation is doing to foster the growth—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my friend from Oakville for the question. On behalf of all of us, you know that a giant of the digital media world here in Ontario, Ted Rogers, passed away and we extend our condolences to his family.

But I would say in regard to Sheridan College that it has been referred to as Hollywood North. We are particularly proud of what's going on in regard to digital media. Digital media is a focus for our government in the Ontario innovation agenda.

Through the Ontario centres of excellence funded by the Ministry of Research and Innovation, I would share with the House that we have made an investment of some \$100,000 in researcher Avrim Katzman's project, which is developing real-time, interactive TV games systems; \$43,000 again to this researcher developing a facial animation communication engine; \$24,000 to researcher Bill Farkas in a project called Synderella Network sonification monitor—just the cutting edge of the work that's going on in digital media, and so much of it is happening at Sheridan. I want to thank the member—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister.

The time for question period has ended. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1135 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Reza Moridi: I would like to welcome Sheila Robinson, Penny Balberman and Aubie Angel from the Gairdner Foundation to the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of page Sahara Douglas, we'd like to welcome her mother, Nina Douglas, and her brother, Liam Douglas. They'll be in the public gallery today.

MEMBER FOR ESSEX

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): As well, I take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Essex as today marks the 15th anniversary of his election to this House. Congratulations, Bruce Crozier.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TED ROGERS

Mr. Peter Shurman: I rise today to commemorate the passing of Ted Rogers, a communications pioneer, a steadfast Conservative and the gold standard for a great Canadian.

First and foremost, Ted Rogers was a husband, father, grandfather and brother. To his wife, Loretta, his four children and the entire Rogers family, I, on behalf of the PC caucus and our leader, John Tory, extend my heartfelt condolences on this great loss.

Ted Rogers achieved countless successes. He started in 1960 with one FM radio station and, today, his empire employs 27,000 Canadians, many here in Ontario. But no matter how great his successes, he never forgot who he was. Ted Rogers made his mark not only by raising the bar on the Canadian business scene but also with charitable contributions, especially in the areas of education and health care. His contributions also include the Rogers Communications Centre at Ryerson, Rogers engineering scholarships at the University of Toronto, the Ted Rogers

School of Management at Ryerson and the recently funded eye institute at Sunnybrook.

I myself spent many years opposing Rogers Broadcasting when I ran Standard Broadcasting, notably CFRB. Interestingly, the “RB” in CFRB stands for Rogers Batteryless, the then innovative receiver Ted Rogers’s father invented. Mr. Rogers Sr. founded CFRB to provide programming to sell his radios, but it also provided Ted Rogers with the impetus to build a communications empire, and obviously, he did his father proud.

We will mourn the loss of a great man who aimed high, who achieved so much and whose drive and perseverance were an inspiration to us all. He will be sorely missed.

SUNITA AND NEETA SHARMA

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The headlines should read, “New Canadians Win New Business of the Year,” after Sunita and Neeta Sharma and their Barrhaven-based business, Learna, Ottawa, won the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce’s Gold Award in the New Business of the Year Category.

I’m so pleased for Sunita and Neeta. Originally from India, Sunita and Neeta have embraced their new country. These business owners are frequent guests at my semi-annual women-in-business breakfast in Nepean–Carleton. At their Barrhaven Learna they’ve reached out to students who require additional math and language teaching with the help and guidance of experienced teachers.

Next summer, Learna, under Sunita and Neeta’s guidance, will open a world of writing, drama, hands-on problem-solving, nature and team activities to the children and youth in Barrhaven.

I want to thank and congratulate Sunita Sharma and Neeta Sharma for the great work they have done for our community. The owners and staff of Learna, Ottawa, are a real Canadian success story.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Kormos: The auto industry in this province and across this country employs hundreds of thousands of people in the manufacturing of automobiles, the assembly of automobiles and the manufacturing of auto parts, but also in big- and small-town Ontario in auto dealerships.

Let me tell you about Gillespie Pontiac Buick Cadillac Ltd. down in Welland: In business 35 years, supporting 50 employees and their families; providing a good product, good service, and active in the community, supporting community sports teams, hospitals, the United Way; providing co-op placements in their service department and in their body shop department for high school students; and employing several students in the summer.

Dave D’Amico and David Chev-Olds on Niagara Street: 62 workers and their families are supported by their work at David Chev-Olds, a dealership that I’m

very, very familiar with. It’s a unionized shop. I’ve had my auto service done there for decades now and haven’t bought a car from anywhere but there for as long.

These workers in small-town Ontario are at risk, along with the auto manufacturing, assembly and auto parts sector. It’s imperative that this government, the McGuinty government, move now, move promptly, move effectively and meaningfully, to restore confidence and restore the capacity—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

GAIRDNER AWARDS

Mr. Reza Moridi: I rise today to acknowledge one of Canada’s most important international prizes, the Gairdner awards.

In 1957, James Gairdner established the Gairdner Foundation. Two years later, the Gairdner awards were launched.

Since then, these awards have become one of the most prestigious honours for biomedical research. These Ontario-based awards celebrate excellence and encourage innovation. They have an international reputation for being amongst the first to recognize and reward the work of the world’s leading scientists. In fact, 73 of the 293 Gairdner recipients have gone on to win the Nobel Prize.

In October 2009, the Gairdner awards will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. To mark this occasion, the foundation is organizing one of the largest gatherings of prominent health research scientists ever held in Canada. The event will showcase the world’s top biomedical scientists, including 50 of the past Gairdner award recipients, 21 of whom are also Nobel laureates.

The Gairdner awards have not only helped to enhance Ontario’s knowledge-based economy, they have also had a global impact.

I would like to thank the Gairdner Foundation for its extraordinary contribution to the field of research and innovation.

SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Mr. Robert Bailey: It is a pleasure for me to be hosting a delegation from Pathways Health Centre for Children today. Pathways is a not-for-profit centre that delivers school health support services for disabled children in Sarnia–Lambton.

Recently, Pathways had to cancel a contract with the CCAC because they could not provide the services for children with complex and multiple disabilities for what the CCAC was willing to pay. This left almost 500 children without the care they need. The contract with the CCAC left Pathways with an annual deficit of almost \$60,000.

Later today, I will be presenting petitions that have been signed by over 1,300 of my constituents which ask the government to change the way they fund programs for children by transferring those responsibilities for school health support services from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to the Ministry of Children

and Youth Services. This would allow for those services to be designed and delivered with a child focus.

Pathways also believes that they could save enough money to restore those services and provide the care that these children need just by taking school health support services out of the CCAC model. This would allow for Pathways to receive money directly from the ministry and not through the CCAC.

Children with complex and multiple disabilities need to have programming that has been designed and is being delivered with a focus on the child. The government should listen to Pathways today and change the way they fund these important programs.

DOORS OPEN ONTARIO

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Doors Open Ontario is a well-known annual province-wide heritage and cultural event made possible by our government's Ontario Heritage Trust.

This summer, I attended a Doors Open Ontario event in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham, in the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. Many organizations, businesses and homeowners welcomed 949 visitors to this annual showcase of our rich local heritage. Participating landmarks included the clock tower, the James Lemon House, Lionel's Farm, the Richardson Masonic Lodge, Willowgrove, the Schell Country Depot, 19 Civic Avenue, the Richmond Hill Live Steamers and the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum.

I visited the Schell Lumber Sash and Door Shop. Built in 1878 to manufacture wooden-trim doors and windows, it served the community's industrial efforts, with contributions to lumbering, milling and woodworking. There, I observed how century-old woodworking machinery is still used today. The Schell family purchased the shop in 1921 and continues to operate it. I commend my constituent Mr. Harry Schell and his family members, who have preserved the shop over the decades and, in so doing, helped to maintain our local history.

I wish to thank the Doors Open Whitchurch-Stouffville organizing committee, the Whitchurch-Stouffville museum and the countless volunteers who assisted in making Doors Open such a success.

1510

ADOPTION

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I rise in the House today to recognize National Adoption Awareness Month and to recognize all adoptive families in Ontario. I'd also like to highlight the release of a new book on adoption called *Labours of Love: Canadians Talk About Adoption*. I have had the pleasure of meeting with Deborah Brennan, the author of the book—she is also a constituent in my riding of Oakville. I would like, today, to congratulate Deborah on her achievement and to thank her for sharing her own personal experiences with me and now with the rest of the country and the world.

The idea of this book began when Deborah was going through the adoption process herself and found there were no Canadian books she could read or research with. *Labours of Love* chronicles the journeys of Canadians who have overcome heartbreaking obstacles to become adoptive parents themselves.

Our government feels that this is a very important issue, and that is why our government appointed a 12-member panel on fertility treatment and adoption this year. The panel is going to be providing advice on improving access to infertility treatment and fertility monitoring. They will also be looking to improve Ontario's adoption system, so that more children can become part of families much more quickly.

I encourage anyone who is interested in becoming an adoptive parent to contact their local children's aid society or the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Again, I'd like to applaud Deborah Brennan and all adoptive parents who have opened up their hearts to children in need of families.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It gives me great pleasure to rise today to inform members about the McGuinty government's latest initiative to deliver high quality and accessible health care. New regulations under Ontario's long-term-care home legislation will enable residents in different homes to switch places if the move is mutually desired. The highest priority will be given to residents who are seeking to be reunited with a spouse or partner. The next priority will be given to residents who are seeking admission to a long-term-care home that serves persons of their religion, ethnicity or language.

These changes may also encourage hospital patients who are waiting for a long-term-care home bed to accept a home that is not their first choice, knowing that there is a greater opportunity to move to their first choice later on. This would make a hospital bed available sooner, improving the flow of patients throughout the hospital and reducing wait times.

These changes are part of the McGuinty government's continuing commitment to providing a high-quality health care system responsive to the needs of all Ontarians. Allowing long-term-care residents to be close to their loved ones and to other community members is a meaningful way to improve the quality of life for all.

DIVERSITY WORKS AWARDS

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I was honoured to attend the first annual Diversity Works awards ceremony, which was recently hosted by Peel Career Assessment Services in my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South. I'm proud to call Ontario home, because it is a province that displays a true commitment to diversity. Since 1967, Peel Career Assessment Services has reflected this commitment by offering newcomers various services that help them find employment and become integrated members of the Peel community. I know that many newcomers to

Peel have benefited greatly from the tremendous services offered by PCAS over the last 40 years.

The Diversity Works awards honour individuals and organizations that promote workplace inclusiveness by reducing employment barriers for newcomers. I was honoured to present Pashupati Pokhrel and Andre Iskander of Phoenix Biomedical with awards for their commitment to diversity. I would like to thank Karen Meechan and Jan Christianson for inviting me to attend this very special event, and I would like to congratulate all those who received awards. It is your commitment to diversity that makes our community great.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BACK TO WORK ACT (YORK UNIVERSITY), 2008 LOI DE RETOUR AU TRAVAIL DE 2008 (UNIVERSITÉ YORK)

Mr. Shurman moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 135, An Act to require the introduction of legislation to resolve the strike at York University by December 11, 2008 / Projet de loi 135, Loi exigeant le dépôt d'un projet de loi visant à régler la grève sévissant l'Université York d'ici le 11 décembre 2008.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): 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 1515 to 1520.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm
Bailey, Robert	Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Brownell, Jim	Jaczek, Helena	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Jeffrey, Linda	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	Jones, Sylvia	Shurman, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	Kular, Kuldip	Van Bommel, Maria
Elliott, Christine	MacLeod, Lisa	Wilson, Jim
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McNeely, Phil	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed?

Nays

Balkissoon, Bas	Horwath, Andrea	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
DiNovo, Cheri	Mangat, Amrit	Tabuns, Peter
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	
Hampton, Howard	Moridi, Reza	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 26; the nays are 13.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Peter Shurman: This bill, which I consider very important, requires the Minister of Labour to introduce legislation no later than the final day scheduled for sitting of the House, December 11, to resolve the strike by the employees of York University, who are represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3903, if the strike is not resolved by that date.

The bill requires the Minister of Labour to make all reasonable efforts to ensure the legislation is passed. The legislation must specify the terms of a new contract between the university and the union. The new contract must be for a term of three years.

Although this is a private member's bill, I might take note that it carries the full weight of the entire Progressive Conservative caucus.

ONTARIO AWARD FOR PARAMEDIC BRAVERY ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LE PRIX DE BRAVOURE DES AUXILIAIRES MÉDICAUX DE L'ONTARIO

Mrs. Van Bommel moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 136, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery / Projet de loi 136, Loi prévoyant le Prix de bravoure des auxiliaires médicaux de l'Ontario.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: The bill seeks to create the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery. Currently there is no provincial award that specifically recognizes paramedics who perform an act of exceptional bravery.

The award would be presented annually to paramedics who, in the opinion of a selection committee appointed by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, have performed an act of exceptional bravery to save or protect the life of another person.

This came to light after the tragic death of a paramedic, Paul Patterson, of Kerwood, Ontario, while he was out on a call.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I rise today to recognize that the holiday season's Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere campaign is now under way across Ontario. Known more commonly as RIDE, this five-week

campaign will once again help make sure that those who travel our roads during the busy festive season will return home safely at the end of the day.

There are few situations more tragic than those caused by drinking and driving. The senseless deaths, the children left without parents, the families and futures that have been destroyed forever—each situation is horribly unique, yet they all have one thing in common: An irresponsible person has climbed behind the wheel of a car and changed lives forever.

Our government has zero tolerance for these drivers. We have zero tolerance for drinking and driving, and we are North American leaders in the fight. Our government works with community partners to educate Ontarians on the dangers of driving while impaired. We work with our police partners to ensure drunk drivers are taken off the roads.

We are also staunch supporters of RIDE. Ever since the Toronto police launched the first RIDE spot checks in 1969, this program has been an effective deterrent to drinking and driving. It now operates province-wide and is managed by 170 municipal and First Nations police services, including 105 Ontario Provincial Police contract locations.

It has made a crucial difference. Last year, police conducted over 500,000 spot checks across the province, leading to 466 drivers being charged. This year, our government committed to help police stop more of the drivers who put all our lives at risk, and doubled our support for RIDE to \$2.4 million.

This builds on other steps we have taken to ensure safer roads and highways across Ontario. We have put 1,000 more police officers into our communities. We have introduced steep fines and hard-hitting measures against street racing and drunk and dangerous driving. Most recently, we proposed new rules for new drivers that include a strict no-drinking policy for drivers under the age of 21.

Ontario roads are already among the safest in North America. We will continue to work with our partners to make them even more so.

I want to recognize how RIDE has evolved over the years. It started as a holiday seasonal blitz. Today it operates year-round on behalf of all Ontarians. It has responded to local needs. The Sudbury RIDE, for example, also spot-checks snowmobile and ATV drivers. The RIDE the Waves program in Toronto, for example, is now targeting boaters in the summertime.

Perhaps most remarkable is the evolution it has caused in public opinion. Because of RIDE, there is high public awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving. “Designated driver” is now a common term. People think twice before getting behind the wheel if they’ve had a few drinks. RIDE has helped all of us pull together to make our communities safer, our journeys safer, and to get irresponsible drivers off the road.

Our government welcomes the holiday season RIDE campaign. We urge all Ontarians to drive safe and sober throughout this festive season.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

1530

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I’m pleased to rise today to respond to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and his comments on the RIDE program across our province. I just want to say on behalf of our caucus, the PC caucus, that we fully support the RIDE program in all the different communities across the province of Ontario. I would also like to thank other organizations, like Mothers Against Drunk Driving and their red ribbon campaign.

Even a number of corporate organizations like the Liquor Control Board of Ontario and many of our large breweries are right now promoting on our sports stories the RIDE program and the fact that people shouldn’t drink and drive. For example, I watched an NFL game the other day, and I have seen Budweiser, I’ve seen Molson, I’ve seen the LCBO. I think it is really important that those types of corporations are out there promoting it as well. They tend to make a profit, but you know what? They want our roads safe as well.

I really want to pay tribute to our police services that are out there on the road as well. I’ve been stopped a few times, and I hope everyone has been stopped at a RIDE program, because we see them a lot at this time of year. It’s usually a blistering cold winter night, particularly in the holiday season, when police officers are out on the highways pulling over cars and checking people to see if they have been drinking and driving. I applaud their efforts for that, because they too want to see our roads safe. I think any police officer would rather be out on a cold winter night checking on a RIDE program, as opposed to being at the scene of an accident caused by someone who had taken someone else’s life or seriously hurt them.

While I’m speaking for a couple of moments, I would like to talk also about our police services, and in the riding of Simcoe North, I would like to pay a special thank you to the Midland Police Service and to the Ontario Provincial Police. We have a number of parades each year around Remembrance Day and around the holiday season, with the Santa Claus parades, and one of the things they do really, really well is that they control the traffic in our communities. I can’t tell you how important it is to veterans on Remembrance Day when there are not a bunch of big tractor-trailers or speeding cars going by, when the traffic is diverted away from the cenotaph so that people can have a special Remembrance Day service. The same thing applies to the traffic around our Santa Claus parades in the holiday season.

When we talk about drinking and driving, every one of us probably wants to have a few drinks at Christmastime or in the holiday season. We are invited to so many events. But you know what? There are so many options out there. You can take a cab. In most communities, there is some kind of cab service. You can call someone, a friend or someone who is in the vicinity, who can give

you a lift home. You can have a designated driver if you are with a group. That works out very well. And in a lot of cases, you can just stay over. I can't tell you how many parents I've talked to—and this goes back to some of the legislation that we are debating right now where young people were killed in terrible accidents due to drinking and driving. But you know, so many parents tell their children this: "If you're going to drink, go ahead and drink, but please call home. Call us, and wherever you are, we will come and get you. Or stay overnight. Don't go on that road." That is a message a lot of people tell their children or their young adults, and I really think slowly it is sinking in. Yet, on the other hand, each year we tend to hear in January the RIDE totals, and there are still people who don't get it.

So congratulations to all the police services and the RIDE program across our province. Eventually, we will win this. It's a completely different world out there today than it was 20 years ago. It's kind of like smoking: At one time it was cool to smoke and it was cool to drink and drive. Well, that's not the case anymore. Today people expect better from others, and if we all abide by the non-drinking and driving laws and eliminate drinking and driving, eventually, someday, we won't even need the RIDE programs.

But in the meantime, congratulations to the police services of our province on a job well done.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Peter Kormos: Speaking on behalf of New Democrats here at Queen's Park, we join in the condemnation of drunk and impaired driving and the toll it takes in our communities and across our province. We of course support and endorse the RIDE efforts by our municipal and provincial police forces, and we note that notwithstanding best efforts on the part of police personnel, at the end of the day it's still very much a matter of resources.

But we find it troubling, because we can't concur that there's been as dramatic a change in public opinion as we wish. It remains that middle-aged Ontarians have become increasingly conscious of the risk of impaired driving—and not so much just from the point of view of getting arrested and charged and being prosecuted and losing your licence and paying insurance fees that are out of this world, and risking jail, but from the point of view of there being a cultural shift. I despair at the fact that amongst young people there may not be the same dramatic awareness of the inappropriateness of drinking and driving, of impaired driving, and the social stigma that's attached to it.

It shouldn't be a matter about being arrested, because let's face it: Cops aren't going to be everywhere all the time, and not every drunk driver is going to be arrested. What we have to do is stigmatize drunk driving. We've got to acknowledge that unlike, oh, 30 years ago, it's no longer the subject matter of humour at the water cooler in the workplace. That's where I want to take us, to this point.

We're well aware of Bill 126, and we applaud the portions of that bill that attempt to discourage even more drinking and driving—or driving while impaired, because of course impaired driving isn't just about drinking; it's about pot and other drugs that can as effectively impair your driving. Look, nobody is telling anybody not to drink, and there may be a few of us who aren't telling anybody not to smoke pot, but for Pete's sake, simply don't drive after you've done it. That's the clear message.

That's why we're concerned about Bill 126 with its, quite frankly, less than rational emphasis on the number of youngsters in a car. We talk about the need for designated drivers, and then we interfere with the responsible young person's performance of that role, should that young person not have completed their licence gradations, by preventing him or her from bringing other young people home from the party.

We also want to say this: We talk about zero tolerance for alcohol for people under 21, and we ask, what's the magic of turning 21? Perhaps we as a community, as a province, both federally and within the scope of the jurisdiction of the provincial Legislature, had better start adopting a far lower standard, as is adopted in most jurisdictions in the world, in terms of the level of alcohol that you can drive with. It makes the whole process much easier. You don't have to negotiate with yourself by saying, if you've been drinking, "Well, I've had two drinks and it's been an hour and a half, so maybe that's okay," or "I've had three, and it's been two hours." If drinking with alcohol in your system is dangerous for a 20-year-old, it's probably dangerous for a 21-, 22- or 23-year-old.

If that sounds draconian, I say you can go to any number of places in the world where there's been a dramatic shift in the attitude, where people literally don't drink and drive (1) because they're afraid of the consequences, but (2) because it's ingrained into the driving culture. That's why New Democrats, in response to this ongoing crisis of impaired driving—drinking and driving, driving under the influence of drugs—want to talk about changing the level of alcohol that's permissible for all drivers. If two drinks are too much for a 20-year-old, then maybe two drinks are too much for a 21- or 22- or 25- or 35- or 55-year-old.

1540

We need to have intensive training, and training that doesn't just end in the first course; a part of the training has to be to instill in all new drivers—not just young drivers, new drivers—a responsibility to ensure that you are in complete control of that vehicle once you are on one of our roadways.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. David Caplan: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes on the topic of the Inter-

national Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: We're in the midst of a global campaign known as 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women. It kicked off on November 25; the United Nations declared International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The campaign concludes on December 10, international Human Rights Day.

Last Tuesday, on November 25, the minister responsible for women's issues rose in this House and invited all members to join her in marking the day by wearing rose buttons and white ribbons. I observed that all members from all sides of the House were very pleased to join her in this call to action. As parliamentary assistant to the minister, I was certainly pleased to do just that. But it was not merely because of the role of privilege that I serve, neither was it because I am a member of provincial Parliament; it was because I am a member of a greater community, as are all of us. We are all called to join in a wider effort across the province, indeed around the world, to stand up and to say no. We're all called to declare that there is no room, there is no tolerance for violence against women in our communities. I am very pleased to stand with any member of this House to join in that declaration, and I welcome that.

Our government believes unequivocally that all women should be able to live in safety and security in their homes, workplaces and communities, free from the threat of violence. Ending this violence is a priority for our government. As the minister shared in the House on November 25, our government has made unprecedented investments to this end. We are investing \$208 million annually in programs and services that tackle violence against women. Since 2003, we have increased funding to community-based services for abused women by 40%. I am proud to be part of the McGuinty government. I am proud of our track record in engaging with key stakeholders in this sector. We are reliant on these partners to advise us on what government needs to do: How can we best invest Ontarians' valuable dollars, and how can we work together to effect lasting change?

We are focused on supporting action at the community level. I have seen this first-hand in my own community, as well as in my travels throughout the province in my capacity as parliamentary assistant. With our community partners, we continue our best efforts to help abused women. Through education and awareness, we are getting at the root causes so that our children can live in a world free of violence.

During these 16 days and every day of the year, let's each of us take action. Whether it's wearing a rose button or supporting a local women's shelter, it's another step to making Ontario communities safer for women and for their children. We know there's more to do. Our government will continue to take our responsibility seriously and to do our part to keep women and children safe in the province of Ontario.

When the United Nations issued its challenge to raise awareness of violence against women, Ontarians took heed. Ontarians listened and acted. I acknowledge our partners in communities across the province who are leading other successful campaigns, including the White Ribbon Campaign and the YWCA rose button campaign.

In closing, women's rights are human rights. Our province knows this and will use every opportunity to reinforce this, both during the 16 days of activism against gender violence and every day.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus.

Recognized on November 25 of each year, this is a day of remembrance and action on violence against women across the globe. This date came about as a result of a vicious assassination of three sisters in the Dominican Republic in 1960. The Mirabal sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic, were ordered to death by then-dictator Rafael Trujillo in reaction to their efforts to overthrow his fascist government.

The speech recently given by Inés Alberdi, executive director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, in recognition of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was compelling, and I would like to quote a portion of Ms. Alberdi's opening remarks: "In Somalia, a girl was stoned to death, after being raped. She had turned to the authorities for help; instead she was brutally murdered for alleged adultery. In Afghanistan, a group of young girls were attacked with acid, their faces disfigured. They had provoked the Taliban by going to school. And every day in South Kivu province, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, an average of 40 women are reported to be raped. These are cases that have made headlines. Yet the vast majority of the crimes committed against women are still largely hidden from public view."

The circumstances just described tell me two things: first, that Canada is beyond other countries in the treatment of women, and that we should be using this knowledge to continue to be a leader internationally in promoting the equality, safety and rights of women in our province and our country.

Our work domestically, however, is far from over. We cannot fool ourselves into thinking that violence and abuse against women is a thing of the past here in Ontario and across Canada. In 2004, Statistics Canada reported that 198 women fell victim to homicide; an estimated 7% of women in a current or previous spousal relationship experienced spousal violence in the five years up to and including 2004; and an astonishing 24% of aboriginal women reported experiences of spousal violence in the five-year period approaching 2004. Further, 11% of women aged 15 or older reported being stalked in a way that caused them to fear for the safety of themselves or someone close to them.

I'm proud to say that a member of our caucus has brought forward issues of domestic abuse with a private

member's bill that would help protect women from violent spouses or boyfriends. The member from Durham, John O'Toole, brought forward Bill 10, the Lori Dupont Act (Domestic Violence Protection), 2007. This bill would have provided victims with the safety of a restraining order in a timely fashion.

On November 24, however, the government introduced Bill 133, the Family Statute Law Amendment Act, which I support in principle; however, this act would have repealed the Domestic Violence Protection Act, 2000. The problem here is this: The current act does not appear to deal with the need for emergency intervention orders, which the Lori Dupont Act would have done.

I urge the government to consider further amendments to the Family Law Act to permit these emergency intervention orders, because simply criminalizing breaches of restraining orders is not enough for the protection of women in violent and abusive relationships.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The statistics are awe-inspiring. They're horrendous. They're absolutely an assault on the senses. These are the statistics: 51% of our population are abused or assaulted; one in every two women in Ontario experiences abuse or assault. What does that mean? That means, for those viewing at home and watching this discussion, when they look at their daughters, if they have two daughters, that one of those little girls is going to be abused or assaulted in her lifetime. That means that, if you look at your mother and your grandmother, one of those women is going to be abused or assaulted in her lifetime. That means, as you look around this assembly, that 50% of the members of provincial Parliament who are women have been abused or assaulted at some point in their lifetime. So the question is, are we doing enough? The answer is always, absolutely not.

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How are we failing women in this province? That is the question before us, because we are failing women in this province. How are we failing them? Let me list the ways. First and foremost, there isn't any daycare. Only one in 10 families can find daycare. Now you ask, how does that contribute to violence against women? Well, it's very simple: If a woman can't find adequate daycare, she can't escape an abusive relationship. If she can't find an adequate place to stay—transition housing, a shelter; and there are not enough beds in shelters and there's not enough transition housing for women escaping abuse—then she can't escape abuse. Then this province condemns her to that abuse.

We can look at the Congo, we can look at Darfur, we can look at the horrors of the world; here, it's more guerrilla warfare; here it's one man against one woman in the quiet of their own home where no one else can see it, away from prying eyes. I can tell you, and we all know this, that it's not a question of policing and it's not a question of law enforcement, because the police don't want to go there and they can't enforce it. This goes on and on again. Seventy one cents on the dollar is what women make to every dollar that men make. That's economic violence and that prevents women from having

enough money to leave abuse. That's about our pay equity laws in this province.

Just to conclude: a woman in my riding whom we are all familiar with now, Bernice Sampson, and her little girl Katelynn Sampson—look at that case. Here is a mother who suffers from addiction who couldn't find rehab, who couldn't find treatment for her addiction, who out of love goes to the criminal justice system, goes to family court, goes to whoever she can find who will listen and asks for someone to look after her child, and finds some people she thinks are okay. The family court system fails her and passes her child over to people who have a criminal record, who then kill in the most horrific way this little girl. How did we fail this mother? We failed her because we didn't have a bed for her. We failed her because we didn't have a social worker for her.

How did we fail Katelynn? We failed Katelynn because when the school phoned to find out why she hadn't been in class for a few months, guess what the abusive foster parents told them? They told them that she was up at the reserve. Normally the school would send out a social worker to check on her whereabouts. The school didn't have the funds to send out a social worker to check on this child's whereabouts. Might I say, the blood of the violence against women in this particular instance is on all of our hands here in this assembly. We could have saved a child, we could have saved a mother, we could have saved a family, and we failed. So let us not pat ourselves on the back; this is not a partisan issue.

We have all failed all women in the province of Ontario. Women continue to be subjected to violence. It continues to be a violent subject. It continues to be a violent province for women, for our children, for our grandchildren and on and on. We know it's not only in developing countries where the test of justice, both economic and civil, is how well women are treated. It is also the test of our own justice, whether economic or civil, how our Ontario women are treated. And guess what? We fail. We fail, this government fails, we continue to fail women and, until that stat changes, which has not changed in my lifetime, 51% of the population will be abused or assaulted. We have nothing to applaud and nothing to celebrate. We have something, however, to do.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

Mr. Ted Arnott: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to draw to your attention the fact that on June 18, 2008, I introduced a petition in the Ontario Legislature on behalf of constituents who live in Mini Lakes Park, in Puslinch township, near Aberfoyle. The petition dealt with the need for a funding program to provide financial assistance to owners and occupants of mobile home parks to assist them in complying with the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002.

Ellen Allain did a lot of work to get hundreds of signatures, and the fact is, I understand, that the standing orders require the government to respond within 24

sitting days. Almost six months have passed, and I have yet to receive a response to this important petition. I would ask you to look into it and see if you can get the government to reply.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That is a point of order. It's my understanding, in consultation with the table, that that response was due on October 23.

Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

Hon. David Caplan: I want to say to the member that I certainly will look into the matter. I think it's important that this place works appropriately and according to the rules.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Say you're sorry.

Hon. David Caplan: I say to the member opposite that that's not very helpful at this moment.

I take the concerns very seriously. Now that the member has brought it to our attention, I want to assure him that the concern will be dealt with immediately and I'll work to ensure it does not happen again.

PETITIONS

SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care funds the school health support service through community care access centres across this province for children with special needs who require physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech-language therapy in public schools and in private and home schools; and

"Whereas the Minister of Children and Youth Services envisions an Ontario where all children and youth have the best opportunity to success and reach their full potential; and

"Whereas school-aged children with complex and multiple disabilities residing within the Erie St. Clair CCAC region receive a severely eroded level of service that denies them the best opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential; and

"Whereas these school-aged children with complex and multiple disabilities residing in Sarnia-Lambton can now no longer receive their school health support service from Pathways Health Centre for Children, the children's treatment centre in our community that employs pediatric specialists who work with these children from birth to adult;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately transfer funding and responsibility for this delivery of school health support services to those school-aged children with complex and multiple disabilities from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and community access care centres to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services."

I agree with this petition and add my name to the 1,300 names here.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Phil McNeely: I want to thank the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 139, Streetsville, for this petition. Before I read it, I'd like to introduce a guest of mine from Ottawa-Orléans today. Judith Cane is in the east gallery. She's past president of Orléans Chamber Of Commerce, president of the Orléans Women's Business Connection and a board member of Women Moving Forward.

"Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

"Western Mississauga ambulatory surgery centre:

"Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

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

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

CHILD CARE

Ms. Laurie Scott: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grandparents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance; and

"Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

"Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse the decision to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren."

It's signed by many people in my riding.

BATHURST HEIGHTS ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This is about saving the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre and it reads as follows:

“Whereas there are over 2,000 adult ESL students being served by the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre, operated by the Toronto District School Board, in partnership with the province; and

“Whereas this is the only English as a second language (ESL) learning centre in this area of the city located directly on the Spadina subway line, making it accessible for students across the city; and

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“Whereas newcomers to Toronto, and in the Lawrence Heights area, need the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre so they can succeed in their career opportunities; and

“Whereas the proposed revitalization of Lawrence Heights threatens the existence of the centre;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that any revitalization of Lawrence Heights include a newcomer centre and ensure that the Bathurst Heights centre continues to exist in the present location.”

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the strike by CUPE Local 3903 at York University has resulted in classes being cancelled, affecting more than 50,000 students across the greater Toronto area; and

“Whereas the members of CUPE Local 3903 show an unwillingness to bargain in good faith and bring an end to this strike; and

“Whereas York University has offered to resolve this labour dispute through binding arbitration;

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

“Enact back-to-work legislation requiring the termination of any strike or lockout action and requiring this labour dispute to be resolved through binding arbitration.”

As the critic for training, colleges and universities, I agree with this petition and will sign it.

HIGHWAY 35

Mr. Bob Delaney: I am pleased to read this petition in support of an initiative by my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I'd like to especially thank Seamus Gallagher, of Stoney Creek Road in Lindsay, for having helped collect the signatures on it. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and reads as follows:

“Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines to communities across Ontario and crucial to the growth of Ontario's economy; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has been planning the expansion of Highway 35; and

“Whereas Highway 35 provides an important economic link in the overall transportation system—carrying

commuter, commercial and high tourist volumes to and from the Kawartha Lakes area and Haliburton;

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

“That the” government of Ontario “move swiftly to complete the four-laning of Highway 35 after the completion of the final public consultation.”

I am pleased to sign this petition and to ask page Jenna to carry it for me.

LOGGING ROUTE

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition to do with logging in the village of Restoule. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Nipissing forest management plan proposes to use Hawthorne Drive in Restoule, which features a single-lane bridge and narrow and steep sections; and

“Whereas area residents have grave concerns about community safety, traffic speed, truck noise and general wear and tear of Hawthorne Drive and the bridge in the village of Restoule; and

“Whereas the proposed route travels past the Restoule Canadian Legion and two churches; and

“Whereas alternate routes are possible via Odorizzi Road and Block 09-056;

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

“That the government of Ontario put the safety and concerns of the people of Restoule ahead of logging interests and ensure an alternate route is selected for the Nipissing forest management plan.”

I support this petition.

EMANCIPATION DAY

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I have received this from Anne Clarke, a constituent of mine in Ottawa Centre.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the British Parliament abolished slavery in the British Empire as of August 1, 1834, as a result of the work of abolitionists; and

“Whereas the Ontario Black History Society has for several years been advocating for the commemoration of August 1 as Emancipation Day; and

“Whereas there remain in Ontario many clear and visible signs of the province's early Black presence; and

“Whereas the freedom offered by Emancipation Day facilitated a Black presence throughout the province and fully sparked the northward movement of enslaved Africans from the United States into Canada on the Underground Railroad; and

“Whereas Bill 111, An Act to proclaim Emancipation Day, is the first bill in Ontario history to be co-sponsored by two MPPs of different political parties, Ted Arnott and Maria Van Bommel;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support Bill 111 and recognize August 1 formally as Emancipation Day."

I fully agree with this petition, endorse it and send it to the table through Jason.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Laurie Scott: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the Western Mississauga ambulatory surgery centre and from the MPP from Mississauga–Streetsville:

"Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

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

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I would like to thank the members of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 139, Streetsville, and I'm happy that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is in the chamber today.

TOM LONGBOAT

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize June 4 as Tom Longboat Day in Ontario.

"Whereas Tom Longboat, a proud son of the Onondaga Nation, was one of the most internationally celebrated athletes in Canadian history;

"Whereas Tom Longboat was voted" Canada's "athlete of the 20th century by Maclean's magazine for his record-breaking marathon and long-distance triumphs against the world's best;

"Whereas Tom Longboat fought for his country in World War I and was wounded twice during his tour of duty;

"Whereas Tom Longboat is a proud symbol of the outstanding achievements and contributions of Canada's aboriginal people;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize June 4 as Tom Longboat Day in Ontario."

I support this, and I affix my name to it.

EMERGENCY DISPATCH SERVICES

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition to do with 911 services in Muskoka. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is considering relocating emergency ambulance and fire dispatch services currently provided by Muskoka Ambulance Communications Service to the city of Barrie; and

"Whereas up to 40% of all calls received are from cellphones from people unfamiliar with the area; and

"Whereas Muskoka–Parry Sound residents have grave concerns about the effect on emergency response times if dispatch services are provided by dispatchers who are not familiar with the area; and

"Whereas 16 Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care-funded jobs, held by qualified communication officers from local communities, may be lost as a result of the relocation of dispatch services to the city of Barrie,

"Now therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario put the safety, health and economic concerns of the people of Muskoka–Parry Sound ahead of government efficiency interests and ensure that emergency dispatch services continue to be provided locally by Muskoka Ambulance Communications Service."

I support this.

LUPUS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'd like to support my seatmate, the very hard-working member from Niagara Falls, with this petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that was submitted to him by many of his friends and neighbours in Niagara Falls. It reads as follows:

"Whereas systemic lupus erythematosus is under-recognized as a global health problem by the public, health professionals and governments, driving the need for greater awareness; and

"Whereas medical research on lupus and efforts to develop safer and more effective therapies for the disease are underfunded in comparison with diseases of comparable magnitude and severity; and

"Whereas no new safe and effective drugs for lupus have been introduced in more than 40 years. Current drugs for lupus are very toxic and can cause other life-threatening ... problems that can be worse than the primary disease;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to assist financially with media campaigns to bring about knowledge of systemic lupus erythematosus and the signs and symptoms of this disease to all citizens of Ontario.

"We further petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide funding for research currently being undertaken in lupus clinics throughout Ontario."

On behalf of the member for Niagara Falls, I'm pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Jenna to carry it for me.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This petition is about unlawful firearms in vehicles. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas innocent people are being victimized by the growing number of unlawful firearms in our communities; and

"Whereas police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

"Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and found in motor vehicles; and

"Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver's licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms in motor vehicles would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving firearms in our communities."

Since I agree, I am really happy to sign this petition.

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HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: This is definitely Royal Canadian Legion Branch 139 Streetsville day in the assembly, and I'm pleased to read another petition submitted by my comrades at the legion. I especially thank Sharon Thomson, George Cowan and Howie Morenz Jr. for helping me gather the signatures on this one. It reads as follows:

"Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

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

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I am pleased to support and sign this petition and to ask page Sara to carry it for me.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. David Caplan: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private bills.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Health is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion with respect to private bills. Is there such consent in the House? Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. David Caplan: I thank my colleagues for the vote of confidence.

I move that the orders for second and third readings of the following private bills shall be called concurrently, and the Speaker shall put the questions immediately, without debate or amendment, for Pr9, Pr10, Pr11, Pr12, Pr13 and Pr14; and that Mr. Delaney may move the motions for second and third readings of Bill Pr13 on behalf Mr. Lalonde; and that Mr. Miller, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, may move the motions for second and third readings of Bill Pr9 on behalf of Ms. Horwath; and that Mr. Miller, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, may move the motions for second and third readings of Bill Pr11 on behalf Ms. Horwath; and that Mr. Hardeman may move the motions for second and third readings of Bill Pr14 on behalf of Mr. Shurman.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Caplan has moved that the orders for second and third readings of the following private bills—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Dispense?

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

2029652 ONTARIO LTD. ACT, 2008

Mr. Paul Miller, on behalf of Ms. Horwath, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr9, An Act to revive 2029652 Ontario Ltd.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

2029652 ONTARIO LTD. ACT, 2008

Mr. Paul Miller, on behalf of Ms. Horwath, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr9, An Act to revive 2029652 Ontario Ltd.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

MASTER'S COLLEGE
AND SEMINARY ACT, 2008

Mr. Delaney moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr10, An Act respecting Master's College and Seminary.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

MASTER'S COLLEGE
AND SEMINARY ACT, 2008

Mr. Delaney moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr10, An Act respecting Master's College and Seminary.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

EUGERRY INVESTMENTS
LIMITED ACT, 2008

Mr. Paul Miller, on behalf of Ms. Horwath, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr11, An Act to revive Eugerry Investments Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

EUGERRY INVESTMENTS
LIMITED ACT, 2008

Mr. Paul Miller, on behalf of Ms. Horwath, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr11, An Act to revive Eugerry Investments Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

PORCUPINE GOLDOR MINES
LIMITED ACT, 2008

Mr. Zimmer moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr12, An Act to revive Porcupine Goldtop Mines Limited and to change its name to Porcupine Goldor Mines Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of House that motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

PORCUPINE GOLDOR MINES
LIMITED ACT, 2008

Mr. Zimmer moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr12, An Act to revive Porcupine Goldtop Mines Limited and to change its name to Porcupine Goldor Mines Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

2076467 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2008

Mr. Delaney, on behalf of Mr. Lalonde, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr13, An Act to revive 2076467 Ontario Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

2076467 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2008

Mr. Delaney, on behalf of Mr. Lalonde, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr13, An Act to revive 2076467 Ontario Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

1068080 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2008

Mr. Hardeman, on behalf of Mr. Shurman, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr14, An Act to revive 1068080 Ontario Limited

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

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1068080 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2008

Mr. Hardeman, on behalf of Mr. Shurman, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr14, An Act to revive 1068080 Ontario Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I want to express my appreciation to the table staff for their assistance with dealing with these private bills.

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR DES IDÉES D'AVENIR

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 1, 2008, on the motion for third reading of Bill 100, An Act to amend the Corporations Tax Act and the Taxation Act, 2007 / Projet de loi 100, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'imposition des sociétés et la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to rise and offer some comments on Bill 100 at third reading. As you may be aware, Speaker, and as my colleagues are likely well aware, the Ontario PC caucus official opposition brought forward a number of amendments to improve the bill, but sadly, they were all defeated by the government members. I do appreciate the support on a number of our amendments from my colleague from Beaches–East York, Mr. Prue, the NDP finance critic. I think our amendments were very well considered. They would have broadened this proposed tax reduction to help a larger number of young entrepreneurs in the province of Ontario; they would have broadened the act to treat far more sectors where a lot of innovation is taking place; and similarly, they would have ended the government's ideological approach on Bill 100, which would grant the tax refund only to innovations that come through the public sector. We believe in a level playing field and that private institutions that are innovating should have had similar access to the tax credit as well. The NDP didn't support us on all the amendments, but as I said, I do appreciate the support of my PC colleagues on our amendments and the NDP on some of them.

The problem here, as you may know, is that Bill 100 very narrowly defines innovation and commercialization, and as a result only a very minor part, very small in size—certainly not in importance, but in size—of the economy would benefit from Bill 100 as it stands. To be more specific, the government-identified priority sectors represent less than 2% of the jobs in the province of Ontario and only a slightly higher proportion of the wages or GDP contribution.

As Progressive Conservatives, we believe in making Ontario the best environment in which to open up a new business or expand an existing one. We believe in the ability of consumers to make the appropriate choices, more so than government bureaucrats or politicians, as to what products are going to succeed in the marketplace. We do worry that this bill, by putting so much power in the hands of the minister to approve types of innovations, will also lead to what economists called “rent seeking,” which will be attracting crowds to the minister's fundraisers, to be granted the tax credit, but won't do much for the functioning of markets.

We also brought forward a number of suggestions to allow the application process to be done electronically. We felt it ironic, to say the least, that a bill that is about encouraging innovation, including in the software business, would use an entirely paper-based system for

review that can go on for months on end, and in fact would be an annual review through a paper-based process. Our amendments to provide for electronic delivery of the tax credit were rejected by the government. We do hope that they will reconsider as this bill moves forward.

Despite the obvious flaws in the bill, we don't want to discourage the government. While a relatively small tax cut in the grand scheme of things, they are actually finally putting a tax reduction on the table. Of course, this pales in comparison to the massive tax increases that the McGuinty Liberal government imposed, contrary to campaign promises, soon after taking office and since.

They still entertain, by the way, as we head into the Christmas season, a brand new tax on computers, on appliances, on tires for your car, when working families and seniors can least afford it in our challenged economy, let alone the fact that Ontario now, under Dalton McGuinty's leadership, has become a have-not province, for the first time in history receiving equalization payments from the federal government. In short, Dalton McGuinty's tax-and-spend policies have put us on the welfare rolls of Confederation.

We had hoped for a far more aggressive response from the government to grow us out of have-not status. We're still waiting for some new ideas to stimulate the economy, to make Ontario the most attractive environment again for business investment, from the Premier and his economic ministers, but a month now after we achieved the low of have-not status, we have yet to see any such initiative.

The concern we have with Bill 100 is that with this approach, in Canada, the innovations that made Masonite, Four Seasons, Couche-Tard, Gildan, Magna and McCain global leaders won't be perceived as innovations. That's rather bizarre, but it reflects the government's very ideological approach to this bill, which entirely favours the public sector and would not allow the private sector to benefit. In the private sector, some examples of leading corporations from Canada are left out of this tax benefit. The next McCain, the next Four Seasons, the next Masonite, for example, will not benefit in the least from Bill 100. We proposed in our amendments that they would. Sadly, the government shot them down.

The other concern that we brought forward was about the very narrow definition that the government used to identify sectors that would be eligible for the tax benefit in this bill. It was narrowly defined as new businesses in the following government-identified priority areas: advanced health technology; bioeconomy; telecommunications; computer or digital technologies production. While important sectors in Ontario have many leaders in these areas, as I said, that only represents about 2% of GDP in the provinces today. We believe, as PCs, that new and old businesses alike should be encouraged to innovate and have equal access to this tax incentive, but it's only available to businesses that are incorporated from March 24, 2008, to March 25, 2012.

Our other major concern is that this is not actually a tax exemption or a tax cut. In reality, it is a tax refund

that is going to require a mound of paperwork to receive. It's only available to businesses that bring to market intellectual property developed at qualifying institutions, excluding intellectual property developed outside universities, colleges, not-for-profits and hospitals. It seemed very reasonable that there would be guaranteed timelines for approvals on these refunds, but to date the government has rejected working toward tight timelines to reward our innovators.

As I mentioned, we had brought forward amendments to amend the definition of eligible commercialization businesses to include businesses in all sectors of the Ontario economy, not just the ones that the government has decided to favour. We wanted to amend the definition of eligible intellectual property to include intellectual property that was developed outside of qualifying institutes—so, again, level the playing field between the private and public sectors to give equal and fair access.

As well, we are concerned about how the bill leaves open to interpretation issues like what a qualifying corporation is. We suggested that they should expand that definition to those incorporated before March 24, 2008. There are already many businesses that are quite successful in moving products from the innovation stage to markets. They develop the expertise, they develop the connections in the marketplace, and they will not be eligible to benefit from this bill. We think that the government is short-sighted. Why would you not take advantage of what already is working and incent it to work even more and to produce even more jobs in our economy? It does not make sense to me that you would exclude businesses that have already demonstrated success. I'd think you'd want to reward success.

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The real issue, though, when it comes to moving innovations into the marketplace, is access to capital. This bill does not address that very serious concern. Access to capital for small firms that have started up is, quite frankly, increasingly difficult. It's made worse, exacerbated, by the Liberal decision to cancel LSIF, the labour-sponsored investment funds, without any kind of adequate replacement for venture capital.

Let me read you a quote from Derek Holt, the vice-president of Scotia Capital Economics, who told us at the Ontario PC economic round table, "The global interbank funding market has dried up. There is no liquidity in financial markets. Because banks are in a state of disrepair in the global economy, getting credit is going to be next to impossible for households and businesses with most stellar financial conditions in this kind of environment." The McGuinty Liberal government added to that problem when it knocked out a strong underpinning to private investment by killing the LSIF tax credits without providing any kind of replacement.

Let me illustrate this essential point about access to capital. In 2000, 283 new Ontario companies received \$1.6 billion in early-stage—often called "A round"—financing, but last year only 60 new companies received a mere \$120 million, less than 10% of the 2000 total. In

Ontario, 118 companies received investment of about \$686 million from all venture capital companies, a decline of 9% from a year earlier. No doubt this decline will grow considerably as the problem works itself through the system.

I'll give you a few quotes of what others have said about Bill 100.

Jim Milway, the executive director of the government-funded Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, criticized the government's decision to give the 10-year tax rebate to new businesses. Mr. Milway said: "If a new technology becomes available, an existing business will have no particular incentive to develop it—even though an already successful firm might be able to do so faster and better than a start-up company could. Lowering overall taxes would be more effective. It would do more for innovation."

Gary Will, of the Waterloo Tech Digest, May 6, 2008, said the following: "I'm still opposed to the government's proposal to offer income tax exemptions to companies commercializing university-created IP—but not to other companies commercializing innovation. This may be the final relic of old school innovation theories—that innovation is something that primarily happens in universities and labs and that university-generated innovation should be given special treatment over other innovations, regardless of the potential economic impact that each offers.

"Great ideas with the potential for significant economic benefits to the province can come from anywhere. With any luck, it won't take another two or three years to overthrow the view that innovations generated outside universities and labs are less deserving of support."

Again, that was Gary Will from the Waterloo Tech Digest. As I mentioned, the PC caucus had brought forward an amendment based on Mr. Will's and others' advice to broaden those that are eligible for the tax rebate.

The C.D. Howe Institute said the following: "Ontario's new 10-year income tax holiday for commercialized intellectual property developed by qualifying research institutions is 'ill-designed.' Tax holidays, also used in Quebec, are high-cost, low-impact policies, typically found in Third World countries and well proven to be ineffective."

Those are just some of the critiques on this bill. The government has put it forward, basically, as one of their only arrows in the quiver to combat Ontario's weakening economy. I don't even know if they put this in the context of trying to grow Ontario out of have-not status. In fact, the government's usual response on what to do about Ontario being a have-not status is to shoot the messenger. They say something about the formula without taking into account that one of the main reasons Ontario is now a have-not province is because our economic growth has dramatically lagged behind the growth in the other provinces. We've seen that as well in job creation, where the number of private sector jobs created in the province of Ontario under the McGuinty government is last when compared to our sister provinces.

So the government wraps this up, in many senses, as the cure-all for what ails the economy. I believe the comments made by experts in the field and reinforced by our PC caucus members show that in reality this will have a relatively minor impact on a small segment of the economy; important to that segment, no doubt, but could have had far more impact in creating jobs, moving Ontario innovations into the marketplace and restoring Ontario's now-tarnished reputation as a world leader because of Dalton McGuinty's tax-and-spend policies.

I do hope in the time ahead, as my colleagues across pay rapt attention to my remarks, we may see some improvements to this approach going forward. It is a limited measure. Despite the fact that our amendments were rejected, we will still support Bill 100 at third reading, as we did at second reading, but do strongly recommend to the government that they need to move off this ideological bent that is, in this bill, penalizing private sector companies. They need to look at other types of sectors in the economy where great innovations are taking place and help to incent them, but most importantly, as an overarching economic rule, to lower the tax and regulatory burden for all businesses that is punishing entrepreneurs across this province and chasing well-paying jobs out of the province of Ontario. Witness the 200,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs that have left Ontario under Dalton McGuinty, including some 30,000 in the auto and auto parts sector.

We'd also like to see modernization in labour laws to encourage investment again in our economy. We certainly have decried the most recent WSIB legislation. My colleague the critic for small business has done an outstanding job in calling attention to the impact this will have on small businesses, as has my colleague the labour critic, Bob Bailey, from Sarnia-Lambton.

So the government needs to have a significant change in attitude and realize that, in order to fund key services like health and education, they need a strong economy, they need entrepreneurs firing on all cylinders and they need to take the sensible advice from observers for the Ontario PC caucus that we've brought forward in our reports at the finance committee to make Ontario again the best jurisdiction in which to invest, to start a new company or expand an existing one. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? Further debate?

Mr. Paul Miller: New Democrats have serious concerns about the effectiveness of Bill 100 in creating new innovation and new economic opportunities in Ontario. Here's what Minister Duncan said about the bill:

"This bill is meant to attract individuals with great ideas from all across Canada to set up their businesses in Ontario.... It would help launch the next wave of Ontario's innovators by helping companies keep more of their income to invest and grow. It would also reinforce the critical role that universities and other public research institutes play in our economy and the next generation of jobs."

Perhaps the minister hasn't talked to those in the venture capital business who might actually benefit from

a program like that. We have, so I'll fill him in on the details of our discussions with several industry groups that represent companies that invest in the commercialization of research. It takes years—at least eight, sometimes 10 years—for companies that commercialize research in the advanced health and biotechnology sectors to become profitable. That means they don't actually pay corporate income tax, so a refund of their corporate taxes, zero in many cases, won't give them extra dollars to reinvest in their businesses. Giving a company a 10-year tax break when it takes eight to 10 years for them to earn taxable profits means that, overall, the program isn't going to cost very much all.

That explains why the costs of the proposal are so low. According to the Ministry of Finance, this proposal will cost \$5 million in its first year and \$7 million annually each year afterwards. To put that number in perspective, it amounts to somewhere between .005% and .007% of Ontario's expenditures. That doesn't sound like the initiative is really a priority of this government; \$5 million is not going to help the sector very much. Why would the minister introduce a 10-year tax refund bill that won't put commercializers of research ahead? It sounds like a low-cost photo op to me: Throw \$5 million at the sector and call it a success, a significant change in the government policy and a step in the right direction. But Ontarians see through the charade. Bill 100 is no opportunity for the McGuinty Liberals to pat themselves on the back.

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The fact is that the venture capital sector is in crisis and has been for many years now. Those who invest in new companies commercializing research aren't concerned with income tax structure. The problem is a lack of capital. The venture capital market took a hit when the technology bubble burst in 2000 and 2001. While the technology sector recovered, the venture capital sector didn't.

Here are some ugly numbers: Between 2000 and 2006, first-time venture capital financing decreased by 92%. The number of companies benefiting from first-time financing went from 187 in 2000 to only 41 in 2006. In Ontario, venture capital investment fell from \$750 million to \$685 million, back to the 1998 levels. That's much different than our other provinces, which saw a 9% increase, or the US, which had a 13% increase in venture capital investment. While Ontario had 88% more venture capital than Quebec in 2002, that gap narrowed to 13% in 2006. Some funds have simply stopped trying to raise capital because of the total lack of interest in them.

There is no light at the end of this tunnel. Before going on, it is important to mention that venture capital is critical to the creation of long-term, high-paying jobs in this province. Venture capital is about getting cash to start-ups in new, innovative fields like biotech, green energy, computing and telecommunications so that they grow into successful companies. Many think about Research in Motion's BlackBerry, for example. Retail venture capital funds contributed \$2.3 billion to Ontario's GDP annually. That's thousands of jobs.

The McGuinty Liberals' response to the venture capital crisis is wholly inadequate. They created a \$165-million venture capital fund, a token amount that industry insiders say will do little to help. Bill 100, with its \$5 million this fiscal year and \$7 million next year, will do even less.

They've taken a step backwards by moving to eliminate the 15% tax credit for labour-sponsored investment funds by the end of 2010. Labour-sponsored investment funds are pools of venture capital flowing largely to companies that commercialize research in the advanced health technology and biotechnology sectors. The credit provides additional incentives for investors to put some of their money into riskier assets. These funds have \$2.9 billion in assets in 645 Canadian companies. These companies employ over 70,000 workers. By cutting the tax credit, the government is signalling that it doesn't want to encourage investors to take the risk necessary to develop new technologies and companies that create jobs in long run. It has replaced good policy with gimmicks.

Here's a quote from a publication of the Canadian Retail Venture Capital Association: "Ontario's commercialization agenda will flounder without a steady supply of venture capital, and its research dollars will never translate into real companies with products, sales and employees."

Here's what we need to get the venture capital sector back on its feet. First, restore the labour-sponsored investment tax credit and enhance the credit's benefit. Make sure that credit can only be used to finance start-ups and target certain critical sectors. Let's create stronger incentives for putting money into venture capital.

Second, create a substantial capital pool, more than the token \$165 million, to get cash quickly into the hands of small start-ups which can turn the new discoveries into sustainable jobs.

Since 2000, we have seen the venture capital market dry up. The financial crisis is leading investors to keep their money under their mattresses. They are in no mood for any more of the riskier investments that characterize venture capital. It's almost a certainty that the decline in the venture capital market will continue.

We see continued signs of bad times ahead for the venture capital sector. Just across the street, the medical and related sciences building, the MaRS building for short, was built with much fanfare as a centre that would be the focal point of research commercialization in Ontario. We learned only recently that the second phase of the MaRS building at the corner of College and University has been halted as it was decided that \$300 million in expansion just wasn't worth it during these tough times.

Here's what Premier McGuinty said when unveiling the centre in September 2005: "Instead of sending researchers into space, we've made space for researchers. Instead of visiting Mars, we brought MaRS down to earth. Instead of spending billions on inter-planetary travel, you can fly here on the Red Rocket for \$2.50. We

really have found a better way." Yes, a centre for research may be important, but ultimately, developing innovative technology is about money. When private sector sources of cash disappear, there's big trouble.

Tony Cruz, CEO of Transition Therapeutics Inc., a company that develops new treatments for people with diabetes and Alzheimer's, located in the MaRS building, said this to the Globe and Mail: "Everybody's getting killed. Everything is down to the lowest levels you could ever think of.... There is just a lack of cash." Bill 100 isn't going to help the company or others like it, and the province's token venture capital pool is simply not enough to get cash to the companies that need it. And without cash, these companies go broke before getting job-creating products to the market.

A strengthened and enriched labour-sponsored investment tax credit would help get cash to the companies that need it. So would a larger or significant capital pool that small startups could access. The Liberals have decided to put commercialization photo ops before real high-tech growth policies. That's unfortunate, because the industry has put real proposals on the table, but the McGuinty Liberals have virtually ignored them all. Press releases and quick announcements have been their priority.

Now is the most important time to make real investments in start-ups. Good governments work to ensure that sustainable jobs are secured to help weather economic storms. We should be filling MaRS with good high-tech companies today, not waiting for the economy to pick up tomorrow. Bill 100 is just not going to create the jobs claimed by the Minister of Finance. New Democrats await a real venture capital plan.

I must say that maybe the ministry and maybe this government should be looking at some of the white-collar crime in this province, because it's my understanding that there are hundreds of millions of dollars that have been poorly invested by banks and by companies that finance different projects throughout our country and throughout the world. These situations are getting worse by the day.

I'll give you a personal example. I don't know how they got away with it, but Stelco, the steel company where I used to work, was undervalued by Tricap and Sunrise when it went into CCAA. They brought up a CEO from the States named Rodney Mott and his American counterparts as an executive team to run the company. They came into Hamilton, they picked up Stelco for, I believe, \$168 million, drastically underfunded—the company worth at the time was probably \$2 billion. After Mr. Mott was there and did some downsizing, did some trimming here, trimming there, cut some subsidiaries of the company, did this, did that, tried to make it more attractive and got some investment from the government for the pension situation to make it more attractive to buy, 18 months later Mr. Mott and his group sold the former Steel Company of Canada to US Steel for over \$2 billion. In exactly 18 months, Mr. Mott went back to Virginia, to his farm, with \$68 million in his pocket.

That same CEO told my fellow workers when I worked there to take concessions, \$3 an hour, attacking pension plans, benefits: “This company is going to be here for a long time. We’re going to work it out.”

Well, here we are about a year and a half later and we’ve got layoffs at Stelco. When I started there in 1974 or 1975, in the Hilton Works in Hamilton, there were 13,400 hourly employees in that one subsidiary—the main one, the main plant—and about 4,800 salaried. So 18,000 people worked in that plant. We’re down to 1,700 and they’re laying off again. That happened all over the city, to all companies. Dofasco, for the first time in their history—it is the Cadillac of steel business in the world; ArcelorMittal owns them now. For the first time in their history they’re closed for two weeks at Christmas. Sure, there are economic problems in the world, but where were the contingency funds? Where were the funds to support that company in hard times? I’ll tell you: \$68 million went to Virginia. There’s another gentleman in the States who’s done that in several places—Pittsburgh, Chicago—same deal, creating horrendous fortunes on the backs of working people in our province and in the States.

In this society, in Canada, you’re 10 times less likely to be charged for white-collar crime than you are in the States—unbelievable. We’ve got to stiffen our laws, and this government should maybe be looking at Bay Street, looking at some of these CEOs and these buyouts and the things that are going on. When people are starving and they’re cutting off grandparents who do all the things that they do, people are starting to wise up, and they’ve just about had enough. The people of Ontario are wising up really quickly. White-collar crime is rampant in North

America. I don’t have to tell you about Enron; I don’t have to tell you about Fannie Mae; I don’t have to tell you about all the other companies.

Hon. David Caplan: It’s Fannie Mae.

Mr. Paul Miller: Fannie Mae—sorry—other companies, other financial investment companies in the States. It’s happening all over the place.

Hon. David Caplan: Freddie Mac.

Mr. Paul Miller: Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, whatever. The bottom line is that these companies are all over the States. It’s happening all over the world, and governments are not doing a thing about it, nothing. So maybe you should take a look in our own backyard.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? Further debate? Are there any other members who wish to speak to this motion?

Mrs. Dombrowsky has moved third reading of Bill 100, An Act to amend the Corporations Tax Act and the Taxation Act, 2007. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day.

Hon. David Caplan: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o’clock.

The House adjourned at 1654.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
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Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
		Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture
		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
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		Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu

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Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	

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Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
		Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
		Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Kim Craitor
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jean-Marc Lalonde
Sophia Ageloni, Ted Arnott
Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett
Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde
Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue
Charles Sousa
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: David Oraziotti
Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell
Linda Jeffrey, Kuldip Kular
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Michael A. Brown, Kevin Daniel Flynn
France Gélinas, Randy Hillier
Lisa MacLeod, Julia Munro
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Jeff Leal
Reza Moridi, Yasir Naqvi
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Sylvia Jones
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Laura Albanese, Ernie Hardeman
Andrea Horwath, Phil McNeely
Jerry J. Ouellette, Liz Sandals
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle
Kim Craitor, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Laurel C. Broten, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Helena Jaczek
Dave Levac, Shafiq Qaadri
Khalil Ramal, Laurie Scott
Peter Shurman
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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