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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 4 June 2009

Jeudi 4 juin 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 4 June 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 4 juin 2009

The House met at 0945.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the aboriginal prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private bills and the motions for second and third reading.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the orders for second and third reading of the following private bills shall be called consecutively and the questions on the motions for second and third reading of the bills put immediately without debate: Bill Pr16, An Act to revive Deep River Management Services Inc.; Bill Pr21, An Act to revive 1173931 Ontario Limited; Bill Pr23, An Act to revive Welechenko Transport Ltd.; Bill Pr24, An Act to revive a corporation named New Hermes Limited in English and New Hermes Limitée in French; Bill Pr26, An Act respecting The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of London, in Ontario; and

That Mr. Ramal may move the motions for second and third reading of Bill Pr21 on behalf of Mr. Rinaldi; and

That Mr. Norm Miller may move the motions for second and third reading of Bill Pr16 on behalf of Mr. Yakabuski; and

That Mr. Norm Miller may move the motions for second and third reading of Bill Pr23 on behalf of Mr. Murdoch.

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

Motion agreed to.

DEEP RIVER MANAGEMENT
SERVICES INC. ACT, 2009

Mr. Norm Miller, on behalf of Mr. Yakabuski, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr16, An Act to revive Deep River Management Services Inc.

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

Second reading agreed to.

0950

DEEP RIVER MANAGEMENT
SERVICES INC. ACT, 2009

Mr. Norm Miller, on behalf of Mr. Yakabuski, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr16, An Act to revive Deep River Management Services Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): 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.

1173931 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2009

Mr. Ramal, on behalf of Mr. Rinaldi, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr21, An Act to revive 1173931 Ontario Limited.

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

Second reading agreed to.

1173931 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2009

Mr. Ramal, on behalf of Mr. Rinaldi, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr21, An Act to revive 1173931 Ontario Limited.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): 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.

WELECHENKO TRANSPORT LTD.
ACT, 2009

Mr. Norm Miller, on behalf of Mr. Murdoch, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr23, An Act to revive Welechenko Transport Ltd.

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

Second reading agreed to.

WELECHENKO TRANSPORT LTD.
ACT, 2009

Mr. Norm Miller, on behalf of Mr. Murdoch, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr23, An Act to revive Welechenko Transport Ltd.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): 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.

NEW HERMES LIMITED/NEW HERMES
LIMITÉE ACT, 2009

Mrs. Mangat moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr24, An Act to revive a corporation named New Hermes Limited in English and New Hermes Limitée in French.

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

Second reading agreed to.

NEW HERMES LIMITED/NEW HERMES
LIMITÉE ACT, 2009

Mrs. Mangat moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr24, An Act to revive a corporation named New Hermes Limited in English and New Hermes Limitée in French.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): 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.

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH
OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON,
IN ONTARIO ACT (TAX RELIEF), 2009

Mr. Ramal moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr26, An Act respecting The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of London, in Ontario.

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

Second reading agreed to.

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH
OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON,
IN ONTARIO ACT (TAX RELIEF), 2009

Mr. Ramal moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr26, An Act respecting The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of London, in Ontario.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Orders of the day.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: We have no further business this morning, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): This House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 0954 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. John Wilkinson: Good morning. I'm pleased to introduce Jesse Beatson, who is from my riding and serving as a legislative intern in my office.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I want to introduce the mother of page Ajoy Paul, Sheena Paul, and his brother Aaron Paul from my riding. Please welcome them to the Legislature.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's an honour to be able to introduce two of my great employees from the great riding of Nepean-Carleton. Kayla Fernet and Alicia Noonan work in my constituency office, and like all constituency assistants, they are the lifeblood of our organization. I want to welcome them to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Jim Watson: I'm pleased to introduce—I believe they were here earlier—members of the grade 8 travel club from Lakewood School, who are visiting Queen's Park from Kenora. They're joined by teachers from Lakewood: Terry Shaw, Marty Laffin, Jennifer Gray and Irene McCuaig.

Also, the two hardest-working summer interns in a minister's office, Aaron GlynWilliams and Nicholas Gallant from Municipal Affairs and Housing: Welcome.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I would like to ask all members to welcome the students from Goodfellow Public School in Innisfil, joining us here this morning.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to take this opportunity to welcome two guests of the Clerk who are seated in the west members' gallery, Mary Polisk and David Love. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

LEGISLATIVE USHERS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I also want to take this opportunity to thank our ushers, who are students here in Toronto, for the work they've done during this session. Some of them will be returning next fall; some of them will be returning to other studies: Osman Akthar, Shae Frosst, Claire Glossop, Shiva Logarajah, William Ng, Michael O'Shaughnessy, Jordan Paolucci, Janette Piasecki, Jenni Simon, Jenna Smith, Kalin Stacey, Harlan Tufford, Nick Turner, Maria Chung and William Wong.

Best of luck to the student ushers.

Applause.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): This being, hopefully, the last question period of this session, I'd like to ask all members to join me and thank our wonderful group of pages. We, too, wish them all the best.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order, Speaker: This tremendous group of pages has been horribly short-changed. New Democrats are prepared to sit next week for four more precious days; all we need is the co-operation from the government to that effect.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Welland is seeking unanimous consent for the House to sit next week. Agreed? I think I heard one no; lots of yeses.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to today acknowledge the fact that this is going to be the last day for Bob Runciman as the leader of the official opposition. Today's question period will be his last, although he will be continuing as our esteemed and valued leader until the end of the month, when we choose a new leader. Despite the fact that Bob might think he's spelling his name to all callers, I can tell you that Bob is held in high esteem not only in this House but throughout the province of Ontario.

Bob has twice had the opportunity to be unanimously elected as our leader since 2004, and although Mad Dog may not have been around from one of the earliest documented references to that nickname in the 16th century, I can tell you that since his election in 1981, he has been madly steadfast and unswerving in his dedication, not only to the people in eastern Ontario, but to all the people in the province. As our leader in the Legislature, he has served our caucus admirably as a very steady, enthusiastic and passionate advocate for people in this province.

Bob, you have certainly earned the respect of everyone in this House. You have served all Ontarians with distinction, and you have been an honest and very capable leader during a time of great need for our province, when getting to the heart of the issues was most critical as Ontarians today continue to struggle through particularly challenging economic times.

I hope that all members in this House would join me in congratulating our leader, Bob, for a job extremely well done. He is an individual who, I can personally attest, comes into this House every day to do the very best he can for every Ontarian.

Congratulations, Bob.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The leader of the third party on the same point of order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm very pleased to rise to pay tribute to the interim leader of the official opposition on behalf of the New Democratic caucus here in the Legislature.

Mr. Runciman is one of the longest serving members of this House, and by the time of the next general election, he will have been here for more than three decades. His record of service to his party and to the people of Ontario is as impressive as that of any member who has ever had the privilege of holding a seat here at Queen's Park.

Mr. Runciman has held cabinet portfolios under three different Premiers, he has chaired parliamentary commit-

tees, and he has been his party's whip and House leader. Simply put, Mr. Runciman has performed just about every role there is to perform in this place, and he has always done so with great diligence and eloquence.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I spent some time in his riding, and one thing was very, very clear: The people of Leeds-Grenville have a tremendous amount of respect and admiration for their MPP, as well they should.

While Mr. Runciman and I may have different ideological perspectives, I know that we both agree that serving our constituents is the most important thing we do. As he steps away from the leadership of the official opposition, I know that he will continue to serve his constituents very well and, on occasion, hold the government's feet to the fire in the way that only he can.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Premier on the same point of order.

Interjection.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There will be no hugs from me; I want to make that clear at the outset. But I rise to give expression to the wonderful sentiments that I think we all sense today.

A predecessor of mine, David Peterson, used to say that the toughest job in the world is to be the leader of an opposition party. I think he was wrong. I think the toughest job of them all has been interim leader of an opposition party—and to grapple with the fomenting changes inside your caucus as various personalities seek to assert themselves, and to garner support and to maintain some sense of order and to assume that high responsibility on behalf of Ontarians.

1040

I want to thank Bob Runciman, MPP, minister, interim Leader of the Opposition, husband, proud father, for all that he has brought to his responsibilities over so many years. He has been dogged; he has been determined; he has been faithful to his principles at all times. I'm not sure there's anything more we might ask of anybody who is privileged to hold public office.

I also hope that, given these warm and wonderful sentiments that we are now expressing, he will adjust his coming questions accordingly.

Laughter.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: If we need a recess for a few moments so that he might rephrase some of those, we will be there.

It is my personal theory of people that while we have more than amply demonstrated over the millennia that we can be selfish and shallow and short-sighted, and at our worst, mean-spirited, at our very best, there's something noble about people and something that takes us beyond our desire for flat-screened TVs and fast cars and big homes and vacation getaways. We want to do something of lasting value, something that endures. We want to do something good for others. My wish for Bob Runciman is that when he's alone with his thoughts and the house is quiet and his head is on the pillow, he enjoys that wonderful sense of satisfaction that comes from knowing he's

made a powerful, lasting and positive difference for so many others. Thank you, Bob.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition on the same point of order.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: This is a complete surprise to me, I have to say. It is going to be difficult to go into question period after this, but I'll do my job.

I want to thank all the members for their expression of appreciation for my contributions over the past couple of years as leader of the official opposition. It's been an enormous honour for me and for my family and the people who have supported me over so many years as their MPP. I know we're all feeling proud to be in this place and to represent our constituents. Certainly having this opportunity, not only as Leader of the Opposition, but to be interim leader of the Progressive Conservative Party as well for the past three and a half months, has been an enormous honour.

Norm just said it sounds like a eulogy, but I think Norm's eulogy will come ahead of mine.

Laughter.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: In any event, I want to thank Andrea, who has been most gracious in her new role as leader of the NDP. She did visit my riding and she's a warm and wonderful person.

I have to say, with respect to the Premier, that one of the things about what's happening here today is an indication of the fact that we all have our roles and responsibilities in this place. In opposition, as the Premier knows as well as anyone, we have a very important job to do in terms of holding the government accountable for their actions or lack of actions, whatever the issue might be. We have to do that job, and sometimes it's not easy because, as we have witnessed here today, we can be friends. It's sometimes a little difficult to be friends, given the nature of the debates or the questions, but at the end of the day we are friends.

With respect to the Premier and me, we have been friends for many, many years. I worked with his dad, and we served on committees together when he was just a rookie. I don't want this to show up in election brochures, but I remember when Dalton was running for the leadership of the Liberal Party and was pretty much an underdog. I met him in the hallway at the east door one night, and I said, "You know, if I were a Liberal"—God forbid—"I'd be supporting you, Dalton." And that's the way I felt.

Interjection.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: No, I didn't say that to anyone else.

I think it's an indication that, despite the fact that we have to take decisions based on principle and what we believe in and in terms of the roles we play in this place, we can still care about each other at the end of the day. I think that's important for all Ontarians to know.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I too, on behalf of the table and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, would like to thank Bob Runciman for his work as Her Majesty's loyal opposition leader.

And I didn't call the member from Kitchener–Waterloo to order on it, but I have been reviewing unparliamentary language and rulings that previous Speakers have made, and a previous Speaker actually ruled that "Mad Dog" is unparliamentary.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Best of luck to you.

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Yesterday, the member for Welland, Mr. Kormos, raised a point of order with respect to the use of question period and specifically with respect to a question asked by the member from Huron–Bruce, Ms. Mitchell. The government House leader, Ms. Smith, also spoke to this point of order.

As the member suggested in his comments yesterday, Speakers have traditionally allowed a fair amount of leeway in allowing questions to be put. In this, I am no different than my predecessors. I have taken the view that members should be given the greatest freedom possible in the putting of questions. Like a hockey referee at play-off time, I am always mindful not to be overly intrusive, and as much as possible, to let the game play on.

The member made reference to standing order 37(a), which refers to the necessity of questions being of urgent public importance. This particular reference has caused some difficulty for almost all occupants of this chair. Like them, I am reluctant to sit in judgment as to what is or is not a question of urgent public importance. I would refer members to a Warner ruling from June 3, 1992, Journals pages 101 to 110, for a fuller explanation of why this is so.

It is a subjective question, and as demonstrated yesterday by the response to this point of order by the government House leader, there are differing opinions on what is considered to be either urgent or of public importance. One member's pothole is another member's crater.

Having said that, there are certain principles governing the form and content of questions, and it would greatly improve the decorum and public perception of this place if they were more closely observed. To begin with, while there may be other motives, the primary purpose for asking a question is to extract information from the government and to call it to account. Specific to this point of order, questions should not be hypothetical nor should they seek merely to elicit an opinion from a minister of the crown. In particular, this principle would prohibit a question that simply offers the minister to whom it is addressed an opportunity to cast an opinion on a comment made outside of this House by another member or members. This kind of question is especially troublesome if it is intended as a meandering attack on a honourable colleague.

In my view, the initial question by the member for Huron–Bruce falls into this category, and I would encourage greater observance of this principle in the future. I thank the member from Welland for raising this point and the government House leader for her response to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It is now time for oral questions. Leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back to reality.

This is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Minister of Health said that it is long overdue for this province to be able to have the eHealth infrastructure that will drive and improve patient care and patient safety. Premier, your minister looked the other way while Liberal-friendly consultants charged taxpayers for \$15 cocktails, and \$300 an hour to read newspaper articles. One consultant even billed taxpayers for sending messages to herself.

Premier, do you really think this type of offensive misuse of scarce tax dollars is improving patient care and safety in this province?

1050

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. David Caplan: I want to thank the member for the question. But before I get to the response, I want to congratulate the member on his years of service and on his last day as interim leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition. I look forward to sparring with him in question period—and others.

I do acknowledge that in fact the investments in eHealth are significant. I do acknowledge that, unfortunately, a previous government set up Smart Systems for Health with the wrong mandate and put the wrong leadership in place. I do acknowledge that we are behind where we should be. And I do acknowledge that we are finally taking steps to be able to rectify that matter.

We are moving forward to modernize Ontario's eHealth infrastructure. We are going to do it, because it will bring better patient care, better patient safety, connect health care—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: The minister clearly has a political damage control team in place, advising him to use the same responses to one of his scandals and subsequent efforts to bury and hide his failures, regrettably, to do his job. We saw it at OLG and now we're seeing it at eHealth.

CBC is reporting that when Sarah Kramer was considered for CEO of eHealth, she was given a supportive reference by one Will Falk, a former Liberal staffer. Shortly after Ms. Kramer got the job, she handed off an untendered \$1.3-million contract to—guess who?—the same Will Falk. That strikes me as a very lucrative taxpayer-paid thank you for the reference.

Minister, let's stop the bafflegab. Give us an explanation as to why this use of tax dollars was appropriate.

Hon. David Caplan: It's my expectation that, whenever possible, the contracts are tendered in an open and

fair competition. The eHealth board made the decision during that transition period to get eHealth moving forward as quickly as they possibly could. It's important not just for eHealth but for all of us who have the privilege to serve Ontarians, including, I would say to the member, all members of this Legislature. That's precisely why I had a conversation with board chair Dr. Hudson and sought assurances, which were not received, and why I have directed eHealth and the board to undertake a third party review. That will be under the auspices of an internal government auditor, along with the agency's external auditor, PricewaterhouseCoopers. There will in fact be another layer where we have the Auditor General of the province of Ontario, an independent officer of this Legislature, who in fact is looking at—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Yesterday in the scrum, even the media were laughing at the minister's desperation in trying to justify these very offensive expenditures of tax dollars.

I want to go to another incident. The Courtyard Group, which is another Liberal-friendly consultant with close ties to the Deputy Premier, also received lucrative taxpayer-paid untendered contracts worth over \$2 million. Top Courtyard employee John Ronson was a former Liberal staffer. Another employee, Karli Farrow, was executive assistant to Minister Smitherman and a policy adviser to the Premier. Courtyard head Michael Guerriere worked right alongside eHealth chair Alan Hudson, who has gone underground since this scandal came to light.

Minister, you can't deny that Liberal entitlement is written all over this. You need to do the right thing: Fire Ms. Kramer. You are the Minister of Health. You're responsible for this file. If you can't do your job, please step down and let—

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

Hon. David Caplan: I want to caution the member about some of the accusations that he makes. I can tell you that Dr. Hudson has made very valuable contributions to the medical—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Transportation.

Minister?

Hon. David Caplan: As I was saying, I want to caution the member about some of the accusations that he is making. Dr. Hudson has made tremendously valuable contributions to the medical community and to health care in this province.

I want to quote today's Toronto Star. "Hudson ... received an honorary degree from the University of Toronto for creating a neurosurgical training program widely regarded as one of the best in the world and for his role as head of the push to improve Ontario's wait times for health services." I can tell you that the results speak for themselves and they are impressive.

In fact, Bob Bell, president and CEO of University Health Network, said: "It's unfortunate the work Kramer and Hudson have done at eHealth is being overshadowed.... The leadership of Kramer and Hudson vastly improved Ontario's wait times for cancer surgery, joint replacements, diagnostic scans, cataract surgery and cardiac procedures."

Speaker—

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

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: To the Premier: Today, as we know, is the last day of the session, a session which has been marred by a record-breaking Liberal deficit, fiscal mismanagement that has made Ontario the only province facing a reduced credit rating, and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

This session ends with Minister Caplan looking the other way while fat-cat Liberal consultants are rewarded with untendered million-dollar contracts. Thousands of Ontarians continue to lose jobs.

Interestingly enough, the Premier, yesterday, told the media that this is one of the best sessions he's had. If we needed any further proof that the Premier is living in a taxpayer-subsidized bubble, he gave it to us with that comment. Premier, do you understand the bad shape this province is in under your watch?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We had a very productive session in fact. It was our most productive session since we've earned the privilege of serving Ontarians as their government. I say that not simply in terms of number of the bills that we've passed during the course of this session, but in the quality and the substantive aspect of those bills. Take a look, for example, at just one of those: the Green Energy Act. It places Ontario at the forefront in North America.

I recently had the opportunity to visit New York City and hosted a dinner there with a number of venture capitalists in representative ethical investment funds. It is perfectly clear that we have risen to the front of the line when it comes to putting in place the kinds of legislation that will harness energy from the sun and wind and biomass and create some 50,000 jobs, although I should tell you that our American counterparts are saying that in fact we've underestimated. They expect it will create many more than that. That's just one substantive bill—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Let's list a few of the other scandals that occurred during the Premier's "best session." Dalton McGuinty brought Ontario into have-not status. He announced his massive McGuinty sales tax, hitting seniors and struggling families with taxes on everything from gas to heating fuel, vitamins and even funerals.

We had the failure to report abuse of caregivers by Ministers Fonseca and Wynne, in order to protect a

federal Liberal friend. Minister Caplan looks the other way while his fat-cat CEO of eHealth twists, bends and manipulates the rules and gives her friends untendered contracts of \$5 million in tax dollars.

Why do you accept such low standards when on this side of the House you screamed for perfection?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Let's keep in mind the context and the real successes that we have enjoyed, working hard together with Ontarians. I just don't share my honourable colleague's negative and pessimistic view of where we find ourselves and where we're going.

If you take a look at the budget, for example, we have found a way, working hard, as I say, together with Ontarians, to introduce measures that will both make us a more competitive and a more caring Ontario. While we've reduced business taxes and reduced taxes for 93% of Ontarians, we've also effectively doubled the Ontario child benefit.

We're putting new money into social housing. We found more money for health care, more money for education and more money for colleges and universities, notwithstanding that we find ourselves at a time where our economy is contracting. We put forward a good, solid budget that is designed to meet the needs of the day and ensure that we can look forward to the future with a great deal of optimism.

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Every day, we're learning more and more that if you're a friend of Dalton McGuinty's Liberals, abuse is allowed, even implicitly encouraged, by a government becoming increasingly comfortable with their entitlements.

In the real world, where people are struggling to put food on the table, pay a mortgage, put their kids through school, rules abused the way that Sarah Kramer and Alan Hudson have willingly abused them—it's grounds for termination; no ifs, ands or buts.

Why won't you do that on behalf of Ontarians? Send the right message at the end of this session. Tell Ontarians that it's not okay to manipulate rules in order to fill the bank accounts of your friends and keep them protected. Why won't you do that?

1100

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The people of Ontario, the people we are privileged to serve and to represent in this Legislature, have high expectations of all of us, and justifiably so. One of those expectations is that we will, in each and every thing that we do, try to be fair.

The opposition has raised some real concerns; I acknowledge those. I think the fair thing to do is to allow our Provincial Auditor to look into this matter, to inquire as thoroughly as he generally does, to come back with some substantive recommendations, for us to carefully consider those recommendations and then to act on those recommendations. I think that speaks to our highest obligation to be fair to Ontarians and to all individuals involved in this matter.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. I want to start by sharing a quote with the House: "This government is trying to spin them with their own money, trying to convince people that they're doing a good job. It seems to me that good policy speaks for itself. You don't need to spin people and tell them you're doing good work for them. Let the policy speak for itself." That was Dalton McGuinty, October 25, 2001, in this Legislature.

My question is this: Has the Premier changed his mind about spinning Ontarians with their own money?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I assume that what my honourable colleague is getting at is whether or not we ought to take measures to inform Ontarians about our recent budget, and I believe we should. I think at the beginning of the 21st century, Ontarians lead hectic, just-in-time lives and I think we have a responsibility to convey to them what we're doing on their behalf.

I think that overwhelmingly, Ontarians don't know that 93% of them will enjoy a permanent income tax cut; they're not aware of that. They're not aware of how we intend to move ahead with a single sales tax and why that's so important to all of us and our economy for jobs today and jobs tomorrow. Just as we have found ways to communicate with Ontarians in other areas on the matters of health care or education or social policy, we think it's also important to talk to them when it comes to financial policy or budgetary policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, apparently for the Premier, policy doesn't need to speak for itself when he's in government. That's cynical politics at its worst.

Here are some more enlightening comments from the Premier: "Partisan government advertising is a disease, and I have the cure." His cure was to introduce legislation to prevent advertising whose primary objective was to foster a positive impression of the governing party.

Dr. McGuinty, why won't you heal thyself? Why won't the Premier halt his shameless attempt at breaking his own law with a multi-million-dollar HST ad campaign, whose only goal is Liberal Party damage control?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My only affliction is the constant attacks of the opposition parties.

I think we owe it to Ontarians to tell them a little bit more about what we're doing in government to help them better understand. As I do this, I'm proud of the fact that we have put in place the kind of legislation that details what kind of advertising is appropriate and what kind is inappropriate. We put the rules in place and adopted those rules, which were not accepted by my colleagues when they were in government.

So we've made a big step forward. There are rules in place; we will respect those rules. We'll also respect our responsibility to Ontarians to ensure that they are well informed about what it is that we plan to do.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Instead of investing scarce public money on child care spaces, on hospitals and

seniors in long-term care, the McGuinty Liberals are spending millions of dollars on a partisan advertising blitz. They're choosing partisan put-downs and publicly funded propaganda over straight talk. Why won't the Premier put the brakes on his mass-marketing campaign and pull the plug on the 8% unfair tax grab?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Just to be clear, we have not run any ads. I've seen a number of ads run by the federal government with respect to their budgetary initiatives. There are ads in other provinces with respect to their budgetary initiatives. We haven't run a single ad yet. But we do think that we are going to have to find some opportunities to better communicate with Ontarians about the specifics to be found within our budget. We think that's important. Ontarians lead busy lives. We have a responsibility to find a way to reach out to them, but to do that in a way that is respectful of the new rules and new laws that we ourselves have put in place.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I look forward to the airwaves over the summer, is all I have to say to that.

Again to the Premier: We are learning each day about the outrageous spending at eHealth Ontario. This agency has burned through millions and millions of dollars on high-paid, high-flying consultants who see nothing wrong with emptying the public purse. We see million-dollar contracts handed to friends of eHealth executives, contracts tendered without a due process, and billing for unconscionable expenditures.

Today I would like to give the Premier one last chance to answer this very basic question: Does he condone this flagrant disregard for taxpayers' dollars?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the opportunity to say what I've said a number of times already. Some things have taken place there which we simply cannot condone. We're going to have to find ways to ensure that those kinds of things don't happen again.

I think the best thing we can do in the circumstances is to allow the Provincial Auditor to do his work, to conduct his investigation, to speak to the appropriate parties, make the appropriate inquiries, come back to us, lay out the facts clearly and provide us with some specific recommendations so that together we might act on those recommendations. I think that's what fairness demands in the circumstances.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: You would think, with this government allowing emergency room closures in places like Fort Erie, with shortages of nurses, doctors and personal support workers across this province, growing crises in our long-term care and home care systems, that the McGuinty government would be looking to save all the health care dollars it can and invest properly in our health care system. Instead, this government has stood by and watched millions and millions of dollars go down the drain through mismanagement at eHealth Ontario. When

will this Premier finally take some ownership, step in and clean up this mess?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think the fair thing to do in the circumstances is to allow the auditor to do his work, and I think Ontarians are with us there. They are objective, interested, and they want to allow the auditor to complete his work.

But I think, in fairness, we should acknowledge that while we have been working with eHealth to move forward and make progress in that area of establishing an electronic health record system in Ontario, we've also been building new hospitals, hiring more nurses and putting in place family health teams. We've been funding new procedures and we've been improving the rate of getting access to procedures through our wait time progress. So it's not as if we've been focused exclusively on the eHealth challenges; we've also, at the same time, been breathing new life and new strength into the broader health care system for all our families.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontarians have a good reason to be fed up with what appears to be the government's lackadaisical attitude towards health care. Our health care system is clearly in crisis. With cutbacks and increased privatization, communities are being forced to do with less while dollars are flowing in the wrong direction. This government's health minister clearly is not up to the job of managing his ministry. It is up to the Premier to step in, put his foot down and fire the minister and the top officials at eHealth Ontario. Why is he refusing to do that?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think I've indicated clearly now on a number of occasions that some things have taken place over at eHealth which none of us are comfortable with, and there are certain things there which none of us could possibly condone. We need to get to the bottom of it, and I think we need to do that in an objective and dispassionate way.

Fortunately, we have an officer of the Legislature who is perfect for these kinds of things. It's the Provincial Auditor. We've asked him to go in there. The Minister of Health has sent him a letter putting in a specific request, asking him if at all possible to accelerate his report, to make that available both in hard copy and online so the public has access to it, so that we can, working together, act on those recommendations at the soonest possible opportunity.

I want to do that in a way, obviously, that doesn't interfere with the progress that we need to make when it comes to putting in place an electronic health record system for Ontarians. We need to find those efficiencies and continue to improve the quality of our care for all our families.

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ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is for the Minister of Health. I thought, when we heard about the

eHealth consultant billing taxpayers \$300 an hour for reading the newspaper, watching TV and riding the subway, that we'd heard it all. Unfortunately for taxpayers, I couldn't have been more wrong.

Miyo Yamashita, the sole-sourced contractor who billed hundreds for talking to her husband, also had one of her employees bill the taxpayer for editing the bio of Allaudin Merali, the guy making \$60,000 a month and billing taxpayers for a nightly cocktail. He's the same guy who left Alberta after a scathing report from that province's Auditor General.

Minister, can you tell us just what Ms. Yamashita edited out of Mr. Merali's bio?

Hon. David Caplan: Of course, the member raises concerns, and both the Premier and I have said we neither condone nor defend the actions, which is why we moved quite swiftly to bring in and to order a third party review, under the auspices of an internal government auditor, in conjunction with PricewaterhouseCoopers, to be able to conduct that investigation. I think that that is important for taxpayers to be able to get to the bottom of it, to make recommendations and to have those recommendations implemented as quickly as possible.

As the Premier has indicated, I have in addition written to Mr. McCarter, the independent Auditor General, officer of this Legislature, under section 17 of the act to ask him, as soon as his report is ready, to please table it with the Legislature and to give me a copy of it, so that we can ensure that his recommendations are implemented as quickly as—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: By not taking action, the minister is defending these offensive expenditures. The example I just gave is ridiculous, but it gets worse. Ms. Yamashita submitted a time sheet to the taxpayers of Ontario for sending herself e-mails and talking to herself on the phone. I know this is too bizarre to believe, but it's true, and it would be funny if it wasn't so outrageous.

The minister continues, day after day, to stand in his place—and he says he's not defending them, but that's what he's doing, and the Premier as well, suggesting there's no justification for dismissals now. Clearly heads need to role. Kramer needs to be fired, Hudson needs to be fired and this minister, if he doesn't quit, needs to be fired. Will the minister do the right thing, step aside and let someone else clean up your mess?

Interjections.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Nobody fired Tom Long.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Minister of Transportation is not helping the situation. Minister?

Hon. David Caplan: I think Ontarians understand the partisan nature of this place, that members on the opposite side will have certain views and certain partisan rhetoric. Of course we'll get into the conversation here in question period.

I also know that Ontarians are fair-minded people, that they will want independent officers of this Legislature to

get to the bottom of these matters. The Auditor General has long been looking into the Smart Systems for Health Agency, the transition to eHealth Ontario and the subsequent work they have done. In addition to that, we have one of Canada's, indeed the world's, foremost auditing management firms looking at the management practices and financial controls under the auspices of an internal government auditor.

I know that Ontarians are fair-minded. I know that my friend opposite as well, regardless of the rhetoric that he uses, would want to get to the bottom of this. I know that he too would want to see—

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

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. This minister's actions are alarming. He is presiding over an agency that has mismanaged millions of precious health care dollars, and every day, it just keeps getting worse. As this minister tries to shield himself and his friends at eHealth, Ontarians are wondering, who's protecting us? Who's protecting our interests?

Why won't the minister take my advice? Take a deep breath that goes in through the nose and out through the mouth, and then admit to Ontarians that there is a disaster at eHealth and that he will take the immediate, necessary, decisive steps to make it right?

Hon. David Caplan: In fact, that's exactly what I have done. I do acknowledge that the investments in eHealth are significant but ultimately will result in better patient care. One day we have the leader of your party saying we should pull the plug—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. David Caplan: You know, we do have on one day the leader of the third party saying we should pull the plug, that we should not investing in the eHealth infrastructure of this province. On another day we have the critic for the third party saying that these are critical investments and that we should be moving forward as quickly as possible.

Frankly, I do agree that it is long overdue and it is work that should have taken place quite some time ago. Regrettably, the previous government in 2002 set up the Smart Systems for Health Agency with the incorrect mandate and with improper leadership. It took my colleague, my predecessor, Minister Smitherman, to order an operational review of Smart Systems in order to point us in the right direction and get this back on track.

I can tell the member opposite that the current leadership is yielding good results, where we have a pilot project on ePrescribing, linking up pharmacists with primary care physicians, so far in two communities: in Collingwood and in Sault Ste. Marie. We have already begun—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I tried to offer this minister a lifeline, an honest way out of this mess, but he needs to denounce the culture of entitlement, the waste and the corrupt business deals that are going on at eHealth. The minister needs to do this but he keeps refusing. Sarah Kramer is still the CEO and president of eHealth, and the minister is just fine with that. He isn't prepared to do the right thing: to send a clear message that this kind of culture is not tolerated and that heads need to roll. He needs to step aside and allow someone who is capable of taking over. Will he finally do that?

Hon. David Caplan: The right thing to do is to be fair in these circumstances: to have an independent officer of this Legislature, Mr. McCarter, the Auditor General, be able to do his investigation and give us his recommendations, and to see those recommendations implemented to the benefit of not only Ontario taxpayers, but Ontario patients who will rely on the eHealth infrastructure once it is in place.

In addition to that, because I know that Ontarians are fair-minded people and because I know they want to understand what has happened and ways that we can strengthen things, I know that they would support having, under the auspices of an internal government auditor, PricewaterhouseCoopers come in to provide that external third party view of what has taken place; to have a look at the management functions, look at financial controls—again, provide us with the proper advice, guidance and recommendations that can be implemented to protect—

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

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mr. Khalil Ramal: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, yesterday the Education Quality and Accountability Office released the results of the 2008-09 secondary schools' literacy tests, the tests administered to more than 140,000 grade 10 students this past March. It measures whether students are meeting the minimum standards for literacy across the curriculum. I am aware that our government has focused on helping all students improve their literacy skills. We created a literacy and numeracy secretariat to support student achievement in schools across the province, provided funding for 10,500 teachers in our schools, and have invested more than \$5 billion in the education system, despite 106,000 fewer students since 2003. I know that this year's results have only improved by 1% over last year. Is the minister satisfied with these results?

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I thank the member for the question. I am indeed satisfied with the results, and the reason is that we were already at a very high level, and so the improvement over last year—we've gone from 84% to 85% of students in grade 10 passing that literacy test. That is a 13% increase over when we came into office in 2003.

Our teachers in our schools are working hard throughout the elementary and secondary panels to improve the

literacy and numeracy skills of all of our students. Those efforts are paying off: 85% of English language students passed, up from 72% in 2003; and 84% of French language students. Significantly, students with special needs and English and French language learners are improving, so that 66% of English language learners passed this year compared to 59% last year. We've got more to do there, but we're moving in the right direction and more of those kids are—

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It's remarkable how much these scores have improved since the McGuinty government took office in 2003. Our government wants to see a good outcome for every student. I have seen the evidence in my riding of London—Fanshawe.

For instance, in the Thames Valley District School Board, we have increased funding by \$130 million despite almost 9,000 fewer students. That has formed a 40% increase per pupil since 2003. This increased support includes funding for 396 new teaching positions, including 70 secondary student success teachers and 761 EAs. But while these test results are coming out, we still have a third of our student population not graduating. Can you tell us what you are doing—despite all this investment—to increase that population?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's a very good question, because there are still students who are not achieving, and in education in Ontario, we are involved in a cultural shift. It used to be that schools were sorting mechanisms—particularly secondary schools—where there were certain students who were going to achieve and others were not going to, and those kids were written off. We have put a student success teacher in every secondary school in this province and a student success leader in every board. We've placed grade 8 and 9 transition teams in order to help kids make that transition from elementary school to secondary school. We are focused on making sure that every student has the supports that he or she needs in order to succeed.

That means that those students may go on—will go on—to graduate from high school and have more opportunities in their lives after school. That's what we're doing in our schools. We've got 13,500 more kids graduating every year. It's a huge success story, and we will continue to support those kids as they go on in their lives.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is to the Minister of Health. Sarah Kramer signed off on many untendered contracts, totalling over \$3.3 million, to Accenture and Courtyard. Let's connect the dots one more time. William Falk, a partner at Accenture, gave a reference for Sarah Kramer's application to eHealth. He is also a former Liberal minister's political staffer.

Then we have Courtyard. One of their key staff members is John Ronson, a former political staffer, along with Karli Farrow, who worked in both George Smitherman's and Dalton McGuinty's offices.

Minister, you have allowed this culture of entitlement, this mismanagement and abuse of taxpayer money. Ontarians don't need a third party review again. The facts are on the table. Will you resign and give the job to somebody else who can clean up the mess?

Hon. David Caplan: In fact, my predecessor ordered an operational review into Smart Systems for Health, set up by the member—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. David Caplan: My predecessor ordered an operational review into the eHealth agency set up by my friend and her colleagues opposite, which was in quite a mess. We have cleaned that up, the legacy which my friend opposite has left. In fact, we are seeing good results already in the few short months that they have been operational.

The member says that a third party review is not required. I understand that was standard operating procedure when the member opposite was on this side of the House. But I want the member to know that I have trust and confidence in Mr. McCarter, an independent officer of this Legislature, who over the years has done outstanding work on behalf of not only this Assembly but Ontarians and Ontario taxpayers. I believe that the Auditor General will provide us with outstanding insight not only into Smart Systems for Health, into the transition and the actions taken, but give us good advice and guidance on a way forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Again to the Minister of Health: Every word that you say brings you deeper and deeper into the scandal that is swirling all around you.

Here's another connection: Sarah Kramer, Will Falk of Accenture and Joanne Walker of the Courtyard Group together penned an article recently bragging about their success. I wonder how much money this cost the taxpayers of Ontario.

Minister, you have allowed this culture of entitlement to continue. You have continued to reward Liberal friends and former staffers. This flies in the face of everything that your Premier has pretended to oppose in the past. Will you finally today recognize that you're in over your head, that you can't clean up the mess, and resign?

Hon. David Caplan: I would quote for the member Bob Bell, president and CEO of the University Health Network, who said, "It's unfortunate the work Kramer and Hudson have done"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. David Caplan: I say to the member opposite that Bob Bell, president and CEO of the University Health Network, disagrees with the member opposite. This is a respected leader in the health care system, who says that the work of eHealth has been impressive, that they have in fact delivered, and out of the ashes of the former Smart Systems for Health Agency.

I'd like to list for the member some of the accomplishments in a few short months. I've mentioned the ePrescribing system that is in place. We are seeing the rollout of electronic medical records in primary care, in conjunction and in partnership with OntarioMD, our partners at the Ontario Medical Association. We've launched the baseline diabetes data initiative to measure the current state of diabetes care in Ontario, providing physicians with information needed to improve patient care. We've established the diagnostic imaging network, we've developed an electronic system to store images, and we're going filmless right across—

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

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Finance. A recommendation contained in the Financial Services Commission of Ontario's five-year auto insurance review would slash insurance payouts for serious car crash injuries by 75%. The cap on medical and rehabilitation costs for non-catastrophic injuries would be lowered from \$100,000 to \$25,000. This recommendation would impoverish accident victims, leave taxpayers on the hook for health care costs and further enrich the insurance companies.

I asked a similar question two weeks ago; you've had time to ruminate. Will the Minister of Finance today make it clear that he will reject this recommendation?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We just wrapped up a second round of public consultations with respect to the auto insurance reforms as part of a five-year review that our government put in place when we made initial changes to insurance legislation back at the beginning of the last term. We are assessing the responses we've had from the public on a range of issues, and as I indicated to the member here in the House last week, I anticipate responding likely in the next two to three weeks.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: In two to three weeks, of course, we will not be sitting here.

The recommendation would seriously damage the quality of rehabilitation services that accident victims receive today. Dr. Peter Rumney of Bloorview Kids Rehab says the following: "It's a huge step backwards.... The proposed \$25,000 cap for rehab services for 'non-catastrophic' claims would, in most cases, be exhausted in three months. It might cover a wheelchair, a couple of modifications to a house and a month of nursing care."

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Just yesterday, I met with the Association of Independent Assessment Centres, and they are echoing the same fears as the many health professionals who have contacted me, and I'm sure you, over the last two months.

When will this minister do the right thing, listen to the experts and say no to FSCO's wrong-headed recommendation?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I will respond, as I indicated, likely in the next two to three weeks, with respect to the

recommendations. And the member's right: We've done extensive consultations.

What I will remind the member is that Ontarians have benefited from a 13% decrease in auto insurance premiums under this government's watch and, if I might add, \$7 billion of auto insurance premiums savings since the reforms we brought forward, implemented in 2003-04 here in Ontario, and reforms, I might add, that were followed in other provinces.

We want to get this right. We've taken a good deal of time to consult. We are completing the five-year review. We will have a response likely in the next two to three weeks. What I can tell you is that this party, this government, the McGuinty government, is looking out for the interests of auto insurance consumers and those who have to access benefits in the unfortunate circumstances they find themselves.

ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation. The world is changing. People are looking for cleaner ways to generate power and for new ways to live and do business more sustainably. Environmental technologies represent a multi-billion-dollar global market. They also mean cleaner air, solutions to climate change and a more sustainable and liveable planet for our children. I know that, through the Green Energy Act, our government plans to be at the forefront of this new green economy.

I want to tell Ontarians about a proud example of the cutting edge of this new economy that is located in my community of Ottawa. EcoVu, based in Kanata, has a remarkable technology that identifies and removes contaminants in water by way of a unique single-step process. EcoVu holds five patents for its processes, the result of more than 20 years of research, dedication and hard work. Sir, tell us what the Ministry of Research and Innovation is doing to help bring technologies like this to the global market.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my friend for the question. Global opinion leaders predict that by the middle of this century, some one half of humanity will not have access to clean drinking water. That is a global challenge, and our government is convinced that what we need to do is seize global opportunities. In Ottawa, in Kanata, there is a company called EcoVu that has come up with a wonderful, innovative solution to increase the ability of humanity to have clean, safe drinking water.

Through our innovation demonstration fund, we've made an investment of some \$4 million into this company as they scale up their processes to meet this growing demand. It's exactly the type of job that we need to create in the province of Ontario to serve a global market.

I'm particularly proud that the innovation demonstration fund, initially allocated with \$30 million, was recently re-endowed with some \$50 million more, bringing our commitment to—

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

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: EcoVu's technology both detects contaminants and purifies water in a single step. I've seen this technology with my own eyes, and it's incredible the way it works. This two-in-one approach is faster, achieves higher levels of purity and can yield cost savings by eliminating steps in the purification process. EcoVu's technology can be used for purification and analysis by both industrial users and municipal water departments to increase the sustainable and efficient use of fresh water in the industrialized world.

But also, we know that water use has been growing at more than twice the rate of population increase in the last century. By 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity. This is a dangerous and troubling reality for much of humanity.

Will the minister outline what the people of Ontario, Canada and the world can expect in economic ramifications of an investment—

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

Hon. John Wilkinson: I know the member has seen this technology with his own eyes; so have I. I recommend that people go to the website for the Ministry of Research and Innovation, and you will see there a video about this groundbreaking technology, because that video speaks volumes about the tremendous breakthrough that has been made by EcoVu. Right now, that company employs 12 individuals, but they believe that they'll have up to 30 individuals in the next few years.

I want to praise Algonquin College. Algonquin College in Ottawa has been part of the success story of EcoVu. I remember actually making an announcement in regard to EcoVu at Algonquin, and we want to thank them.

Clean technologies represent an amazing economic opportunity for Ontario in what is projected to be a \$125-billion global market by 2010, within the next two years. I don't know about you, but I believe that Ontario needs to get its fair share of \$125 billion—

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

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Back to the Minister of Health: Minister, will you confirm whether or not you've received or did receive any correspondence advising you not to involve either Alan Hudson, Sarah Kramer, or both, in the eHealth agency?

Hon. David Caplan: I'm not sure what the member is referring to. However, I can tell you that I have treated concerns that have been brought here to this Legislature in a manner most serious. I've expressed my concern—I neither condone nor defend them—as has the Premier. I think that's why we took the prudent step that Ontarians would expect that we would take, which is to instruct the board, under the auspices of an internal government auditor, to take on a third party review through the external audit process of PriceWaterhouseCoopers.

In addition to that, I have, on occasion, been able to share with the member that I have been in conversation with Mr. McCarter, the Auditor General of the province of Ontario. Under section 17 of the Audit Act, I have written to Mr. McCarter requesting that he table his report with—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I'll say it once again: By not taking action, the minister has condoned this offensive abuse of tax dollars.

As you noted, Speaker, he didn't answer my question. It's a simple question, and I think it's a very important question, because if he did have these facts before him before these appointments occurred, I think his complicity in this scandal is even greater.

If he won't deny, then I ask him if he will search his files, make this letter public and save people the time, save the public the time and expense of obtaining a copy through the FOI process. Will you do that?

Hon. David Caplan: I have said to the member opposite, I want to caution him in some of the accusations he makes. I would note that Dr. Hudson is a very well-respected member of the medical community; in fact, so much so that members opposite appointed him as head of Cancer Care Ontario in 2001. He has done tremendous service to this province, as Bob Bell has noted—as I have read that quote earlier.

Perhaps I did go a little bit far in my earlier comments regarding Smart Systems for Health, because they did accomplish some important objectives for this province, and I do wish to acknowledge that, in contrast to my earlier remarks. For example, they helped to build and connect approximately 7,000 secure network sites in the province. In fact, we are now connected—every surgeon's office in the province. No other province in Canada has this type of system in place—

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

LABOUR MOBILITY

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. As you know, other jurisdictions in Canada have a far less restrictive regime than Ontario when it comes to allowing accounting professionals to practise in the area of public accounting. As labour mobility is founded on the acceptance of professional qualifications from other jurisdictions, when will this government support the removal of all barriers blocking accounting professionals who can practise public accounting in their home province from practising public accounting in Ontario?

Hon. John Milloy: I may refer the supplementary to the Attorney General, but I'd like to point out to the member that Ontario is a signator to the Ontario Labour Mobility Act. We brought forward legislation in this House which will remove barriers for individuals to practise across the province. At the same time, the

province of Ontario, as well as other provinces, has the right to put forward exceptions or instances where we believe there are differences between the professions, and for a variety of reasons, such as health and safety, that we feel that an individual who comes to this province in this profession needs to upgrade their skills or seek other training. We're in the process of developing that list of exceptions and working with other provinces to keep them to a minimum, but at the core, we want to see the borders open throughout Canada.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: I guess they've got to watch those paper cuts.

What evidence does this government have to support the claim that Ontario consumers would be at risk if a licensed public accountant, other than a chartered accountant, were to practise public accounting in Ontario? This government's position is particularly bewildering, given that an independent trade panel has already ruled that the Ontario government's barrier to labour mobility—which he says it isn't; it is—for public accounting is inconsistent with the interprovincial Agreement on Internal Trade. It is more bewildering, given that the continuation of this barrier will cost Ontario taxpayers up to \$5 million under the terms of AIT's new dispute resolution mechanism.

I repeat: Without any evidence that consumers will benefit, why is this government pursuing this unfounded barrier to labour mobility for public accounting?

Hon. John Milloy: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The maintenance of accounting standards is important for all of us, whether in a business or individually. That's why, after 40 years of discussion, this Legislature came together and agreed on the process we now have in the province of Ontario, a process which provides the determination of these standards, and who qualifies, to an independent body, the Public Accountants Council, that makes the determination of the standards to protect us all.

We all came together—all branches of the profession within the province came together. These very important issues for the people of Ontario are determined independently, according to the principles that apply to accountancy. They are not a political issue for us.

SPORTS AND RECREATION FUNDING

Mr. Dave Levac: My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. As all of us know, amateur sport plays a significant role in communities across the province. It contributes to Ontarians' physical and emotional well-being, among other benefits. Considering the health benefits, there is certainly a need for Ontarians' sport and physical activity participation levels to increase.

Promotion of physical activities focuses on active living and encourages Ontarians to look for enjoyable ways to make physical activity a regular part of their daily life. Amateur sport provides Ontarians of all ages

with opportunities to participate in sports activities to suit their aspirations and abilities.

Whether it be children and youth, seniors, women, aboriginals or individuals with disabilities, all Ontarians should have access to greater opportunities to stay active.

Can the minister share with us the plans that are in place to ensure that we're providing Ontarians with appropriate support, and specifically, how those who most need it are getting it?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I want to thank the member from Brant for that question. He's certainly a great advocate for his community.

Interjection: Hear, hear.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Hear, hear.

The McGuinty government continues to work to increase opportunities for participation in sport among our most under-represented groups. I had the privilege of announcing on Monday, along with the federal Minister of State for sports, an investment of \$5.3 million to assist disadvantaged and vulnerable Ontarians to gain access to physical activity and sports. Under the Sport for More bilateral agreement, the McGuinty government and the federal government collaborated in investing \$2.65 million each. This is a total investment of \$5.3 million.

This is another example of our government's commitment to Ontario's children and youth, Ontario's aboriginal communities, Ontario's ethnic minorities, Ontario's—

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

Mr. Dave Levac: Improving the health and quality of life of Ontarians through sport and physical activity is indeed vital and also proven by research. I'm pleased to hear that the funding will focus attention where the greatest needs exist.

This type of support will also work towards the goals of Canada's first-ever national physical activity targets for children and youth aged 5 to 19, set at the federal-provincial-territorial conference on sport in Victoria on May 21 and 22, 2008.

Ontario's aboriginal community has a great history, heritage and traditions that enrich our province. It's important that members of the aboriginal community receive sufficient opportunities through this bilateral agreement. It's important to my riding of Brant, and indeed to those who are living inside the entire province of Ontario, especially those with disabilities. There is a great interest, in the residents of my community and the rest of the province, for the McGuinty government to provide for First Nations communities and Ontarians with disabilities. Could you elaborate on the level of—

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

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Our government, the McGuinty government, is committed to engaging all Ontarians in active, healthy lifestyles. That is why we are investing over \$1 million in our aboriginal communities; that is why we're investing over \$400,000 in support of organizations such as ParaSport Ontario, the Ontario Wheelchair Sports Association and the Ontario Deaf

Sports Association. As a result of this investment, over 10,000 children will have access to organized activity sessions from 60 First Nations communities across Ontario.

In addition, six new aboriginal community activators have been hired in First Nations reserves, bringing this to a total of 15. Over 5,000 vulnerable children and youth across Ontario will receive customized sports camps through the—

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

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Housing. With little notice and no consultation, the Landlord and Tenant Board has recently changed all in-person hearings to telephone hearings in southwestern Ontario. This has resulted in tenants losing their homes, sometimes in a matter of seconds, by telephone. Under this new process there is little or no access to mediation services, and it is very difficult to provide free tenant duty counsel services to low-income tenants. Some tenants are on cellphones, paying for their own eviction. Some have no access to a phone at all. Why is this minister allowing such gross violations of due process at the Landlord and Tenant Board?

Hon. Jim Watson: I hate to correct the member on the very last day, but in fact not all hearings are being held via teleconference. That is an option for those individuals in more remote areas. In fact, we have a number of very highly qualified adjudicators who are responsible for having in-person hearings. The work that this government has done—and my predecessor, Minister Gerretsen—to reform the Landlord and Tenant Board and to make it more user-friendly for tenants has gone over very well. We're very proud of those reforms. They're very progressive.

I again remind the member that we do have adjudicators. They have in-person hearings, and we're proud of the work we've done. We have allowed some hearings to be heard by teleconference as a cost-saving measure, but individuals do have the right to have an in-person hearing.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a cost-saving measure for landlords but certainly not for tenants. Perhaps this minister is unaware of how grossly unfair telephone eviction really is. In a recent hearing in Stratford, a social housing landlord told the Landlord and Tenant Board that a tenant, who was a subject of the eviction application, did not have a telephone. The landlord requested that the hearing be held in person. The request was refused.

Under the Statutory Powers Procedure Act, the tribunal has an absolute responsibility to avoid electronic hearings if it is "likely to cause the party significant prejudice." Why won't the minister end this absolutely shameful practice?

Hon. Jim Watson: Again I'd remind the honourable member that individuals do in fact have the right to have

an in-person hearing. If the honourable member would like to provide me with the specific issue and the individual's name, I'd certainly go forward to Dr. Ma, who is the chair of the Landlord and Tenant Board, doing an excellent job on behalf of tenants and landlords in the province of Ontario. I'd be very happy to examine that particular case and see why that ruling was given, because we want to make sure that every tenant who appears has unfettered access to the Landlord and Tenant Board. We're happy to look into any specific issue that the honourable member would like to forward to me.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. I'd just like to remind the honourable members of the Cattlemen's barbecue on the front lawn today. Also, happy birthday, the 29th, to the member from Burlington. "Happy birthday to you."

This being the last question period, I wish all members and all staff in the Legislature a safe summer and look forward to seeing you all in the fall. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1150 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome two guests to the Legislature today, sitting in the east members' gallery: Mr. Fred Opolot from the Office of the President of Uganda; and Gilbert Kadilo, director of communications from Makerere University in Uganda. Welcome, gentlemen, to Queen's Park.

I'd also like to welcome, on behalf of the member from York West and page Alexander Singh, his mother, Shirley, his father, Buddy, and his sisters, Natalie and Sharon Singh, in the east members' gallery this afternoon. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOLLAND MARSH

Mrs. Julia Munro: Many of my constituents have been writing, phoning and e-mailing me with their concerns about the peaker plant that the government wants to build in King township in my riding. They are concerned that this plant will be built in the greenbelt right next to the Holland Marsh.

Let me remind this House of the importance of the Holland Marsh: 7,000 acres of low-lying land containing some of the richest farmland in Ontario. The annual value of the carrots grown in the Holland Marsh today is estimated at \$130 million, with onions at \$160 million. Greens, such as celery and lettuce, make an estimated provincial impact of \$160 million. About 90% of all vegetables consumed in Ontario are grown there. Tomatoes and ornamental flowers are also grown inside

18 acres of year-round greenhouses. Growers estimate the marsh has a total economic impact of over \$1 billion annually.

In the process of approval for locating a peaker plant, how important is our food supply to this government? Community residents are naturally concerned and believe that only a full environmental assessment can protect the unique features of the Holland Marsh.

WAJIH HAMKA

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I rise in the House today to recognize Dr. Wajih Hamka, a very generous dentist and businessman from Ottawa. His continued support to numerous organizations, hospitals and charities reaches well beyond not only his community, but also our country and the world.

Dr. Hamka has proven time and time again to be an exemplary citizen and role model to all. Apart from the numerous humanitarian deeds he has completed thus far, Dr. Hamka is the recipient of several awards, certificates of merit, as well as congratulatory praise from community and organizational leaders. His philosophy on charities goes beyond making financial donations: He is committed to being involved, regardless of the challenge.

Although he travelled and lived in many countries before settling in Canada, Dr. Hamka never ceased to help those around him. Due to his kind nature, he founded the Hamka Charity Foundation in 1990. He lives to serve our province and our country.

I wish him all the luck and success for his undying generosity, as he's always able and willing to give to others.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to make the statement. I wish Dr. Hamka all the success, and to continue to give to our province and our country, and to help others, without any conditions.

CATTLE FARMERS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Today, members and staff of this Legislature have been treated to a great lunch of high-quality Ontario corn-fed beef. I want to thank the Ontario Cattlemen's Association for providing lunch and doing a great job of letting us know the challenges that our farmers are facing.

However, I'm disappointed that the items they are asking for today are similar to the ones they needed last year. It seems a sad statement on the responsiveness of this government and the Minister of Agriculture that in that time no progress seems to have been made.

The Ontario cattlemen are still asking for a \$20-million corn-fed beef ledger account to provide stability to our cattle farmers. As the minister drags her feet, statistics are showing that there are fewer and fewer cattle being raised in Ontario.

They are still asking this minister to admit that the AgriStability program—that she signed on to—isn't working; since, the minister hasn't been addressing the problem of helping young farmers.

The Ontario Cattlemen held round tables to talk about the challenges beginning farmers are facing and what solutions are needed. They have heard from young farmers that we need to look at interest-free start-up loans. While we wait for a response from the minister, our farmers continue to get older.

Since the government has created this long summer break, I hope the Minister of Agriculture will use it to get out to the farms, talk to our farmers and take real action to help our farmers succeed.

Thank you to the cattlemen of Ontario for being here to provide us with that great barbecue on the front lawn of the Legislature.

AIR QUALITY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm rising in the House today to speak about a phenomenal coalition called the Clean Train Coalition.

Many may not know this, but Metrolinx is planning on sending diesel trains through our communities at the rate of up to 400 diesel trains a day from the current traffic of about 40. What they're going to be spewing into the air is incredible—hundreds of toxic air contaminants, including arsenic, benzene, cadmium, dioxins, lead and mercury. This is within 30 metres, or less in some instances, of 200 schools—30,000 little children whose lungs are just developing. In fact, this is more polluting than if people just took their cars to work downtown, which is some misinformation that Metrolinx is putting out.

What the Clean Train Coalition is asking for, and what we're asking for, all along the train corridor is real consultation with our community. We're also asking for electric, now. It's way cheaper to put electric trains on those rails right now than it is to pay the health costs for our children and our grandchildren and their grandchildren. That's what we're asking for.

We're not hearing back from Metrolinx, but certainly the challenge is there—and to Minister Bradley, whom the Clean Train Coalition is asking all their members to e-mail.

Go to cleantrain.ca and please e-mail Jim Bradley and tell him you will not take it; you want electric trains and you want them now.

EVENTS IN YORK CENTRE

Mr. Monte Kwinter: In the spirit of National Tourism Week, I'm pleased to tell this House that the riding of York Centre recently received funding of almost \$38,000 through our government's Celebrate Ontario program.

This program, initiated by the McGuinty government, is supporting the growth of the fourth annual Wings and Wheels Heritage Festival, which occurred in my riding at Downsview Park recently. The festival, which took place May 22 to 24, 2009, was held in the original de Havilland Aircraft of Canada factory as well as outdoors. This historical backdrop offered visitors a rare opportunity to

get up close and personal with vintage and modern aircraft, classic cars and much more.

The support from our government helped to boost the local economy in York Centre by attracting new audiences and generating more economic activity in my riding.

Just this year, the Celebrate Ontario program provided \$11 million to 224 festivals and events, an increase of 150% over last year. To date, the program has invested a total of \$25 million for festival events throughout the province.

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Our society is built on the belief in fairness. People believe that their governments will treat all people in an even-handed manner.

This week, the Ontario government, the McGuinty government, gave General Motors \$3.5 billion. That's \$307 dollars for every man, woman and child in Ontario. The money will flow through GM to its pension plan. The 67% of Ontarians who don't have a pension plan will be bailing out the GM pension fund.

One e-mail I received sums it up: "I don't have a company pension so I have to fund my own. It seems insane to think I am funding someone else's."

What about Nortel pensioners? Their plan is also underfunded, so many of them will see their pensions cut by 25% to 75% when this historic company winds down. Is it fair to ask them to pay \$307 each so that GM retirees will get 100% of their pensions?

1310

The Premier is creating two classes of pensioners and people: those at GM who receive \$3.5 billion in tax dollars, and the rest who have no protection for their pension, or no pension at all, but are still expected to pay the bill for the GM bailout. When we ask what he will do for Ontarians, our Premier tries to shift the blame to the federal government. The Premier caused this inequity and should face up to his responsibility and come forward with a plan that is fair for all Ontarians.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

Mr. Dave Levac: As we wind down this interesting sitting of the Legislature, it's a great pleasure to be able to stand here today to recognize all of the great and wonderful men and women who make the lives of all members in this House easier and complete during these long days of work here at Queen's Park.

From the Clerk and her staff, to the Sergeant at Arms and his staff, to the legislative security services—especially Harold who takes care of my car in the parking lot—and to you, Speaker, and your staff.

Of course, the most critical individuals who make Ontario's Legislature work are the many young grade 7 and 8 students from across Ontario, the legislative pages. Page Matthew Crawford from the great riding of Brant, or the daughter of Dr. Johanna Carlo, the page

Samantha Carlo-Beleutz, who resides in the beautiful riding of Beaches—East York of the member across, Mr. Prue—who takes care of my executive assistant Chris Yaccato—for the example that they work incredibly long hours to ensure we're all looked after.

We discussed today that the pages are enjoying themselves so much they don't want to leave. I did a little searching and found out. I heard through the grapevine that the reason they don't want to leave is because they haven't been able to locate the ghosts that reside here at Queen's Park yet and they want to catch a glimpse of a ghost.

Unfortunately, the summer break is here, and I would like to reiterate that the pages are some of the hardest workers in the Legislature, and we want them back at any time. And I know the members will agree with me that when they grow up to be our successful leaders in the communities, one of them might even sit as an MPP. I hope they don't want my seat.

Pages, as you leave the Legislature, know that we appreciate your work, and thank you for the dedication you have for us and your communities and your parents. You've done them all proud. Congratulations.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I rise today to recognize United Nations World Environment Day, celebrated each year on June 5. The theme for this year's World Environment Day is: Your Planet Needs You! Unite to Combat Climate Change.

Climate change is our generation's greatest environmental challenge. Our government's ambitious climate change action plan lays out among the most aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets in North America and a roadmap to achieving those reductions. Our government recognizes that the solutions to the twin challenges of the environment and the economy go hand-in-hand, and this session, our government has taken two more important steps.

The new Green Energy Act will provide the government with the necessary tools to ensure Ontario's place as North America's renewable energy leader and sets Ontario on the path to a 21st-century green economy. Last week, our government introduced legislation that, if passed, would enable the establishment of a greenhouse gas cap-and-trade system for Ontario, helping industry reduce greenhouse gas emissions and stay competitive in the emerging low-carbon economy.

As we recognize World Environment Day, we know that there remains much more work to be done. We will continue to move forward to protect our environment and grow the green economy.

CATTLE FARMERS

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I rise today to welcome members of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association who are visiting us here at the Legislature for their annual beef

lunch on the front lawn at Queen's Park. I especially want to welcome the OCA president, Gord Hardy, who is a constituent of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I had actually hoped that he would be here today, but judging by the lineups that we had outside, I think he's probably still serving beef. I know members and staff will tell you that this is probably the most anticipated lunch of the year here.

This day is very important, as it gives members the opportunity to engage with Ontario's beef producers and also to thank them for providing us with the best and safest product in the world.

Formed in 1963, the Ontario Cattlemen's Association represents 19,000 beef producers throughout the province through 49 county associations. In 2008, the farm gate sales of calves and cattle valued at over \$1 billion. We know that this industry is vital to Ontario's economy, employing approximately 30,000 people. Our government continues to work closely with the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, as well as all our partners in agriculture and the agri-food sector. We will continue to make strategic investments in research, innovation, branding and marketing to help Ontario's agri-food industry grow to be a strong, strong participant in our economy.

Again, I hope everyone enjoyed their lunch here today.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PENSION BENEFITS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT AUX RÉGIMES DE RETRAITE

Mr. Wilson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 195, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Act and other related Acts with respect to the transfer of assets between pension plans / Projet de loi 195, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les régimes de retraite et d'autres lois connexes en ce qui a trait au transfert d'actif entre régimes de retraite.

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?

Mr. Jim Wilson: This bill would amend the Pension Benefits Act to allow for the transfer of pension assets, and require the administrators of pension plans to enter into an asset transfer agreement in respect of employees whose employment has been transferred.

It would specifically deal with an issue that I have been working on regarding the transfer of pension assets for paramedics throughout Ontario, and in Simcoe county

in particular. Ontario's paramedics deserve to receive their full pension benefits when they retire, even if they have been transferred between employers throughout their careers.

BARRIE-INNISFIL BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LA MODIFICATION DES LIMITES TERRITORIALES ENTRE BARRIE ET INNISFIL

Mr. Watson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 196, An Act respecting the adjustment of the boundary between the City of Barrie and the Town of Innisfil / Projet de loi 196, Loi concernant la modification des limites territoriales entre la cité de Barrie et la ville d'Innisfil.

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 minister for a short statement?

Hon. Jim Watson: I'll make my statement during minister's statements.

HUMAN RIGHTS CODE AMENDMENT ACT (FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LE CODE DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE EN CE QUI CONCERNE LA LIBERTÉ D'EXPRESSION

Mr. Klees moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 197, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code with respect to freedom of expression / Projet de loi 197, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne en ce qui concerne la liberté d'expression.

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?

Mr. Frank Klees: This bill, if passed into law, will repeal section 13 of the Ontario human rights act. This is the section that is being used by the commission to justify investigation into the views and opinions of citizens of Ontario. This has a chilling effect on freedom of expression and is contrary to that important value in our democratic society. Freedom of expression is a core value of democracy, from which rights naturally flow and without which our very political system would perish.

There are those who want to abolish the Ontario Human Rights Commission. I strongly disagree with that position. Abolishing the human rights commission and its tribunal is not the answer and would in fact send the wrong message to Ontarians and the international community about the importance we place on human rights in this province. That is why I believe the responsible solu-

tion is to reform and refocus the human rights commission, not to abolish it. That is why I'm proposing this legislation, and I'm asking members of this House, from all parties, to support us in quick passage.

1320

PLANNING AMENDMENT ACT
(ENABLING MUNICIPALITIES TO
REQUIRE INCLUSIONARY HOUSING),
2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE
(INCLUSION DE LOGEMENTS
ABORDABLES PAR LES MUNICIPALITÉS)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 198, An Act to amend the Planning Act with respect to inclusionary housing / Projet de loi 198, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire à l'égard de l'inclusion de logements abordables.

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.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The Planning Act is amended to include the adequate provision of a full range of housing with this bill, including housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households, as a matter of provincial interest.

Section 34 of the act is amended to allow the councils of local municipalities to pass zoning bylaws requiring inclusionary housing and regulating the required percentage of affordable housing units in new housing developments in the municipality.

The new section 37.1 of the act allows municipalities to pass bylaws requiring that a specified percentage of housing units in all new housing developments in the municipality be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

Section 51 of the act is amended to allow the approval authority to impose, as a condition to the approval of a plan of subdivision, a requirement that a specified percentage of housing units in all new housing developments in the subdivision be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Brad Duguid: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 25, 26, and 27.

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

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

MUNICIPAL PLANNING

PLANIFICATION MUNICIPALE

Hon. Jim Watson: Today, I'm pleased to introduce the proposed Barrie-Innisfil Boundary Adjustment Act, 2009. This is a key part of the Ontario government's support for sustainable and managed growth in the Lake Simcoe area. It's part of our integrated approach to improve the quality of life in Simcoe. Resolving the long-standing Barrie-Innisfil boundary dispute would help us address the growth planning and environmental protection issues in the area.

Ce projet de loi est une pièce maîtresse du soutien accordé par le gouvernement de l'Ontario à la croissance gérée et durable dans la région du lac Simcoe. Il fait partie de notre approche intégrée d'amélioration de la qualité de vie dans la région de Simcoe. Le règlement du différend de longue date sur les limites territoriales de Barrie et Innisfil nous permettrait de résoudre des questions de planification de la croissance et de protection de l'environnement touchant la région.

The government has tried to encourage and champion a local solution to this issue on several occasions over many, many months. That has always been our preferred, number one option. As such, I have previously met with the mayors of Innisfil and Barrie, as well as the warden of Simcoe county. We sent in a provincial facilitator to help, and while a settlement was proposed for consideration by the municipalities, no agreement was reached. I also helped convene a further meeting of all parties at the AMO conference in Ottawa. Again, this was met with no local resolution. I then met individually with Innisfil, Barrie and Simcoe county representatives, and still no solution could be reached.

All local options have failed, and this government is prepared to act, and to act decisively, because this issue has dragged on for far too long. This solution will greatly improve the long-range planning and management of growth in this important part of the province. A point I wish to emphasize is that under the growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe area, the city of Barrie contains the only designated urban growth centre in the Simcoe area. As such, the province is proposing, through this bill, to extend the southern boundary of the city of Barrie. This proposed boundary adjustment is based on Barrie's land needs, the growth plan policy and addi-

tional consideration, such as the protection of the Lake Simcoe watershed.

The proposed boundary adjustment would provide the city of Barrie with 2,293 gross hectares of land as of January 1, 2010. This would provide Barrie with enough land to satisfy its land needs until 2031 and beyond. The lands would retain current land use designations until such time as the city of Barrie proceeds through a land use planning process to determine the future use of the lands. In considering where and how it will grow, Barrie is required to ensure consistency with the provincial policy statement and conform to the growth plan, both of which are aimed at curbing urban sprawl. However, this boundary adjustment is not just about the city of Barrie and its land needs. Our government understands the importance of protecting the individual characteristics of the town of Innisfil.

In addition, the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure will consult over the summer on the area known as Innisfil Heights. If the proposed changes to the growth plan are made following the consultation, Innisfil Heights has the potential to bring much-needed employment opportunities within the Innisfil boundary as well as expanding Innisfil's current tax base. I believe that this boundary adjustment would be a win-win for both Innisfil and Barrie as well as Simcoe county. It would provide Barrie with larger development parcels of land that are close to the Highway 400 corridor. It would extend the municipal boundary between Barrie and Innisfil to Innisfil Heights, and although no planning decisions have been made, this could ultimately enable both Barrie and Innisfil to plan for development and employment lands along the Highway 400 corridor. It would give a clear signal of the direction for managing growth in the Simcoe area.

I've worked closely with my cabinet colleagues the Honourable George Smitherman and the Honourable John Gerretsen, the Minister of the Environment, and we have come up with an integrated approach to the growth challenges of the Simcoe area that protects Lake Simcoe and its watershed. Our government forecasts 73,000 new jobs in the Simcoe area by 2031.

J'ai collaboré étroitement avec mes collègues du Conseil des ministres, les honorables George Smitherman et John Gerretsen. Ensemble, nous avons élaboré une approche intégrée pour surmonter les défis en matière de croissance de la région de Simcoe tout en protégeant le lac Simcoe et son bassin versant. Notre gouvernement prévoit la création de 73 000 nouveaux emplois dans la région de Simcoe d'ici 2031.

Boundary disputes create unnecessary friction and division and do not help to create a sense of confidence, stability and progress within the Simcoe area. They also don't help to create jobs or encourage economic development. Businesses need to know the future direction of the Simcoe area in order to expand businesses, and municipalities need to know in order to attract businesses.

Simcoe and Barrie, like all counties and cities in Canada, must focus on ways to attract jobs and oppor-

tunity and not discourage growth or add confusion. These issues don't create one job, and it's counterproductive to what we should all be doing during this time of economic challenge. This proposal, together with the work of my colleague Minister Smitherman, who is releasing a discussion paper today entitled *Simcoe Area: A Strategic Vision for Growth*, will be in the best interests of the entire region. We should be working together to retain and grow jobs in Simcoe, Barrie and Innisfil. That is the message I passed along today when I personally called the mayors of Innisfil and Barrie and the warden of Simcoe county.

The McGuinty government wants to ensure that those jobs are accommodated in a sustainable fashion. That means protecting our natural environment and our farmlands. That means bringing a semblance of order and thoughtful planning to the entire region. That means creating liveable communities. And that means supporting the infrastructure investments necessary for sustainable development. That vision can be a reality. I urge all members to support the passage of this bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Statements by ministries? Responses?

1330

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to be able to respond, on behalf of the official opposition, to the bill that has been introduced today.

While there's the story of David and Goliath, and as everyone knows, I'm sure, David won, today the Liberals rewrote the story, and Goliath, known as Barrie, has won without lifting a finger. With the stroke of a pen, this government has created 2,293 hectares of land open to any kind of development at this point.

The minister made reference to the fact that the city of Barrie contains the only designated urban growth centre in the Simcoe area. What's interesting about this reference is the fact that the only way the government sees this happening is obviously at the expense of Innisfil. I think all of us thought that the notion of the growth plan was to contain sprawl, and that, to most of us, means intensification. Instead, we have the appetite of Barrie being met with this piece of legislation, and then we're going to talk about the principles of the growth plan.

The minister talks about the importance of opposing urban sprawl, but that's after the fact that this transfer of thousands of acres would go to Barrie. It's important to see the principle, but we are just going to make this one adjustment and we'll come back to the principle after the opportunity has been given to Barrie to provide this kind of growth.

There are many questions that will have to be answered. The bill itself simply identifies the area of land that Barrie will assume. The minister has talked about a process of consultation that will go on during the next few months. I would suggest to the minister that he needs to have these conversations in Innisfil and Barrie and talk to the local residents.

One of the issues, certainly—the minister alluded to this, but I would just point it out—is the question of the

protection of Lake Simcoe. I pointed out last week that Innisfil actually has a better environmental record than Barrie. Barrie puts two and a half times as much phosphorous per litre into the lake than Innisfil. Obviously, the question that comes from that is the danger of these new development lands on the water quality of the lake.

Although the minister has referenced past meetings that took place, I think that certainly the people I have the privilege to represent were looking for the minister to offer a greater opportunity for consultation. As we look at this particular piece of legislation, the residents of Innisfil will be watching very closely for this consultation process and for assurances of the continued viability of Innisfil.

As I have the opportunity to share my time with the member from Simcoe–Grey, I would just ask that a page come to deliver the messages from the people of Innisfil on this issue.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I just want to take this one minute to put on the record a letter from His Worship Tom Walsh, mayor of the township of Adjala-Tosorontio, which I think reflects the sentiments of all 16 municipalities that make up the county of Simcoe. This letter was written to the minister on June 2: “As mayor of a municipality in South Simcoe, I feel that I must advise of our concerns about the proposed acquisition of lands from the town of Innisfil by the city of Barrie.”

As I’m going to run out of time, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that they’re very much opposed to this. It affects all the municipalities in the county of Simcoe, because our assessment will be lower as a result of not having commercial and industrial development in Innisfil and its ability to pay the county bills. I just want you to know that not all is well in Simcoe, and they’re not all in favour of what you’re doing today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Mr. Michael Prue: I’ve just been handed a copy of the bill, as is the way we do business around here, and I had an opportunity to read it. The first thing that popped out to me is that this is a transfer of lands that were put aside some 20 years ago, so this ought not to come as a surprise, literally, to anyone. These lands were set aside and there has been an ongoing dispute for more than 20 years on what to do with them.

But the question that next comes to me, though: Is this a fair resolution? Is this the right thing to be doing in terms of Barrie, which obviously wants to expand and have more money, more power and more ability to tax? Is it a fair resolution to the people of Innisfil and the surrounding municipalities, which are going to find themselves with less land, less ability to tax, and therefore having to go back to their members and their citizens to get alternative forms of monies in order to keep going?

The bigger question, though, has to be, how will this land be developed? That has to be the question, because we have seen what this government has done before with annexations: the annexation in Oxford; the annexation and the secret negotiations in places like Bradford, where there was a secret negotiation of 1,800 acres of prime

farmland that was negotiated away; in Innisfil, where a thousand acres were negotiated away for residential housing; and the expanding hamlet of Bond Head, which the government was right into and which went from 500 people to 4,500 people. Is this what the government has planned?

The whole question I have is, is the government committed to its Places to Grow Act? Is that what this is all about, in order to prop up and keep the Places to Grow Act going? Or is this just another opportunity, like Oxford, Innisfil and the hamlet of Bond Head, for urban sprawl? Is that really what the government has in mind, because, quite frankly, I’m very worried, given what has happened in the past.

The government of Ontario, of course, is imposing its will. This is a government that likes to talk the good talk about talking to municipalities—the 480 municipalities—being equal partners, the 480 municipalities having an opportunity to have input and to be respected. And here again, we see the government using the heavy fist and the heavy hand.

It was only last week or the week before last that I listened to my colleague from Simcoe raise the question, and I heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing skirt around the question about whether anything was going to happen, how he was going to have consultations, whether the consultations were ongoing and what he was going to be doing. Well, my goodness, this is a fairly complex and large bill with lots of stuff. He must clearly have understood when he answered that question last week that the minister’s mind was already made up. I cannot, in my wildest imagination, believe that this bill, from that day to this day, was completely compiled, went through legal and translation, and went through all of the machinations that are required to present it here today. Quite frankly, his mind was made up before, so that when that question was asked, he already knew what he was going to do. In effect, when the good people were here from Innisfil, he held out hope to them, when there was, in fact, no hope to be held out.

This is akin, to my mind, to the forced amalgamations that took place across Ontario a number of years ago, in which my city, the minister’s city and other cities were forced into something they didn’t want. The people of Innisfil and the people in surrounding Barrie probably do not—not probably; they definitely do not want this and what is happening to them.

What the minister has done today is again produced a winner, Barrie, and a loser: all the other towns and all the other people who live in them. But there are losers as well throughout all the municipalities of Ontario, because every single rural municipality, every single small municipality that is around a larger city, that is in close proximity to a larger city, must have shivers going up and down their spines. Here is a former mayor from Ottawa who knows exactly of what I speak, because you have sent shivers up and down all of their spines by doing what you’ve done here today.

In the end, the question comes down to the opportunities, whether they’re going to be there. I have no idea

what Barrie is going to do with this land, what idea they have in terms of development, but I have no doubt in my mind whatsoever that this minister knows what those plans are because this has been in the works for a long, long time. It's not just something that's come out here today.

1340

Hon. Monique M. Smith: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent that five minutes be allotted to each party in tribute to Sam George.

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

SAM GEORGE

Hon. Brad Duguid: As I rise today and speak on behalf of the government, and probably all of us here in this Legislature, my words are shared by the Honourable Gerry Phillips and Maria Van Bommel, who have a particular connection to what I'm about to talk about.

It was with great sadness that we learned yesterday morning that Sam George began his spirit journey in the early hours of June 3. He was home at Kettle and Stony Point, surrounded by the love of his family and friends.

It was only six months ago that I had the honour to stand in this Legislature to honour Sam for his tireless efforts and wisdom in helping to build better relationships between our government and First Nations. It was a role Sam hadn't asked for, but one that dominated the last 14 years of his life. Somehow, Sam was able to overcome the inevitable emotions of anger and bitterness over his brother's tragic death and channel his passion into a relentless pursuit of the truth, followed by reconciliation.

From the evening of September 6, 1995, when he got the terrible news that his brother Dudley had died at Ipperwash park, Sam asked only, "What happened, and why?" It was the question that launched the Ipperwash inquiry, an examination of relationships far beyond those between the people and organizations present in the park that tragic night. This is what Sam wanted the inquiry to be, I really think.

Sam found the courage and grace to work with the Ipperwash inquiry and the government to find truth and fairness for his community. I've met few people in my life who could exceed the strength of character demonstrated by Sam at all times in the most difficult of circumstances. His contributions ensured that together, we would find a way to move forward into a new era of healing, reconciliation and peace with First Nations in Ontario. He was a modern-day hero whose legacy will impact future generations.

Sam was tireless in his efforts. He travelled near and far to talk about his experiences and the path he was on in seeking the truth about what happened to his brother. He wasn't used to the mechanisms of a formal inquiry, he told Justice Linden and others, but the elders in his community told him that the answers he sought would come.

Even then, the elders had faith in us, and the answers did come. Sam didn't quit when the inquiry issued its recommendations. He had only just begun to work with us at the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, a ministry his passion helped to create, when he was diagnosed with cancer.

I'm grateful to say I was privileged to meet Sam on many occasions, most recently at his bedside following the May 2009 signing of an agreement to transfer Ipperwash Provincial Park lands to the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation. The community had asked for this transfer, and Justice Linden supported this in the inquiry's final report. I'm so glad he lived to see this historic agreement become a reality.

Despite his failing health, Sam was very much with us in spirit that day in the park, and afterwards, he met with many visitors at his home. It was a day of celebration and renewed hope, and Sam was one of those who made it possible.

His goal was never accolades, he told us; his work was dedicated to the respect and honour of his brother's memory. Dudley George gave his life for his people. Sam George dedicated the last 14 years of his life to ensure that Dudley's tragic death did not go unaddressed.

Fourteen years ago, relations between the government of Ontario and aboriginal people were at an historical low. Today, 14 years later, that relationship is at a high point. The sacrifice made by those two brothers and the George family has provided our generation with a historic opportunity to work together to do something our forefathers failed to do.

As we work to eliminate the socio-economic gaps that exist between aboriginal people and communities and other Ontarians, we will do so with the knowledge that Sam's tireless efforts played a critical role in making this possible. His children, grandchildren, and many nephews and nieces will know that their beloved father and uncle changed the course of Ontario history.

Sam has helped to paint a new and brighter future for all of us here in Ontario. Sam's loss will be deeply felt by First Nation people and Ontarians right across this province. At the same time, there's comfort for Sam in his passing. Sam told the Ipperwash inquiry that from the time he got the phone call about his brother, he hurt. He said, "I will hurt until the day I meet with my brother again." So we wish Sam a joyful reunion and peace.

I've had the privilege, as I said, to meet and spend time with Sam's family, and what a generous, kind and loving family they are. On behalf of Premier Dalton McGuinty, on behalf of Sam's very good friends and champions, the honourable Gerry Phillips and MPP Maria Van Bommel, my colleagues here in the Ontario Legislature and all Ontarians, I extend our sincerest condolences to his wonderful wife, Veronica, daughters Tammy and Yvonne, son Donald Jr., Sam's extended family, his friends and the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation.

We've lost a great leader, teacher, visionary and friend.

Mr. Norm Miller: It is a privilege to rise in this House on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to pay tribute to Maynard Donald (Sam) George. I would like to start by offering my condolences to the George family.

It was just a little over six months ago that I rose in this House to congratulate Mr. George for receiving the Order of Ontario, Ontario's highest honour. It was through Mr. George's tireless efforts that clarity was brought to the events of September 6, 1995. For all those people who say that one person cannot make a difference, he proved them wrong. As Chief Superintendent Chris Coles of the Ontario Provincial Police testified towards the end of the Ipperwash inquiry—he spoke of Mr. George's character. He said, "Many times I've looked in his eyes. I have no brothers, but I believe sincerely in my heart that if I had a brother, Sam George is an example of a brother I would have liked." That is indeed significant praise for a man whose persistence had put Mr. Coles on the hot seat.

Mr. George revealed that there needs to be better understanding, communication and respect, not only between government representatives and First Nations, but between all Ontarians. His ability to exert bravery and perseverance through difficult times are qualities we have all come to admire. Wayne Samuelson, president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, who nominated Mr. George for the Order of Ontario, stated, "Sam George did not seek revenge, he sought justice. Sam is a man of peace, a shining example for us all."

It is with great sadness we say goodbye to this fine man whose legacy will live on. We thank him for his advocacy for first peoples and for his contribution to this province.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I rise on behalf of my NDP caucus colleagues and all New Democrats across Ontario to pay tribute to Sam George.

Ontarians should always remember September 6, 1995. It was a watershed day in the history of our province, a day on which a group of concerned people from the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation gathered to protest peacefully at Ipperwash Provincial Park in memory of their ancestors. Tragically, events spun out of control and one of those protestors, Dudley George, was shot dead. It's something that never, ever should have happened. It had the potential to cause great upheaval in relations between this province and First Nations peoples. Fortunately for all Ontarians, an unassuming man by the name of Sam George stepped forward. It was his brother who had been shot. Sam decided Dudley's death would not be in vain. In his own meticulous and methodical way, Sam George went about making a profound and lasting difference in the way Ontario treats First Nations peoples.

Sam George was a quiet and a humble man, but a quiet, humble man who made a giant impact. He did not seek to make headlines, but he was determined to achieve justice for his brother, for his people, for all of the First Nations in Ontario. We have much to thank Sam for. He set an example for all of us.

1350

Last December, he was honoured for his work with the bestowment of the Order of Ontario. The tribute, I think we all agree, was richly deserved.

Yesterday, Sam George left us, succumbing to the cancer he had valiantly fought. He leaves his wife, Veronica; his three children, Don, Tammy and Yvonne; a large circle of loved ones and a province filled with admirers.

While Sam was able to achieve justice for his brother, there is now a challenge for each and every one of us in this place and across the province to use Sam's powerful legacy to improve the lives of the First Nations in Ontario. Too many live in deplorable conditions, with inadequate health care and a lack of essential services that the rest of us take for granted. Their children attend schools that are in states of dismal disrepair. Jobs and opportunities are scarce. In fact, even to today, their leaders are jailed for simply defending their land and their rights.

Ontario must do better for the people whose land this truly is. They have shared an enormous gift with us: a magnificent, wondrous place of limitless opportunity and boundless hope. It's a place where everyone should be able to prosper, but we're not there yet. There is much work to be done to get us there, and we have a collective responsibility to get that work done.

The recent transfer of Ipperwash Provincial Park back to aboriginal hands should serve as a powerful symbol of what can be achieved when we set our minds to it. Sam George has shown us the way. He may no longer be leading us, but his memory remains with us. Let's make sure that we pay tribute to that memory, and let's do it by ensuring all First Nations peoples are able to share in the promise of Ontario. It's something that Sam wanted, something that he was extremely passionate about, something that's long overdue. Thanks to Sam George's leadership, it's something that we will get done. I trust absolutely that that's the case.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask all members and our guests to please rise as we observe a moment of silence in memory of Sam George.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition signed by hundreds of people, to do with the McGuinty merged sales tax. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is planning to merge the 8% provincial sales tax and the 5% federal sales tax; and

"Whereas the new 13% harmonized sales tax will be applied to products not previously subject to provincial

sales tax such as gasoline, home heating fuels, home renovations, haircuts, hamburgers, television service, Internet service, telephone and cell services, taxi fees, bus, train and airplane tickets, and dry cleaning services; and

“Whereas rural and northern Ontarians will be particularly hard hit by the harmonized sales tax, as will seniors and families;

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

“That the McGuinty government should remove this harmonized sales tax from its 2009-10 budget.”

I've signed this petition and I give to Matthew.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas physically present pharmacists have served the Ontario public well over the years by ensuring high levels of safety and care, the requirement for the physical presence of a pharmacist to operate a pharmacy and compound, dispense or sell a drug in a pharmacy should be left intact to protect the public interest;

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

“We request that the laws requiring the physical presence of a pharmacist to operate a pharmacy and compound, dispense or sell any drug in a pharmacy be left intact; specifically, clauses 146(1)(a) and (b), and 149(1)(a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) of the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act be left intact and unchanged, and legislation should not be introduced which undermines the protections and service offered by physically present pharmacists.”

I agree with this and give it to Ajoy for delivery.

MULTIPLE MYELOMA

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a petition today from Merv Smith who, despite serious health challenges, has 305 signatures on the petition, which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, an incurable form of cancer; and

“Whereas Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Ontario for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells; and

“Whereas multiple myeloma is treatable with the proper therapies, thereby giving hope to the 2,000 Canadians who are diagnosed annually;

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

“Immediately provide Revlimid as a choice to patients with multiple myeloma and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding.”

I agree with this petition and will sign it.

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Sondergaard for sending me this petition.

“Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe–Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax ... that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, vet bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

“Whereas the blended sales tax will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers.”

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Michael Prue: I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO) released the Report on the Five Year Review of Automobile Insurance to the Minister of Finance on 31 March 2009, and that this report contains recommendations for changes to automobile insurance, and that the Minister of Finance is considering adopting the FSCO recommendations; and

“Whereas the FSCO recommendation (number 22) to reduce the cap for medical and rehabilitation benefits for non-catastrophic claims from \$100,000 to \$25,000 will deny further access to reasonable and necessary assessment and treatment, undermining a return to functional independence and gainful employment, and increase the burden on the social welfare system (i.e., OHIP)—and it goes on; and

“Whereas the FSCO recommendations (numbers 15 and 21) to have assessment requests and treatment plans completed only after a referral is made by the health professional primarily responsible for the claimant's rehabilitation (in most cases a family physician) will further burden the OHIP system and already overextended family physicians, undermine timely access to treatment, and is prejudicial against some 800,000 Ontarians without a family physician; and

“Whereas the FSCO recommendation (number 20) to revoke section 42.1 of the SABS, which allows claimants to obtain an assessment from their health care provider (known as the rebuttal report) to address issues raised in an insurer examination, will remove all balance from the system; and

“Whereas the FSCO recommendation (number 29) to make housekeeping and home maintenance expenses and caregiver benefits optional, is prejudicial against women who traditionally assume these roles, and single-parent families;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose adoption of the FSCO recommendations by the Minister of Finance.”

I am in agreement and have signed my name thereto.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I have a petition that’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the McGuinty government has committed \$27.7 million in new infrastructure funding for Centennial College, located in the riding of Scarborough Southwest and other parts of Scarborough;

“Whereas this money is committed to improving and enhancing post-secondary education in Scarborough and across Ontario by offering state-of-the-art technology that will facilitate cutting-edge, world-class learning opportunities in the form of a state-of-the-art library;

“Whereas these opportunities will equip our youth and retrained workers to be at their competitive best when companies seek employees to fill new-economy jobs;

“Whereas these types of initiatives are part and parcel of a larger economic plan that will bring new high-paying and sustainable jobs to Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, therefore request the McGuinty government to continue to continue to follow this approach when it comes to its long-term economic plan for Ontario.”

I agree with the petition and affix my signature to it.

1400

PENSION PLANS

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

“Whereas several paramedics in Simcoe county had their pensions affected when paramedic services were transferred to the county of Simcoe, as their pensions were not transferred with them from HOOPP and” the OPSEU Pension Trust “to OMERS, meaning they will receive significantly reduced pensions because their transfer did not recognize their years of continuous service; and

“Whereas when these paramedics started with their new employer, the county of Simcoe, their past pensionable years were not recognized because of existing pension legislation; and

“Whereas the government’s own Expert Commission on Pensions has recommended that the government move swiftly to address this issue; and

“Whereas the government should recognize this issue as a technicality and not penalize hard-working paramedics;

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

“That the Minister of Finance support Simcoe–Grey MPP Jim Wilson’s resolution that calls upon the government to address this issue immediately and ensure that any legislation or regulations allows paramedics in Simcoe county who were affected by the divestment of paramedic services in the 1990s and beyond to transfer their pensions to OMERS from HOOPP or OPTrust.”

PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY FRANCHISE

Mr. Jeff Leal: I’m pleased today to introduce a petition on behalf of Cheryl Foster, of Chelsea Crescent in beautiful Stoney Creek, Ontario. She must be a great hockey fan.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment has the highest average ticket revenue per game in the National Hockey League; and

“Whereas the Toronto Maple Leafs are ranked the most financially valuable team in the NHL; and

“Whereas many Hamilton and greater Toronto area hockey fans are unable to attend professional hockey games due to a lack of adequate ticket supply; and

“Whereas the Hamilton and greater Toronto area boast the biggest and best market in the world for hockey fans, with Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment bringing approximately \$2.4 billion to the local economy over 10 years; and

“Whereas a new franchise in the Hamilton and greater Toronto area is valued at \$600 million by some economists; and

“Whereas competition in both business and sports is healthy for both the Hamilton and greater Toronto area economy and sports team performance; and

“Whereas, despite having the most loyal fans in the world, the Toronto Maple Leafs have not won the Stanley Cup in over 40 years; and

“Whereas Hamilton and greater Toronto area fans deserve competitive professional hockey teams;

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

“To request that the government of the province of Ontario express its strong support to the board of governors of the National Hockey League for the relocation or expansion of a second NHL hockey team in the Hamilton and greater Toronto area in order to realize the economic advantages to the taxpayers of the province of Ontario and to provide healthy competition to the existing Toronto NHL franchise.”

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

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by a great number of my residents and, it appears from other petitions, by a lot of residents throughout Ontario.

“Whereas residents in Oxford do not want Dalton McGuinty’s new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$500,000; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families, farmers and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families.”

I affix my signature, as I agree with the petition.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Charles Sousa: I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) conducted 22 months of ambient air monitoring and determined that the Clarkson, Mississauga, airshed study area was taxed for respirable particulate matter (PM2.5); and

“Whereas the average annual PM2.5 concentrations measured in the Clarkson airshed were among the highest found when compared to data obtained from the ministry’s air quality index monitoring stations; and ...

“Whereas the study found that emissions of acrolein and acrylonitrile exceeded provincial limits; and ...

“Whereas the MOE stated that industrial emissions may contribute as much as 25% of the PM2.5 concentrations in the Clarkson airshed study area; and

“Whereas the MOE stated that it would focus on achieving reductions of the target pollutants from the 57 identified emitters that currently operate in the area; and

“Whereas the Ontario Power Authority is accepting proposals from companies for the operation of a gas-fired power plant in the Clarkson airshed study area that would see a new, very significant source of additional pollution into an airshed already determined as stressed by the MOE;

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

“That no contract be awarded by the Ontario Power Authority for the operation of any gas-fired power plant that would impact the Clarkson airshed study area.”

I affix my signature and provide it to Rebecca.

COSMETIC PESTICIDES

Mr. Toby Barrett: This is entitled Scrap the Cosmetic Pesticide Ban:

“Whereas the cosmetic pesticide ban will eliminate control measures available to control invasive insect species, invasive weeds and noxious weeds, forcing control measures to be adopted which are more expensive and far less effective; and

“Whereas all products being banned have already been approved by the PMRA (Pest Management Regulatory Agency) process for public safety, a method of application, classification and distribution;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to not ban cosmetic pesticides for Ontario consumers.”

Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues could we ask for a five-minute extension, being that it’s the last day. There are a couple more petitions.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed to extend petitions by five minutes? Agreed.

PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY FRANCHISE

Mr. Bob Delaney: I know the Speaker will be disappointed, but I’m fresh out of ambulatory surgery centre petitions. So today, on behalf of my colleague from Oakville, I’d like to support him with this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment has the highest average ticket revenue per game in the National Hockey League; and

“Whereas the Toronto Maple Leafs are ranked the most financially valuable team in the NHL; and

“Whereas many Hamilton and greater Toronto area hockey fans are unable to attend professional hockey games due to a lack of adequate ticket supply; and

“Whereas the Hamilton and greater Toronto area boast the biggest and best market in the world for hockey fans, with Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment bringing approximately \$2.4 billion to the local economy over 10 years; and

“Whereas a new franchise in the Hamilton and greater Toronto area is valued at \$600 million by some economists; and

“Whereas competition in both business and sports is healthy for both the Hamilton and greater Toronto area economy and sports team performance; and

“Whereas, despite having the most loyal fans in the world, the Toronto Maple Leafs have not won the Stanley Cup in over 40 years; and

“Whereas Hamilton and greater Toronto area fans deserve competitive professional hockey teams;

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

"To request that the government of the province of Ontario express its strong support to the board of governors of the National Hockey League for the relocation or expansion of a second NHL hockey team in the Hamilton and greater Toronto area in order to realize the economic advantages to the taxpayers of the province of Ontario and to provide healthy competition to the existing Toronto NHL franchise."

What a great idea. I'm pleased to sign and support it, and to ask page Ajoy, on his last day with us, to carry it for me.

TAXATION

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition provided to me by Century 21 Watson Realty and Re/Max Real Estate Centre Inc. It reads:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the largest tax hike in Ontario's history, but he still cuts health care services and nurses;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again on Canada Day 2010, with his new ... combined GST, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's new 13% combined GST will increase the cost of goods and services that families buy every day, such as: coffee, newspapers and magazines, gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, veterinary care, arena ice..., Internet fees, theatre admissions, funerals, courier fees, fast food sold for" under \$4, "bus fares, golf greens, gym fees, snowplowing, bicycles, taxi fares, train fares, domestic air travel, accountant services and real estate commissions;

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

"That Dalton McGuinty wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes, once and for all, on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

As I agree with this and support it, I sign it and provide it to David.

1410

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Mike Colle: I've got a petition on behalf of Ontario's unemployed workers.

"Whereas the federal government's employment surplus stands at over \$50 billion; and

"Whereas over 70% of Ontario's unemployed are not eligible for employment insurance because of Ottawa's unfair eligibility rules; and

"Whereas an Ontario worker has to work more weeks to qualify and receives fewer weeks of benefits than other Canadian unemployed workers" in all the other nine provinces; and

"Whereas the average Ontario unemployed worker gets"—listen to this—" \$4,000 less in EI benefits than unemployed workers in other provinces and thus, unemployed are not qualifying for many" of the federal programs other unemployed workers get in the other provinces;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to press" Stephen Harper and "the federal government to reform the employment insurance program and to end the discrimination and unfairness towards Ontario's unemployed workers."

I'm in solidarity with Ontario's unemployed workers, and I affix my name to this petition.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I want to sign that petition.

Mr. Mike Colle: The Minister of Transportation wants to sign also.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition has over 2,000 names and is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care adequately funded Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital in Petrolia to maintain its emergency room and not redesignate it as an urgent-care centre; and

"Whereas Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should recognize the importance of rural health care in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Petrolia medical community has stated that the loss of the Petrolia emergency room will result in the loss of many local doctors; and

"Whereas the rural communities should be provided access to the same level of emergency medical care as those in urban areas;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately transfer funding to allow the recruitment of additional medical staff and renovations suggested in the Hay Group report, to ensure continued emergency medical services to the Lambton county rural community."

I agree with this and affix my signature.

PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY FRANCHISE

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'm pleased to present a petition today on behalf of Gary Foster in Hamilton, Ontario, who obviously wants a hockey team moved to his hometown.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment has the highest average ticket revenue per game in the National Hockey League; and

"Whereas the Toronto Maple Leafs are ranked the most financially valuable team in the NHL; and

"Whereas many Hamilton and greater Toronto area hockey fans are unable to attend professional hockey games due to a lack of adequate ticket supply; and

"Whereas the Hamilton and greater Toronto area boast the biggest and best market in the world for hockey fans, with Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment bringing

approximately \$2.4 billion to the local economy over 10 years; and

“Whereas a new franchise in the Hamilton and greater Toronto area is valued at \$600 million by some economists; and

“Whereas competition in both business and sports is healthy for both the Hamilton and greater Toronto area economy and sports team performance; and

“Whereas, despite having the most loyal fans in the world, the Toronto Maple Leafs have not won the Stanley Cup in over 40 years; and

“Whereas Hamilton and greater Toronto area fans deserve competitive professional hockey teams;

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

“To request that the government of the province of Ontario express its strong support to the board of governors of the National Hockey League for the relocation or expansion of a second National Hockey League team in the Hamilton and greater Toronto area in order to realize the economic advantages to the taxpayers of the province of Ontario and to provide healthy competition to the existing Toronto National Hockey League franchise.”

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The time for petitions having expired, I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Mr. Brownell assumes ballot item number 58 and Mr. Hoy assumes ballot item number 67.

Orders of the day.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

PENSION PLANS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Mr. Wilson moves second reading of motion number 100.

Mr. Wilson for a statement up to 12 minutes.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I just want to introduce the resolution first, Madam Speaker:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should immediately adopt the recommendation from the government's Expert Commission on Pensions that says, “The government should promptly address the pension arrangements for groups of public service employees affected by past divestments and transfers, whether by allowing these groups to use the group asset transfer process proposed in recommendation 5-4, or by other means, including negotiations with their rep-

resentatives,” and ensure that any resulting legislation or regulation allows paramedics in Simcoe county who were affected by the divestment of paramedic services in the late 1990s and beyond, to transfer their pensions to OMERS from HOOPP or OPTrust, ensuring that these paramedics are not penalized.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Speaker, may I begin by thanking you for filling in for me today so that I could introduce my resolution and speak to it, in doing the Acting Speaker duty.

I'm pleased to rise to speak to my resolution, one that, if accepted, would correct what I would term as an oversight regarding the pensions of hard-working paramedics in Simcoe county and throughout Ontario. For me it's an issue that I hope we can begin to resolve today.

Before I begin, I want to acknowledge the presence of a number of Simcoe county paramedics who are in the gallery today. They are David Coursey, Greg VanRooyen, James Besley, Robert Lewis, Douglas Osmond, Chris Bischof and Bryant Lucas. These are the faces of our local emergency services. They are the people who provide round-the-clock emergency services to our communities, friends, neighbours and families. They are the people who work indoors and outdoors under a variety of weather conditions and under threat of a variety of risks, including exposure to diseases. It is also work that is physically and emotionally demanding, whether they are transporting patients, responding to emergencies or dealing with critically ill or injured individuals.

The list of duties they perform and the qualifications they have is lengthy. It's important to recognize the significant role these individuals play in our communities, and it speaks to why these people are so deserving of our help here today.

As an aside, I personally had the opportunity to avail myself of Simcoe county paramedic services when I was transferred one week ago today from the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie to Southlake hospital in Newmarket. I want to take this opportunity to thank paramedics Ian and Mike for all their help.

I first met Dave Coursey in my Collingwood office a few months ago. He came in with Carl Eichenberger, a local OPSEU representative who's also with us in the gallery here today, to tell me about the problem that he and about 30 other paramedics in the county have with their pensions. In that meeting, Dave told me that he's been a paramedic in Simcoe county for the past 35 years. For 25 of those years, his employer was Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie. As many members in this House will recall, in the late 1990s and early 2000s paramedic services were divested or transferred from the province to upper-tier municipalities. In our area, it was from places like Royal Victoria Hospital or the Orillia ambulance service to the county of Simcoe. So on December 31, 2000, Dave was given notice of termination from RVH. He then applied for the position of operations supervisor

at the county and was successful. He began his new job the very next day, on January 1, 2001.

This is where the issue gets tricky. While working at RVH for 25 years, Dave paid into the Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan, or HOOPP for short. When he started with the county, he was enrolled in OMERS, the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System. When Dave moved from one employer to the next, he figured his pension would move also, but it didn't. He was told the funds could not be moved because they were divested, and that because of provisions in the Pension Benefits Act, there was nothing he could do about it. Needless to say, this caused a considerable amount of concern for him and many other paramedics in similar circumstances.

If their pension funds are not allowed to be transferred from one plan to another, then they will receive two pension cheques, once they retire, at a significantly reduced amount because their transfer from one employer to the other does not recognize their years of continuous service. In other words, after 25 years as a paramedic, Dave Coursey and many other paramedics had to start all over again with new pension plans. To quote from a letter that Dave wrote to me:

"I have consulted with both providers numerous times. On every occasion, everyone is in agreement with me—not only is my predicament unfair, it is wrong. As it stands, I will have to work at my present capacity for the next 14 years. This would give me over 47 years of service."

Dave is right. The pension providers do largely agree. Let me read from the HOOPP submission to the government's own Expert Commission on Pensions:

"The Pension Benefits Act should be improved to enhance the opportunities to transfer the accrued defined pension benefits of Ontario workers without serious loss of value when they change jobs or employers. Some of the most important areas of concern for HOOPP are the questions of pension benefit coverage and portability. HOOPP would welcome changes that will bring greater clarity to the portability rules to provide greater opportunities for plan members to preserve the value of their pension "benefits when they change jobs and pension plans, including as a result of their employer's divestment or merger."

Their submission even goes on to say, "The example of ambulance workers is a good illustration. Many ambulance workers, as a result of health care restructuring, are forced to change pension plans every few years (i.e. each time a supplier contract ends). They are frequently left with no realistic chance to consolidate their pension service."

1420

Then there was OMERS. They were nice enough to come to my office and to meet with Dave and me just recently. I want to thank Tracey Ball and her colleague from OMERS for coming in to explain their position in greater detail. We appreciated that very much. Let me quote from their submission to the commission:

"With the increase in government divestment activity over the last decade, administrators and members of affected public sector pension plans have become concerned and frustrated about the negative impact of current Financial Services Commission of Ontario ... policy on their ability to negotiate and consent to group interplan asset transfers."

They go on to say, "Many public sector employees are affected by this issue and many have been waiting for a number of years for plan administrators, the regulator and/or the provincial government to address it."

The OMERS submission goes on to state—and I know my colleague from Oxford is going to speak on this issue in his remarks: "The provincial government has recognized and responded to these concerns, with limited effect, by amending the Police Services Act to permit the administrators of the public service pension plan and OMERS to enter into one or more asset transfer agreements in respect of eligible police force employees whose employment has been transferred between a municipal police force and the Ontario Provincial Police. This step is to be commended, but more remains to be done to address this issue facing the major Ontario public sector pension plans."

So we have agreement from HOOPP and OMERS and the OPSEU pension trust that this issue should be addressed through their submissions to the government's own Expert Commission on Pensions.

Let me take a moment to tell you what the commission itself had to say on this issue. Their final report reads:

"Problems associated with asset transfers have given rise to significant controversies in the public and broader public sectors. During the late 1990s, the provincial government 'divested,' or transferred, some 10,000 employees from one agency, or level of government, to another or to the private sector. Very few of these employees benefited from asset transfers. Indeed, some of them continued to do the same job in the same place, but were told that their future pension accruals would be in a different plan. These individuals will receive pension benefits that are lower than they would have been if all of their service credits and associated pension assets had been transferred to their new plan. Unfortunately, as noted, then- and still-prevailing rules preclude asset transfers if even relatively minor differences exist between the new and old plans."

It is that statement which gets to the heart of the issue here today and that led to this recommendation from the commission. The commission recommended: "The government should promptly address the pension arrangements for groups of public service employees affected by past divestments and transfers, whether by allowing these groups to use the group asset transfer process proposed in recommendation 5-4, or by other means, including negotiations with the representatives."

That is what I'm asking the government to do today: to implement the recommendation of their own expert commission on pensions. Doing so would resolve this matter once and for all and allow people, like those in the

gallery here today, to be treated fairly and equally. It's my hope that any initiative by the government includes these paramedics who either had pensions at HOOPP or in the OPSEU pension trust, and who are now enrolled in OMERS.

I should add that earlier today I introduced a bill in this House, the Pension Benefits Statute Law Amendment Act, that would, if passed, allow any employee to consent to the transfer of pension assets and require pension plan administrators to enter into an agreement on the transfer of benefits. It's modelled after the amendments that were made with respect to the pensions of police officers through the Police Services Act, and it would address this issue. I tabled it to give the government an option for resolving the issue.

Finally, I want to say that I don't really see this as a partisan issue. I do recognize that the divestment of these services mainly occurred under the previous government. I don't think the resulting pension issue was intentional, though. I served in cabinet at the time, and I can honestly say that I wasn't aware of the issue until Mr. Coursey brought it to my attention some months ago. I believe it was an oversight and one that can and should be rectified by this Legislature. After all, that's our job.

It's important to note that this issue affects people across the province and not just in my riding. Others affected include 100 paramedics in Frontenac, 110 in Hastings-Quinte/Prince Edward county, 60 in Leeds and Grenville, 15 in Dufferin county and 28 in Grey county, and those are just the ones that I know about. It's not right to penalize hard-working paramedics because of a change of employer in which they had no say. I ask all members to support this resolution and/or my private member's bill to bring justice to the issue once and for all, to bring it to closure and allow these ladies and gentlemen to retire, recognizing their full continuous years of service. After all, many of them are reaching 35 years of service—and more, in some cases. They deserve to have the proper pension. After all, that's what they signed on for when they signed on to be paramedics, to go through extensive training and to risk their lives, their health and their backs—which often go to help us, our friends and neighbours in our time of need. So let's help them in their time of need.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened to my colleague and his motion. First of all, for the record and for the people who are intently listening to this here today, this is a motion. Unfortunately, it does not bind the House—it binds the House but not the government. But I think it's a timely motion and it's a motion that we need to debate in terms of fairness.

A long time ago—I guess, a generation or two ago—there was much discussion in this House about having a portable pension, an Ontario pension. It was a wise old man of Ontario, Leslie Frost, who was then the Premier, who talked about having a pension for all. He went along with that idea for many years, trying to develop it so that

every person who worked in Ontario would have a pension and that pension would follow them from job to job; so that if your job, as has happened to the people who are here today, was transferred from one level of government to another or from one ministry to another, from one ministry to the private sector or anything else, that pension and the portability of that pension would follow.

Leslie Frost gave up on his idea at the time when the Canada pension became law, because he saw that the Canada pension would usurp. He was hoping that the Canada pension would be able to handle the needs of the people of Ontario, as well as all of those across Canada.

I think people in this country are very appreciative of the Canada pension. It surely has been upgraded and updated to make sure that when you retire at the age of 65—and most people do, or even if they don't retire, they start getting their pension then—there is a sum of money that flows in, that makes sure that you do not live in abject poverty. In fact, a number of years ago now when there were stories of seniors who were forced to eat dog food and live in very trying circumstances, the government of the day saw fit, and rightly so, to increase the Canada old age pension to make sure that that was not the case.

Today we are seeing some other phenomenon. We are seeing the phenomenon of people who have paid into pensions their entire lives suddenly seeing that those pensions are becoming valueless. We have had debates in this House; we've had motions and e-mails and petitions talking about the pensions that are being lost. The most classic one that is talked to and about is the General Motors pension, or the pension in the Big Three auto that people paid into literally their entire lives and have now seen devalued to the point that it's nearly worthless. We've seen the government forced to come to their aid, and much of the \$3.2 billion that has been earmarked from this government to the Detroit Three is going towards pensions.

Certainly I agree with my colleague that we need to do something to help the workers who are here today, but I also look to how they found themselves in this circumstance in the first place. I want to cast no aspersions, but clearly it should have been something that the government of the day, when they transferred workers from one jurisdiction to another or privatized some of them, should have looked at. I was not here, but I know my colleague was, and he's signalling—I'm not saying it in a nasty way. It's something that should have happened, and it did not happen. I don't know what the Harris government was thinking when they were doing this, or maybe they just assumed everything would work out, but in fact it hasn't.

I know that people who transfer from one kind of job to another, who pay into one kind of pension plan and then another, oftentimes find that the two are incongruous and that they cannot be combined. They cannot extend the life. I do know, in my own case, I was a federal civil servant for more than 20 years. I paid into

the federal civil service's superannuation plan and was expecting to get a pension out of that. Lo and behold, something wonderful happened: I got elected full-time to be the mayor of East York and had to quit the federal civil service. In East York we did not have a gold-plated pension. As people who worked for the municipality, we were entitled to the same pension, which was an OMERS pension, that the workers had, the same people who collected the garbage, the same people who worked behind the counter. Whatever we earned, we paid into that pension at the same rate and were entitled to a pension or a portion after our years of service.

1430

I tried to transfer, I remember, my federal civil service pension of some 20 years into the OMERS pension so that I could collect one pension in the end and was told that it could not happen; I wished it could have. It's not the same as the gentlemen here, because they didn't leave one job; they stayed in the job. I changed jobs, from working in the immigration department to being a mayor and then later to be at the megacity of Toronto. But my pensions could not flow and could not follow. I think that was a shame because, in order for it to work correctly and for people to understand the value of their pension and to see it accrue after many years of working, it is absolutely essential that we have one pension that flows and follows with them, particularly in the cases where they continue to work at the same job. Nothing changed except the name of their employer; nothing changed, not even the place they worked, not even who their boss was, not even to whom they reported—nothing. It makes no sense to me that they are in a circumstance today where they're going to have to be collecting two separate pensions. They haven't been melded; they haven't been worked together.

Certainly, the Arthurs report—and I go back to the Arthurs report, which was put forward to this Legislature a month or two months ago now—set out a number of things that needed to happen. The Arthurs report, and I have a note here about it, in 5-4, “addresses” the “asset transfers on a going-forward basis” but does not act “retroactively.” The recommendation is not retroactive; I think it needs to be.

Although it does not bind the government, I think all members of the Legislature need to understand that the people who are here from EMT—and from other organizations, I'm sure, in the future, that are going to come forward and are worried about their pensions—need to have the support of this Legislature. They need to understand, and we need to understand on their behalf, that the changes need to be made in order to secure that. We cannot send them away from here today thinking that this Legislature is cold or unsympathetic to what they're trying to do. In fact, all they are asking for is something that they have paid into their entire working lives and that their employers, whether it be the provincial government, whether it be a branch of the provincial government, transfer to municipalities, transfer to the federal government—there's all of this going on—or to the private sector, they, too, need to be onside.

The pensions need to be protected, they need to be regularized and they need to flow so that a person, when they turn 60 or 65 years of age, will know at the time they are retiring that their pension is secure, what they have paid into they're going to get and can retire in dignity and honour, the same kind of dignity and honour that they gave us all of their working lives.

I support my colleague. I support what he's trying to do. I'm not sure of all the nuts and bolts, but this is a motion, after all. I ask the government to listen to the House if the House passes this today and for the government to do everything necessary with the auditors and everything else to bring this to fruition.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity. Just before I begin with respect to the motion we have before us, I have some brief remarks. I don't often have an opportunity on Thursday afternoon when the House is rising for an extended period to say to folks who are here, our members and certainly the staff that work on all of our behalfs to enjoy some downtime during the summer as well as the work they will continue doing in their ridings as members and as committees travel about, doing things like that. I wanted the opportunity to say that at this point, particularly as we're almost in mid-mandate, I guess, for this government, as it turns out.

I want to spend the few minutes that are allocated to me to speak to the member's motion. When I first arrived here, I was working then with the Chair of Management Board, now the Ministry of Government Services. I recall in those early days being approached by then-GO Transit workers in regard to their pensions and the transfer of those from the Ontario public service to OMERS. I think that was the direction. I've kind of lost track of where that went. Maybe it was from OMERS back to OPS, but regardless, I don't think the issue is probably substantively different in the context of the movement of employees from one organization to another and the capacity of moving those pension provisions that were related to those. So I'm aware of the concern that those who are in the field have with protecting their pension rights, protecting the capacity to move those and protecting their ability to take advantage of provisions for early retirement and all of those things that go with it. I'm certainly sympathetic to the position that our EMS folks and others in the public sector have.

I think it's timely, obviously, that we have this kind of a discussion, because it's not the first time in this place in the past number of months that we have been discussing pensions, whether those were pensions in the private sector directly through dealing with the auto sector, whether it was a broader discussion about the need for a national conversation around pensions, the Premier's efforts to engage the federal government in a broader pension discussion, or the Minister of Finance with his colleagues recently. I think it continues to be timely to have the discussion that we're having here.

Having said that, I'm not going to be supporting the motion we have before us today. I'll tell you the principal reasons for that. It's not reflective of the folks that the member opposite has identified in particular within his resolution as a primary driver for bringing this forward, because it's been brought to his attention through them, and it has little, if anything, to do with the divestment that happened earlier and whether or not that should have occurred then, because we do have to continue to work through these issues and find a resolution to them. I think the primary concern I have with the resolution today is the sense, for me, that the motion would speak to this Legislature, although not committing the government by virtue of the motion, but committing this Legislature to say to the government that they should immediately adopt the recommendation of the government's expert commission. This is a comprehensive piece of work done by the expert commission under the directorship of Professor Harry Arthurs to bring forward thoughtful recommendations that government should consider. But as we all know, government needs time, sometimes more than we would like, to give consideration to recommendations that are brought forward and for stakeholders to provide feedback on those for government consideration.

Though I am not at all averse to what the member is suggesting we do in the context of ensuring that elements of that report get a sense of urgent consideration in the broad sense of pension reform, I'm not in a position, as a member of this place, to suggest to government that they should immediately adopt the recommendations of that commission with respect to even just one element of it, let alone the broader range of recommendations that the commission brought forward.

There were, I believe, some 127 submissions to that. There are 142 recommendations in that report, and to begin peeling off the one-off recommendations I don't think is in the interest of pension reform. We have done things within the budget context in the matter of pension reform, including locked-in pension funds. There was a commitment in the fall of this year, as I understand it, from the Minister of Finance to bring forward a report and recommendations with respect to pension reform. As I understand, that's the intention. I very much hope that our debate today will provide him with information, through Hansard, to take this under advisement as a matter that he may—and should—give consideration to in his consideration of recommendations in the discussion this fall.

I have to say to the member opposite that the sense of urgency about immediate adoption is something that I, as a member of this caucus, cannot support this afternoon. But I want to thank you for bringing it forward and drawing it to all of our attention.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to start by congratulating the member from Simcoe–Grey on bringing forward this resolution and supporting his local paramedics. These are people who have contributed to their pension

in good faith over the years and are now stuck in a bureaucratic situation that is threatening the level of their retirement.

This is just one example of the great job that the member from Simcoe–Grey is doing in advocating for his riding, and I want to commend him for that. Over the past couple of years, he's been a vocal supporter of causes such as preserving the Banting homestead and reopening the birthing unit at the Stevenson Memorial Hospital.

1440

I also want to take a minute to recognize and thank the paramedics who are in the audience here today for the good work they do, and as the member from Simcoe–Grey pointed out, in this case the good work that they do for him personally. I'm starting to think that this whole resolution may very well be somewhat of a payback for a job well done. We thank you very much for that.

In Ontario we are lucky to have such dedicated and professional people we can depend on who are there when we need them. Often we don't see the paramedics unless we're facing a crisis, so we don't have the opportunity to stop and tell them how much we appreciate what they do. I know for many years I've been going with the fire department to where people were hurt in automobile accidents, and the paramedics are always there to help and make the pain go away for a lot of people. At that time, you don't get the opportunity to say thank you, so I'm happy to be able to do that here today. I want to do that not only on behalf of those of us here in the Legislature but also on behalf of the people I represent in Oxford county, and in fact the people all over Ontario.

As the member for Simcoe–Grey explained in his remarks, this is all part of the realignment of services, of the delivery of ambulance services, when it was moved from the province to the municipalities. There was a variation in how it was provided before, so it doesn't affect all the paramedics in the province, because some of them were working for the Ministry of Health, and some were working for private contractors, and they were shielded somewhat from the impact of this. But the vast majority of the paramedics were covered by this, and this is what caused the problem.

The problem these paramedics are facing is that their new employer is part of a different pension plan, and current law doesn't allow their pension assets to be transferred to the new plan. If this cannot be corrected, it means that these paramedics will end up with two pension plans, as was mentioned, but likely the two parts will not provide the same support and benefits as the single pension that they were originally contributing to. I think the key point to look at is that this is not a personal choice of the paramedics or a personal choice that they made to change their jobs. They are doing exactly the same job they were doing before. Responsibility was shifted, and the fact that government shifted the responsibility for service should not negatively impact anyone's retirement. In fact, it surely shouldn't affect the paramedics who are being impacted.

I know that a lot of people in Ontario don't have a pension. In fact, the member from Beaches–East York was talking about his pension working for the federal government and his pension working in municipal government. When I worked in municipal government, I had no pension. Before I worked for municipal government, I had no pension. Now that I work in the provincial Legislature, nothing has changed. That doesn't mean we shouldn't look at the changes that have taken place on behalf of these paramedics through no fault of their own.

Let me give you some examples of the problems they're facing. Let's say the original pension allowed you to retire with a 90 factor. That means that when your years of service and your age combined reach 90, you retire with a pension. Someone who is 60 years old who has been a paramedic for 30 years would receive a pension. That same person in this situation—the paramedic might have 25 years with one pension plan and then five years with the other. Because the service is in different pension plans, all of a sudden he no longer qualifies for the 90 factor and, incidentally, he never will, I'm afraid. As a paramedic, he can't work that long to retire a second time with a 90 factor. He now has to work an extra five years simply because responsibility for the paramedic operation changed. That just doesn't seem fair. Because of this switch, he's unlikely to get enough hours in either pension. The two plans calculated together will not amount—and I think that was mentioned by the member from Simcoe–Grey—to the same pension they would receive if it were all in one pension, because of course the result at the end of the pension is calculated based on the highest earning years, and the highest earning years are never in the first half of a working career. So, obviously the first pension will come back at a much lower rate than the second part of the pension.

This isn't just a paramedic issue. The problem we're talking about today and the solution that we need today are for the paramedics, but all the other transfers of services had the same problem.

For instance, a situation occurred in Tillsonburg, in the south end of my riding, with the Tillsonburg police services. They were replaced by the OPP, and of course the pension changed. John Murray, the former Tillsonburg Police Association president, gave an example of an individual with 30 years of service who was facing a shortfall of \$8,700 per year, compared to either a municipal or an OPP officer with similar years of service. Again, if their service was not interrupted, that first individual would make \$8,700 a year more on their pension.

In fact, the hospitals of Ontario pension plan, in a submission to the Ontario Expert Commission on Pensions, said the effect of receiving pension cheques from two or more pension plans “often means affected members eventually receive smaller pension benefits, particularly if their highest earning years occur in the successor plan”—which is almost certain to happen. “This can occur because a member ends up receiving pension income from two or more pension funds”—and there are

cases where that's happening—“because the benefit is typically based on a final average earnings formula, the sum of the parts are often less than the whole benefit that the member would otherwise have been paid if the member had stayed in one plan.”

There are other details that will need to be worked out to ensure that transfer of the pension assets is achieved, to be fair to both pension plans. Of course, that's a challenge. We also need to make sure that the second pension plan doesn't become responsible for all kinds of liabilities, in the transfer, that the first plan has got the contributions for.

We had a similar situation with pension transfers in my riding of Oxford, with the Ingersoll police force. Again, the transfer was to the Ontario Provincial Police, which put them into another pension plan. In the case of the police department's agreement, police officers who transfer between municipal and OPP can also transfer their pensions, and that was spoken to earlier; that they actually changed the police pension plan to allow the transfer of assets. However, as you will note in the situation in Ingersoll, there was a difference between the pension contribution that resulted in the municipality and the police officers sharing—between the plan that they had and the plan that they were going to. So in order to even that out, there was a cost that had to be bought back into the plan, and in negotiations the municipality and the police officers jointly paid the difference that was required to pay into the police plan, and in fact, their whole plan was changed over.

Whatever solution is allowing the transfer, you have to leave enough flexibility so that it works for different pension plans in different ways. Some will be transferred up to a more lucrative, shall we say, a greater-benefit plan, and others will go down to where there are not quite as many benefits. But the truth is that they have to come out fair, and they have to come out to the plan, at the choice of the individual who has been involved with it.

Another area where it occurred was with the community care access centres. They were also transferred from municipal to the OPSEU pension plan, not the OMERS plan. They ran into exactly the same problem.

I just wanted to say at the end of it that the issue is something that has affected numerous groups over the years and is a situation that will probably occur in the future. While the problem has been resolved with the police force—and I would suggest that as we look at the resolution today and give direction to the government to look at making the changes; even as the member from Simcoe–Grey said, he introduced a bill today, similar to the Police Services Act, that will solve this problem for this one—I think that we need the government to bring something forward that will allow it to happen for all types of situations, so that if people change jobs, the plan can go with them, and when they get to retirement age the pension won't be totally contingent on how many different employers they had, but how long they worked and what entitlements they should have.

It's simply not fair that people are punished for the fact that their job has been transferred to another level of

government. It's also not fair if a person has been transferred to another job because their job has changed or their job has been lost and, in a lot of cases, they have to take a job for less money, and here we are, penalizing them, because their pension plan can't be transferred.

I think it's very important that we deal with this, and I hope that the government will take action on this situation by changing the Pension Benefits Act to allow this for everyone. If we look at the submissions made by the pension commission themselves, it's all about an interpretation of how the assets can be transferred, whether it has to be on the whole group or individually.

1450

I think it's time that the government got rid of the red tape and made it understandable and effective for everyone who needs their pension plan changed, so we can get the best possible outcome for everyone who has contributed to a pension for their whole life and now has a right to the dignity of living on that pension in their retirement.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm happy to support the motion by the member from Simcoe–Grey. I agree with everything my colleague from Beaches–East York stated on the record on this bill. I'm going to have to simply say that it is highly probable, as the member from Simcoe–Grey said, that some of them, or many of them, would not have known the unintended consequences of the bill they passed; it's highly likely. But it is hard to believe that out of the cabinet discussions they would not have discussed what the implications would be when you transfer one group of employees to another level. It really is hard to believe that they hadn't discussed it or that they wouldn't know the consequences.

So I want to accept that the member from Simcoe–Grey would be one member who just didn't know about the consequences. But I tell you, it's really, really difficult for me. I've been in cabinet and I've been around here for quite a long time, and we discuss these issues. Most of the government members of the Liberal Party today discuss a whole lot of issues. They know what's going on. A whole lot of members protest—internally, of course, because you can't do it externally—what the government members do. So they might pretend they don't know, because they have to accept what the government is doing, but we all know.

So in the late 1990s, the provincial government divested or transferred some 10,000 employees—we're not talking a couple; 10,000 employees, more or less—from one agency or level of government to another or to the private sector, and very few of these employees benefited from asset transfers. Indeed, some of them continue to do so at the same job in the same place but were told that their future pension accruals would be in a different plan. These individuals will and have received pension benefits that are lower than they would have been if all their service credits and associated pension assets had been transferred to the new plan. So there's a problem here.

Why could we not have built into the transfers a transferability of assets, a portability of assets in pension benefits? Why couldn't we have done it? Was it discussed? I'm sure it was. The problem is, as others have noted, the prevailing rules preclude asset transfers if even relatively minor differences exist between the new and the old pension plans. So the rules preclude asset transfers.

The member from Pickering–Scarborough East says we need time, but the problem is that we don't have time. These folks here don't have time. We need changes within my lifetime and theirs. The problem with a whole lot of Liberal amendments is that it takes a whole long, long time before changes are made, and by that time they're out of office. Then we leave it to yet another government to review the very changes Mr. Arthurs is recommending.

So I'm going to be supporting this recommendation. I want to say on the record that I know a whole lot of Conservatives knew what they were doing. But I'm prepared to accept that the member from Simcoe–Grey puts it forth genuinely, and I believe that these workers, these paramedics, need fairness. Whatever we can do to solve it today, we should do today, not tomorrow.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. David Zimmer: I'm happy to speak to this, but I must say I find it really sort of passing strange that the member for Simcoe–Grey has brought this matter forward. It was in the late 1990s that the Tories created this mess when they went through this divesting exercise of public service employees' pensions. I note that the motion, in general terms, lays out that we should move quickly and rapidly on the Expert Commission on Pensions and what it says, and so forth and so on, but the real nub of this thing is that we've got an election coming up in 2011, because I see what I suspect is the real motive behind this, "and ensure that any resulting legislation or regulation allows paramedics in Simcoe county who were affected by the divestment of paramedic services in the late 1990s and beyond, to transfer their pensions to OMERS from HOOPP or OPTrust, ensuring that these paramedics are not penalized."

That's a very, very narrow motive, I suggest, that the member for Simcoe–Grey has in bringing this matter forward. What's behind that motive? Well, here we are in 2009. We've got an election coming up in 2011, and I dare say that all those paramedics in Simcoe–Grey are mightily hot about the action that the Tory government took in the late 1990s.

Anyway, be that as it may, where are we going to go from here? The Expert Commission on Pensions under the leadership of Harry Arthurs has issued its report. It's got a couple hundred submissions; they've done multiple public meetings with various stakeholders; they've got 142 recommendations there. Look, this business of the divestment is 10 years old now. It's going to be very, very difficult to sort out, but I can tell you that currently the staff at the Ministry of Finance are in the process of reviewing this, collecting additional information. We

have announced our intention to introduce a pension reform plan later this fall. Provisions such as this may be looked at. There are about 10,000 people affected by this motion who are not directly or adequately addressed here, and what we have to do, as a government, is take a larger view of this. This is more than just a particular group in the riding of the member for Simcoe–Grey.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It's a privilege and an honour to stand up and enter the debate on ballot item 22. It's a very important issue that we're discussing here this afternoon.

First, I want to welcome all the paramedics from Simcoe–Grey and all the paramedics across the province of Ontario; they do an excellent job on behalf of all of us in this province.

Everyone has mentioned, from the third party to my colleagues, the importance of this issue and how our government has taken this issue seriously. That's why our Premier asked the federal government to enter the debate on pensions for all the people in this province.

Sadly, I was listening to the member from Beaches–East York and the member from Spadina—

Mr. Michael Prue: Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Trinity–Spadina. He was mentioning why the member from Simcoe–Grey—he was, I think, a minister back then—was sitting around the table with the member from Oxford to discuss this issue. Back then, the Mike Harris government brought this mess to Ontarians, not affecting just the people of Simcoe–Grey; it affected more than 10,000 people across the province of Ontario. So the pension deinvestment happened under the watch of those people. Anyway, it happened in the past, and now we are talking about the present and want to work together in order to build a good future for all the people who rely on a pension when they retire.

It's important to deal with the pension issue because it's opened up—especially in these times after we heard of a lot of companies going bankrupt—for many people who worked all their lives. They were hoping to get a good pension when they retired, when they got old. I think it's our duty and obligation as a people, as elected officials, as a government, to look after those people and give them the chance to live with comfort, because it is important for all of us to make sure that people who work very hard in their lifetimes are protected and live with dignity and respect. That's why we've talked about the guaranteed income fund many different times. We said that this has been mismanaged since 1981. I'm not talking about a particular government; all the governments that came through, from 1981 until now, didn't look into this pension fund. That's why Professor Harry Arthurs conducted a study and came up with recommendations for the government. But he didn't come up with a proposal and solutions for how we could deal with it in general.

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That's why our Minister of Finance, our government, asked to conduct a study of different pensions, like

HOOPP and OMERS, to see how we can deal with them and to support the pensioners who worked very hard in their lifetime. As I mentioned at the beginning, they deserve all of the respect and the support that they need, because they worked very hard, on the assumption that when they retired, they'd get a full pension.

To the member from Simcoe–Grey: I don't think that this issue is only for the Simcoe–Grey people, even though I respect the Simcoe–Grey area. It has to be dealt with province-wide, in conjunction with the federal government, to come up with a solution for all the pensioners across the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The time for debate having ended, I would ask the member from Simcoe–Grey for up to two minutes in terms of a response.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I do appreciate Beaches–East York, my colleague from Oxford, Pickering–Scarborough East, Trinity–Spadina, Willowdale and London–Fanshawe for your comments.

I gather from the government side, though, that you sort of got the same response from the bureaucracy as I have: that this is a very complicated issue, it's very difficult to deal with, and it's 10 years old. Listen, if you want the politics of this, you guys are very union friendly. These fellows are OPSEU members, and there are about 10,000 of them across the province. I don't think they necessarily vote for me. They were kind enough to ask their MPP to come forward, on behalf of themselves and their families, to bring this issue forward, but the politics of this is that they're your voters and you should do something about this.

OPSEU is watching. You've got the agreement, and you've already got—I've met with HOOPP, I've met with OMERS and all of the parties involved, and they're quite willing. They're getting tired of these pension plans, and the offices of people who are now coming to retirement—and that's why the word “immediate” is in there, I say to the member from Willowdale. These people, these gentlemen are starting to retire, and they're getting ripped off.

I take full responsibility. I didn't know about the issue. I was fourth in charge of the province for eight years under Mike Harris. It never came up in cabinet, I swear to God. We just assumed. Now, maybe somebody knew and somebody got briefed somewhere, but it didn't come to my attention, and I don't think Mr. Harris knew. He wouldn't do this. This doesn't cost us money. It's a transfer of money from one plan to the other that these people have paid into. It's not a big bill for anybody here, so it would be no sweat. Why would we want to tick people off and rip them off on their pensions? That just doesn't make any sense, politically.

I ask you as private members today to send a signal to your own government and support this resolution. If you feel you can't do that, please, at least in the background—I'll take you at your word, government members, that this a serious issue, that they are working on it, that there is a response promised by the Minister of

Finance coming soon. I would just ask you, if you don't want to support it today, at least pressure the Minister of Finance behind the scenes to do the right thing, and when he comes forward in a few months with his response to the commission, please include these paramedics.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): For those interested, we will be voting on this ballot item in about 110 minutes.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT
(AFTERMARKET BRAKE PAD
STANDARDS), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE
(NORMES RELATIVES AUX PLAQUETTES
DE FREIN DE RECHANGE)

Mrs. Sandals moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 181, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to aftermarket brake pad standards and specifications / Projet de loi 181, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui a trait aux normes et aux caractéristiques relatives aux plaquettes de frein de rechange.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Ms. Sandals, according to standing order 98, you have up to 12 minutes for your presentation.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'd just like to begin by introducing a couple of people from my riding from ABS Friction—they just moved; I'm just finding them: John Burns, who is the president and chief operating officer, and Steve Curtis, who is the director of finance at ABS Friction in Guelph. I'd also like to note that Rick Jamieson, who is the CEO of ABS Friction and actually the past chair of the Friction Materials Standards Institute for North America, has been a great help in preparing this bill. Fittingly, perhaps, he's actually at a meeting of the institute down in the States today and couldn't be here.

When I go to buy a new car, I have some criteria that are very particular to me. I do a lot of highway driving. I want a driver's seat that's really comfortable because my back seizes up when I drive long distances. I have a lot of really tall adults in my family, so I want to make sure adults can sit in the back seat. My husband would tell you that it is genetically embedded in me to pack everything but the kitchen sink, so I want good luggage space. As I said, I do a lot of freeway driving, so I want an engine that's powerful enough that, when I come onto the 401 and the slow lane's going 120, I can accelerate into traffic. And I want to make sure that I've got good brakes and I can stop.

Probably out of all those criteria, the only one that everybody in the House agrees with and the only one that everybody watching agrees with is, "I want to be able to stop." We all know that it's really, really important that when we get in our cars, we're able to stop.

I make certain assumptions that I'm sure most people do, which are, because it's really important that I be able to stop, and the government's in charge of important safety standards, I just presume that there's some safety standard for the brakes on my car. That's actually only partly right. When you buy a new car, there are in fact North American safety standards for the original equipment. But eventually those brakes will wear out and you go to get them replaced, and in Canada, there is no standard for aftermarket brakes. It's buyer beware. You really do need to beware, but most of us don't actually realize that.

Ontario brake manufacturers in fact do meet some voluntary standards, and their brakes are perfectly safe. But that can't be said of everything that's on the market in Ontario.

The other assumption I would make is that Ontario, because of our health and safety legislation, no longer uses asbestos. That's only sort of true. We don't use it in the manufacturing process in Ontario, but there's no ban in Canada that says that you can't bring products that include asbestos into the country.

Bill 181 would address both of those issues. It would (1) require safety standards for aftermarket brakes, and it would (2) make sure that the brakes we use in Ontario don't contain asbestos.

You might ask, "What does asbestos have to do with brakes?" As we know, asbestos is a strong, heat-resistant and cheap material. Because of that, it can be used—and used to be used in Ontario—as a cheap, effective material in the manufacture of brake pads. But Ontario brake pad manufacturers don't use asbestos anymore. Why? Because asbestos causes cancer. So a brake pad manufacturer in Ontario wouldn't dream of having an industrial process that involved mixing in little bits of asbestos; we simply don't do that. So Ontario brake pads don't have asbestos. But what does happen is that asbestos that is mined in Quebec is shipped to Asia—people in Asia still use asbestos to make brake pads—it's shipped back to Ontario and you might buy those brake pads.

What happens then is that as your brake pads wear out, there's a little fine powder that ends up in the wheel wells of your brakes. What happens when you go to get those brake pads repaired? Well, the mechanic who's dealing with those brake pads is going to have to go into the wheel well, clean up the wheel well, take apart your brakes and do the repairs. At that point, the mechanic is going to be potentially breathing in asbestos dust. You might think, "Well, that sounds a little bit far-fetched. Does this really make a difference?"

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The truth of the matter is that if you look at the data—interestingly, this came up as an issue a few years ago out in Seattle. The Seattle newspapers went around and collected dust from garages that did brake maintenance and sent this out to a lab to be analyzed. What they found when they sent it out to be analyzed was that dust they collected from garages that did brake repairs could have anywhere from 2% to 64% asbestos content. Think what

that means to the mechanic working in the garage. They're breathing it in or they may ingest it if it gets on their lunch or their coffee cup or whatever, and that causes cancer. One of the cancers it can cause is something called mesothelioma, a very severe form of cancer caused almost exclusively by asbestos.

It's interesting that when you look at the data around who is most likely to get mesothelioma, it includes the categories we traditionally think of: people who worked in the construction industry back when asbestos was commonly used in pipe wrappings and insulation and things like that. A lot of construction workers have been exposed to asbestos, and they have a high rate of mesothelioma. But one of the other groups that has a very high rate of mesothelioma is actually mechanics who do brake repair work, because they've been ingesting that asbestos powder that comes in. Bill 181 would say that brake pads in Ontario, no matter where they came from, can't include asbestos, because we want to protect mechanics who work with brakes.

Let's go back to the whole issue of "I want to stop," because the other thing that Bill 81 would do is deal with the issue of "Can I stop?" Let's think of what happens when I go to get my brakes fixed. I go into the garage and say to the mechanic, "There's something wrong with the brakes." The mechanic puts the car up on the hoist and says, "Yes, she's actually right. We need to fix it." If it's the brake pads that need fixing, brakes come in a lot of different varieties, because different kinds of cars need different kinds of brakes. So the mechanic probably picks up the phone and says to the local auto parts distributor, "I need this kind of brake," and hopefully tracks it down so they can get my brakes fixed by end of day.

The local auto parts guy may not know a lot about where the brakes come from; they get them from some national distributor. Nobody in this chain actually knows anything about where the brakes came from. They don't know if they come from an Ontario or a North American manufacturer who is meeting safety standards. They don't know if they come from someplace else.

Interestingly again, people have done some work on this. One of the brake-testing organizations has looked at some brakes that come from areas of the world where people don't necessarily meet standards, and here are some of their findings. Under North American testing, some of the brakes that come from outside North America actually ignite—they catch fire—when they're subjected to friction testing. In fact, one of the most common causes of car fires is brake pad failure. For every thousand pads that were tested, five to seven pads completely separated from the steel backing on the pad. In simulated panic stops, where your brakes are most likely to fail, some of the brake pads just self-destructed. They crumbled; they fell apart. Obviously you don't want this happening when it's your car or when it's the car of the person behind you. You want their brakes to stop their car as well.

What do you do about that? There are already a number of voluntary standards. The European Union has a

standard that is quite simple. It says that replacement or aftermarket brake pads must be plus or minus 15% within the standard of the original equipment brakes that came on the new car. That's one way of doing it. Another North American standard is called BEEP, the brake effectiveness evaluation procedure.

AMECA, which stands for the Automotive Manufacturers Equipment Compliance Agency, has an equipment compliance program, and they have a whole rating system where they test brakes, they make sure it meets the standard, and then if it meets the standard, it's actually identified with what's known as an edge code, to identify who manufactured the brake and what standard it meets, which gives you total traceability of that standard.

The bottom line is, what happens in Bill 181 is that the Ministry of Transportation would be required to have a discussion with our local brake industry and come up with an agreeable standard that is workable in North America, and every brake pad used in Ontario would be required to meet that standard.

So Bill 181 would do two things: It would assure that mechanics aren't getting ill because of asbestos, and it would ensure that the brakes you use are safe and will stop your car.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker—or Madam Speaker. I'm very pleased to contribute to the debate on Bill 181, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act, introduced by the member from Guelph. I will be supporting this bill.

This bill, of course, is going to require motor vehicles other than motorcycles that are equipped with aftermarket brake pads to be equipped with brake pads that meet the prescribed standards and specifications, and also ensure that they do not contain asbestos.

In my opinion, there are two important issues that this bill addresses: (1) road safety, and (2) the protection of human health, both of which are of very significant concern to all Ontarians.

With respect to the issue of road safety, although the number of motor vehicle accidents has been decreasing in recent years, the personal and economic costs of such collisions continue to be very costly for Ontario. In terms of the lives lost and the pain and the suffering experienced by victims and their families, motor vehicle accidents continue to devastate hundreds of families each year. Further, the economic costs of such collisions to the province are enormous, as surviving victims require extended hospital stays, surgeries, medication and long-term treatment to overcome their injuries. Some of the injuries are permanent, and they cause significant stress to the individual and their family. In fact, a recent report tabled by the Ministry of Transportation estimated that vehicle collisions cost Ontario \$18 billion each year in both economic and social costs. That, of course, does not include the emotional pain and suffering.

Given the major negative repercussions of motor vehicle accidents in Ontario, I believe it is necessary to

support any measure which will help reduce accidents and injuries. While brakes are a key component of the safe and proper functioning of motor vehicles, there are currently no government regulations which cover replacement brake pads. The bill is attempting to fill a legislative gap that currently exists. Hopefully, passage of the legislation would reduce collisions as well as deal with the reduction of the economic, social and human costs associated with such accidents.

I also support this bill because I believe it builds on the commitment to road safety that was made by the Progressive Conservative government over many years in the province of Ontario. The Progressive Conservative Party has a very proud record of doing everything it can to ensure the safety of our roads. In fact, if we reach back to 1976, it was the Progressive Conservative government of Bill Davis that introduced legislation to make Ontario the first jurisdiction in North America to make the wearing of seat belts mandatory. More recently, we have built on our party's commitment to road safety by instituting policies which encourage responsible driving, strengthen the working relationship with our road safety partners and our ability to enforce the safety of commercial vehicles, and increase the safety of construction sites. Yes, we do have a proud past when it comes to road safety.

1520

Let's look at the other component of this bill, aside from the issue of road safety, and that is the impact this can have on the protection of human health, because again, this bill would help to eliminate asbestos in the province. We know that asbestos is toxic and that it is directly linked to major illnesses such as cancer. However, brake pads have generally been composed of semi-metallic materials and asbestos. This bill would institute the requirement that such harmful materials could not be used in the manufacturing of brake pads, which could cause harm to any person who's going to come into contact with these products. Therefore, again, this bill has a very positive implication for Ontarians because it is a step in eliminating the use of a known toxin, asbestos.

I will be supporting this bill, which focuses on improving road safety and human health by the banning of the use of asbestos in the manufacturing of brake pads. As I stated a few minutes ago, I am proud of our party's commitment over the years to doing all we can to establish and maintain safe roads in Ontario. As such, I am very pleased to see this initiative brought forward today, and I will be supporting it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I did notice it's "Madam Speaker." I rise to support this bill in the full knowledge that something can and has to be done about the use of asbestos. I say that as a person who thinks back about asbestos in my life. I remember that in public school we had a great big piece of asbestos which the science teacher passed from person to person. We peeled little pieces off, we had the wonder

of it, we saw a movie from Thetford Mines and we saw the workers out there mining asbestos. It was one of the proud accomplishments of Canada that we produced more asbestos than anyone else in the world. They showed us the asbestos that was on the pipes and they showed us asbestos all over our school. We looked at it and marvelled at it. It wouldn't burn; we tried to light it with matches and things and it wouldn't burn. We talked about firefighters who used it. Everybody thought that this was a miracle product if ever there was one.

I remember a little later in my life going to work in a factory—I've spoken about it a few times here in the House—called Dunlop's, which produced rubber tires, rubber conveyer belts and tank linings and things. It was located on Queen Street. I worked there many summers as a young man. I did all kinds of work including, during the shutdown, staying behind to do the repairs on what was then a 100-year-old factory. One of my jobs one year was to take all the asbestos off the pipes and put on the new asbestos. We taped it up. We never had any masks. I was even in little confined rooms, tunnels, where we were taking it off. There were no masks; there was nothing. I wasn't afraid of it because I had remembered my public school experience. Nobody was afraid of asbestos. How could you be afraid of asbestos? We didn't know. So I remember doing all of that.

It was a couple of years later, a few years later, that the reports started to come out and talk about the harm of asbestos, and people were dying from asbestosis and lung disease. I remember back particularly to those two experiences, peeling pieces of asbestos and playing with it in public school, and more harmfully, I know for sure, doing all of that work over one summer, taking asbestos piping off the walls.

It wasn't until I went to a union conference and met my colleague from Thetford Mines—his name was Renaud Paquet. He went on to become the national president of the Canada Employment and Immigration Union, at which time I was one of the national vice-presidents. His father died from asbestosis. He lived in Thetford Mines, and talked about how as a young man he had worked there a couple of summers, and the fears that he had about one day contracting that disease and having the same horrible disease that killed his father, and the really horrible death it was—because he couldn't breathe. It was a long, lingering and horrible death. I vowed to change my views, and I did change my views.

Over the years I've seen a whole bunch of things. When I was the mayor of East York and we were tearing down the old building, the old city hall, after a new one had been built, they had men who came in spacesuits to take out the asbestos. They came in spacesuits. I used to just crawl into this space and take it out; they were fully protected so that none of it got on them. They had to put plastic on so that it couldn't even go onto the sidewalks or the roads around.

I know that an attitude has changed, and the attitude that has changed here is a good one. I am going to support this because we have the technology today such

that we don't need what we once considered to be the miracle fibre, something that couldn't burn. For a product like brake pads, the reason it was put in there in the first place was because the brake pads would heat to such an extent, they needed something that wouldn't catch fire, and asbestos was the logical product of the day. But today we have other things. Today we don't need asbestos and today those brake pads ought not to have it.

I'm going to support this bill for other reasons, not only the health reasons, not only for the mechanics, not only for the air that we breathe—because every time someone puts the brakes on in a city like Toronto, if they're using brake pads with asbestos, some will leak into the air.

I was surprised to find out as a mayor, when we had some studies done, about the amount of asbestos in the air in the downtown Toronto core and East York. There was more in our downtown core than one would find anywhere else in pretty much the entire province. The number of cars that were putting on their brakes in Toronto would release a certain amount of asbestos into the air, and we were all breathing minute amounts. Granted, it was small, but we were still breathing those minute amounts because we lived here in Toronto. So for health reasons, I fully support it.

But the last reason I want to support the bill—and no one's really talked about this—is that all of the brake pads that are made in Ontario are asbestos-free. That means that if we develop this standard, when people get their brake pads repaired, then they will have to buy pads that are asbestos-free. And to me, it is only logical to assume and to conclude that the place where the majority of these brake pads will come from is our own jurisdiction.

I am looking forward to this as something that will create jobs here in the province of Ontario. It will no longer be possible for mechanics to use foreign-made brake pads, be they from the United States—and I don't know what their legislation is—or from China or from any other place that has access to asbestos, but they will be pads that are made here, that meet Canadian standards, that meet Ontario standards, that have a number on the side so they can be traced in cases of accidents and that will provide jobs for the people who live here.

We, as New Democrats, believe in a made-in-Ontario policy. I've talked about it in other debates and other things, but this is a small way in which the change in the legislation will force mechanics and others who repair cars to use Canadian-made products that meet the requirements.

I'm not naive enough to think that over the years, other jurisdictions who want to get into the Ontario market won't be forced to mimic us, won't be forced to put markings on the sides and won't be forced to take asbestos out. But in the short term, it will certainly be a boon for Canadian workers, for Canadian manufacturers and for those people who want to get involved in this business.

I will be supporting the bill. It's time that we had the asbestos taken out of the air we breathe, it's time that we

keep mechanics and others who work on linings safe in their jobs, it's time that we took the health concerns seriously and it certainly is long past the time when I, as a much younger person, would play and work with asbestos without fear. We know today what it can do. It is in all of our interests to lessen its impact wherever possible.

I commend the member from Guelph—Guelph—Wellington?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Just Guelph now.

Mr. Michael Prue: Just Guelph now—for bringing this forward, and I would ask that members on all sides of the House consider this on the three aspects: It will help to produce Canadian-made jobs; it will certainly protect those who work in the industry; and thirdly, it will protect the general environment for all of us who live in this great province of Ontario.

1530

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I'll remember “madam” this time. I apologize for previously. I'm getting better.

I'm delighted to speak on Bill 181, from my good friend the member for Guelph. I'm going to talk from a practical standpoint. Maybe some members of the House don't realize, but I was a licensed mechanic. I say “I was” because I failed to renew my licence a number of years ago, probably because I didn't need it or I didn't practise it. This will probably tell you my age as well.

Interjection.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Twenty-nine.

Back in my days of apprenticing to be an auto mechanic at a dealership here in Toronto, we got what they called the dirty jobs as apprentices at that time. A car would come in for a brake inspection, and it was the apprentice who took the wheels and the drums off. Then the mechanic would come over and decide what the car needed.

Back in those days, disc brakes weren't all that popular unless you had a really expensive car; they were mostly drum brakes. What the drum did was encapsulate the brake shoes, and there was a backing plate, so any dust from wear from those asbestos brake shoes would really stay in the drum; it wasn't spread along the road. So when a mechanic would pull off that drum, it was like having a big cloud of dust. Not only did it impact the apprentice or the mechanic, because we used to get either an air hose or a bristle brush and kind of clean things out and make more dust; but the people who would clean up the place afterward would sweep up the stuff, pick it up and dispose of it, and God knows where it went from there.

Back then, one of the things we used to do after one of those brake inspections and replacements—the cure for the dust we inhaled—was to have a nice cold beer to wash out your mouth of all those kinds of things. I'm sure it wasn't an appropriate thing to do, but we didn't know any better.

As we learned that that wasn't a good practice, I'm delighted to see that Ontario, and probably Canada—we realized that asbestos was not the right thing to have in brake shoes, and they now produce asbestos-free product. So they're leaders in that, and that brings me to talk about this. I still tinker, the odd time, with the two or three cars I have. I go to the local auto supply store and pick up parts with no markings on the outside. They're plain, white boxes. I have no idea where these things originated. It's got a part number that an automotive store would identify so that they know what car it fits, but we have no idea where those brake shoes or brake pads or other parts we buy come from, and that worries me.

It's the same as being parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. We all know that Ontario produces the best food and the safest food. Ontario manufacturers produce the safest products, and brake pads are one of them, especially when they removed the asbestos.

I think this has to happen. I support my colleague wholeheartedly. I know my fellow members are going to speak about some of the other technicalities, but I just say that this is long overdue. I know this might not mean a lot to ordinary folk in the street, but it means an awful lot to the health of people who have to work on those cars.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to speak to Bill 181, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to aftermarket brake pad standards and specifications, which has been brought forward by my colleague and friend the member for Guelph. It was introduced for first reading on May 12, just a few weeks ago.

I'm a big supporter of private members' time. I think it's unfortunate that we now have private members' time on Thursday afternoons instead of Thursday mornings, as we used to for so many years. Unfortunately, the turnout on a Thursday afternoon, especially on perhaps the last day that the House sits, isn't quite what it would have been had we been sitting on Thursday morning, but certainly we have many of the quality members here, like the member from Cambridge, who's participating today too. I think it shows the importance of the issue that a number of members have spoken to it this afternoon and are passionately in favour of it.

I'm glad that we do three private members' ballot items now on Thursdays. I trace that back to the Select Committee on Parliamentary Reform and enhancing the role of the private member. There was a report that was tabled in this Legislature in around 2002, I believe, that recommended that we do three private members' ballot items each Thursday instead of two. I think it gives all of us a greater number of opportunities to bring forward important issues that we are informed of, quite typically in our constituency offices, that perhaps otherwise wouldn't be considered by the government. So it's issues like this that need to be brought forward, and this is the vehicle in which we bring them forward.

I would have to say that this is a short bill, certainly; it's one page in length. I would also add that the simpler the private member's bill is, usually the greater the chance of success, quite frankly. When I think back to the private members' ballot items and bills that I've had the privilege to see pass through this Legislature, as well as the ones from other parties, the simpler, the better in terms of these private members' bills and the greater their chance of success.

I would never suggest that the bill is simplistic because it's simple or that the member hadn't thought out the details or that the bill lacked sophistication. I think the member for Guelph knows what I'm saying. I would never say that about her bill. I certainly think that this bill is one that is worthy of support and I will want to support when the vote takes place.

The member has identified the issue of highway safety with respect to Bill 181, and I think she's quite right. Certainly the human cost of accidents as well as the economic cost of accidents is staggering. My colleague the member for Kitchener–Waterloo alluded to that in her comments, and I would agree. When an initiative like this comes forward which is intended to promote highway safety, I think that all of us as members would want to get behind it.

I was quite surprised to learn that there really are no standards right now for aftermarket brake parts. This was brought to my attention as well recently by Rick Jamieson, who is the CEO of ABS Friction in Guelph. He was quoted recently in an article in the *Globe and Mail* in January saying that there are no standards: "We have standards on auto glass that you can replace in a windshield, but we don't have standards on what stops a car," which is amazing to me when you think about the importance of the brakes. I think most of us, when we get in our car, take our brakes for granted. We assume we're going to be able to stop when we apply our foot to the brakes, and we would anticipate that people in this House would be concerned about this if indeed there are no standards. From the comments I've heard so far, it seems that this bill is going to pass, because most people believe that the provincial government should be involved in this.

The health aspects have been raised as an important issue, and the need to remove asbestos from our natural environment is something that I would agree with. I'm aware that there are some brake parts, perhaps imported to this country from other countries, that may not have the same standards and may, in fact, contain asbestos. Of course, that subjects our auto repair mechanics to, I would suggest, an unacceptable risk to their health. I'm aware that there have been some studies with respect to that issue which have identified the need to remove that risk, because asbestos can lead to cancer and other terrible diseases that they shouldn't have to worry about, obviously. That's another good reason to support this particular piece of legislation.

I had the chance and the opportunity a few years ago, I think it was eight or nine years ago, to tour the ABS plant in Guelph when I was the parliamentary assistant to the

Minister of Economic Development, the late Honourable Al Palladini. I had a chance to meet Rick Jamieson at that time and to meet many of his employees, his associates. I'm sure that plant has expanded. A lot has changed in the intervening years. I haven't had the chance to be back in again, but I'm glad to hear that the company is taking advantage of the economic opportunities that still exist in the province of Ontario, in spite of the economic downturn. Obviously we're looking for whatever economic good news we can find these days, and it's exciting to know that a company like this is considering expansion and hiring new workers.

We've experienced considerable job loss in our area, going back to about 2005, I guess, when I first brought forward a resolution in this House calling upon the government to have the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs study the economic competitiveness of our manufacturing industries. Unfortunately, those hearings never took place. I would still argue that had we taken that step in 2005, had a standing committee of the Legislature focused on that issue and had a public discussion about the competitiveness challenges that our manufacturing sector faced, I would submit that we could have come up with a decent action plan as members, in a non-partisan way, that the government could have adopted. I would submit that we could have gone into this economic downturn stronger had we taken those steps and I would suggest that many of the hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs that have been lost—some of them, at least—could have been saved had we taken action before the economic storm hit us the way it did.

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In closing, I want to again congratulate and commend the member for Guelph for bringing forward this particular bill. I hope that the government will adopt it as government legislation. We know we're coming towards the end of a session, it's possible the government will prorogue, but this is a good idea that should be adopted by the government as government policy. I would encourage all members to support it this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I too will be supporting the bill introduced by the member from Guelph.

I was interested in listening to the stories of my colleague from Beaches–East York when he spoke about his connection to asbestos and how they handled and studied asbestos when they were in high school, as if it were a specimen that was harmless, nothing to fear. It's amazing how so many of us have lived through those experiences without knowing. It reminded me of my experience, when I was a young man of 21 or 22, working in a factory for a summer job, and it was an asbestos factory. Knowing nothing about the dangers of asbestos and recollecting that experience, I said to myself, "I wonder if I was wearing a mask at the time? I can't even remember," hoping, as my mind tells it, that I was, but I'm not quite sure.

But even if I was wearing a mask most of the time, I don't think while we had lunch, sitting outside at the receiving end, where things were taken out and received—when we were all sitting there, of course, our mask wouldn't be on; we would be eating without it, and these particles are flying in and out—only to discover about three years ago when I went for some X-rays that they said, "We noticed something," and, "We should do further checks," and it was revealed that I have some asbestos in my system. I've got to tell you, it's frightening. It's quite possible that I might die of something else and not of that. I hope so, because dying of asbestos is a very serious, serious matter.

I remember in the old days where people died of asbestos, and we didn't acknowledge and we didn't pay workers' compensation at the time, because people were dying of asbestos and their claims were denied for many, many years. It was thanks to people like Stephen Lewis, the leader of our party, who raised that issue on a regular basis, year in and year out, that eventually the Workers' Compensation Board had to accept those claims.

So this motion ensuring that all brake pads in Ontario do not contain asbestos is a good one. We comply with that in Canada, so it's the imports that we've got to worry about. But I've got to tell you, we mine asbestos in this country and we send it out to many other countries across the world. Knowing that it kills, we still mine it and send it out, as people who work in it are affected and as people who have to use it in other parts of the world are affected, get sick and die of it.

In my view, if something kills, it should be prohibited. I understand that it creates jobs, but I wouldn't want to work in a place where I knowingly work in an area where this stuff will kill me eventually. I'd prefer to find other work. I'd prefer to find other work even if it didn't pay well enough—even if it didn't. That's an argument that I make.

Yes, it saves lives, it's good for our industry because we comply with the laws, and I think it's a motion worth supporting. I'm sure every other member will support it as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'd like to quickly recap for anyone who's watching, what is Bill 181 about? It's about aftermarket brake pads. More words have already been spoken in this 45-minute debate than the bill actually contains.

So what's the bill about? When the brake pads on your car wear out, you can replace them in one of two ways. You can install original equipment manufacturer, or OEM, as it is called, brake pads. Those are the best-quality brake pads; they are also the most expensive. You, or your mechanic, as your second choice, can install what are called aftermarket brake pads. Aftermarket parts are made by independent or offshore manufacturers, and in the case of brake pads, there are no prescribed standards. Many, for example, contain the substance asbestos.

Now, here's what the bill says: The bill says that if you use brake pads that are not OEM, those brake pads will meet prescribed standards and specifications should the bill be passed, and the bill says that these brake pads will not contain asbestos. That's it. That's all there is to the bill.

I'll talk a little bit about asbestos. Asbestos is actually a very handy substance. It is a terrific insulator; it's a very powerful fire retardant. It's also a very potent carcinogen. If asbestos sticks into your body, it will cause cells to mutate that produce a very aggressive, very nasty, very painful form of cancer. Nobody who manufactures car parts in Ontario uses asbestos any more. But offshore manufacturers do use asbestos. So that means this bill is designed to benefit, in this case, car mechanics. Similar legislation would benefit people who, for example, deal with older buildings and structures where the insulation or the pipe wrap may contain asbestos.

But let's go back to car mechanics. When you step on the brake, your forward motion is slowed by converting a little bit of that forward momentum, the kinetic energy, into friction heat as your brake shoes get hot while your car, your truck or your vehicle slows down. That's all that happens. While the brakes get hot, the insulation rubs off as a very fine powder and adheres to the inside of the brake assembly. If those brake pads contain asbestos, your brake assembly accumulates finely ground asbestos dust. As a mechanic, when you service that car, you run the risk of breathing that fine asbestos dust. If it enters your lungs, it can, as previous speakers have said, cause a very nasty and aggressive cancer called mesothelioma, so-called because it attacks the mesothelial cells that line many of your body's organs—and I'm sure the next speaker will talk about that—causing those cells to mutate into a cancer and multiply rapidly. That's the risk that this bill seeks to reduce: Get asbestos away from vulnerable workers. If you're watching this, you'll probably want to ensure that your brake pads don't contain asbestos.

One of the things that's important about this bill is that it says very clearly—to executives of car part firms, to shop owners and even to consumers who may have never known and hitherto probably never cared—ask what your aftermarket brake pads contain. If they contain asbestos, don't install them. If you are an executive and you're installing cheap, aftermarket brake pads, look at it and see whether or not your shop is installing asbestos parts. You shouldn't be doing this. This is a good bill. Its time has come.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm sure it will come as no surprise to anyone that I will be supporting Bill 181, introduced by our colleague from Guelph.

I'm going to concentrate mostly on the aspect of asbestos. This is a subject that actually makes epidemiologists truly, truly excited, because when you look at the case of asbestos and the harm that it can cause individuals, it is one of those situations where denial has been a

very prominent feature throughout the history of the connection between asbestos and human illness.

It was as early as 1922 that a statistician for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. found that asbestos workers are at risk of injury to the lungs from asbestosis, the sort of chronic, obstructive lung disease that was seen in those days. Of course, there were allusions through the years that this was caused by smoking or not so much by the asbestos, but by 1944, the Journal of the American Medical Association reported that asbestos is one of the agents known or suspected to cause occupational cancer. And from the anecdotes of our colleagues from Beaches–East York and Trinity–Spadina, it's really shocking to hear that both of you were exposed, obviously.

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In 1964, Dr. Irving Selikoff published a study showing specifically that mesothelioma, the type of very aggressive cancer that has already been alluded to, was specifically related to asbestos exposure. This, again, was an epidemiological study that showed multiple areas where causation was proven.

One of the specific situations related to the concentration of asbestos fibres in the air—our colleague from Guelph has alluded to the study done in Seattle showing that, as recently as 2000, automotive mechanics were being exposed to dust where the concentration was up to 64% of the dust where they were actually working.

There have been calls in Canada for a strategy. Dr. Barbara Whyllie, who was the CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society, in July 2007 called for a comprehensive strategy that will lead to Canadians no longer being exposed to asbestos. So how ironic that, in a situation where new cars manufactured in Canada cannot use asbestos in brake pads, they are being used for replacement—clearly something that I think was shocking to many of us as we read the bill that has been presented.

This is an issue that really does affect everyone, as it relates to safety from the type of brake pads that are being used in some cases. As drivers, I think we're all very, very concerned, but clearly the issue related to automotive mechanics is exceptionally important. It is one that must stop, in my view. Exposure is not something that we can countenance, given the very long history and the absolute confirmatory studies that have been done as to the risk to workers from exposure to asbestos.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Guelph has up to two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'd like to thank all those who have spoken: the members for Beaches–East York, Northumberland–Quinte West, Wellington–Halton Hills—Kitchener–Waterloo I missed—Trinity–Spadina, Mississauga–Streetsville and Oak Ridges–Markham. I really appreciate the comments which have been very supportive and the understanding that the members have shown of the problem.

We've been talking a lot about the impact of asbestos, and I was surprised at the number of members who have personal experience with exposure to asbestos in one way or another.

I received an e-mail this morning from Helmuth Slisarenko, who owns a garage in Guelph. If you've ever driven from Aberfoyle up into the city, you will have passed the Brock Road Garage on your way. Helmuth writes:

"Good morning Liz....

"As you know, I have been in the auto repair industry for many years—since 1969 and in those early years inhaled my share of asbestos despite being extremely careful in wetting down brake shoes prior to performing repairs. Thankfully, asbestos seems to have disappeared from locally manufactured parts a number of years ago. The proliferation of 'offshore' parts has brought that practice into question....

"Hopefully, your bill will make it through....

"Thank you again for bringing this to the light of day!"

Just to recap, the bill will say that you cannot have asbestos in brake pads used in Ontario. It will also make sure that the brake pads meet some safety standards. It will not affect Ontario jobs, because Ontario brake manufacturers already meet the standards. In fact, my local manufacturer, ABS, with the recession, is finding more and more people are keeping their old cars and are having to replace the brake parts, and they've actually had to add on a new shift. So this is actually an urgent issue, in the sense that more and more replacement brake pads are out there on the roads.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. This ballot item will be voted on in about 50 minutes.

CONDOMINIUM OWNERS PROTECTION ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PROPRIÉTAIRES DE CONDOMINIUMS

Mr. Marchese moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 186, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to condominiums / Projet de loi 186, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui a trait aux condominiums.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Pursuant to standing order 98, you have up to 12 minutes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I, first of all, would like to thank approximately 15 condominium owners who have come to listen to the debate, and I appreciate the fact that they're here, because this is being debated in the afternoon and they've been here for about an hour and a half already. That speaks to their commitment to seeing changes in the Condominium Act, and it speaks to the concerns they have experienced over the years with their condominiums, in relation to so many problems that they have experienced.

I want to tell you that the first Condominium Act was created in 1972 or so, and the subsequent changes were made in 1998 by mon ami Monsieur Harris. I have to say that the changes that were made in 1998 were not picked

up by anybody. It's as if condominiums didn't exist, literally, because there weren't that many people who complained about problems they were experiencing with their condominiums. There weren't any hearings that I'm aware of, and if there were, they probably were minor. I think we dealt with it in a day or two, if I recall.

What has happened is that we have seen an incredible increase in condominium construction in the last 10 or 11 years, mostly in Toronto, but it has happened as well in Ottawa, in Kitchener-Waterloo; it's happening in Hamilton, I was told by our leader. It's expanding everywhere—London, if I haven't mentioned London. So it has become something to think about and to worry about. In fact, condominiums have replaced rental buildings, where more and more people are renting in a condo as opposed to rental buildings. That's what has happened in the last 10 or 11 years. As a result of that, as we talked to condominium owners, we have picked up on a lot of concerns they have.

Just to quote some of them, "Fair disclosure and standard provisions: The sales office representing the developer did not advise buyers of upcoming construction," says Hannah from Toronto.

"I'm concerned about developers and hidden clauses, and having to sue or fight or pay to get out of contracts that the developers make." That's John Doe, from Ontario.

"We were provided with vague explanations like 'contractual expenses, utilities etc.,'" John from Toronto says.

"After living in my condo for eight months, my condo fees jumped up by over 25%. For a 600-square-foot condo, I pay well over \$300 in condo fees. I can't wait to get out of the condo," Reshma from Toronto says.

These are the kinds of expressions of problems that we have been hearing for a long time. There is much more than this, but I wanted to give you a flavour of what we are hearing from some of the condo owners.

I've got to tell you, 40% of my riding in Trinity-Spadina is made up of condominium owners. There are about 70,000 condominium units in the area of Toronto Centre—my colleague George Smitherman. There are 166,238 condo units in the city of Toronto, which includes Etobicoke, North York and Scarborough. These are facts that we were able to gather in the last couple of days, just to give you a sense of the number of condominium units in parts of Toronto. There are 234,303 condo units in the GTA. The numbers are huge. It's a large community that we need to speak to; there are problems that we need to address.

When I introduced my Bill 185, which had parts of my new bill today but was dealt with a couple of years ago, I remember my friend Gerry Phillips, the chair of cabinet for the Liberal Party, and he said, "Look, we don't have any problems, and the current law addresses the problems that condominium owners have." I said to him in that debate that that is not true, that if a condominium owner has a problem with a developer, they have to go to court. No condominium owner is rich enough to be able to take on a developer. The then Minister of Government Services said, "No, that's not a problem."

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If a condominium owner has a problem with you, a property manager, they've got to deal with it in court. No condominium owner has enough money to be able to go to court to defend himself or herself with a problem that they might be experiencing. Similarly, if you've got a problem with the board, they have to resolve that; if not amicably between themselves, they too have to go to court. There are hundreds and hundreds of problems experienced by condominium owners as it related to many issues of condo living. I said, with my bill in 2007, that we wanted to create a condominium review board that would enforce the Condominium Act, advocate on behalf of condo dwellers, provide info, help condo owners review documentation vis-à-vis declarations and resolve disputes faster than what we have at the moment, affordably, and not have to go to court to deal with it. We need review officers that could solve problems so you don't have to go to court. We feel that this is an affordable measure, an easy measure, that would help a whole lot of condominium owners deal with the problems they experience.

We also wanted standard provisions for declarations, which are transparent and should be transparent, and at the moment they're not. They're in legalese that most of the condo owners cannot understand. They're standard in British Columbia and they're not standard here. Every condominium has different declarations that have to be read by lawyers, and not all condominium owners go to lawyers to read what the declaration says and what their obligations and/or responsibilities might be. You need to spend anywhere from \$3,000 to \$5,000 to be able to get a lawyer to read that for you, and most of them cannot afford to do it. Some do it but most can't. And we also said we should have good-faith disclosure, so that when a developer of a condominium says, "This is what we're going to do," they would have to keep their word from the beginning to the end of the process. That language existed in the old 1972 Condominium Act, but it was resisted by condominium developers, friends of the then Conservative government, and they made sure the good-faith legislation and good-faith disclosure did not exist, did not enter the law.

These are useful things that we want to repeat in the current act that I am presenting today. We want that and additional things that should be covered. In our discussions with condominium owners in the last three years, there have been other issues that have been talked about. My bill would extend coverage to lofts and other dwellings in conversion condos. The problem at the moment is that the warranty program does not extend to conversions. We feel it should. Lawyers believe that it should. Then-Minister Gerry Phillips said that if Tarion agrees, they'll make the changes. But if Tarion—the agency that administers this warranty program—does not agree, then tough luck. The problem is that Tarion since 2007 does not agree that conversions should be covered by a warranty program. As a result, I'm urging the government that it should, and that it should make the

changes and oblige Tarion to provide a warranty for dwellings and conversion condos.

The other matter we speak to is that we want to address Tarion's prolonged process with dealing with complaints. At the moment, we know that it takes a long while to deal with complaints. It should not be the case. It should be speedier and it should be easier for people to bring forth a claim and solve it quickly. We want a realigning of Tarion into a consumer protection agency and removing developers' and builders' majority on Tarion's board of directors agency. The Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act lets Tarion determine the makeup of the 12-member board. There is no expressed requirement that the board have fair representation of homeowners' consumer advocates. Instead, developers dominate the board. The current makeup of the board reflects how Tarion's mandate does not stipulate that it is a consumer protection agency. It should be. So my bill makes that possible.

Another change: We want to allow the reserve fund to be used for replacement of common elements following reasonable wear and tear and installation of renewable energy. Condo owners and boards are expressing loudly that they want to green their buildings via retrofitting, installing solar panels, solar water heaters, linking to deep lake water cooling. A frequently cited obstacle to going green is the cost. The proposed amendment removes this obstacle.

Further, closing a loophole that allows the board to implement pricey major alterations to common elements without protection of the owner: We believe that's something that needs to be changed in order to allow board members, condo owners, a voice, and not bypass the condo owners when pricey renovations have to be made.

Ensuring that the condo review board is composed of condo consumer advocates and not developers and their representatives is another change that we make, including, we say, correcting the misuse of proxies. At the moment we have the right of a person to go door to door gathering proxies, which has generated more controversy than you might imagine. You have people who have gone door to door where they've signed two or more proxies that actually contradict each other, or have signed proxies based on false and incomplete information.

These are some of the major changes I wanted to speak to. I know that I will have the two minutes' remarks and hopefully some other time to be able to make other suggestions about condo changes that we feel are timely. Condo owners are looking to the government to either pass my bill or pass their own and make these changes today, not in the next 20 years.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: I'm glad to stand today and speak about this very important piece of legislation. First, I wanted to say thank you to the member from Trinity-Spadina. I always enjoy listening to him; I think the whole House enjoys listening to him.

This is a very important debate, and I am very pleased to be a part of it. I know that we can all agree on the importance of ensuring that condominium buyers are protected. Protecting condominium buyers means protecting consumers and strengthening their confidence in the condominium marketplace. This is exactly what we have done in the current Condominium Act, 1998. In fact, the current act does provide for more consumer protections than what Bill 186 offers as an alternative.

Recently I had the privilege to attend and participate in the Canadian Condominium Institute's Golden Horseshoe Chapter conference. It took place in the great city of Hamilton just this past month. During this conference I learned a great deal about the state of the condominium industry, including their issues and their concerns. In fact, certain experts who were discussing our current legislation at the conference spoke very highly of it, especially when it was compared to other jurisdictions.

The Condominium Act was described by one expert as the most complete and progressive act in North America. Our current new condominium and home warranty legislation, which provides consumer protections, is not available in all other provinces. We have a 10-day cooling-off period which follows a purchase agreement. Ontarians who purchase condominiums must be provided with a comprehensive disclosure by developers, and any material change to this statement allows the purchaser the ability to cancel a sales agreement.

In addition, we introduced a new delayed-closing regulation which came into effect on July 1, 2008. This regulation provides more disclosure, increasing compensation and clarity to new homebuyers whose homes are not completed on time.

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While Bill 186 was introduced in good faith, in many cases its proposals are already covered through the current act or through our legal system. Just as an example, the duty-of-fair-dealing clause proposed in this bill is already a recognized concept throughout our courts. In addition, the specifics of the proposed review board are not clear. It adds an unnecessary layer of dispute resolution where there are existing provisions already in this current act.

Our government has made significant headway in regulating and supporting the condominium industry here in Ontario. I believe that this legislation would unnecessarily replicate many parts of our current legislation and not offer increased protection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently to the member from Hamilton Mountain, but I find that I must disagree. It would appear to me very likely that the people in condominiums do not have the kind of authority that they require in order to have a livable place in which to live and in order to function. Part of the problem is that people who live in condominiums, through their boards, through the agencies, through how the whole thing operates, find themselves to be relatively powerless.

They are powerless against the developers and the builders because the developers and builders have big money when it comes to moving into the building, if things aren't right; they are powerless when things happen to them that are beyond their control.

I want to talk about the circumstances of the condominium owners who live at 3640 and 3650 Kingston Road in the riding of the Minister of Health Promotion. Those people who live in those condominiums, the twin buildings, have not been able to go back home since March 6. They have not been able to go into their homes. There was a transformer malfunction, an explosion and fire, and they have found themselves literally on the streets. They can't go home. Even those who have insurance—and most of them had some form of insurance for their condominium property—found that the insurance did not cover them when they could not go back after 12 days. So after 12 days, those people in the condominiums have been forced to stay with friends, with relatives, wherever they can because the insurance monies ran out; they could no longer stay in the hotels. Those who were destitute, those who did not have insurance, have been taken in by the city of Toronto, and they continue to live in Howard Johnsons and other local hotels.

The condominium people have been trying, through their board, to take the necessary action, but they found that they can't because the dispute resolution that they have to follow is a long and arduous one that takes them through the courts. Taking it through the courts, literally, will take months and/or years.

What my colleague from Trinity-Spadina is attempting to do, first and foremost, is to have a resolution mechanism so that ordinary people can have a resolution through a place other than the courts, so they can have a resolution and an opportunity for places other than hiring lawyers, going after condominium developers and the people who manage the condominiums.

It seems to me that whenever you empower people over their own property, they will, by and large, do the right things. I don't know where the member from Hamilton Mountain is coming from with her argument, but the condominium people with whom I have spoken want these additional powers. They do not consider what Mr. Marchese is putting forward in his bill lessened powers; they consider them additional powers. The powers he's talking about are not only about the resolution of dispute but the misusing of proxy instruments to make sure that when there are votes taking place on boards of directors or to have undertakings done within the properties, the instruments are used in an appropriate manner. That needs to be tightened up, because people are obtaining proxies, in some events, that are not correct with the law, and people, after having given a proxy and finding out how the vote went, sometimes are angry and sometimes think that their proxy was misused. We need to tighten those instruments to make sure they're used correctly.

He's talking about access to reserve funds, because right now, the reserve funds that are held in con-

dominiums can only be used for repairs. He wants the access to be used for renewable energy. Think about condominiums, especially large ones, that want to put solar water heaters on the roof. That is the technology that has come of age, that can actually be done for less cost than natural gas boilers. They can't use their reserve funds for renewable energy. His bill wants to use that, wants to have it incorporated that the condominium corporation can access the reserve funds to use them for renewable energy, which, after all, will not only benefit the people in the building and reduce their costs, but will benefit all of us and our environment.

In his bill, he also wants to talk about noise protection standards, which currently do not exist. I don't know what the 1998 bill says on that. Quite frankly, I don't think it says anything. The member from Hamilton Mountain can elucidate; she can tell me. After I sit down, I can't speak and she can't either. But if she can convince me that there is something in the current bill that speaks to that the same way that Mr. Marchese's bill is for noise protection standards, then I will listen.

Having said that, it seems to me that the bill he is proposing is one that will strengthen the power of ordinary people, who, after all, are trying to look after their number one asset, which is their home, a home in which most of them have invested their life savings, a home in which they want to have some control, and a home which they occasionally have to desperately fight to keep, against forces that are not well understood.

I live in a house. I don't live in a condominium. But I do know that those of my friends and colleagues who live in condominiums have a different set of conditions with which they must deal, a different set of variables, issues that I don't have. I have only the power over my own home, but I don't have anyone else telling me how to operate it or how to operate a common area.

They need to be individually empowered. They need to collectively be empowered. They need to be able to take it to resolutions, other than the courts, that don't cost inordinate amounts of money in order to resolve that.

I am going to support Mr. Marchese's bill, because whenever you can empower ordinary people, they will do the right thing. I commend him for bringing it forward, and I will support it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Mario Sergio: I compliment the member from Trinity-Spadina, because I know that he has put a lot of effort into bringing this bill for debate today. I also know that he has very good intentions of dealing with some of the issues that are very problematic within the Condominium Act.

The real problem is in the existing format, with how condominiums are organized. We have boards of directors that do not get along with the owners; boards of directors that do not get along with management; owners that do not get along with management. This is the main problem with the existing corporations. The others can all be adjusted, but once you have an appointed or elected

board of directors, to try to remove those members is very problematic for owners of that corporation.

The bill requests that many things be done. The first one that I really have a problem with is to access the reserve fund to create projects of improvement with respect to energy efficiency or new technology.

I have to say that 80% of the corporations have problems with their existing boards, with the existing management, and to try to deal, as an owner, with those groups is a very serious problem. If you give the power to a management corporation to take away the funds in the reserve fund, you're going to have a major, major problem on your hands. Reserve funds are to be used exclusively for repairs or replacement of the common elements, to maintain the building in good condition, and if you wish to use fresh, new technology, then at the worst they should be levying a particular levy specifically to do that particular event, without interfering with the reserve funds.

1620

Establish a review board to provide information to corporation owners and assist in the resolution of disputes and strike out the existing "Superior Court of Justice": If we were to do some of these things, I think our condominium owners would be in a sea of very severe, horrendous problems.

One that I also find a very severe difficulty is amending the object of the corporation. They would be serving as a consumer protection agency—and by this, I'm speaking to amending the new home warranty program. My goodness, they have more on their hands than you can shake your stick at. As a new home warranty program, they will never be what you call a consumer protection agency. I would hope that at the least, they would be doing their job and providing the services that they are supposed to, as a new home warranty program.

Change the composition of the board so that at least half of the directors have experience in consumer protection—give me a break—and advocacy and at least two of the directors must have experience in representing homeowners. What kind of experience are we asking of these people here? All of the board of directors are volunteer people. And some of the board of directors, the good ones, because of the problems that exist, they want out. So only the bad ones continue to manage and represent the board of directors.

I think there is one that I have very severe problems with: "The review board shall submit an annual report ... to the minister, who shall submit the report to the Lieutenant Governor," who in turn should submit it to Parliament, if in session, and if it's not in session, in the next session.

My time is up, but I have to say to the member, thank you for bringing this forth, and I hope that something good will come out of this. But this is not the way to do it, because it will create more problems for condominium owners, corporations and management. At the same time, Rosario, I wish you well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm pleased to support this legislation, entitled Bill 186, the Condominium Owners Protection Act. This is a very important bill. If you're looking to buy your first home in Toronto in particular, chances are you probably will end up looking to buy a condo or, if you are going to be downsizing, you probably also will be looking for a condo.

According to a CBC Marketplace investigation, however, buying any condo is fraught with risk, and many homebuyers are surprised to learn that the beautiful rooms they see in a model suite are not necessarily like the ones they will live in once their building is complete. I believe that the member from Trinity-Spadina has brought this bill forward to address those types of concerns.

He has stated, "The condo act should require standard provisions for disclosure materials and the declarations that govern condominium corporations.... Declarations should look like each other and not be uniquely drafted and distorted. After all, condo owners are consumers and they must be able to read what they are buying in very plain and simple language.

"Developers should have to deliver what they promise and provide purchasers with clear, fair disclosure." I agree with the member from Trinity-Spadina. I also am opposed to any hidden clauses.

This bill would amend the Condominium Act, 1998, to require that every declaration contain the standard provisions set out in the regulation. A duty of fair dealing would also be imposed on all declarants and condominium corporations in their dealings with owners and purchasers of condominium units. Obviously, when you buy a condominium, there are problems. One is noise, and I think the member has tried to address this through his bill.

"The bill" would also amend "the act to permit a corporation to access its reserve fund for the purposes of installing renewable energy and other energy-efficient technologies and replacing common elements following reasonable wear and tear," and I agree with this provision of the bill in spirit. My only reservation would be if this amendment were to increase monthly condominium fees. As we know, these fees are already costing homeowners a considerable amount of money every month. However, as a former Minister of the Environment, I agree that we need to do what we can to protect our environment, so if a building needs to be fixed or upgraded, then hopefully the homeowners would have an opportunity to make a choice about using more energy-efficient technologies.

There is a concern, when you take a look moving forward, about purchasing condominiums, and that's the impact that the harmonization of the PST and the GST could have. We understand it could add over \$2,000 to the cost of a real estate transaction, and that's going to hurt people who are buying not just condos, but any properties, and certainly it was not the best time for the government to be introducing this harmonized tax, when we're in the midst of an economic downturn. I think we need to recognize that condo owners and condo buyers

could well see increased costs as they close their new condo.

I just want to quote from the Ontario Home Builders' Association, who say, "Harmonization is a jobs killer for residential construction." We certainly hope that the government will reconsider their harmonization initiative.

I'm going to conclude simply by saying that—you know what?—it's a good thing we're seeing more condos. It certainly allows us to fill in. I'm going to support the bill that the member from Trinity-Spadina has put forward.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm privileged and honoured to enter the debate on Bill 186. I listened carefully to the member from Trinity-Spadina and many others who spoke before me.

It's an important subject, an important topic, because I know a lot of people live in condominiums in my riding of London-Fanshawe. When the people buy, they think they can save some money, because, as you know, people who are getting old or have limited resources move from a house and they move to a condominium. They think they're going to save some money. What happens is most of the time they sign a contract and they're going to pay \$150, and they discover, after they said to them it was \$150, it becomes \$200, \$300 and sometimes \$400. Most of the time when they go to fix something outside, they say to them, "Why are you fixing it?" Well, they fix it. They have no other choice.

One person I know who lives in a condominium has limited resources, and the condominium authority or the corporation decided to change all the windows and the doors from outside and change the roof. It cost him \$10,000, and he doesn't have the money to pay it. Basically, what they did is, they forced him to pay on a monthly basis; otherwise, they could take his condominium.

I think we're due to open the subject and talk about it openly and try to reform it to protect the consumer, to protect the buyers and to protect the people with limited resources.

I want to say it's important to note when we talk about the act of 1989, I believe, that back then, as the member from Trinity-Spadina knows, not many people used to live in a condominium. It wasn't an issue. People used to live in houses. But now, as I mentioned, people are getting old; people have limited resources. They're moving out and they're going to a condominium, because they don't want to remove the snow or look after the lawn or many different things.

They think if they move to those condominiums, they get some kind of service, but as a matter of fact, some of the people who look after those condominiums—I'm not talking about everyone—are corrupt. They have a lot of people they're working with. They have some kind of contract. They get rebates. They get kickbacks if they change the windows, the doors, the lawn, the snow removal, the garbage. All of this stuff is subject to

investigation. It's important. I think we're obligated, as elected officials in this place, to stand up for the poor people, for the people who have limited resources.

As I mentioned, member from Trinity–Spadina, they have the right to go hire a lawyer, but who can afford it? Who can afford it? Nobody can afford it. A few people can afford it, but if they want to say something at the board meeting, you know what? Nobody listens to them.

1630

It happened to my brother. He went to the board and he told them, "I don't want to change this. How come you forced me to change it?" They said, "The majority of the people voted to change so you have no other choice except to accept it; otherwise you have to leave and pay what we said you have to pay."

Most of the people who live in those condominiums have no idea about the laws and the regulations. They come in good will and good intention to buy a place and to live, they and their families, with comfort, without any extra obligations, because they're being told by real estate agents, "You're only going to pay \$100 or \$150," but they discover, after the ad is up, that because of the small print at the bottom of the contract, they have to pay \$200 or \$300 more, and then they put themselves and their family in jeopardy.

I think this act should be discussed more, should be reopened to protect the vulnerable people who live in this province of Ontario. As you know, Madam Speaker, the majority of Ontarians right now live in condominiums. I live in a condominium in his riding, Trinity–Spadina. Do you know what? I don't know other condominiums, but I know it's very, very difficult to get service.

I think it's a very important subject. We should open it up and we should discuss it for the sake of the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

The member from Trinity–Spadina has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I have two minutes plus additional time—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes; thank you very much.

I appreciate the comments made by all the members and I particularly appreciate the comments made by the member from London–Fanshawe, because he is talking about his own personal experience. When people speak sincerely about their own problems, they're able to address problems rather than pretending that we have solved them. That's the reality I believe we need to talk about: The bill needs to be changed. We heard through the grapevine that the government was undertaking discussions, but I'm not quite sure whether these discussions have happened or are actually going anywhere. So the point I make is, have your discussion; pass or defeat my bill; I don't care what you do, as long as you open up the debate on the Condominium Act, because it needs changes.

The member from York South raises quite a number of issues, actually, and it surprises me. I'm wondering whether he speaks from his own experience or from the notes that have been written for him. My sense is that the notes have been written for him by the ministry, and I'll tell you why: When he says, for example, that the warranty program should not cover conversions, I say to myself: Why not? "Give me a break" is his language; they already have enough work to do. I don't understand that. What does it mean that they have enough work to do? If conversions are not covered, that's an unfair practice to those people who are moving into condominiums that have been converted and don't have a warranty. Isn't that unfair and shouldn't they be covered? The argument that, "Oh, we have too much work to do; we can't worry about these other people," is just a false argument.

He then says that the review board would strike out, if I remember his language, the courts. My bill does not do that. My bill allows for people to still go to the court system if they want to, but it does not exclude the courts. What it does do is permit the review board to hire review officers, who would be able to settle disputes and arbitrate problems between a board and a condominium owner, a condominium owner and a developer, and a condominium owner and others. You have the option to go to court if you've got deep pockets, but if you don't, somebody else would solve them. What's wrong with that suggestion?

If he says that this is not the way to do it, what is the way to do it? I am proposing a bill that recommends changes. If he has another bill, bring it forth. But if he doesn't have another bill for me to debate, then he should be urging his minister to bring forth changes.

He talks about Tarion. "They're volunteers," he says. "Give me a break"—he used that language again. "Give me a break; they're volunteers." I'm sorry; the majority of Tarion board members are developers, and they represent the developers' interests. We know this for a fact. All I'm saying is that we should have people on that board who are expressing the opinions of consumers and of condo owners. They should have the ability to represent condo owners, to be able to say, "We are on your side." Isn't that what Tarion should be able to do, as opposed to representing—who? And if it's representing developers, is that a fair deal? I say to him it isn't. So he's got objections. Fine, but let's take it to committee and debate these changes. If you don't like it, oppose it, and if you don't like what I'm suggesting, bring your own changes. The fact of the matter is that the government is doing absolutely nothing vis-à-vis amending the Condominium Act. They do not have a voice at the moment; they don't. Tenants have a voice. Landlords have a voice. They have a tribunal to which they can bring disputes. Condominium owners have nowhere to go except the courts, and they're alone with their problems. It's just not fair, as the member from London–Fanshawe said, in terms of what a condominium owner has to face.

So I'm saying, bring it to committee, debate it. If you don't like the bill, change it. If you want to bring your own, bring it forth. But tell these condominium owners that you're willing to listen and you're willing to make changes to the Condominium Act because the time is right. It's been 11 years since those changes were made, and we need changes. They need them today, not in the next 10 years.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Trinity–Spadina still has two minutes, if he would like to use them.

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Colle: Point of order: He sat down.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): It's okay?

Mr. Mike Colle: He relinquished his time.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): A point of order from the member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: I don't care. On a point of order, Madam Chair: I don't mind if he gets two minutes, but the rule is that once you sit down, you're down. You can't get up again.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Yes, the member from Trinity–Spadina has an extra two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And Mike is my friend, by the way, but he speaks to the rules only.

Interjection: Rules are rules.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Rules are rules; I absolutely agree with that. We should add the two minutes next time instead of confusing the Speaker, thinking that two minutes have been added and one doesn't know.

I urge condominium owners here and who are watching—the government only responds to political pressure. It doesn't matter which party is there. It doesn't matter which party is in power; we only respond to political pressure. Rare is the government that does the right thing because they believe it's the right thing to do. Rare is that government.

Mr. David Zimmer: Right here.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, yeah, right here. Where is it again?

Mr. David Zimmer: Right here.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Right here in the rump, as opposed to the other side.

I urge those who are condominium owners to put pressure on the Premier, to put pressure on the minister, because this is the only way they're going to respond. They actually believe that the current act protects you and that you have your voice. They actually say that. They said it two years ago and, I presume, since no speaker has spoken on this matter today, that is still the case.

I want people to write letters to the Premier. If we get enough people, if we get enough people from my adjoining riding, from the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, George Smitherman, if we can get enough people from that riding to lobby him, if we can get

enough people to lobby everyone that is a Liberal backbencher to understand that this is serious, then they will listen to you. It's not about me. It's about giving rights to condominium owners. The member from London–Fanshawe spoke on behalf of many like him who understand condominium problems and condominium issues, and he too says we should be addressing it, not because it's me introducing it but because it's an issue that needs to be addressed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The time for private members' public business has expired.

PENSION PLANS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): We'll deal first with ballot item number 100, standing in the name of Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Wilson has moved private member's notice of motion number 100.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? All those in favour will please say "aye."

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

In my opinion, the nays have it. The motion is defeated.

Motion negatived.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (AFTERMARKET BRAKE PAD STANDARDS), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (NORMES RELATIVES AUX PLAQUETTES DE FREIN DE RECHANGE)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): We will move to the next ballot item. That's private member's Bill 181, dealing with aftermarket brake pads, put forward by Ms. Sandals. Is it the pleasure of the House that this bill carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. The bill has passed.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Would the member like to refer the bill to a committee?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I would like to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Is it the pleasure of the House that it be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government? Agreed.

CONDOMINIUM OWNERS PROTECTION ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PROPRIÉTAIRES DE CONDOMINIUMS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Finally, private member's Bill 186, the Condominium Owners

Protection Act, put forward by Mr. Marchese. Is it the pleasure of the House that this bill pass?

If so, say—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Wait, wait. All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Is it the pleasure of the member to put that forward to a committee?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'd like to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, please.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Orders of the day? No further business?

Could I have a motion for adjournment?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: As I wish everyone in this House a very lovely and restful summer, I'd like to call for adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Is it the pleasure of the House that that motion carry?

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

Anybody opposed, please say “nay.”

I'd like to add my voice to the government House leader's and wish everyone a wonderful summer.

This House now stands adjourned until September 14 at 9 in the morning.

The House adjourned at 1642.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Broten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Bryant, Michael (LIB)	St. Paul's	
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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
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Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
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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	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
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	
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
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 Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique 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
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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
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Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

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Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
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Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
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	
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 Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire 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	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
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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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Bob Delaney
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat
Phil McNeely, Yasir Naqvi
John O'Toole
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 Aggelonitis, 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: Jim Brownell
Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell
Linda Jeffrey, Kuldip Kular
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
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**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
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Michael A. Brown, Howard Hampton
Rick Johnson, Lisa MacLeod
Gerry Martiniuk, Julia Munro
David Ramsay, Lou Rinaldi
Liz Sandals
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
Dave Levac, Reza Moridi
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
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Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Sylvia Jones
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio
Peter Tabuns
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des comptes publics**

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Laura Albanese, France Gélinas
Ernie Hardeman, 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**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
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Rick Johnson, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht
Mario Sergio
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**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Laurel C. Broten, Kim Craitor
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Helena Jaczek, Shafiq Qaadri
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman
Elizabeth Witmer
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

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
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