



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 40th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 40^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 23 February 2012

Jeudi 23 février 2012

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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Deborah Deller

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



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 23 February 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 23 février 2012

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

MEMBER FOR LANARK–FRONTENAC–
LENNOX AND ADDINGTON

Hon. James J. Bradley: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent that the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington may speak and vote from his place while seated.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We've been asked for unanimous consent for the member to remain seated during his presentations. Do we have agreement? Agreed.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. James J. Bradley: I have a motion; I think we have unanimous consent to present this motion from the opposition parties—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we have unanimous consent to present the motion? Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. James J. Bradley: When I move the motion, I have to read a lot of names. Remember, this is the first time I have read all the names, so if you think you have a hard time, Mr. Speaker, we'll see how I make out.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Jim Wilson's willing to assist.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I can say Wilson. I'm used to saying that one.

Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move government notice of motion 17, and that up to 30 minutes be allotted to debate on the motion, divided equally among the recognized parties, at the end of which time the Speaker shall put the question without amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is there consent for the motion to be put? Agreed.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 108 and pursuant to standing order 113, the following standing committees be appointed and that the membership of these committees be as follows:

The Standing Committee on Estimates: Kim Craitor, Grant Crack, Vic Dhillon, Mario Sergio, Rob Leone, Rick Nicholls, Michael Harris, Michael Prue, Taras Natyshak;

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs: Bob Delaney, Yasir Naqvi, Teresa Piruzza, Soo Wong, Peter Shurman, Monte McNaughton, Vic Fedeli, Michael Prue, Cindy Forster;

The Standing Committee on General Government: David Oraziotti, Michael Coteau, Joe Dickson, David

Zimmer, Laurie Scott, Jeff Yurek, Todd Smith, Rosario Marchese, Sarah Campbell;

The Standing Committee on Government Agencies: Bill Mauro, Donna Cansfield, Helena Jaczek, Phil McNeely, Jim McDonell, Lisa Thompson, Randy Pettapiece, Peter Tabuns, Monique Taylor;

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy: Laura Albanese, Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle, Shafiq Qaadri, Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren, Rob Milligan, Paul Miller, Teresa Armstrong;

The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly: Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon, Donna Cansfield, Jeff Leal, Garfield Dunlop, Lisa MacLeod, Steve Clark, Gilles Bisson, Jonah Schein;

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Phil McNeely, Reza Moridi, Liz Sandals, David Zimmer, Norm Miller, Toby Barrett, Jerry Ouellette, France Gélinas, Jagmeet Singh;

The Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills: Michael Coteau, Grant Crack, Vic Dhillon, Mario Sergio, Randy Hillier, Rod Jackson, Bill Walker, Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof;

Standing Committee on Social Policy: Dipika Damerla, Kevin Flynn, Amrit Mangat, Tracy MacCharles, Ernie Hardeman, Ted Chudleigh, Jane McKenna, Cheri DiNovo, Michael Mantha; and

That, except for its responsibilities set out in standing order 111(b), the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly shall consider no other business prior to the completion of a study and the tabling of a report on the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario; and

That, notwithstanding any standing order, no government bill shall be referred to the Standing Committee on Estimates or to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts; and

That, the terms of this motion shall terminate on the day before the first day of the 2012 fall meeting period."

I'm pleased today to stand, on behalf of the government, having gone through that. I think the members of the Legislative Assembly will know when you are actually reading names from a list, they probably end up having a hard time saying "Yakabuski," who is sitting across from me, let alone others, but of course he has been here in this House, and I had the opportunity to serve with his father—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister, we have to complete the motion.

Is it the favour of the House that the motion carry?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, you're getting ahead of yourself.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Bradley has moved motion number 17, and now we will enter into debate.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Do not delete the name "Yakabuski" from the record. He is here this morning, so his constituents know. He's sitting right across from me trying to throw me off, but he's sitting across from me nevertheless.

I'm pleased to speak on behalf of the government. This morning, I think the members of the assembly will say, "At long last," to establishing this Legislature's nine standing committees. For those who follow the ins and outs of this place, they will know that the three parties have been at, shall we say, something of an impasse—I think might be what we might use—for the past several months over committees, each with an interest in seeing the committees work as well as possible.

I won't go into the details of the impasse. They are details that could leave even the most learned political expert confused. Even my friend Mr. Kormos, who was a previous House leader here, might have struggled on some days with the intricacies of this issue. He is gone from this place, but his spirit revolves somewhere in the building, I think, even though the present member, Ms. Forster, I think, even though the present member, Ms. Forster, is doing a marvellous job for her constituents. His memory will fade at some point in time; don't worry. There are those who might—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That'll be in the leaflet, Jim.

Hon. James J. Bradley: That's always dangerous. The interjection was that whenever you say something good about a member of the opposition, it can appear in an election leaflet saying what a good job the person is doing, or in a constituency newsletter.

It says here that there are those who might stand in their place and point out that the agreement we've reached is nearly identical to the agreement the government first put on the table three months ago. I know Mr. Yakabuski was noting that as he walked in this morning.

0910

Now, such a person would say that the opposition has at long last agreed to follow the rules of the House. I wouldn't say that, of course, because that's not really what happened. But the rules say two important things: (1) committees can have no more than nine members; and (2) committee membership must be in proportion to the representation of the parties in the House. I know that that is reflected in this particular motion.

I will say this, however: All of us in this House, I think, have an opportunity at this time. It's an opportunity to make this House and its committees work in a way they haven't in a long time—may I explain briefly for, perhaps, those who might be watching at this time or new members of the House?

My experience has been, particularly in a majority government, that the committees are pretty perfunctory. In other words, the government members tend to pursue the government line and vote with the government, as the

whip says, and the opposition members do the same. There are a lot of windy exchanges, but not necessarily a lot happens, although I think there has been some good work done, particularly by members who have been here a longer time; I would say particularly with, I think, select committees, we've seen some good work done.

What happens in a minority Parliament, in essence, is that the government has to be more responsive to the opposition because the government doesn't have a majority of the votes. The opposition, it means, has to be more responsive. I mean, when I was in opposition, it was easy just to oppose everything the government did because there weren't consequences to that. Today, we have to try to develop a consensus. It's not going to happen on every bill or every motion, but what I think is going to be better about this kind of Parliament, this minority Parliament—if there are good things about minority Parliaments—is you try to develop that consensus and you recognize, in government, that not all the good ideas reside on the government side.

I've even got a couple of things I've said to the opposition members. My critic, for instance—we've got a bill we'd like to present sometime in the session on the Great Lakes and the protection of the Great Lakes. So I phoned both the opposition critics and said, "Do you have any good ideas on this that we should include in it?" I think that kind of across-the-aisle opportunity should be followed as often as possible, because there are some good ideas from members of this House and I'd like to see us be able to work together.

There are still going to be partisan clashes. That's part of the place; we understand that. But I think there's a good opportunity to make the House work, and I know that Mr. Yakabuski is the one who will lead that particular charge.

Mr. Jeff Leal: He's always been a voice of moderation.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Always a voice of moderation. I like hearing that.

So whether it's a government bill or private members' legislation, or perhaps an idea to study a public policy item that is in dire need of review, we're going to have to work together to make this happen. That is why I think it was good advice that former Premier Bill Davis provided to Premier McGuinty back in the fall, when he suggested that we set up a parliamentary working group. I think it was a good move when Premier McGuinty moved ahead with that particular idea suggested by Premier Davis.

For those who don't know, every week when the House is sitting and every two weeks during the inter-session, four members of each party get around a table and talk about how we can work together in the best interests of Ontarians. As a member of that group, I can tell you that slowly but surely, we're finding some common ground. Sometimes the common ground is on minor items, such as ensuring the government provides more information and technical briefings to the opposition before legislation is introduced, but there are more significant items on the table as well. For example, we're currently

working to set up a process for the reconciliation of two anti-bullying bills before this House, one from the Liberal government and one from a Conservative member. I'm optimistic, and the fact that we are here today establishing committees gives us that much more reason to be optimistic.

I say in the period of time that I have remaining that I know many of the members of the House, except for the new ones; but the longer-serving members. This is my 35th year in the House now, and I have met a lot of people over the years. I think we can actually make this work, and I like the kind of dialogue we're going to see.

Listen, in question period, it's going to be the cut and thrust, the usual. There may even be the odd partisan speech. But I am confident that the opposition will have a better opportunity to hold the government accountable, and that's positive from a public policy point of view. But I'm also optimistic that the opposition is going to want to play a role in actually seeing legislation moulded and changed in the right way. I mean, if the government comes in with bills that are clearly going to be unacceptable to the opposition, I can tell you what my expectation would be.

However, one of the dangers in this situation is that we could get into gridlock. The government is the government. Whether people around the province like it or not, the government is the government, so we'll have to pursue things, particularly in the situation we find ourselves in today, where I think people are looking for somewhat urgent action. They know there are extremely important issues confronting the province and so they are going to be looking out there—I think the people who are watching today, the people we talk to on a daily basis—for that consensus that we don't see, frankly, south of the border.

I think it's absolutely appalling, watching particularly the Congress of the United States at the present time and the hyperpartisanship that's taking place there. I don't think people want to see that duplication here and I don't think it's necessarily going to have to happen.

I know it's a different Parliament. People have pointed to the Davis government of 1977 to 1981, and I remember that very well. It worked exceedingly well, again, because the government was responsive and the opposition responsible. My assessment is that there was a much less partisan House. The ideological division was not nearly as great in those days as it is today. Many of the people who sat in that House could have sat in any one of the three parties at that particular time, and there was much collegiality that took place. Perhaps because of the days of the sitting of the House or whatever circumstances, there was much collegiality that took place. That is not the situation today.

So I don't think we can say that we can absolutely duplicate what happened from 1977 to 1981. There were different personalities, different ideological bents.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You were younger then.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I was here with Yakabuski's father at that time, Mr. Yakabuski's father, who was a much more agreeable person, in many ways, to those

things happening. I was actually here with Norm Miller's father as well, and David Caplan's mother. There are a lot of people I was here with whose sons and daughters are here today.

But I'm looking forward to it. You know, a lot of people say, "Well, aren't you grinding your teeth at the fact that the opposition has more people than the government?" And I say, "I'm not grinding my teeth over that, because I know the personalities and I'm confident that we can make this Legislature work."

Listen, if I talk to the public, that's exactly what they want to see, and knowing the personalities in this House, I'm very confident that this committee structure will work in such a way as it will benefit the people of this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson: The Progressive Conservative Party caucus, under the leadership of Tim Hudak, is also committed to making this Legislature work. That is why the Progressive Conservatives worked tirelessly alongside the NDP and with the government to form a new set of committee structures. For the first time in decades, the opposition will have a combined majority on legislative committees, which is indicative of the current makeup of this House.

Did we get everything we wanted in negotiations? No. Did the NDP and the government get everything they wanted? No. But through negotiation, compromise and hard work, our caucus is prepared to support this motion to form the standing committees of this legislative session. Ontarians can rest assured that Her Majesty's loyal opposition, under the leadership of Tim Hudak, will do its job to hold this government accountable in committees, improve government and private members' legislation in committee, and work hard to study and change the standing orders of this House to ensure that it works better for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my House leader colleagues from the government side and the third party, and all the respective House officers and staff who helped to make this motion come to fruition. Thank you very much.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I asked that this particular motion be tabled in this manner, rather than doing unanimous consent, for a couple of reasons. One was, I thought it was important that we actually are very clear about the motion, when it comes to the table, that we're dealing with the motion we actually negotiated. But the bigger issue is that I thought it was important to put on the record how we got here, and I think that's fairly important.

0920

First of all, let's recognize what happened. There was an election on October 6, and the result of that election brought a minority Parliament for the first time since 1985. There are only two members in this assembly who

sat in minority Parliaments: Mr. Bradley is one and Mr. Kwinter is the other. This is new territory for many of us—the majority of us—who, like myself, have been here for 22 years but never sat in a minority Parliament. I think everybody has to try to find a way to adjust.

What was clear in my mind was that when the government, after October 7, was out speaking to the media in regards to where they were going, it was clear that they were trying to copy the Harper minority style to the Ontario Legislature. The comment that I made to many of those in the media of the day who asked me is that you can't compare the federal House to the provincial Legislature. They are two different beasts, as you might say. The federal House, at the time, had more than three parties. At one time, they had as many as five parties, but they had three opposition parties to a government. You're talking about a Legislature that is three times the size of this one when it comes to membership, and a committee structure—this is the point—that is very, very different to the committee structure that we have here in Ontario.

What a lot of people didn't recognize is that the committee structure federally essentially is controlled, even in a minority, to a certain extent by the government because of the way the rules are written. But in Ontario, our legislative committees are structured in a very different way because we are trying to find that congeniality, to a certain extent, so that members can do their jobs on committee.

So the government started out by saying, "Well, you know what? We're going to model ourselves on Stephen Harper, and we're going to act as a major minority," if you remember that whole discussion. Myself and my colleague Jim Wilson had some exception to that because we said, "Listen, this is a minority Parliament. We need to be able to find a different way of moving forward." And the point that I made as House leader—and I'm not going to speak for the Conservatives because it's up to Mr. Wilson to say this part—is that I believe that what would work in this place is trying to find compromise. I went into those negotiations at the beginning, as the House leader for Andrea Horwath and the New Democratic Party, with a pretty firm position: that we copy what Bill Davis had essentially done. Bill Davis, in a minority of 1975 and 1977, had a model that said, "When we strike our committees, it will be committee membership plus one in order to replace the Chairs," so that there is never a tie when it comes to a vote on committee.

That was the compromise that quite frankly was gotten between the Conservatives, at the time of Mr. Davis, and New Democrats and Liberals, who were in opposition, because they recognized that having tied committees would offer a certain difficulty for the government, especially when it came to trying to amend bills, if there should be a tie on committee.

So we took a position that we thought was well thought through. It was based on the experience of Ontario and on the reality of the rules of the House. The government took a completely different view of just doing what it is that they would want to do as far as

striking committees just under the way that the standing orders called, for now, but to use those standing orders in such a way that would give them a slight advantage by tying up those committees.

So we went through an entire process. I always remember probably one of the most gruelling and most frustrating processes that I've seen for House leaders in a long time: trying to get the government to say, "Listen, there is a minority Parliament in this Legislature and we're going to have to compromise if we're going to move forward."

The government—I give them some credit—back in December, did show some movement as far as compromising. They put an offer on the table, and I'm not going to get into the details; it's too long. But they put an offer on the table. I remember sitting at the meeting with my colleague Madam DiNovo as the whip. We had our deputies there, France Gélinas, and we had Cindy Forster with us and our staff. I remember sitting there and listening to the compromise. I said, "Well, you know what? The government has moved, and it's incumbent upon us, the opposition, to take that offer seriously." At that time, I said, "I'm not saying we're going to say yes at this point, but this is movement. Let's see if we can work our way forward."

I got on the phone and talked to our people within the caucus. We figured it was a good compromise because we recognized that, at the end of the day, that's what it was going to take to get an agreement. I called the government House leader and said, "Okay, we're in. That's fine. If we do it the way that you suggest, we'll be fine." Much to our surprise, the government withdrew its offer, at which point I'm sort of standing there scratching my head, along with my colleagues, saying, "Hang on a second. What's going on here? Was the government only testing us, thinking that if we were to say no then all of a sudden they'd make us look unreasonable? Was it a game that they were playing?"

I have to think that's a little bit of what was going on, and I think that was unfortunate, because the government had to get into this process somewhat to recognize that there is the reality of October 6 and there is a minority Parliament. The opposition does control the majority of the House when it comes to what the votes in this House will be. We'll essentially have a fairly significant role when it comes to what happens in committee.

So we went through this dance of the seven veils, as I would call it, where we went to I don't know how many meetings after that December meeting and couldn't come to any kind of movement. I always remember, we'd go to these meetings, we would meet for an hour, nothing much would come of them, and we'd all be repeating our positions, until eventually I think the government understood. I think at one point the government started to say, "Well, we need to find some way forward," so they compromised on their original compromise and said, "Well, what about you do this?" at which point the opposition, Mr. Wilson and I, said, "Well, here are a couple of other

conditions that we want to put in,” and I just want to speak to those very quickly.

One is that we time-limit this motion. This is not new to the Legislature. We have sessional motions that we've done before, but it's not normally the way things are done. My thinking at the time, and I want to put it on the record today, is that time-limiting the motion so that the government has to come back and create committees all over again in September puts the government on notice that they better be having good behaviour. They'd better not try to use committees in the way that I think they initially anticipated doing them, because in the end, it'll be more difficult for them once we get to September.

So I think what this does is it forces all of us in order to try to make this work—the opposition and the government—because at the end of the day, we need to respect what happened on October 6. The people of Ontario have spoken. People may like it or people may dislike it, depending what side of the House that they're on, but at the end of the day, they're the boss and we're their servants. We are here to do their work. Andrea Horwath has said that right from the beginning: The reason that we're all here now is to do what's right by the people of Ontario.

I hope in striking the committees in the way that we have, where the government is somewhat limited to what it can do when it sends bills to committees—probably not as much as Mr. Wilson would have liked to have limited you, but we see that as a compromise. We have to move; you have to move: That's what this was all about. We have struck a committee in order to take a look at the issue of how we approach changing the rules in this Legislature so that we truly can give the members the kind of ability that they need, by way of the rules, so that this place can work better.

One of the things that we hear a lot by all sides of the House, because we've all been government or opposition at one time or another in the last 20 years, is that members, including government members, are frustrated by the amount of control that the Premier's office has on members when it comes to what happens in this House and what happens on committee. It was true for Bob Rae; it was true for Mike Harris and Mr. Eves; and it certainly is true for Mr. Dalton McGuinty.

I think if we're able to go in and we're able to look at the rules of the Legislative Assembly, this House, understanding that, at the end, the government is the government and they must have their way in the sense of being able to do what their responsibility is as a government—but at the same time, members have to have the ability to do their jobs and to hold the government accountable in a way that makes some sense. We can maybe move those rules to a place that brings us back to how this Legislature used to work some 20 years ago, where there was much more congeniality across the aisle, where members were able to work on issues to the benefit of Ontarians and not just necessarily have to defend the government line or defend the opposition line. So I look forward to

what may happen on committee as a result of changing the standing orders.

The last point I would say is that for the government and the opposition, I think it was our sort of first, how would you say—it was the first test of this Parliament in the sense of, how are we able to move forward in a way that makes some sense? And I want to say to the government across the way, congratulations; you compromised. Congratulations to us; we compromised. Together, we were able to find something that nobody is totally happy with. I'm sure the government would have liked something different, and I'm sure the opposition wanted something different, but that's what compromise is all about. When you walk away from the table and nobody is truly excited, you know that maybe you've done something right.

So I look forward to what will happen on committee because, in the end, that's where the compromises will be made, and I look forward to the work that we'll be doing on committee this spring.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 17. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE ACT (EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT), 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LE CONGÉ FAMILIAL POUR LES AIDANTS NATURELS (MODIFICATION DES NORMES D'EMPLOI)

Mrs. Jeffrey moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave / Projet de loi 30, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le congé familial pour les aidants naturels.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mrs. Jeffrey has moved second reading of Bill 30.

0930

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, may I say how well you look in that chair? It's nice to see you there.

Mr. Speaker, it is again a pleasure to rise for the second reading of the Family Caregiver Leave Act (Employment Standards Amendment), 2011. I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from York South–Weston.

Before I begin, I want to take a moment to welcome Scott Allinson. He's the vice-president of public affairs for the Human Resources Professionals Association. Thank you for being here.

This morning, I'm going to be speaking about proposed legislation which speaks to the heart of what government should do. The Family Caregiver Leave Act, if passed, would provide up to eight weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave so that employees can care for loved ones who are seriously injured or ill. The hard-working people of our province and those that depend on them deserve no less.

Every member of this House and all those who are listening or watching these proceedings share a common life experience: We are all either sons or daughters; we have grandparents; we may have children and spouses. In short, we're part of a family, and when somebody in our family becomes seriously ill or injured we want to be there because we need to be and because we care. When someone we love faces such a crisis, time stands still and nothing else matters—certainly not that email or project or that deadline we thought needed our full attention—because at such times our hearts and our minds are elsewhere. We're distracted because we want and we need to be with our loved one who is suffering.

This bill, if passed, would give working Ontarians the right to take care of their loved ones during those very difficult times without having to worry about losing their job. This legislation, if passed, would protect both full- and part-time employees, and even those on contract, and it would protect our families. We have asked the federal government to better support these families by allowing qualified employees to draw employment insurance while on this proposed leave, just as they do under the family medical leave legislation. We want to encourage our federal government to enter into a partnership with us in Ontario so that caregivers would also have the income security they deserve.

This legislation, if passed, would give the province's working people time—time to be with their hospitalized child and time to care for their elderly parents; time to be with their spouse who has had a stroke or a heart attack. Whether you're an employer or employee, emergencies arise that you cannot predict, and sooner or later we all face situations where our loved ones need our care.

There's an obvious need for this legislation that is all too familiar to anyone who has ever faced the challenge of juggling work commitments with the need to be present for a family member who is seriously ill or injured. I've personally known this to be true from my own experience. After my grandfather passed, my grandmother tried to manage by herself, and for a while, she seemed to be able to be coping. She lived in a small, rural village in England, the type of community where neighbours would pop in every now and then to see how my grandmother was doing. But gradually she started having falls, and my mother realized on one of her visits that my grandmother was in need of immediate assistance in order to be able to stay in her own home and avoid serious injury.

My mother was constrained by time and distance. She had only a two-week vacation from work in Canada to navigate a system in England that was unfamiliar, so she had to get an assessment, set up home care and ensure

that someone was able to check on my grandmother every day.

The hardest thing, my mother told me, was that she felt that the clock was ticking. My mother felt rushed in navigating and setting up a support system that was necessary for my grandmother, and making such drastic changes in my grandmother's life so quickly was not easy. My poor mother felt guilty about rushing through the process, but she had no choice: She had a job in Canada that she had to get back to.

That was more than 10 years ago, and really, the world hasn't changed much. We now have what is commonly known as the sandwich generation: busy parents who are often both at work and are trying to care for younger children. At the same time, they're facing the additional challenge of caring for aging parents, one or another, when they're seriously ill or an injury strikes. It's then that we realize how much we need and rely on the social safety net that government can provide; it's then that we realize how important, how critical it is to have our jobs protected when serious injury or illness occurs to the loved ones who need us most.

In my case, my grandmother was proud. She didn't want to admit that she needed help. It's understandable: Our parents have traditionally been the ones looking after us, and it can be a difficult transformation switching roles and admitting that you need help. Sometimes our parents are legitimately worried that they're taking us away from our jobs. I know this to be true from my own experience with my parents. They don't want to ask for my time and help, because they know I'm busy as the Minister of Labour. But I reassure them and let them know that I'm also the minister responsible for seniors, so helping them is actually part of my job.

For the family, for the parents of working Ontarians, this reluctance to reach out and ask for help can come from the knowledge that their child or their spouse does not currently have the job protection that they need. They may fear that a request for help might leave their loved one vulnerable or even unemployed. These fears are not unfounded, and that's why we're proposing this bill. But there are also other pressing reasons. Because, as I stated earlier, I am also the minister responsible for seniors, I'd like to speak about some of those who need care from their working adult children.

We all know that we have an aging population that is growing. We're going to have 43% more seniors a decade from now and twice as many 20 years from now, and that's a good thing. I'm sure there are many in the House who hope to be among that important cohort. Of course, as people age they need more care, and there are times of serious illness or injury when that need is critical and time sensitive. Our seniors, our aging parents, understandably want to be home as long as possible. It is care by family members that helps ensure that they can indeed stay at home, where they are most comfortable; at home, where there's less expense for our health care system.

Our government, through my cabinet colleague Minister Deb Matthews, has launched a care strategy to help

seniors stay healthy and provide better-quality care in the home, where they want to be. Our proposed family caregiver leave recognizes the vital role that family members play in health care. But to provide that care and to fulfill that role, working Ontarians need to know that their jobs will be there when they look after their loved ones.

On the day that this legislation was introduced, I made an announcement at Princess Margaret Hospital. At that event, a young woman by the name of Marcella Robless came forward. She came forward to give a very personal and touching account, and I'd like to read the remarks she made that day at Princess Margaret Hospital. She said:

"I took care of my mom for about three years. I am the sole caregiver for her. I've been in Canada now for about 28 years. The only family that I have now is my brother who is in Montreal and my mother who lives with me. We're not fortunate to have a lot of relatives [here] so all of the pressure and her care is on me. Two years of the three that I've been taking care of my mother I was in a full-time job. I don't know how I did it, but I managed to do both things.

"Those very same two years were the worst years for my mother. She was on radiation, chemotherapy, surgery. But what I have to say is that caregiving is not just bringing them to the appointments or bringing them to CT scans or MRIs—being a caregiver is also being there in the middle of the night, being there all the time. We don't have a break, you can't tell a disease..., 'Okay, I need a few days off and then I'll be back and take care of you.' So I really hope that you will support this bill.

"As caregivers we are not invincible, and we need support. I definitely need to feel, if I get a full-time job and my mother winds up being eligible for surgery, I can be there for her and not worry about it. Right now I'm in a part-time job, and this is something I have to think about every day."

That was Marcella's true and touching account, which resonates with many of us who have aging parents or other seriously ill or injured loved ones, at the same time trying to juggle work responsibilities. Marcella's words put a human face on the need for this bill.

I was also touched by the personal account given by the member from Essex in response to the introduction of this bill. The member told this House about the catastrophic injury his brother suffered, leaving him in urgent need of care. I thank the member for his thoughtful and candid comments when the bill was introduced.

Our heart goes out to all those who struggle through difficult and challenging situations in the hopes of caring for their loved ones. Again, I know from my own experience that when a crisis happens, we need time to care for our loved ones. When my grandmother was in the midst of her health care crisis, it took time to assess her needs, arrange for home care, get her a walker and outfit her home with grab bars. I remember how frustrated my mother was with a health care system that didn't seem to react quickly enough when her mother was struggling.

Looking back, my mother actually achieved a lot and did a remarkable job in a very short period of time.

0940

A health care crisis can be very stressful and very difficult for working Ontarians when they don't have the security of knowing that their employment, their means of providing for themselves and their family, is protected and secure. At times like this, the last thing we need to worry about is being out of work. We shouldn't have to worry about being unemployed on top of coping with the medical crisis of a loved one that we're trying to deal with. When the chips are down, you want to know that someone is in your corner, and that's what this proposed legislation is all about.

If passed, our bill would assist people and the economy in other ways. It would help protect and retain skilled workers who might otherwise have to leave their employment or who might lose it. Keeping skilled labour is good for employers, employees and the Ontario economy alike. Skilled labour is what keeps our province competitive, and that's important in these challenging times. Job-protected leave during periods of crisis is one thing we can do to help keep skilled labour on the job.

Mr. Speaker, this proposed legislation would provide reasonable protection for both employers and employees alike. This unpaid leave would require that a physician issue a medical certificate. And while we've asked our federal counterparts to provide employment insurance to those who would be eligible for the leave, it would currently be unpaid.

In the time since this legislation was first introduced, my ministry staff have had the opportunity to sit down with a variety of business stakeholders to get their feedback on the proposed leave. A few weeks ago, in Toronto, I was asked to speak at the Human Resources Professionals Association, and I spoke about the family caregiver leave. Later, they shared with me a recent survey that they had sent out to their membership. Of the over 600 people who responded, 95.6% supported the idea of family caregiver leave. The Human Resources Professionals Association told us that this leave is an excellent retention initiative. They pointed out that it's costly to recruit, select and train new employees. It's better to allow for family caregiver leave rather than the alternative of having to go through the process of hiring a new employee. This legislation would benefit all workplace parties. Whether they're employers or workers, we're all part of a family, and we understand what families go through in times of serious illness or injury.

This bill is for the young family or single parent needing to care for a child in hospital diagnosed with a serious medical condition. It's for the wife helping her husband through a difficult period of chemotherapy or radiation. It's for someone caring for that elderly parent who has suffered a broken hip. This proposed legislation, Mr. Speaker, is our way of saying to the people of this province that we will be there to help protect you as you protect your loved ones.

That same spirit of compassion that inspired this bill also led to our government introducing family leave back in 2004. The current family medical leave legislation provides job-protected leave for employees when a family member is facing a terminal condition. Our proposed family caregiver leave would complement this legislation and would apply in cases of serious illness or injury, even when there's no significant risk of imminent death. The proposed family caregiver leave would be in addition to the family medical leave. That means that if you're caring for a loved one under the proposed family caregiver leave and their condition becomes terminal, you would also be entitled to the family medical leave.

Speaker, this proposed legislation would, if passed, assist Ontarians who are most vulnerable, and that's because the burden of caregiving usually lies most heavily on those without the financial resources to provide care. Our bill would assist the poor. It would help the immigrant family new to Canada, already struggling with adapting to a new home. It would assist single parents. And it would assist women, to whom we all know a disproportionate share of the responsibility of caring for family members still falls.

With this proposed legislation, we'll be able to tell working Ontarians, "Go and take care of your loved one's needs, and you can make them a priority. Go and be reassured that your job will be there when you return." It says, "We understand why you care and why you need to be there."

Speaker, this bill is simply the right thing to do for the working people of our province and for those they love.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? Questions and comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to talk a little bit about this caregiver leave. I think it's an interesting proposal. You know, we do have some other leave provisions under the Employment Standards Act.

Many people find themselves in difficulty when they have family members who have a serious illness or injury. However, I think there is a need to ensure that we have appropriate health care in place as well in this province. We have 10,000 people waiting on a home care list who need home care in the province. There is a need for more personal support work for seniors, more health care aides hired in the home care setting to provide some of this.

The problem I see right off the top with the bill is the fact that there are many people working in minimum wage jobs here in the province of Ontario, particularly over the last few years, as we've lost thousands of jobs, who couldn't afford to take advantage of this initiative. When you're making 10 bucks an hour at Tim Hortons, you can't take a day off to look after your family member if you're a single support parent. So I think there needs to be something built into this proposal that would provide people in those situations the opportunity to get some income replacement.

The theory is good because the existing legislation really only applies to end-of-life types of situations, but I

don't think that it necessarily goes far enough at this point.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Minister, you have two minutes to respond.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I just want to thank the member from Welland for her comments. I appreciate that she's trying to find solutions on this bill.

I think at the end of the day we all recognize that there are many families across this province who, through no fault of their own, struggle to try and juggle a family member who's injured or ill, or a serious crisis happens in your family and you need time away. We believe this piece of legislation will give that comfort to an employer and employee that they have certainty about the job being protected.

We think it's important to have those conversations. Obviously we've been out talking to stakeholders, and I appreciate the advice given on this issue. Certainly we know that caregiving usually often falls disproportionately to women because they're often the caregivers in the family. The woman I spoke about at Princess Margaret who had to juggle her job and her mother's situation ended up having to leave her job. I know that caused her economic hardship.

We believe this piece of legislation will help assist those individuals. We want to make sure that Ontarians know that we have their back, that we're going to protect them and that we're proposing a piece of legislation that will help ensure that they know that when they leave to take care of someone they love, they don't have to worry that their job isn't going to be there when they get back. We are going to put something in place that will reassure them that their job will be there, and that certainty, I think, helps all employers.

0950

We all know that skilled employees are important to the economy of Ontario, and we want to make sure that we provide certainty to the employer and to the employee that, should something catastrophic happen in your family, this piece of legislation would provide them that comfort, knowing that they can't be thrown out, that they can come back. When everything is restored in their family, they can come back to a workplace that they have a valuable contribution to provide.

I hope to listen to any other comments the other side has. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make comments or to address the Family Caregiver Leave Act. I find little merit in that act, and I will not be supporting it. That is the end of my comments to that.

However, I would like to say thank you to the House leaders of the government and to the third party for accommodating me with time to make my maiden speech, which I would like to do at this point in time. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to address this esteemed House. This will be my maiden speech.

It is a great honour and a privilege to sit here in the Ontario Legislative Assembly as the elected representative for the riding of Carleton–Mississippi Mills. Carleton–Mississippi Mills is a wonderful mix of rural and urban, of old and new. The population is 25% rural and 75% urban. The city of Kanata is the biggest urban area in the riding and is growing rapidly. There has been a population increase of 16,000 people in the last five years. Many of the people are new Canadians in our riding, and the biggest share of that population is Chinese people.

There is a broad spectrum of industries in Carleton–Mississippi Mills, ranging from farms in the rural area that were established in the early 1800s, to construction companies, to the high-tech industry.

Kanata is the high-tech centre for Canada. It is a proud testimonial to the resiliency of the high-tech industry that they have been able to rebound after the failure of Nortel 10 years ago. They have created enough new jobs to replace all the jobs that were lost during the high-tech meltdown, only now, there are twice as many companies as there were back then. New, smaller companies created these jobs. This is innovation at its best.

Many of the residents in the riding are also employed by the federal government, which is a very large employer that adds great long-term stability to our local economy.

Carleton–Mississippi Mills is in the Ottawa Valley, with the Ottawa River as its northern boundary. As one stands on the shore of the Ottawa River, gazing across the majestic mile-wide body of water at the beautiful Gatineau Hills in Quebec, you can imagine the early explorer Samuel de Champlain canoeing up the river 400 years ago, as he headed west.

A few words about my family and our history and experience in the riding. My wife, Janet, who is here in the gallery today, and I have been married for 32 years, and we have three daughters: Jessica, Rachel and Alexis. Janet and all three girls are registered nurses, and I'm very proud of them. Janet and Alexis—and Alexis is here, sitting beside my wife—work at the Queensway Carleton Hospital in Ottawa. Rachel is working at a hospital in San Diego, and Jessica works at a hospital in Calgary.

I graduated from Queen's University with a degree in civil engineering. I worked in engineering and construction in Vancouver for three years and Calgary for seven years. I experienced the economic downturn of the oil industry in 1981. I lost my job in 1982. We had two babies and a mortgage, nobody was hiring, and house prices were falling fast. It was a terrible time for my family. I learned how devastating bad times can be.

We came back to the family farm at MacLaren's Landing in 1982 and have been proud to be farming ever since. I lived and worked and raised my family in Carleton county, as did my father and his father before him and his father before him. Our farm was a crown grant to our family in 1826.

In our house, it was always understood that with the enjoyment and benefits of a healthy community comes the obligation to contribute to the community. For several generations, my family has been actively involved in politics at the municipal and provincial levels.

When I was a boy, I can remember my father talking to Erskine Johnston, who was the MPP for the riding at the time. My father was one of Erskine Johnston's strongest grassroots supporters and communication links to the local community. Erskine was a great MPP. He was accessible to his constituents and helped his constituents. He was well thought of and respected in his community. He was an excellent role model.

Over the past 30 years, I have had leadership roles in several community organizations. Most recently, I was president of the Ontario Landowners Association. Through these organizations, I have had experience dealing with bureaucrats and politicians from all three levels of government. I have travelled Ontario from Glengarry to Niagara, to Essex, to Manitoulin, to Sudbury, to Toronto and places in between to answer calls for help, calls for help from people who have government knocking on their door.

We have become an over-regulated society with regulations that are unnecessary or wrongful. This tells us what we already know: that the fight for freedom, justice and democracy will never end; that if we relaxed our democratic guard, our freedoms would be taken away from us by those who think we should be controlled.

We all know government has become too big, too expensive and too controlling. It is time to take control of the business of government. We must reduce our spending and our debt. We must eliminate the unnecessary regulations that interfere with the abilities of people, businesses and communities to thrive. People must be free to be creative and innovative. I believe in small government, low taxes and minimal regulation. I believe that government should exist to serve people, not rule over them. I believe it is the basic nature of men and women to do good, and men and women should be free to do what they want so long as they do not hurt anyone or the environment. Ontario must once again become a welcome place to live and work and play.

We must remember that the foundation of democracy is the Magna Carta of the year 1215. That wonderful document of 800 years ago defined that the common man had rights: the right to life, liberty and property. It defined that government should serve people, that government was nothing but the instrument of the common man. The intention of the Magna Carta was clearly stated in William Pitt's oft-cited address to Parliament in 1763: "The poorest man may in his cottage do defiance to all the forces of the crown. It may be frail; its roof may shake; the wind may blow through it; the storm may enter; the rain may enter, but the King of England cannot enter. All his forces may not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement!"

But somewhere along the line, government seems to have forgotten that freedom and democracy are the guar-

anteed right of the common man. This right is enshrined in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This guaranteed right is centuries old, the product of hard-won struggles and well-established jurisprudence. We have become an over-regulated, over-governed society. There are 500,000 regulations in Ontario. Government has become too big, has gone too far, and is intruding into people's lives and businesses in an unwanted and wrongful way. Government has taken freedoms away from the common man. This is a problem.

What do we do? As lawmakers, we must do something. We must remember that we are nothing but the servant of the common man.

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I would like to talk to you about some of my experiences with the Ontario Landowners Association, to tell some stories of wrongful actions by government.

Mike Westley, who is in our members' gallery here, and 60 of his neighbours in rural Ottawa fought the city of Ottawa, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority for six years to prevent their properties from being wrongfully designated as provincially significant wetlands. The problem developed over many years, as all three agencies issued permits for new development of quarries, highways, housing subdivisions and streets that caused more and new runoff into the creek that flowed through Mike's and his neighbours' properties. The result was that the increased water flow flooded their properties.

Then, the three agencies of government said their properties were a wetland and they intended to designate their lands as provincially significant wetlands. The Drainage Act states that a neighbour cannot increase or decrease the amount of water in a watershed that would harm a downstream neighbour. This position has been upheld in court, which is the basis of common law. Mike and his neighbours hired a large backhoe and they dug out the creek to increase the capacity of the creek. The drainage problem has been resolved.

Wendell Palmer, who is also here in our members' gallery, of the Niagara area had an old and very large, exotic breed of pig. The pig waddled when it walked and had a slight limp. Wendell's veterinarian said the pig was healthy, just old. An OSPCA inspector came to Wendell's farm and said the pig was in distress and must be destroyed immediately. Over Wendell's protests, she shot the pig 17 times in the head, but the pig was still alive. She went back to her office for a bigger gun. Wendell was left to the task of slitting the pig's throat to end its suffering. Wendell was charged with animal abuse.

Steve Straub, a farm labourer of the St. Thomas area, owned and cared for a variety of unusual birds and animals on his father's five-acre home and property. The OSPCA handcuffed Steve and threw him into the back of the police cruiser as they seized his birds and animals. He pleaded guilty to the terrible crime of having a budgie birdcage with a dirty floor. The OSPCA order was written in the names of Steve and his father, John, because his father owned the land and the house, the only sig-

nificant asset the family had. The OSPCA then sent invoices for the care and housing of Steve's birds and animals to Steve and John Straub jointly in the amount of \$168,000. The OSPCA took Steve and John to civil court to collect the bill. The judge threw out all the invoices, except for \$5,000.

Ed Embury, a farmer near Napanee, has been hounded by the Kingston Ministry of the Environment for seven years over a minor manure spill on to a neighbour's farm field. The MOE persisted over the years with inspections and charges and took Ed to court many times. Recently, the justice of the peace threw out all of the charges, saying they were frivolous.

In November 2009, Major Mark Tijssen—and Mark's mother, Linda, is here in the gallery with us today—was charged under four different sections of the Food Safety and Quality Act because he bought a pig from a local farmer and slaughtered it to feed his family. A Ministry of Natural Resources enforcement officer sat in a neighbour's tree stand for five days watching Mark and his children in their home with night-vision goggles. The MNR then raided Mark's home, with six squad cars with lights flashing.

The maximum fine was \$100,000, but Mark was told that the fine would be reduced to \$1,000 if he pleaded guilty. But Mark said he didn't do anything wrong and decided to fight the charges in court. Major Tijssen acted as his own attorney, arguing that he had a constitutional right to choose the food he wants to eat. On December 6, 2011, the MNR delivered a letter to Major Tijssen, stating that they intended to drop all charges after two long years of court appearances.

Bob Mackie of Beamsville, who is in the gallery with us today, set up a small archery training business on his nine-acre rural property. About seven years ago, the Niagara Escarpment Commission, which is the local planning authority, ordered Bob to stop his archery business because his land had an agricultural use designation in their official plan and archery was not mentioned as a permitted use on agricultural land. The official plan doesn't mention archery as a prohibited activity; it just doesn't mention it at all.

This is contrary to common law which is practised in Ontario, which states that a man can do whatever he wants unless it is prohibited by law or regulation. Bob continues his seven-year fight for his rights in court.

George Eng and his neighbours own land at Mount Albert; they excavate and sell peat on their land. That is their business, their livelihood, and they have been doing it for over 40 years. Four years ago, the Lake Simcoe conservation authority designated their properties as provincially significant wetlands and told George and his neighbours they were breaking the law by excavating peat. They were told to stop doing business. George and a few neighbours have been charged and are in court fighting for their rights and their livelihoods using their crown land patent grant as their property rights defence.

These are examples of the negative effects that some of the 500,000 regulations that we have in Ontario are

having on people's freedoms and rights. We need to make changes that will restore these lost liberties and property rights. Life, liberty and private property ownership are the foundation of any successful democracy. The law, which is the collective will of individuals, is intended to provide justice, to protect liberty and property. If a man takes another man's property without his permission, it is illegal theft, or plundering. If government uses a law to take a man's property without his permission, it is legal plundering, but it is still plundering and that is wrong. Such a wrongful law must be struck down.

Thank you. I will be sharing my time with the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Chatham–Kent–Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for her presentation. I listened intently. As a member of the PC caucus, we are extremely compassionate to the needs of Ontarians.

We all know that there have always been seen and unseen benefits and consequences to each and every bill that is passed by the Legislature. The seen benefits in each piece of legislation are held up as triumphs; the seen benefits are what families read about in the next morning's newspaper. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we on the opposition side of the Legislature believe that the unseen consequences of this particular bill deserve close and careful scrutiny. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is my opinion that the ministry has not done its due diligence in investigating and recognizing the unseen consequences of this bill.

Following ministry briefings and discussions with my colleagues, I'm left with the distinct impression that the purpose of this bill is not to correct or solve a defect within the legislation it seeks to amend, nor to address a looming and credible threat to the well-being of Ontario families. Frankly, it is my opinion that this bill, while bearing all the trappings of being well-intentioned and designed for the good of Ontario workers and families, is instead a document designed for political posturing on the part of the government. Allow me to explain how I and my colleagues have arrived at this conclusion.

According to ministry personnel, they have little or no empirical, statistical or anecdotal evidence that there are people being denied time off from their employment to provide care for their loved ones. Not only have there been no studies, there aren't even mechanisms in place to collect the kind of data that would give the members of this House—and the Ontario taxpayers who must pay for it—a clear idea of any real or imagined problem this bill claims to solve. Furthermore, this bill neither creates nor empowers the collection of such data. For all the information that has been provided to the members of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, this bill may as well have been created in a vacuum.

In short, we will never be able to ascertain with any degree of accuracy whether this legislation, should it be passed, provides the people of Ontario with any tangible benefits or, on the other side of the coin, addresses the consequences of not passing it.

1010

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I find it astounding for two reasons. First, nobody should know better than this government the perils of not doing your homework before introducing legislation. The headlong rush into the creation of this bill reminds us all of the lack of consultation with local communities and business owners that has given rise to unwanted industrial wind turbines across the province, including in my own riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex. You would think this government would have learned by now of the loss of trust in government that will undoubtedly result from not doing your homework.

And as deputy critic for labour, I find it astounding that this government would introduce a bill that not only fails to make a case for its own existence but approaches the suggestion that Ontario employers and job creators are somehow mistreating their own staff by denying them job-protected employment leave, a proposition that, as I've said, is completely unsubstantiated. Ontario's entrepreneurs and small business owners deserve better than to be viewed with suspicion, yet it is my fear that by allowing this bill to proceed in the manner it has, without backing up the ministry's claim, it is accomplishing exactly that negative effect. As I stated a few moments ago, it is our duty and the duty of every member of this House to fully investigate both the seen and unseen benefits and consequences to every piece of legislation brought forward for debate.

It is to the unseen consequences of this bill I would like to now turn, and one in particular that we ought to safeguard against. This bill has all the hallmarks of shifting the responsibility for family care from the individual onto the collective shoulders of the taxpayers. That is something that should be of concern to all Ontario families. As a husband, a father and a grandfather myself, Mr. Speaker, I tell you that a bill that alters this relationship must be examined very, very closely.

I've also had the great privilege, like many of my colleagues on this side of the House, to have been an employer in my lifetime. I draw from that valuable experience when considering any piece of legislation that seeks to affect the relationship between job creators and the Ontarians they employ. I can tell you, as an entrepreneur, that that relationship is based on the firm ground of mutual respect, mutual benefit and accommodating each other's priorities and individual needs.

As I mentioned a moment ago, it was clear to me that in developing this bill, the ministry had prepared little in the way of case studies citing a need for new legislation. Yet I believe we owe it to Ontario workers and families to base our debate proceedings on firm evidence drawn from real-world experiences of the folks who sent us here.

I took the liberty of researching this issue myself to see what business owners in my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex would tell me about their approach to their employees' needs in the case of illness in the family. Some were unionized, while other smaller businesses were not. With unionized firms, I was told that situations

requiring time off to care for a loved one were covered through the collective agreement or through passed legislation. For the non-unionized businesses, it was a matter of using the strong relationship between employee and employer to find a unique solution without setting precedents.

I discovered that mutual understanding and respect, demonstrated on both sides, often resulted in the employee being given the needed time off to attend to their loved ones, a very compassionate gesture on the part of the employer. It is my firm belief that by replacing this relationship with a rigid and prescribed legal code, all the requirements for flexibility, mutual consideration and mutual respect will be removed from the relationship between the employer and employee. It will become just another area of life in Ontario in which this government seeks to have its say.

Next, from my discussions or those of my colleagues with the ministry, there is some desire to work with federal counterparts to recognize time off provided by this bill as an insurable benefit under the federal employment insurance program. Yet it is deeply troubling to me that this bill has reached second reading without an agreement of terms with the federal government. Frankly, there has been so little discussion with the federal government on this topic as to be negligible. What will the costs be? We don't know, and this ministry cannot tell us. What happens if the federal government does not accept the terms? We don't know, and this ministry cannot tell us. Where are the safeguards against abuse and fraud? We don't know, Ontario families don't know, and Ontario employers don't know, because this ministry cannot tell us. We ought to be cautious of this. We owe it to Ontario families and workers, who have seen the cost and size of government go up and up, to give this bill the close scrutiny that it clearly requires.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The clock is now at 10:15 and this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I would like to ask all members to help me in welcoming Mr. Mike Glennie and family friend Mr. Mao, who are in the gallery today from the great riding of Whitby—Oshawa. They're here to observe page Grace Glennie in action today.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I would like members of the Legislature to join me in welcoming, in the members' east gallery, Rosemary and Robert Cooper, parents of page William Cooper from Canadian Martyrs school in St. Catharines, as well as William's cousin Candace Cooper. We welcome them to Queen's Park.

Ms. Soo Wong: Today I would like to welcome to the House Mr. Jeff Mole, a constituent of mine. Mr. Mole is the founder of the Trillium Energy Alliance, which seeks

to create a province-wide network of local energy generation co-operatives. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Mole to the House.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I would like to welcome guests here that have come to join us in the Legislature today: my wife, Janet MacLaren, on the left here, and my daughter Alexis MacLaren beside her, who are both registered nurses working in hospitals in Ontario, and I'm very proud of them; Yvette and Bob Mackie from Beamsville; Mike and Dawn Westley from Ottawa; and Linda Tijssen, mother of Mark Tijssen.

These people all came to hear my maiden speech a little earlier this morning, Mr. Speaker, and they are all members of—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Brilliant.

Interjection: Great speech.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: It was a great encouragement for me to have them here as friends and family. I would like to say they are all proud members of the Ontario Landowners Association as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew heckles his own members.

Minister.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I would like to introduce to the House my good friend from Thunder Bay, in north-western Ontario, and a very active northern Ontarian entrepreneur, Mr. Shane Diakunchak. Shane, thank you, and welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the press gallery today, we have a new group of visiting journalism students from Sheridan College. Again, my preamble is that they're here at Queen's Park today to shadow and learn from Queen's Park reporters. Today we have Nasr Ahmed, Chelsea Andrade, Mary Katherine Bowyer, Meron Gaudet, Justin Goulet, Christopher Haley, David Larocque, Lily Martin, Geoff McGregor, Colin Meenagh, Priscilla Monachese, Chanelle Ouellet, Nathan Peters, Stephen Pike, Rosemond Quartey, Gurnek Nick Singh and Andrea Stathers. Welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PUBLIC SERVICES

Mr. Tim Hudak: Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Don Drummond, your hand-picked adviser, said on page 9, in his message from the chair, that "each rejected recommendation must be replaced not by a vacuum, but by a better idea—one that delivers a similar fiscal benefit." The Ontario PCs agree with Mr. Drummond in that respect.

The Premier has already announced that he's taking \$1.5 billion off the table from Mr. Drummond's recommendations, to finance full-day kindergarten. I asked the Premier yesterday how he's going to make up that \$1.5

billion. He didn't answer me, Speaker, so I'll ask him again today. Premier, to make up that \$1.5 billion, are you contemplating further spending cuts or are you contemplating tax increases?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question, once again, and my answer is the same. The answer will be contained in the budget itself. We will use this period of time, pre-budget, to hear from the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the third party, a legislative committee, Ontarians generally. The finance minister will continue his pre-budget consultations, and I fully expect that all MPPs will, as part of their responsibilities, reach out to their own constituents.

Again, I say to my honourable colleague that if he has any particular pieces of advice with respect to which of these provisions he recommends that we adopt and which he recommends that we reject, we would of course be more than pleased to hear from him.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: As the Premier knows, we've gone farther than that. We've put on the table ideas to save \$2 billion—and a mandatory public sector wage freeze, by way of example. We've talked about arbitration reform. We've talked about competitive bidding across government. Hopefully, the Premier will in fact finally take up these ideas that he has rejected to date.

Premier, I think you're feeling the magnitude of the mess that you've dug us into. For over a year now, you've increased spending when you said you'd go the opposite way. The deficit is up, not down. All but two ministries are actually up in spending instead of going down, as you promised. And now you've taken \$1.5 billion off the table for full-day kindergarten.

The question I also had that you failed to answer, Premier, is, your education minister, in a February 21 article in the Toronto Sun, was also backing away from Mr. Drummond's recommendation on ending the hard cap on class size—another \$500-million hole you have to fill. I'll ask you, Premier: Will it be filled with tax hikes or spending reductions?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I find it disappointing, frankly, that the leader of the official opposition's go-to place, when it comes to government cuts, is public education. We have a different value set in that regard. I think the single most important thing that we can do for our families is to invest in our children by giving them a great-quality education, and the single most important thing that we can do to grow our economy in a knowledge-based era of globalization is to invest in a skilled workforce. That speaks to the high value that we attach to publicly funded education in Ontario.

Again, I say I find it disappointing that the leader of the official opposition's go-to place for cuts is publicly funded education for all our children.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Speaker, the Premier knows full well these are recommendations by Mr. Don Drummond, your hand-picked adviser. For some time, Premier, you

basically described him as your white knight. He was going to save you from the \$30-billion hole. Now you're treating him like some distant relative you may see at the occasional family reunion.

Parsing through the Premier's speaking points is often challenging. Let me see if I understand his comments today. You seem to be signalling, Premier, that similarly, the hard cap on class size recommendation of Mr. Drummond—the \$500 million is now off the table, and you seem to be recommending that Mr. Drummond's target to reduce the number of non-classroom teaching staff by 70% is off the table. Premier, that's about an additional \$1.6 billion, and partnered with full-day kindergarten, \$2.5 billion.

So am I reading you correctly, Premier? Are those additional recommendations by Mr. Drummond now off the table?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, it's going to be a long time for my honourable colleague if all he does between now and budget day is ask me what's going to be in the budget. I'm not going to divulge that. It's a work in progress. It's something that we think is important to consult Ontarians on. We continue our deliberations, but we remain very much open to advice.

My concerns are the inconsistencies that are coming from the opposite bench. At first, the leader of the official opposition says we need to adopt the report in its entirety, that we should not cherry-pick. And now he's saying no, he's not prepared to adopt the LHIN recommendation; he's not prepared to adopt the recommendation that says we bargain firmly but fairly with Ontario doctors; he's not prepared to adopt the recommendation that says that we ought to put into question the \$345 million we invest in supporting the horse racing industry in Ontario. Again, a clear message would be very helpful.

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PUBLIC SERVICES

Mr. Tim Hudak: You know, what's truly disappointing is the Premier's seeming lack of understanding of the depth of the problem he has dug us into. We are in a debt crisis in the province of Ontario. Premier, according to your own adviser, Mr. Drummond, we're on track to a \$30-billion deficit. You are on the verge of having Ontario triple its debt, to \$400 billion. This is very serious.

I know you're trying to stick to your talking points here, you're trying to avoid the tough questions, but you have made some commitments. You're going to add on an additional \$1.5 billion in full-day kindergarten. You now appear to be backing away from Mr. Drummond's recommendations on the cap on class size and the non-teaching personnel. That's about \$2.6 billion. If you want our advice, let me ask you again, are you asking us to find an additional \$2.6 billion in savings because those items are now off the table?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I would say to my colleague that we look forward to answering all of his

questions and then probably a bit more through the budget.

I do want to quote a little bit from the Drummond report because I think it's always helpful. In particular, he said that "spending is neither out of control nor wildly excessive. Ontario runs one of the lowest-cost provincial governments in Canada relative to its GDP and has done so for decades." It also goes on to make some interesting findings. In relation to our GDP, total government spending in Ontario is the third-lowest in Canada, the tax burden is the second-lowest in Canada and per capita spending is the lowest in Canada.

So again, I say to my honourable colleague, yes, there is a real concern in front of us. It's important that we tackle the deficit. It's important to understand our fundamental underlying strengths as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, it seems like, sadly, the Premier is the only person in Ontario who thinks that spending is under control. In fact it's the opposite. I'd remind you, Premier, that you're spending \$1.8 million more every hour, 24 hours a day, than you take in in revenue; and since the Drummond report alone, you're over \$250 million further in the hole. All I see from the Premier is Liberal talking points and continuing dithering and delay.

We would have a very different approach. I said I would have reduced the size of my cabinet down to 16 members. I would have called the Drummond report immediately so we could have brought in a fall economic statement that actually would have reduced spending instead of your bills that are increasing spending. We would have brought in a public sector wage freeze and saved \$2 billion off the top.

Premier, since you seem to be dithering and delaying and taking things off the table on Drummond, will you at least accept our proposals to rein in spending, including a public sector wage freeze to save us \$2 billion off the top?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'll remind my honourable colleague that the Drummond commission in fact recommended against that very specifically. He called it—I'll use his word, Speaker—"dumb." That's a direct quote; it's in the document itself. So we're not going to go there for all the right reasons.

But I think there is an important and sharp contrast to be had between their values and our values. They support the \$345-million subsidy to the Ontario horse racing industry. We think we should consider redeploying that money so it supports our schools and our health care. That's a question of fundamental values. I think it's an important contrast between that side and this side, and I would dare to say that our values are in keeping with those shared by Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, frankly, here's the contrast: Instead of dithering and delaying, we would have acted immediately to rein in spending in the province of Ontario: a public sector wage freeze to save \$2 billion; an

end to your feed-in tariff program that is driving up hydro bills and impacting on the finances of the province as a whole.

Premier, you've gone even beyond cherry-picking; you're taking out entire bricks in the foundation that Mr. Drummond laid out for you. You're taking out the full-day kindergarten brick and now it sounds like you're taking out the bricks when it comes to class sizes and the 70% reduction in non-teaching personnel in education. That's about \$2.6 billion right there. Plus, you've brought in new spending initiatives totalling \$2.5 billion.

I know old habits are hard to break, Premier, but will you please tell us, are you going to make up that difference through tax hikes, or where will you find additional savings that pay for all your additional spending?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, again, we were very clear from the outset that the Drummond commission's responsibility, as we saw it, was to advise, and our responsibility in government is to decide. I would say to my honourable colleague that the responsibility of government is to bring judgment to bear on the advice that we receive, so there are some recommendations here that we are going to accept, others we will accept with modifications, others we will outright reject, and others we will send for further study. I've made that very clear in my meetings with Don Drummond himself.

My honourable colleague said that no judgment is required here, that there's no value set to be brought to bear on these recommendations. He says we should adopt these holus-bolus, notwithstanding the fact that we hear over and over from his caucus about different reservations they have with respect to different recommendations. I say again: They advise; we decide. We'll bring Ontario values to bear in our decision-making.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the Conservatives tabled a motion calling on the government to maintain the Premier's scheduled corporate tax giveaways. My question is a pretty simple one, Speaker: Will the Premier side with struggling everyday families, or will he side with the Conservatives?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question, Speaker, and—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: We're always right. Side with us.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's good to be wanted. What I must say and what I can say is that the responsibility that we share here in government, of course, is to listen to both sides and to draw what wisdom we might from those, and then to inform our decisions with, I think, a broad value base shared by Ontarians. I think that this is what they want at this point in time. They want us to tackle the deficit in earnest. They want us to do it in a way that ideally improves the quality of our schools and our health care system. They want a strong foundation for growth and they want us to create more jobs. That's the mindset and the value set that we'll bring to bear as we receive conflicting advice from my opposition parties.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, I can certainly understand the Premier's dilemma. On the one hand, the Conservatives are endorsing the Premier's very plan; on the other hand, it's a reckless plan. It's a plan that has not helped create more jobs for people in this province and it is not a plan that's a priority for families.

Can New Democrats expect the Premier's support next week when this motion comes to a vote in the House? Can we expect the Liberals to be with us in voting against the Conservative motion?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I understand my honourable colleague's devotion and perhaps even obsession with the tax issue. Taxes are always an important part of the balance that forms the foundation for growth and prosperity.

But again, I say to my honourable colleague, she says that we should freeze corporate taxes. That would save us \$800 million, but we have a \$16-billion deficit, so that constitutes a 5% solution. So I say to her again, what about the other 95%? I know where she stands on the first 5%. She has been very clear and very consistent, and I give her that. But what I ask her again is, what are her proposals with respect to the remaining 95% of the savings that we need to find?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, I'll remind the Premier that he shouldn't have gone down this misguided path in the first place and stuck with his guns. He used to believe that corporate tax reductions were not the way to go.

Nonetheless, families across this province are still reeling from the recession. London's unemployment rate is at 9%. Windsor's is at 11%. Sixteen thousand people are out of work in Oshawa. In Toronto, 275,000 Torontonians are looking for work. The answer isn't more tax giveaways to companies that pick up and head south. It's a job creation strategy that rewards companies that actually create jobs.

Speaker, will the Premier say today, once and for all, that he will not move ahead with the corporate tax cuts?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, again, we'll provide our answer in the budget. But what I can say to my honourable colleague is that right after question period, in fact, on this very day, we'll all have an opportunity to support what I believe to be a very important initiative that will create some 10,000 jobs per year, create \$800 million in economic activity every year and provide our parents and grandparents, aged Ontarians, up to \$1,500 every year in tax credits for renovations in their home. It's our healthy home renovation tax credit, and I encourage my honourable colleague to support that very initiative momentarily, right after question period.

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AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. Karen Tzventarny worked at Ornge as a nurse

for five years. As a medical professional, Karen was responsible for screening patient transfers for Ornge in the unit dedicated to controlling infectious disease. She said that she complained back in 2009 to the Ministry of Health after the now former CEO of Ornge replaced qualified medical personnel with less qualified staff.

I'd like to know if the Premier knows what the ministry's investigations of that complaint revealed.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I'll be glad to take the first question. I'm sure my colleague the minister will want to answer the others.

I can say that we have been very clear in terms of our disapproval of the activities that took place there, of the fact that the executive, the leadership, lost sight of their responsibility, first and foremost, to ensure that we're delivering the best possible care to Ontario patients, and secondly, to show respect for Ontario taxpayers.

We have moved together as a government, decisively. My honourable colleague knows that we have referred the matter to the OPP for a criminal investigation. We await the outcome of that investigation.

We have also made it clear that we are providing every co-operation that we possibly can to the Auditor General. That individual's office will be thorough in its examination of the issues. We look forward to receiving the recommendations and we look forward to acting on the basis of those recommendations.

My honourable colleague also knows that we are moving ahead with a series of initiatives that will increase accountability and oversight to ensure that we provide the best possible air ambulance care to Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, I suspect that the Premier's lack of response about the investigation is because there likely wasn't an investigation into that complaint.

Reports today indicate very clearly that that was not an isolated incident. Ornge executives replacing medical and aviation specialists with less qualified staff was apparently the norm in that organization. Fed up, this particular nurse, Ms. Tzventarny, ended up quitting her job in light of what was happening there.

Can the minister say how many complaints her ministry received from whistleblowers? And how many investigations did they conduct as a result of those complaints?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member opposite, the leader of the third party. I can assure the member that we take every complaint very, very seriously. And every complaint is investigated, Speaker.

What I can tell you, though, is that we know we need to do more. That is why we have brought about very significant change at the leadership levels at Ornge. We have a new interim CEO. We have a new board. The board is taking the issue of patient safety extremely seriously.

But that alone is not enough. We need to do even more, and that is why I will shortly be introducing legis-

lation that will continue to improve the oversight and the quality of patient care at Ornge.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, day after day after day, the minister ignored the warnings—the warnings from nurses who were seeing a downgrading of the skills of their colleagues at that agency; warnings from accountants about financial irregularities and mismanagement; warnings from pilots and paramedics that the quality of care was being compromised at Ornge as the skills were being downgraded; and warnings from employees and MPPs in the Legislature about executive salaries and questionable contracts.

The minister obviously was not doing her job. Why should she be keeping it?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, my job is to fix the problems that I find, and in the health ministry, the province of Ontario, there are unfortunately problems that arise from time to time. My problem is to fix the problems that arise and take every step I can to ensure they do not happen again. That job is under way. We acted swiftly. We have replaced the leadership. They are very focused on patient safety issues, and so am I.

Speaker, I think it's important that we think about the patients who have been served by Ornge, and I'd like to share one story, if I might. A university student was at his cottage. He was barbecuing hamburgers and the propane barbecue exploded. After briefly losing consciousness, he realized his arms were on fire. He called 911. Ornge arrived and transported him to Sunnybrook. He says thank you to Ornge.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Health: Speaker, yesterday the minister was alerted to yet more serious gaps in service at Ontario's air ambulance service. She was presented with a list of 13 recent incidents that put patients and front-line staff, paramedics and pilots at risk. These incidents are happening on a daily basis. Unqualified and inexperienced people are the reason. That's who's in charge at Ornge today. The minister may have called for a criminal investigation, but she's obviously oblivious to the operational gaps that are there in this place today.

Not only has this minister presided over the spawning of a financial scandal, but she has also failed to protect the integrity of our essential air ambulance services. I ask the minister once again: Given her inability to manage this file, will she agree to step aside?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I have said, we take every concern that is raised very seriously. I did have the opportunity of sharing the list that the member presented me with yesterday. I have raised those issues with Ornge. They've looked into them, and it appears that each one of those incidents had in fact been investigated by the people at Ornge.

The member opposite is playing a political game; I understand that. He wants a minister's head on a platter.

What I am focused on is patient safety. We have a new board in place. Dr. Barry McLellan—impeccable credentials—is heading up the patient safety focus of the new board. I have every confidence in the new leadership and in the front-line staff that this member seems intent on destroying.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: It's that front-line staff who are bringing these concerns to my attention. That's why we're raising them here: because the minister isn't listening. It's this kind of rhetoric that continues to undermine the confidence of that front-line staff.

What we want to know is, why hasn't the minister put people in charge who are qualified and experienced in air ambulance to get things right? With all due respect—we have the highest regard for Mr. McKerlie. He knows nothing about air ambulance services, knows nothing about air ambulances and knows nothing about the issue. There are people in the public service who have that experience. Why hasn't the minister put them in charge?

Again, she has shown she's incapable of dealing with this file. Why will she not admit that she is the single impediment to getting things right at Ornge?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated. Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said earlier, the member opposite is playing a game of politics. I understand that. I am focused on improving the quality of care at Ornge. I am focused on ensuring that patients have the air ambulance care that they need.

The member opposite, when the new board was revealed, himself admitted in the media that it was a very strong board. If he now wishes to say that Ian Delaney is not a strong chair, if he now wishes to say that Barry McLellan is not a strong member of the board—if he wants to cast aspersions on a very, very strong leadership team at Ornge, he is free to do that. I stand behind the new leadership and I stand behind the front-line staff.

I can tell you that I have received messages from front-line staff who are very, very pleased with the changes that have been made.

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AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

We're now looking at bankruptcy documents for one of Ornge's many, many for-profit businesses, called Ornge Global Holdings. It shows that this company owes nearly \$14,000 to a Brazilian law firm. I want to know: Is the minister aware of the Brazilian business that's going on, and does she think that throwing taxpayers' money around Brazil is a good use of public health care dollars?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite knows that we have turned over—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's enough, please. As I said before, this is a difficult topic that needs to be discussed, and it will be discussed. I need to hear the answers, as does everyone.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, as the member knows, this matter has been turned over to the Ontario Provincial Police. They are conducting their investigation. They will go exactly where they determine they need to go.

I can assure you that the forensic audit team, the Auditor General, my ministry staff and the people at Ornge are fully co-operating with the Ontario Provincial Police. That was a step that, unfortunately, did need to be taken. We must all do what we have to do to see that justice is done, and that means letting the OPP do their job.

What is very important is that we are turning the page at Ornge. I will be introducing legislation that will bring our air ambulance service under the Excellent Care for All legislation, because we believe that quality should be measured and quality should be improved.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, families are rather surprised to find that their publicly funded air ambulance services ran a for-profit company called Ornge Global Brazil Holdings. It was only one of a web of for-profit companies created by Ornge, by a team of high-priced lawyers. All of those private companies always meant the same thing: They meant big bucks for well-connected insiders. Former Liberal Party president Alfred Apps has received \$9 million so far for his work for those private companies, and the document shows that he's still owed tens of thousands of dollars by Ornge.

When David Caplan faced the same thing, when he let well-connected insiders divert public money away from front-line care, he did the honourable thing: He stepped aside. Why does the minister think that she shouldn't do the same? Why does she think that she can keep her job?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What I would suggest is, if the member opposite has allegations, please refer them to the Ontario Provincial Police. This investigation is under way right now.

What I can tell you, Speaker, is when the new board was put in place, they were given very clear instructions: Focus first on patient safety, support the forensic audit process that was under way, and wind down the for-profit. Those for-profit companies are in the process of being wound down because we want the new Ornge to be focused on Ontario patients: getting those Ontario patients to the care they need as quickly as possible.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Grant Crack: My question's for the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. The eastern Ontario economic development fund has been a successful program that has provided a tremendous economic boost to communities throughout eastern Ontario, including in

my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Our government has invested \$53 million in the eastern Ontario development fund, which has leveraged \$503 million in private sector investments. That's an 8 to 1 ratio of leverage that's created and supported 11,700 jobs.

I was honoured to have the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation visit my riding last week, and together we met with the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus to discuss how the fund could be improved. Speaker, will the minister take the recommendations of the community, including those of the wardens, into account when considering—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

The Minister of Economic Development and Innovation.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for his question and for the great tour we had of his riding, an opportunity to meet some of his constituents.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that residents in eastern Ontario understand just how important the eastern Ontario development fund has been as a job creation tool to those communities. Job creation and economic growth are the key priorities of this government and I know that communities in eastern Ontario really do support this.

I would like to thank, as well, the eastern wardens' caucus for the leadership that they have demonstrated as a champion of this fund, not only on the provincial level but out in their communities as well. I was very pleased with the principles that they put forward, and in fact, one of the principles that they think is key is making this fund permanent, which is exactly what we're trying to do. I looked forward to their input. It was thoughtful. We had a valuable discussion, and we take it very seriously. I hope, though, that the opposition take their views just as seriously—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you, Minister.

Speaker, some members of the House and some in my constituency have raised concerns regarding the levels of available funding under the eastern Ontario development fund. The fund was established in 2008, with the four-year period set to expire in March 2012. As I understand it, the fund was allocated up to \$20 million a year for each of the four years. To date, approximately \$53 million has been invested, leveraging about \$500 million of private investment into the region. While the fund has been a huge success, creating and supporting 11,700 jobs, why was the full amount of each year not spent, and do unspent dollars in any given year carry on to subsequent years?

Hon. Brad Duguid: That's a good question. The eastern Ontario development fund was designed to provide up to—and I repeat: up to—\$20 million annually to those projects that meet our due diligence as well as our accountability criteria. I'm pleased to confirm that I have been advised that every company that applied to the

eastern Ontario development fund and that met the criteria has indeed received funding.

Let's be clear, though: Our budgets are allocated on an annual basis, based on the demand for such projects. Any amounts below the \$20-million maximum that are not allocated don't carry forward into the next year. A great deal of effort is made to ensure that Ontario taxpayers are getting value for these investments. These investments are highly scrutinized, and recipients are held accountable. Perhaps that's why this really good program gets such a great private sector leverage return—because we scrutinize very, very closely, and we make sure that those companies are very accountable for the investments that we make in them. I hope this clarifies that for the member.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Health: Ontario's air ambulance service has been embroiled in controversy for months—financial scandal, blatant abuse of tax dollars, senior executives and the entire board of directors fired, daily reports of incidents that put patients and crews at risk. And yet, as recently as yesterday, the Minister of Health, under whose watch this scandal brewed and service levels were compromised, had this to say about that air ambulance service: "Ornge has a world-class ambulance service."

Speaker, if there isn't anything more but that statement in itself that shows that this member has lost all perspective, nothing else will. Surely that statement alone should tell the Premier this his minister should resign—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, Minister.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, the member opposite is free to criticize me—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It was dead silent during the question, and I want it dead silent during the answer.

Carry on.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, the member opposite is free to criticize me; I understand that. But when the member opposite veers into—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew has a warning.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —questioning the integrity of the front-line staff, that is where I draw the line. The front-line staff at Ornge are delivering world-class service, and if you want to criticize the people who are saving lives every day, I have to challenge that. The doctors, the nurses, the paramedics, the pilots, those people who are servicing the planes and the helicopters, they are superb public servants of this province of Ontario.

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Have there been problems? Yes. Have we addressed those problems? Yes. Do we need to do more? Yes, we do, and that is why we're introducing legislation that will

bring Ornge under the Excellent Care for All legislation that will enshrine oversight in law.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: It's those front-line staff who are calling into question the integrity of the minister. That's why we are here having this debate.

When will this minister put patients and the air ambulance service of our province ahead of her own sense of importance? What makes this minister think that, given her track record of allowing the integrity of our air ambulance service to be undermined, her personal political career is more important than the integrity of the air ambulance service?

I ask the minister—it is her complete lack of leadership that has resulted in the circumstances that we find at Ornge today. Given that, will she put our air ambulance service, those front-line staff to whom she refers—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question?

Mr. Frank Klees: Will she put them ahead of herself and resign as minister—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: You know, Speaker, we may have our differences, but the member opposite and I also share a very fundamental value. That is that we want the very best care for the people in this province, the people who need our health care system, be it through air ambulance or through our entire health care system.

My responsibility is to fix the issues that arise. I have moved decisively to fix what was wrong, and I am moving decisively on introducing legislation, developing a new performance agreement, that will not only ensure much higher oversight going forward, but attempt to restore the confidence in Ornge that this member seems to try to disparage.

I'm asking the member opposite to support the new legislation that we will be introducing shortly to enhance the oversight and transparency at Ornge.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Taras Natyshak: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: Speaking to reporters last Friday, the minister said that Ornge would be subject to oversight from the Ontario Legislature through the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

My question is simple: Now that she has had some time to think about it, does the minister still believe that this is the case?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, what I can tell you is that if it is the will of the Legislature that they look at Ornge, I will be nothing but supportive of that decision. In fact, as we introduce legislation to enhance over-

sight and transparency at Ornge, I have every expectation that this will be the subject of a committee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The minister sets her expectations quite low, and she knows that despite recent changes, Ornge is not a government agency and cannot be called before committee. They're also not subject to freedom-of-information rules. That's no accident: Ornge was strategically designed this way.

Mr. Speaker, why did the McGuinty government design Ornge to be free from public scrutiny?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, what this question indicates to me is that that member, and presumably his party, will be fully supportive of the legislation we will be introducing to enhance transparency and oversight. That is what we know we need to do, and that is what we are going to be doing. So I look forward to continued conversations with the third party and with the opposition party as we do what we need to do to strengthen oversight at Ornge.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, recently you introduced a bill that would repeal the Public Works Protection Act. I understand that the act is an outdated piece of legislation; in fact, it dates back to 1939 and it was enforced in the context of World War II. But recently, during the G20 meeting in Toronto, there was much criticism—justified criticism—that the legislation was in need of revision.

Minister, it may seem obvious, but for the record, can you explain why you're proposing to repeal this piece of legislation?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'd like to thank the member from Willowdale for this important question. Protecting both safety and the rights of Ontarians is a top priority for our government. The McGuinty government is acting to update the legislation that protects our important facilities. In 2010, the McGuinty government called upon former Ontario Chief Justice Roy McMurtry to review the legislation. We are now acting on his recommendations.

The proposed new legislation strikes the right balance between the need to safeguard our courts and power-generating facilities with the need to protect the civil rights of Ontarians. I would encourage all members of this House to support the changes to this legislation to keep our communities safe and protect the rights of all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate that protecting public safety and at the same time respecting individual rights and freedoms is a very delicate balance. Minister, what stakeholder groups have you consulted, what sectors of the community have you consulted with in order to get the balance of this legislation correct so that we have an effective piece of legis-

lation that protects the community and preserves the individual rights of our citizens?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me thank very much Justice McMurtry and the Ombudsman for their good recommendations.

We have consulted with court security officials, the nuclear power industry, our justice partners, municipalities and civil liberty advocates. If passed, the new legislation will maintain the security of our courts and nuclear and other power-generating facilities. It would also require that any new security powers be given through legislation, creating public awareness and accountability.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, we are ensuring the protection of our key infrastructure while at the same time ensuring that all Ontarians are not subject to any more regulation than is needed to accomplish that goal.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, we now have evidence that a critically ill child, a newborn baby boy in Windsor, did wait four and a half hours for an air ambulance to take him to London. In fact, doctors were so worried about this delay that they sent the baby to Detroit instead, for fear that if he waited any longer he'd die.

We have now discovered that that was not the first time a critically ill or injured patient at Windsor Regional faced transfer delays that caused doctors concern. In fact, they had sent out a memo to staff on January 27, telling people: Send them to Detroit when you deem that a delay is going to be detrimental.

I ask you: The people at Ornge want to do the best job they can, but they can't if they can't get to the patient. Minister, is this the world-class air ambulance service that you bragged about yesterday, that Ontarians should expect in the future?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I am familiar with the case that the member has raised. What is important is that that child got the care that the child needed. The interests of the patient will always come first.

You know, Speaker, I have confidence in our front-line staff to make those split-second decisions that they must make when they are dealing with critically ill people. I think it's important that the member opposite understands that there is a protocol to report and improve quality. We want to do even more, Speaker; that is why we will be introducing legislation to bring Ornge under the Excellent Care for All legislation so that just like hospitals, they will publicly report on quality indicators and they will have a continual plan to improve quality.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: To the minister again: You acknowledged yesterday that you didn't know anything about the Windsor and London situations, and we now learn that this is a common problem in Windsor. I also want to remind you that in your own backyard, air

ambulance was not available for four consecutive nights last week because there were no pilots.

Minister, the public is concerned that lives are continuing to be put at risk. They have lost confidence in your ability to oversee this urgent care service. Indeed, this loss of confidence was reflected this morning when 83% of the people polled on AM640 said you should resign. I ask you, will you do the honourable thing and resign?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Minister.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I suspect that if there was a poll of the people asking, “Do we want to make Ornge stronger?” the answer would be 100% yes, we want to make it stronger. That is why we have put in place strong new leadership who are focused on exactly the issues that other members in this Legislature are focused on.

Under the leadership of Ian Delaney, we have a very strong board, one that Frank Klees himself described as a step in the right direction. These are very competent people. Frank Klees said that, Speaker.

Elizabeth Witmer said, in 2007 when they were debating Bill 171, “I know our party”—their party—“certainly can take some pride in what we have done ... to create a world-renowned air and land ambulance service.” Elizabeth Witmer again—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Today, Premier, you answered a question from the Leader of the Opposition saying that education was the basis for a strong economy. You’ve ruled out cuts to full-day kindergarten, but you haven’t ruled out the Drummond commission recommendations to cut funding to schools by almost \$3 billion.

If you indeed believe that investment in education is crucial to a skilled workforce and economic success, why won’t the Premier rule out those cuts put forward by Mr. Drummond?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I’m pleased to have an opportunity to talk about the advice that we’ve received from Don Drummond. Don Drummond has given us a great deal of advice, and we’re taking that into account and looking at it in the context of advice that we get from other important experts in the educational field; for example, how we can continue to see our student success rates go up.

But let’s be very clear: Our government has had a constant focus on increasing the success in public education. Funding has gone up by 46% since 2003. Our students are doing the best in the world. Our grad rates are up. Our test scores are up.

The Premier has been absolutely clear that we will take Don Drummond’s advice in the context of examining that and many issues, and we will make our decisions and make that clear in the upcoming budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, Speaker, parents are paying higher and higher fees for public education. Schools already lack adequate staffing. Now the McGuinty government is considering cutting 10,000 staff from our hard-pressed school system; cutting funding from classroom supplies, textbooks and computers by 25%; and charging fees for busing.

Parents are anxious; they’re worried about their children’s future. The Premier had to act and speak out that he was going to protect full-day kindergarten. Will he now give parents and their families assurance that these cuts recommended by Drummond will not go forward?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I do want to highlight that absolutely yes, we made it clear that full-day kindergarten would go ahead. And why did we do that? Because registration is as we speak. Families are planning for the school year ahead, and we knew that those families needed clarity. I myself have been in those families’ shoes, and I understand the importance of families planning for next September.

But, Speaker, let’s be clear: Our government has invested in public education. We will take Don Drummond’s recommendations in the context of ensuring that the steps that we take to find a sustainable pathway to public education are ones that protect the gains that we’ve made.

My friend opposite rises up and he has a lot of anxiety, but the curious thing is that in the last election campaign, the NDP didn’t even have an education platform. We’ve always been clear about our focus on public education. We will continue to do that, and we will take Don Drummond’s recommendations in that light.

ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I’ve got a question today for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. I think there’s an awareness in this House, on all sides, that our many aboriginal issues, particularly when it comes to land claims—that in order to achieve success, we’ve got to work together with our First Nations partners and with the federal government. It came as a surprise recently when the member from Haldimand–Norfolk stated to the media that the federal government has indicated that there is no valid land claim in the Haldimand tract area. Yet just this weekend, the federal MP for Brant stated that Canada stands ready to settle Six Nations land claims.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister please advise this House, the people of Ontario, and clarify this for us and tell us just what is accurate information?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you to the member for Oakville for his question.

I’ve had many conversations on this issue since I was appointed to this role in the fall. I’ve had the opportunity

to visit the community, to visit Caledonia and Six Nations to meet with the chief, some council members and area mayors. I can tell you that in all of those interactions, the message is quite clear: The federal government needs to come back to the negotiating table and to resolve this 200-year-old land claim.

Now, the federal government has been absent for a number of years, but I'm glad to see some encouraging words from the MP for Brant. Now we'd like to see action. We continue to urge the federal government to come back. But the land claim is only one part of the solution. We need conversations to happen with the confederacy and the local residents as well—bringing all the community members together is a necessity at this point. Any solution to the challenges in the community has to come forward from the community, and we're making it a priority to find those practical solutions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I think we'd all agree that having those conversations is important. Many members of this House travelled around with the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions and we heard exactly that when we travelled to First Nations communities. Now, constructive discussion and peaceful negotiations are obviously preferable to confrontation or unproductive negative commentary.

February 28 will mark the sixth anniversary of the events at Douglas Creek Estates. What actions has the government engaged in to date to find solutions to the challenges that are faced by residents in the Haldimand area?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: From my perspective, opening that conversation is the first step in determining the concrete actions that need to go forward. It's not for the government to step in unilaterally and decide the way forward for the community. That has to be part of the community members' solution—coming forward and coming up with long-term solutions that they can live with.

As a first step, what we're proposing is that we get all parties to the table to discuss potential uses for the DCE lands. Finding a use for the lands that Haldimand residents and Six Nations members can all agree on, I think, is an integral part of repairing the relationships in that region. In addition, we'll continue to urge the federal government to come and rekindle the negotiation process.

But it's important to remember that at the heart of the matter is a 200-year-old land claim that only the federal government can resolve. They have to come back to the negotiating table to resolve that. It would be very helpful if the members opposite would call their friends in Ottawa and ask the federal government—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Minister of Health. It involves the northern base of Ornge's air service in Thunder Bay. Today we have learned that Ornge

is now unable to guarantee 24-hour, seven-days-a-week air service to northern Ontario. The continuing problems are that there aren't enough medics or pilots available, or that the aircraft are out of service.

Minister, will you please stand here today and guarantee to the residents of northern Ontario that air ambulance service will be available on a 24/7 basis, fully staffed with critical care medics and pilots?

1130

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The quality of care that Ornge provides is, of course, dependent on access to that service. What I will undertake to do is to look into this particular situation and get back to the member with details on that situation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: As if the Thunder Bay slap to northern Ontario wasn't enough, we've also learned that Ornge plans to cancel emergency helicopter service to the First Nation residents of Moosonee. Minister, are they not deserving of the same level of emergency care as the rest of Ontario? Minister, will you stand up today and guarantee full air ambulance service to the First Nations and residents of Moosonee, and if not, will you resign?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What I can assure the member of is that I will look into this situation. But I can assure you, Speaker, that 24/7 service will be provided to the people of northern Ontario. The people of northern Ontario deserve access to health care the same as everyone else. In fact, a very high percentage of the work that Ornge does is in northern Ontario. I will get back to the member with more details but, yes, I can ensure 24/7 service.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Sarah Campbell: My question is to the Minister of Health. A month ago I wrote to the Minister of Health, urging her to address the ongoing problems in primary and emergency care in Rainy River. I invited the minister to come to my riding, sit down with health providers and community members, and finally come up with a solution that will work in the long term. One month later and I have not received a response, and we are now facing a crisis. I have a copy of that letter and a new one that I will ask a page to hand-deliver to the Minister of Health.

The only doctor who is left in Rainy River is leaving his position as of April after concluding, and this is a quote from him, "that the Ministry of Health has no interest in fixing the problem." Why is the minister forcing Rainy River into a crisis situation rather than working with us to solve the issue?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you for the question, and I welcome the invitation to come to Rainy River.

What I do want to say is that we are aware of the emergency department issues in Rainy River. We're working very hard to ensure the coverage that is required. I do want to say that I'm very happy to know that the

emergency department is now fully covered until April 5. The member opposite has raised issues before, worried about coverage over Christmas holidays, for example; we fixed that. We've now got coverage until April 5.

I can tell you that we are working hard to ensure that there is access to care throughout the province, and that is part of the reason why we are bringing primary care under the umbrella of the LHINs. It is at the LHIN level, the regional level, that primary care can be delivered—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It's a systemic issue. It's not a problem at the LHIN level; it's a systemic issue.

This doctor has been sounding alarm bells for years. The situation for family doctors in communities like Rainy River is untenable and it means that we are unable to recruit permanent family doctors. The minister knows all of this, yet she keeps hoping that the problems will somehow magically disappear. Well, they won't. The system as it now stands is broken. Will the minister commit to working with me and health care officials to create a strategy that works for Rainy River and other northern communities?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, what I can tell you is that this government has been very focused on ensuring that there is health coverage in the north. That is why we opened a new medical school in northern Ontario called the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. It is now graduating doctors who are from the north, who want to practise in the north, and they are training extraordinarily fine physicians. The people of northern Ontario are the beneficiaries of that investment today and they will continue to be as this Northern Ontario School of Medicine continues to graduate physicians who specifically want to work in the north.

The hospital in Rainy River is continuing to work with HealthForceOntario to ensure that there is adequate coverage.

The member opposite and I want the very same thing, and that's for there to be coverage for the people she represents. We are taking steps to do the very best we can to ensure that happens.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Cambridge on a point of order.

Mr. Rob Leone: Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order: During question period today, the Premier used the word "dumb" in relation to a quotation he supposedly got from the Drummond report in relation to the Leader of the Opposition's proposal for a public sector wage freeze. Mr. Speaker, the only mention of the word "dumb" is in recommendation 3.2, which talks about and discusses across-the-board cuts.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the Premier withdraw that statement and apologize to the Leader of the Opposition.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order. The member should know that members can correct their own record on Hansard and that's the way it works here. It's not a point of order.

DEFERRED VOTES

HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION TAX CREDIT ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / *Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1137 to 1142.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Members take your seats, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Members, I am serious. I'd better not say that in front of your leader because he's not in his seat yet, either.

I would beg your indulgence when it is time to seat. It should not take this long.

On November 29, 2011, Mr. Milloy moved second reading of Bill 2. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Bartolucci, Rick	Forster, Cindy	Murray, Glen R.
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Best, Margaret	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Piruzza, Teresa
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Prue, Michael
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Campbell, Sarah	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Schein, Jonah
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Chiarelli, Bob	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Sorbara, Greg
Coteau, Michael	Mantha, Michael	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Craitor, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Mauro, Bill	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	McGuinty, Dalton	Vanthof, John
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
DiNovo, Cheri	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Pettapiece, Randy
Chudleigh, Ted	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Shurman, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd

Elliott, Christine
Fedeli, Victor
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hillier, Randy
Hudak, Tim

McDonell, Jim
McKenna, Jane
McNaughton, Monte
Milligan, Rob E.
Munro, Julia
Nicholls, Rick

Thompson, Lisa M.
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Fifteen years ago, an agreement was made between the Ontario government, the horse racing industry and municipalities that allowed slots at racetracks on a mutually agreed revenue-sharing basis. Since that time, Ontario's horse racing industry has thrived and has become a destination for North American horse racing.

Between the year 2000 and today, wages and salaries sustained by the industry are up 50%. Annual expenditures from the industry are up 67% and revenues realized by federal, provincial and municipal governments have increased by 27%.

Over the past nine years, under this government's watch Ontario has slipped to become a have-not province. Our credit rating is being threatened by a ballooning debt and businesses are being forced to close or leave Ontario for other jurisdictions.

By misrepresenting the slots for the racetracks program as a subsidy, this government is choosing to end a program that supports the second-largest subsector of the agricultural economy: 60,000 jobs a year and millions of dollars in revenue.

The fact is, the government receives 80% of slot revenues and over \$260 million in revenues from horse racing. The government is going to kill the goose that lays the golden egg each and every year. The fact is, when it comes to rural economy, this government has turned a blind eye for nine years. The fact is, horse racing is good for Ontario.

HEALTH PROMOTION

Mr. Paul Miller: Like many of you, a great deal of my childhood was spent cultivating a lifelong love of sports. Though my knees aren't what they used to be, my passion remains with a healthy and active lifestyle.

I recently met with representatives of the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society to discuss their Healthiest Province campaign, highlighting the impact of health promotion on our health care system.

Early learning about the benefits of nutrition and exercise shapes lifelong habits and teaches children to value an active lifestyle, which will reduce their dependence on the health care system as adults.

Team sports are a simple and effective way to ensure that our children get the exercise they need. On March 9, I will be speaking at the Hamilton Soccer Hall of Fame. This organization honours athletic contributions that individuals have made in their communities. The inductees have set a positive example for Hamilton youth, promoting the benefit of sports and recreation.

I encourage all of our constituents to sign up their children for team sports and enjoy a healthy lifestyle for the whole family. Regardless of your game of choice,

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 69; the nays are 36.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): So ordered.

This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1147 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John O'Toole: I know they may not be here, but I was out today in the front yard on a demonstration on breed-specific bans. My constituents, Madge MacBeth-Goodfellow and Mike MacBeth-Goodfellow, I expect were out there; I expect them to be here. I'd like to welcome them to the Ontario Legislature and let them know my position on Bill 16.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I was remiss this morning in not introducing one last person that I should have, and I'd like to correct that matter. Wendell Palmer from the Niagara area was here to support my maiden speech, and so we'd like to welcome Wendell Palmer to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: At this point, I'd like to have the entire Legislature welcome my brother, Gurratan Dhaliwal, today. He's in the—

Applause.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: In case you're seeing double, that is my brother; and also, my good friend and classmate at Osgoode Hall Law School, Terry Taoussanopoulos.

Ms. Soo Wong: Shortly, I want to recognize a group of students coming from one of my schools, Sir Alexander MacKenzie Senior Public School, to the Legislature. They will be coming in. The students' names are Yin Wang, Holden Milligan, Ashley Jones, as well as the teacher, Ms. Barchha.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They're not here yet, but they will be arriving en masse, and I'd like to welcome in advance the Dog Legislation Council of Canada, the Canadian Kennel Club and a number of other groups that are here to hear the second bill discussed.

there's no denying that staying active makes us all healthier.

RIDING OF NIAGARA FALLS

Mr. Kim Craiton: It is with the greatest pleasure that I inform the House, the people of Ontario and the people of Canada that a major event will take place in my riding of Niagara Falls this summer. Last Wednesday, the Niagara Parks Commission passed, unanimously, a vote to allow Nik Wallenda's proposal to be the first person in over 120 years to cross Niagara Falls on the high wire. This permission came after the Governor of New York state, Andrew Cuomo, signed into state law legislation allowing Mr. Wallenda to cross the falls from their side as well.

This event will be seen all over the world, live on television, and will bring attention to the area for months leading up to the actual walk and certainly for years afterwards. The economic impact, as studied by Enigma Research here in Toronto, has been predicted to be up to at least \$120 million. Already, the press has been staggering. Since this approval, Nik has done interviews from Barcelona to Taiwan, from Austria to Australia, from China to Peru, from the New York Times to the London Times. It's only the beginning.

Nik is a seventh-generation member of the famed Flying Wallenda family of over 200 years. I have personally had the pleasure to know Nik and meet with him while he was going through this process—a family man through and through, a devoted husband and the father of three. I would love everyone from around the world to come to Niagara Falls this summer to watch a worldwide historic event.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Mrs. Julia Munro: Later today in private members' time, we will be debating Bill 16, which would repeal the pit bull ban in Ontario. This amendment represents the failure of government seven years ago. This amendment also represents the loss of trust people have in this government.

Seven years ago, people who obeyed the law, worked hard and paid taxes found themselves on the wrong side of the law. They discovered that their happy, healthy family pet had them on the wrong side of the law. He looked like a pit bull type of dog. Even then, these owners felt there was a mistake. How could their government betray them? After all, since pre-industrial times, people who share the parliamentary tradition that we have know they are innocent until proven guilty.

Little did they know that that fundamental principle of democratic government had been removed in this act. People woke up to a new reality. These families would have to mount a defence to prove that their family pet was not a pit bull type. Untold thousands could not afford to mount a legal defence. Thousands of dogs were

euthanized. This had nothing to do with dangerous dogs; it had everything to do with a political agenda.

REFUGEES

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Mr. Speaker, last night in my riding, we had a powerful and moving event. It was a candlelight vigil for the Roma refugees and immigrants in my riding. There were about 300 people there, and when asked if they had ever experienced violence in their home countries, many of them coming from European Union countries like Hungary and the former Czechoslovakia, all of them put their hands up. We asked them if they had ever experienced oppression or racism. All of them, including the children, put their hands up.

They were there for another reason too, and that's a draconian bill, Bill C-31, that's being brought in by the federal government under the auspices of Jason Kenney. It's a bill that will limit even more Roma people from being able to seek refugee status in this country; we only accept 2% of those who are applying now.

1310

I also remind the members that Roma were victims of the Holocaust as well: Two million Roma were killed by the Nazis during the Holocaust years. Now, the least we can do is to accept those who are already being faced with deportation from home countries, who are faced with imprisonment and violence and draconian laws throughout Europe.

We strongly oppose this bill. We ask that the government here do what they can to oppose it when they're dealing with the federal government, and we ask all members to be very aware of the plight of the Roma people, not only here in Ontario—although they are here—but everywhere in the world.

ED ARNOLD

Mr. Jeff Leal: There are people throughout our lifetimes whom we respect for their leadership and their contribution to our communities. In Peterborough, one of these individuals is Ed Arnold. For 40 years, Ed Arnold has managed the Peterborough Examiner newspaper. To quote the Examiner staff, "He announced his retirement and the power went out."

Ed Arnold was born and raised in Peterborough and graduated from my high school, Kenner Collegiate, where his name now appears on their wall of honour. His newspaper career began shortly after that. In his youth, he worked for the Examiner and the Globe and Mail delivering newspapers.

After graduating college in 1985, he became the managing editor of the Peterborough Examiner. His 40 years of reporting the news would shape the views and attitudes of the residents of Peterborough on many, many issues.

His reporting was factual and honest. Ed liked good-news stories. When asked what news events stayed with him throughout his career, his recollections immediately

go to the human side of the news. Although he covered all facets of the news, he had a compassion for the human story.

Ed Arnold not only cared about reporting the news; he was passionate about his community. He was a tireless volunteer, working with local charities, sports organizations and local projects, many of which benefit children in our community. These contributions were recognized many times over. He was the recipient of the Rotary Club Paul Harris award and the Ontario medal of citizenship, and his name appears on the Pathway of Fame in Peterborough. He is the author of 11 books and has received international recognition for his work on *The Flying Bandit*.

Ed Arnold's name is synonymous with the Examiner. Although we will all wish Ed well in his retirement, his professionalism, his insight, his compassion, his humour and his love of reporting the news will be greatly missed by the people in Peterborough.

LIVE BAIT INDUSTRY

Ms. Laurie Scott: The live bait industry in Ontario is important to anglers, bait and tackle shops, and the harvesters who make their living in this field. On June 29 of last year, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency confirmed the presence of viral haemorrhagic septicaemia, or VHS, in Lake Simcoe, and advised MNR on July 5.

However, MNR decided not to make this public until December 14, when they advised bait harvest licence holders of the presence of VHS, and that as of January 1, 2012, an import-export ban would be imposed for their minnows beyond the Lake Simcoe management zone. Approximately 50% of the harvest is shipped to bait and tackle shops all over Ontario, particularly in the north.

The harvesting of minnows for the ice fishing season occurs during the fall. Because these small businesses were kept in the dark by MNR, many of them invested tens of thousands of dollars in their harvest, only to have 50% of their markets closed to them, making it impossible to recoup their investments.

For over six months, MNR allowed these minnows to be shipped all over the province without restriction, yet imposed an arbitrary embargo date of January 1, which will force many of these small businesses into bankruptcy. This is a terrible example of mismanagement of our natural resources by this government, which in this case will result in lost livelihoods. It is shameful, Mr. Speaker.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I want to take this time to talk about a very difficult issue, and that is suicide. Suicides break families and grieve our community. Youth or teen suicide, Speaker, is an even more difficult challenge, due to bullying or mental health issues.

We, in our community, as we have spoken in the House, have had many instances of suicides lately taking

place among young people recently. Most notably, Councillor Allan Hubley's son took his life.

As a result, Speaker, our community wanted to do something so that we can prevent suicides, especially among our young people, in the future. The member from Nepean–Carleton and I got together because we recognized that this is not a partisan issue. We worked along with Councillor Allan Hubley, and we also enlisted the support of Steve Madely from CFRA Ottawa, a radio personality who's very well known in the community. And we worked along with the Ottawa Community Suicide Prevention Network, a group of 40 organizations that have been working together to look into strategies to prevent suicide.

On February 8, a symposium was held in Ottawa to launch an action plan to make Ottawa a suicide-safe community. There are five pillars to that plan, Speaker: leadership; training to improve mental health literacy; suicide bereavement for those who are affected; mental health promotion; and creation of a community action plan, to be completed within a year.

All of our community, the provincial government, the municipal government and the leadership of Dr. Isra Levy and Mayor Watson have come together. We're hoping the federal government will come to the table as well so that we can make Ottawa a suicide-safe community. Thank you, Speaker.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let me get this statement out of the way.

The member from Huron–Bruce.

TOWN OF GODERICH

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's going to be hockey night in Goderich when Goderich wins the title of Kraft Hockeyville 2012. I'm pleased to rise today, Mr. Speaker, and pledge my support for the town of Goderich to be named the winner of Kraft Hockeyville 2012.

Goderich is a town of unbelievable spirit. As you know, last August, an F3 tornado touched down in the centre of town, destroying the centre square of Canada's prettiest town. Their tornado destroyed homes, businesses and cultural landmarks. As devastated as the community was, they picked up and lent a helping hand. They've worked their way back to getting the community back on track.

The top 15 communities for Hockeyville will be named on March 3, and I'm confident Goderich will be in the mix. Goderich started Hockeyville Fridays where people are encouraged to wear their hockey jerseys to work and school every day in support of their bid. They've held residential decorating concerts where homeowners are encouraged to decorate the front of their homes and share their spirit as well. The Goderich Hockeyville bid has almost 2,000 fans on Facebook, and I'm pleased to promote them on my MPP website.

Kraft Hockeyville has lifted the spirits of a town that was literally torn apart last August. It's amazing to see

this community rise above adversity. I look forward to announcing their win later this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Member from Lanark, Frontenac, Lenington and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Lennox and Addington. Very good. Sorry, I've been away for a few days and you haven't had the opportunity to rehearse that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The crutches threw me off.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent from the House today for people in the Legislative Assembly, in this chamber, to wear yellow scarves in support of Bill 16 this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Unanimous consent has been asked to wear scarves this afternoon. Is there agreement? I heard a no.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RADON AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACT, 2012 LOI DE 2012 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

Mr. Moridi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces / *Projet de loi 36, Loi visant à sensibiliser le public au radon, à prévoir la création du Registre des concentrations de radon en Ontario et à réduire la concentration de ce gaz dans les logements et les lieux de travail.*

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

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Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The bill enacts the Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, 2012, and amends the Building Code Act, 1992, with respect to radon. The act provides for the establishment of the Ontario Radon Registry and requires radon measurement specialists and laboratories to provide the registry with specified information.

The minister is required to educate the public about radon and to encourage homeowners to measure the radon levels in their homes and take remedial actions if necessary. The minister is also required to ensure that the radon level in every provincially-owned dwelling is measured and that remedial action is taken if necessary.

Similarly, owners of enclosed workplaces are required to ensure that the radon level in an enclosed workplace is measured and remedial action is taken if necessary.

The Building Code Act, 1992, is amended to provide authority for regulations that require buildings to be constructed in a way that minimize radon entry and facilitate post-construction radon removal.

The minister is required to review those requirements within five years after the day the Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, 2012, comes into force.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AMENDMENT ACT, 2012 LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ DE PROTECTION DES ANIMAUX DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. MacLaren moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 37, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act / *Projet de loi 37, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des animaux de l'Ontario.*

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to amend the OSPCA Act to remove all enforcement powers, the need for enforcement staff, and any fines, penalties, invoicing or bills that the OSPCA has currently been doing. All policing would then be done by the local police force, whether that be the OPP, city police or regional police. The law would be the Criminal Code of Canada that would be used for policing. The Animal Care Review Board would also be removed.

MOTIONS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous support to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is there unanimous consent? I heard a no.

Interjection: Who said that?

Mr. Frank Klees: Ask again.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I shall ask again because I didn't want that to interrupt your conversation. Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed. We have unanimous consent.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: After the scarf issue, I don't know if we should allow that.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It's on your behalf.

I move that, during consideration of private members' public business this afternoon, in the event that Bill 17, An Act to Proclaim the Month of May Jewish Heritage Month, receives second reading, the order for third reading shall immediately be called and the question be put immediately without debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it agreed for the House? All in favour? Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I'm getting my wording down. Agreed.
Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

QUEEN ELIZABETH II DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDAL

Hon. Charles Sousa: I rise in the House today to recognize Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee. The year 2012 marks the 60th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne. This year-long celebration gives Ontarians a chance to look back and thank Her Majesty for her tireless service to Ontario and Canada.

The world has seen dramatic social change in the last 60 years. But our Queen has remained steadfast, a symbol of tradition and stability.

On this occasion, we honour her kindness, her spirit and her tremendous sense of duty. We admire her for guiding the monarchy into the modern world.

To recognize the Diamond Jubilee, the province will award over 2,000 outstanding Ontarians a Diamond Jubilee Medal. These medal recipients are people who have used their time and talents to make our province a better place to live. Mr. Speaker, this is a fitting way to celebrate Her Majesty and the importance she puts on service to others.

Many remarkable Canadians have already received the Diamond Jubilee Medal: musician Gordon Lightfoot for his contribution to the arts; Daryl Fox for his commitment to finding a cure for cancer; and the youngest Canadian to receive this honour, eight-year-old Bryden Hutt for his support of the Children's Wish Foundation.

I invite my honourable colleagues to recognize outstanding members of their communities with this special award. All members of provincial Parliament have received Diamond Jubilee Medals to distribute in their ridings. Mr. Speaker, this ensures that we reach every corner of the province so that we may find and reward those Ontarians who share in the bravery, kindness, commitment and other positive qualities embodied by our Queen.

In fact, all Ontarians will have a chance to nominate members of their community for a Jubilee Medal. Any Ontarian can visit the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's website to nominate someone for this medal using an easy online form. The nomination deadline is April 30, 2012.

Mr. Speaker, Her Majesty has said, "In this special year, as I dedicate myself anew to your service, I hope we will all be reminded of the power of togetherness and the convening strength of family, friendship and good neighbourliness." Let us keep Her Majesty's words in mind as we move forward together in 2012. Let those words inspire our actions and let us join with the Queen in her hopes for a better and more prosperous society.

Finally, as we celebrate the Diamond Jubilee, let us reflect on our good fortune to call ourselves Ontarians and Her Majesty our head of state.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Thank you to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, who of course had the distinction of being honoured with a Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2003 in recognition of his charitable work in the community. It was well earned, I'm sure. The fact that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is now overseeing the Diamond Jubilee Medal program is one of those delightful plot twists that seem to accompany the royals.

It is my distinct honour to rise today to speak in recognition of the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who ascended to the throne 60 years ago this month.

Since that time, she has remained dear to many people around the world. Perhaps no one outside of Britain has cherished her more than Canadians.

The affection is mutual. Her Majesty has praised Canada's values of freedom and fairness, and she has visited here about two dozen times since her teen years, when she toured as a princess. On her first post-coronation visit to Canada in the fall of 1957, Queen Elizabeth had been monarch for five years but was not much older than our current Duchess of Cambridge. Indeed, her star power burned infinitely brighter during her whirlwind tour: Her Majesty would visit again soon after to open the St. Lawrence Seaway, and again a few years later for events marking the centennial of Confederation.

In the summer of 1973, then-Premier Bill Davis and Lieutenant Governor William Ross Macdonald were part of a motorcade that led Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip from Pearson International Airport to Queen's Park. Once again, she was here to celebrate some notable anniversaries, among them the centennial of the RCMP and the 300th anniversary of Kingston.

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In the last decade, the Queen's 2002 Royal Jubilee visit made stops in Hamilton, Oakville and Ottawa as well as Toronto, where she visited the CBC to mark the television broadcaster's 50th anniversary. The Queen returned with Prince Philip in 2010 for a visit that concluded at Queen's Park, where they were met by an appreciative crowd on the south grounds. Her Majesty attended the presentation of the Ontario Medals For Good Citizenship and then unveiled a special plaque commemorating Queen's Park's 105th anniversary.

We gather together in this historic building in the midst of a turbulent era—turbulent at home and abroad.

Look at the headlines and you see a world lurching from crisis to crisis. Europe regularly seems to be teetering on the brink of ruin.

It might be helpful to recall how a set of public figures weathered a stormy darkness 72 years ago, how our Queen and her family withstood the Blitz years with grace, grit and a stiff upper lip.

Her Majesty's elegant blend of toughness and poise was bred into her early on. Against the advice of the foreign office, the royal family refused to flee Britain during World War II. The royals stood firm in Buckingham Palace, which absorbed several direct hits from German bombers. The King and Queen were nearly killed one September day when a pair of German bombs tore through Buckingham Palace, prompting the Queen mother's wonderful, no-nonsense response: "I am glad we have been bombed. Now we can look the east end in the eye."

During the Blitz period, the teenage Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret were sent west to Windsor Castle for their safety. A month after that dramatic bombing, 14-year-old Elizabeth took to the airwaves to reach out to the children and youth of the Commonwealth who had been sent abroad for their safety: "I can truthfully say to you all that we children at home are full of cheerfulness and courage," she assured them. "We are trying to do all we can to help our gallant sailors, soldiers and airmen, and we are trying, too, to bear our own share of the danger and sadness of war."

That spirit of solidarity and shared sacrifice appeared again a few years later. It was 65 years ago this month, much to her father's frustration, that Her Majesty joined the women's Auxiliary Territorial Service, where she served as a truck and ambulance driver, always aware of the value of self-reliance and utterly unafraid of manual labour—quite the opposite.

She has also been a compelling voice for peace. Her speech last year at Dublin Castle was a perfect case in point. Looking back over the long and bloody conflict between England and Ireland, she spoke of "the complexity of our history, its many layers and traditions, but also the importance of forbearance and consolation; of being able to bow to the past, but not be bound by it." All of us here might take some of that wisdom to heart.

The Queen is a remarkable woman who has led an extraordinary life, even by the elevated standards of royalty. It is only fitting that we will recognize the occasion of her 60th year on the throne to honour exceptional Ontarians with the Diamond Jubilee Medal. These awards will allow all of the members of the Legislature to remind ourselves of those outstanding citizens who have achieved excellence and demonstrated a commitment to the growth and prosperity of our province. I know that we all look forward to celebrating their stories, even as we honour Her Majesty's 60th anniversary as Queen. God save.

Mr. Michael Prue: It is indeed an honour to stand here and talk about the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty's accession to the throne.

You know, in those 60 years, and I'm starting to remember some—most—of those 60 years, a great deal has happened in our world. The technological changes that bring people into your living room every day—never mind your living room, onto your BlackBerry that I often see many members in this House looking at, although they're not supposed to. It can be brought immediately. So if anything happens in the world, instantly, billions of people know about it. In that time, nothing that has happened has diminished the respect people of this country and this province have for the Queen. That cannot be said for many heads of state, that cannot be said for many people in political life, because the foibles of people come and are very transparent today. But throughout even the most difficult of times, the Queen has handled them with grace and with dignity and has set an example, I think, for all of us in public life.

At 85 years of age, she has a stamina that remains undiminished and is actually quite astounding. She has made, as has been said, 23 or 24 trips to Canada alone. She has spent a lifetime speaking to and about and with the people of the Commonwealth, and she has shown us all what it means to be a public servant. In honour of those 60 years, we will be handing out Diamond Jubilee medals.

I remember some 10 years ago, as a relatively new member of provincial Parliament in this place, having the honour to hand out some Golden Jubilee medals in my own riding. Although I had only been there less than a year, it fell upon me and my staff to identify people we could honour. I still remember to this day how moved the people were that they were considered. They were unsung heroes. They were people who had not been hugely recognized. We held a ceremony in this very building, in room 230. We brought in a caterer. We told a story about each one. We pinned the medals on. We took pictures. We made sure that the media knew about it in the riding.

Some of those people—as best I could remember this morning—included Theresa Bowers, for her work as a tenant representative; Grace Stephens and her many years of work around race relations issues; Vi Thompson, whom we honoured for her help in all the things she did for seniors and seniors' organizations; Linda Tourney, for her work as a unionist; Carolyn Lemon for establishing Lemon and Allspice to give adults with developmental disabilities an opportunity to run a business; Doug Taylor, for his work with the Métis community; we honoured Walter and Dylis Jones for their work in Toronto East General Hospital—for more than 30 years, they laboured and continue to labour for that hospital; and John Ridout, who is now deceased but who was the president of the East York Historical Society, who tried to preserve our neighbourhood and all the history that was much beloved by our community. Those were just some of the people.

I'm looking forward to the 14 recipients—we haven't even sat down to determine who they might be. Those are the kinds of heroes that each and every one of us has in

our communities. Those are the kinds of people who need to be recognized.

I would invite all of you, if you have the opportunity and if you're not too far away from this beautiful building, to hold the ceremony here. If your community is too far away, hold it in a city hall or a place of some enormous dignity. Call it a media event. Invite people in. Invite the media. Show them that we have heroes. We have people in our community who give of themselves in the same kind of way that Her Majesty has for the last 65 years, people who put their community first and, above all else, people who deserve the recognition, and people who I am sure will proudly wear this medal for the rest of their lives.

Congratulations to all of us who are going to do this and to Her Majesty on 60 years of service to the people of the world.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'd like to thank all of the members for their very kind comments about Her Majesty and to bring reference, as a reminder to the members of this place and also to guests, that right downstairs in the main lobby there is a book of good wishes from the people of Ontario. So please feel free to go down and sign the book of good wishes, which will be sent to Her Majesty. Thank you very much.

PETITIONS

RURAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Jim Wilson: "Petition to Save Duntroon Central Public School and All Other Rural Schools in Clearview Township.

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is an important part of Clearview township and the surrounding area; and

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is widely recognized for its high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

"Whereas the frameworks of rural schools are different from urban schools and therefore deserve to be governed by a separate rural school policy; and

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"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election campaign that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep rural schools open in Simcoe-Grey;

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

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of Clearview township and suspend the Simcoe County District School Board ARC 2010:01 until the province develops a rural school policy

that recognizes the value of schools in the rural communities of Ontario."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas currently the law takes the onus off of owners that raise violent dogs by making it appear that violence is a matter of genetics; and

"Whereas the Dog Owners' Liability Act does not clearly define a pit bull, nor is it enforced equally across the province, as pit bulls are not an acknowledged breed;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly passes Bill 16, the Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, into law."

I absolutely agree, of course; I co-signed the legislation. I affix my signature.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here that was sent to me by Shirley Hanlon from Tavistock, Mr. Speaker. It's signed by a great number of people, not only in the riding of Oxford but in the adjoining ridings—in Perth-Wellington and in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Tavistock's Bonnie Brae Health Care Centre is an 80-bed, D-class nursing home that must be either rebuilt or closed by July 2014; and

"Whereas there is currently an application by a private operator to move the 80 licensed beds outside of Oxford county to the city of London, despite the recent opening of two other long-term-care homes in Middlesex county in 2010; and

"Whereas long-term-care wait times in Oxford county can be as much as 134 days longer than in Middlesex county; and

"Whereas Tavistock receives referrals from the nearby Waterloo Wellington CCAC, which has among the highest waits for long-term care in the province;

"We, the undersigned, request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario retain these beds in Tavistock and seek partners to fast-track replacement of the Bonnie Brae as part of Ontario's 10-year plan to modernize 35,000 long-term-care beds."

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition on behalf of my constituents. I will sign it, as I agree with its content.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. John O'Toole: It's my distinct pleasure, even though it's out of sequence, to read a petition from the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

“Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the greenbelt; and

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier governments to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

“Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment to initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt, specifically at 4148 Regional Highway 2, Newcastle, and Lakeridge Road in Durham.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this and present it to Rachel, one of the pages here, and support my constituents.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition here today—over 4,000 names. The petition reads:

“Whereas currently the law takes the onus off of owners that raise violent dogs by making it appear that violence is a matter of genetics; and

“Whereas the Dog Owners’ Liability Act does not clearly define a pit bull, nor is it enforced equally across the province, as pit bulls are not an acknowledged breed;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly passes Bill 16, Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, into law.”

Speaker, I agree with this petition, I will hand over the 4,000, and in addition, there are over 7,000 online petitions that have also been received.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Mr. Speaker, you’ll have heard this before, but I’m going to do it again.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas currently the law takes the onus off of owners that raise violent dogs by making it appear that violence is a matter of genetics; and

“Whereas the Dog Owners’ Liability Act does not clearly define a pit bull, nor is it enforced equally across the province, as pit bulls are not an acknowledged breed;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 16, Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, into law.”

I’m going to give it to our wonderful page Sophia to be delivered to the table.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. Jim Wilson: A petition to restore local control:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s Liberal government is forcing Ontario municipalities to build industrial wind and solar power generation facilities without any local say or local approval; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government transferred decision-making power from elected municipal governments to unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats, who are accountable to no one; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government has removed any kind of appeal process for municipalities or for people living in close proximity to these projects; and

“Whereas Tim Hudak, Jim Wilson and the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party have committed to restoring local decision-making powers and to building renewable energy projects only in places where they are welcomed, wanted and at prices Ontario families can afford;

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

“That the McGuinty government restore local decision-making powers for renewable energy projects and immediately stop forcing new industrial wind and solar developments on municipalities that have not approved them and whose citizens do not want them in their community.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

Interruption.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would just like to welcome the audience and remind you that you’re allowed to observe the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, but you must refrain from clapping and doing any other things. I’d appreciate that.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Rob Leone: I’m pleased to rise in this House once again to table some more petitions on the child care issue in Waterloo region.

“Whereas the Waterloo Region District School Board (hereinafter ‘the board’) proposes to implement a before-and after-school child care program in their schools for children ages four to seven years, effective September 2012;

“Whereas the board intends to prohibit all daycare centres currently partnered with schools from continuing to provide the same services;

“Whereas the board intends to charge \$27 per day for the same services that the YWCA charges \$16 per day;

“Whereas the implementation of such a program would result in the loss of revenue for the daycare centres

currently partnered with schools, further resulting in either a fee increase to child care services for children three years and under (\$1,500 plus per month) or the complete closure of child care programs for children three years and under;

“Whereas the result would be to create a crisis in child care for parents in this region who require good-quality, affordable child care for their children three and under, which already suffers from a severe shortage of such services;

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

“Whereas we are seeking that the board either cease to implement such a program or implement a hybrid approach wherein existing daycare centres partnered with schools will be allowed to continue to provide before- and after-school care at rates set by them, and the board may operate before- and after-school care in schools which do not have on-site daycare centres;

“Whereas, should the board refuse to implement either approach,

“We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation amending the Education Act and the Day Nurseries Act so as to protect our valuable and vulnerable child care spaces and affordability from the above actions of the Waterloo Region District School Board.”

Mr. Speaker, there are hundreds of signatures on these petitions. I'm pleased to sign it and hand them over to page Judy.

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RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition not only on behalf of the member from Simcoe–Grey but from the riding of Durham. This petition was presented to me by Clarington Wind Concerns and Heather Rutherford. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty's Liberal government is forcing Ontario municipalities to build industrial wind and solar power generation facilities without any local say or local approval; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government transferred decision-making power from elected municipal governments to unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats, who are accountable to no one; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government has removed any kind of appeal process for municipalities or for people living in close proximity to these projects; and

“Whereas Tim Hudak, Jim Wilson,” myself “and the Progressive Conservative Party have committed to restoring local decision-making powers and to building renewable energy projects only in places where they are welcomed, wanted and at prices ... families can afford;

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

“That the McGuinty government restore local decision-making powers for renewable energy projects and immediately stop forcing new industrial wind and

solar developments on municipalities” and agricultural land that have not been approved “and whose citizens do not want them in their community.”

I am pleased to sign and support this petition on behalf of my constituents and present it to Jason, one of the pages.

TUITION

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm pleased to rise in this House to present petitions from students at my alma mater, McMaster University.

“Whereas tuition fees in Ontario have increased by up to 59% since 2006, and students in Ontario pay the highest fees in Canada; and

“Whereas Ontario students owe \$37,000 on average after graduation and collectively owe more than \$7 billion to the federal government and more than \$2 billion to the Ontario government; and

“Whereas tuition fees are the most significant barrier that prevents students from obtaining a post-secondary credential and disproportionately hinders access for students who are low-income, racialized, francophone, aboriginal, queer, transgender or have a disability; and

“Whereas tuition fee increases have enabled successive Ontario governments to remove funding from the post-secondary education sector, leaving Ontario dead last in per-student funding, \$15,000 lower per student than Alberta; and

“Whereas during the 2011 Ontario election, the government was elected in part based on a promise to reduce tuition fees by 30%; and

“Whereas all political parties in Ontario have publicly acknowledged that college and university tuition fees are too high;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, support the Canadian Federation of Students—Ontario's call to drop tuition fees and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to apply the promised \$430 million in funding for grants to reduce tuition fees for all students and progressively reduce fees by 30% over four years, reduce the debt cap and introduce more student grants rather than loans for students, and increase per-student funding to the national average.”

Mr. Speaker, unlike the government, which has proposed several bills of spend, spend spend, Minister—I'd like to present this petition and assign it to Grace.

DOG OWNERSHIP

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

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

“Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

“Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

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

“To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners’ Liability Act (2005) and any related acts, and instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

There are hundreds more signatures, and of course I’m going to sign it myself and give it to Mackenzie to be delivered to the table.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I have here a petition signed by a great number of my constituents and other good folks in the area. It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s Liberal government is forcing Ontario municipalities to build industrial wind and solar power generation facilities without any local say or local approval; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government transferred decision-making power from elected municipal governments to unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats, who are accountable to no one; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government has removed any kind of appeal process for municipalities or for people living in close proximity to these projects; and

“Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party have committed to restoring local decision-making powers and to building renewable energy projects only in places where they are welcomed, wanted and at prices Ontario families can afford;

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

“That the McGuinty government restore local decision-making powers for renewable energy projects and immediately stop forcing new industrial wind and solar developments on municipalities that have not approved them and whose citizens do not want them in their community.”

I thank you very much again, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present this petition, and I sign it, as I agree with the petition.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time for petitions has come to an end.

I would once again like to remind the audience that we welcome you here to observe the proceedings in the chamber, but I would ask you to refrain from clapping, if you can.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Ms. Soo Wong: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should create a

childhood obesity awareness month during the month of May as part of its strategy to combat childhood obesity in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Soo Wong: Today, I stand in this House to introduce my private member’s resolution, which calls on the government of Ontario to create a childhood obesity awareness month during the month of May as part of its strategy to combat childhood obesity in Ontario.

I’m introducing this resolution after consultation with medical professionals, researchers, educators and young people, through which I was able to learn more about childhood obesity. From those consultations, I can tell you something we have all heard already: Childhood obesity is a growing problem that needs our concern.

Childhood obesity is measured in young people aged two to 17. It can be understood as a preventable condition that occurs when children have an abundance of body fat. Simply, obesity results from an imbalance when energy consumed is greater than that released.

Childhood obesity has become an international crisis. The World Health Organization has stated that childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century. According to estimates, 42 million children globally under five years of age are overweight. In the UK, the latest health survey for England shows that over one in 10 children aged two to 10 are obese. According to the government-commissioned Forsyth report, if no action is taken, 25% of children in the UK will be obese by 2050.

In the United States, childhood obesity rates have nearly tripled over the past 30 years. Today, the Centers for Disease Control states that 17% of American children are obese. In addition, studies have shown that 31.7% are obese or overweight. That means that more than 12 million American children and adolescents are obese and more than 23 million are either obese or overweight.

In Canada, we are facing a similar problem. It is estimated that 26% of our children nationwide are either obese or overweight. In addition, over the past three decades, obesity rates have tripled in children aged 12 to 17 in this country.

Ontario is not immune to this childhood obesity problem. In a 2004 report entitled *Healthy Weights, Healthy Lives*, the then Chief Medical Officer of Health, the late Dr. Sheela Basrur, stated, “An epidemic of overweight and obesity is threatening Ontario’s health.”

For Ontario, childhood obesity data is limited, but according to Statistics Canada, in 2010, 20% of youth aged 12 to 17 were obese or overweight. It is important to note that this statistic is based on self-reported height and weight data, which tend to underestimate percentages of people who are overweight or obese. Concern over childhood obesity rates has also been voiced in a study by Dr. McCrindle of the Hospital for Sick Children.

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Obesity rates among our children are at an unacceptable level. Ontario physicians have warned that if these

current obesity trends continue, we are raising the first generation of children who will not outlive their parents. It is for this reason that we must address the issue.

As a nurse, I can tell you that when unhealthy habits are learned at a young age, they stay with children into their older years. These habits can lead to worse health implications down the road. Evidence has shown that obesity in children contributes to the early onset of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, chronic joint pain, several types of cancers, and breathing problems such as sleep apnea. These are chronic diseases that will remain with our children as they progress in their lives, preventing our children from living the normal, healthy lives they should.

And because of the associated health risks, obesity has an enormous economic cost on our society. The health impacts related to being overweight or obese cost Ontario \$2.2 billion to \$2.5 billion a year.

Statistics also show that 75% of obese children will be obese as adults. Obesity costs become more expensive as people get older. Considering that over half of Ontario adults are obese or overweight, this province faces a threat of increases in health costs down the line with the high prevalence of childhood obesity in Ontario.

It is for all of these reasons I have mentioned that we need a childhood obesity awareness month. We need a month to educate and inform the public about the need for all of our children to live healthy, active lives. We need to use this month to help alleviate the current crisis and prevent all of our kids from developing unhealthy habits.

Mr. Speaker, as part of my consultations to learn more about childhood obesity, I visited many schools in my riding for a number of childhood obesity and healthy living round tables. A number of schools participated, including Agincourt Collegiate Institute; Sir Alexander Mackenzie—some of my students are here today; Henry Kelsey public school; Dr. Norman Bethune Collegiate; Kennedy Public School; David Lewis Public School; Terry Fox Public School; L'Amoreaux Collegiate; Sir Ernest MacMillan Senior Public School; Stephen Leacock Collegiate; Chester Le public school and St. Henry Catholic School.

The reason why I conducted these round tables was because I wanted to hear from young people who see childhood obesity first-hand or may be experiencing it. I wanted to hear about what they thought about childhood obesity, what are its causes, and how we must deal with this issue. The students provided valuable insight on this issue. They told me that youth today are spending a lot of time watching TV, playing video games and on their computers. Some walk to school, while many do not. Many eat unhealthy food because it is advertised more in the media and is much easier to access. Students also told me that they are dependent on their parents to provide them with healthy foods.

Our kids are more sedentary now than ever before. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines suggest that young people age five to 17 should accumulate at least

60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily. However, only 7% of young people attain this level of physical activity, according to the Canadian Health Measures Survey.

Our kids are also eating less healthy. The consumption of high-sodium, fatty foods and high-sugar drinks all play a role in contributing to obesity in children. In a 2009 report by the Heart and Stroke Foundation on the health of Ontario kids, they found that only 13% of Ontario kids age six to 12 eat the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

We need a childhood obesity awareness month to encourage our kids to be more active and eat healthier. We must use a childhood obesity awareness month to empower our parents to make healthy choices for their kids.

Mr. Speaker, as part of my consultations on childhood obesity, I met with Dr. McVey and Dr. Ferguson at the Hospital for Sick Children. Both doctors emphasized to me the significance of mental health and how it contributes to childhood obesity. Negative body self-imaging and stress at home can contribute to unhealthy eating, binge eating and a lack of self-confidence.

In fact, this point was emphasized by my conversations with students. Stress in a young person's life in school or with their family may lead them to eat unhealthy foods. As well, students who are overweight or obese face bullying, and they are constantly bombarded by the media's portrayal of an ideal body. As a result, those young people lack confidence in their bodies, isolate themselves from others and can suffer from depression.

It is important that we use childhood obesity awareness month to promote positive mental health, confidence and positive self-imaging in all of our children, so our children can have confidence to be healthy.

It is also important that we use childhood obesity awareness month to encourage our schools to teach our kids the importance of living healthy, active lives. In my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, many parents are new Canadians. They work long hours. As a result, the school is where the kids learn many of their healthy, active-living habits. Because the school plays such a pivotal role, I am proposing that childhood obesity awareness month take place in May. This will give our young people an opportunity to be in school and also enjoy the warm weather of May so that they can be physically active outside.

Many of the schools in my riding are working to promote healthy, active living to our young people. We must also use childhood obesity awareness month to encourage our school boards to continue to motivate our students to live healthy, active lives. The chair of the Toronto District School Board wrote to me and stated that by working together and raising awareness, he believes “we can help encourage physical activity and develop healthy eating habits in children that will last a lifetime.”

We should also use childhood obesity awareness month to encourage our businesses, community groups

and sports teams to work in the communities to promote physical activities amongst our youth.

Mr. Speaker, this government has already committed to combatting childhood obesity in Ontario. The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care recently released the Ontario action plan for health care. The government will “aggressively take on the challenge to reduce childhood obesity by 20% over five years.” I fully support this initiative by the minister. My resolution, in creating childhood obesity awareness month, will complement the minister’s objective.

To all members of this Legislature: Childhood obesity is a growing crisis that has an enormous impact on our society, but most of all has an impact on our young people. I hope you will support this resolution so that we can use the month of May to raise awareness about childhood obesity and encourage all of our young people to be healthy and active. What they will learn in the month of May can be used all year around. It is the future of our children and youth that is at stake here.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Let me offer my congratulations to the member from Scarborough–Agincourt. I thought that was an outstanding presentation that she just made regarding her resolution that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should create a childhood obesity awareness month during the month of May as part of its strategy to combat childhood obesity in Ontario.

I believe she made some outstanding points about the situation that exists today and also the need for us to support any effort to encourage our young people to develop healthy, active lifestyles.

She has identified the fact that this is a crisis that continues to grow, and I want to emphasize that because, as a former Minister of Health and Minister of Education, and actually a teacher of physical education before that, I certainly am aware of what has been happening during the past few years and have initiated activities myself in order to help combat this. But I really think there is so much more that needs to be done, so I will support the focus during May. I think she has pointed out why that would be a good month to do so.

I think one statement that really hit home to me a number of years ago was the fact that the generation today will not outlive their parents. That is so shocking, when we all take a look at information and we see the fact that—you know what?—people who are aging are living longer than ever before, and yet these young people, if this trend continues, are not going to outlive their parents. It is shocking. It really is incumbent upon all of us to obviously support whatever efforts are necessary to combat this growing crisis of childhood obesity.

I know that the Ontario Medical Association has been expressing their grave concerns, and they’ve also pointed out that the public supports efforts. In fact, they say that 65% of the people in the province believe we should be doing more to combat childhood obesity, and that

includes making investments that are going to translate into results.

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My colleague has talked about the fact that obesity is a proven risk factor for many ailments and chronic diseases, including hypertension, type 2 diabetes, coronary artery disease and kidney disease, and the list could go on and on. But this also means that not only will the rise in these chronic diseases associated with obesity put new and increased stress on our health system; what really concerns me the most is the impact it is going to have on the quality of life of these young people today who are obese. It’s going to be very different from the life that we enjoy. We’re seeing children today who have heart disease—unbelievable. It’s estimated that the health impact of being overweight or obese is going to cost the health system somewhere between \$2.2 billion and \$2.5 billion per year.

I would say to you that we need to do a couple of things. We need to focus on healthy eating, but we also need to focus on exercise, and we know that children are not getting the exercise today. My colleague has talked about their sedentary lifestyle, and obviously there’s so much more to do.

Now, I’m going to be sharing my time. I’m going to conclude my comments. She’s done a great job; I know my colleagues will pick up where I’ve left off. But, folks, I will be supporting this resolution. We need to act, and we need to act now. With the passage of this resolution, we can celebrate, recognize, in May of this year. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to add my voice to some of what my colleagues have been saying today. The need for action on childhood obesity is clear. Certainly an awareness month can raise awareness. In and of itself, it’s not going to solve the persistent problem, but it is certainly a step in the right direction that can only do some good. I am hopeful—I would almost say I’m sure—that everybody in this House will recognize that this is a serious issue that deserves this Legislative Assembly’s attention and that this is a motion that is certainly worth supporting.

But I would also like to draw a little bit of attention to: Are we doing enough? Is this action we’re taking today the end of it all? And I’m saying, if this is the case, then we’re falling way short. The statistics have been laid out for all of us to see: 26% of Canadian children between the ages of two and 17 are considered overweight or obese. That’s one in four. And 75% of those kids will grow up to be overweight and obese adults.

But it’s not only a weight problem, is it? When you dig a little bit further, you can’t help but notice that it’s actually clearly linked to lifestyle factors: 26% of overweight and obese children report fewer than seven hours a week of physical activities; 35% report 30 or more hours of screen time. Everybody knows what that is. They go from their DS to their computers to their iPad

to their iPhone to their TV to their computer etc. The ratio is rather startling, isn't it? Less than seven hours of physical activities a week, and that includes everything—that includes walking to school, playing in the backyard, less than seven hours. But screen time, 30 or more hours. I think there are some lifestyle choices that need to be seriously looked at.

We look at eating also. Everybody can see the link between eating and obesity. Only 50% of the kids are meeting the minimum serving of vegetables and fruits per day. That's only one in two that are meeting the minimum standards. For the rest of them, the numbers are through the roof.

I remember in the previous Parliament I brought forward a calorie labelling bill—and I see Dr. Jaczek there remembers. The idea of the bill is very simple: Right now, when you go into a fast food restaurant, you need to either go to the bathroom to look at the big poster or you need to wait to be served and flip over your little placemat thing to see the number of calories in the food that you've just ordered or consumed. What we're trying to do is take those same numbers—the data is already there, available—but put it on the menu board. The way we have it in Ontario right now—the research has been done—one person out of 1,000 uses that information. If you put the calories right there on the menu board, beside Big Macs, \$2.99, 500 calories, one person out of two will use it to make their food choice. I mean, you've already made some food choice; you're already in a fast food restaurant. Maybe not the brightest choice, but once you're there, there are more and more of them that offer other options. But when you don't know and you're not reminded of it, one in 1,000 use it.

If all we were to do is ask them to take that information and put it on the menu boards like all of the states are doing, like half of the countries in Europe are doing, like Australia is doing, if we were to do this, one family out of two, one person out of two would be using it to make healthy choices. In general, they decrease their calorie consumption—so far, the research is just from the state of New York—by 160 calories per order. Take 160 calories and multiply this by the number of times you bring your kids to the fast food restaurant. It adds up, and it adds up pretty quick.

We also have to talk about food insecurity. Unfortunately, the number of families who live with food insecurity—basically, they don't know where their next meal is going to come from. They use food banks and they use all sorts of other meal programs. Eight per cent of Ontarian families use food banks. Where I come from, in northern Ontario, it's 10%: One family out of 10 depends upon food banks. Some of us took the challenge and looked at the type of food you get when you go to the food bank. It is pretty hard to eat according to the food guide when all you have to pick from are all the starches and the cans that come in a box that you get at the food bank.

But there is hope out there. There are opportunities out there. We could do things better, and I'm hoping we do.

Passing the bill, the Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating Act, would be a step in the right direction. Looking at food insecurity—like the health unit says, put food into the budget—could go a long way toward fighting children's obesity.

My colleague Rosario Marchese had already introduced a bill talking about not targeting advertising at children in school anymore. If you go into a lot of schools, you will still see advertising for fast food, for all sorts of food choices that are not healthy food choices. When you bombard young minds in a place where they feel secure, in a place where you send them to learn and you bombard them with advertising about junk food, it is not surprising to see that they're interested in this.

I see that my time is running short, and I have colleagues that wanted to talk. It will be a pleasure to support this motion, Mr. Speaker.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It certainly is a pleasure to rise in support of the motion before us today brought forward by my colleague the member for Scarborough—Agincourt. I'm going to start off my remarks by telling you a little bit more about our new colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt. She has been my colleague since 1999, when she was hired as a public health nurse at the York region health services department. In fact, she reported directly to me. She was project manager leading our no-smoking bylaw at the regional municipality of York, and I well remember her tenacity and her dedication in that regard. It took us, I believe, some four years, Soo, but we did it, and we had a great celebration when we passed one of the most stringent bylaws in the province at that time.

Now she has turned her attention to this particular public health challenge, which is childhood obesity. As has been pointed out, over one quarter of our children are in fact overweight, and obesity rates have tripled in the past three decades in youth aged 12 to 17. I tried to get some statistics specific, in fact, to York region, and a group there has produced a report, Healthyork, dated 2010. Some of the very alarming statistics that have been compiled there show that among York region residents in 2009—they're starting to measure rates from age 12, so that 5.1% of people aged 12 and over had diabetes. Now, this is at least double from the time I went to medical school many years ago. In addition, some 18.2% had high blood pressure. Again, as the member for Kitchener—Waterloo stated, it's really quite astonishing that we think of children these days with high blood pressure.

In terms of people's attitudes, again, even though the knowledge is out there in terms of the requirement to eat some five to 10 fruit and vegetables per day, in York region only some 47.5% of people are actually doing this. Although we are seeing some gradual increase, it's obviously not nearly what we would like to see.

When we're tackling a problem such as childhood obesity, first of all, it's very important, of course, that

people have knowledge, that they're aware of the issues, that if you consume more calories than you expend every day, you will continue to gain weight, but the crucial link is moving from that knowledge to behaviour change. I think where this particular resolution is going to prove very useful is in bringing attention and hopefully changing actual behaviour.

Now, our government has introduced a number of programs to assist the population in this regard. EatRight Ontario offers free advice on healthy eating from a registered dietician by phone or online. The school food and beverage policy that was previously referenced in fact is banning junk food and trans fats, pop, chips, French fries and candy from schools. We have introduced 20 minutes of physical activity daily for elementary students. There is some progress.

To the member for Nickel Belt, I wanted to let her know that I was actually in the drive-through of a fast food restaurant—I admit it—this last month, and in the car ahead of me, I heard the lady at the wheel demand to know the calorie content of each of the items that she was considering ordering. So even though we didn't get, perhaps, the action that we required through the member for Nickel Belt's private member's bill previously, certainly some of this knowledge and some of this behaviour change in fact is occurring here in this province. I know my colleagues wish to address this issue as well, but I certainly want to congratulate the member for Scarborough—Agincourt in bringing this to our attention.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I am pleased to speak to the ballot item put forward by the member from Scarborough—Agincourt. I know she shares the Ontario PC Party's heartfelt concern for our children and youth.

In recent years, we as a society have promoted acceptance of various body types, shapes and sizes. That dialogue is important, but it shouldn't distract us from some uncomfortable truths. The odds of our children and youth growing up obese are higher now than they have ever been.

We know that this will have very many serious, even tragic, consequences. Obesity is a proven risk factor for a host of chronic diseases, on top of mental health issues. The impact on our health care system is staggering: over \$2.2 billion a year.

More than a quarter of Canadian children are overweight or obese. Three quarters of those will become obese adults. And nearly a quarter of adults are already obese—a serious challenge, but it is not black and white.

Obesity is a complex issue, and we may not always have all the answers. It might be the result of a passive lifestyle and a low-quality diet, or maybe not. Obesity might be the result of a hereditary disease or a hormone disorder. It could be the result of a life in a low-income household or the upshot of triggers like stress, anxiety and depression. It could be the result of overeating as an attempt to assert control over situations where they feel powerless.

It's never as simple as less food, more fitness. Active lifestyles, physical activity and balanced diets are never the wrong prescription, whatever your body type. But when we're trying to hit on a recipe for changing lives, we should not neglect mental and emotional health. We must all help our young people cultivate self-worth, self-awareness and self-understanding—tools they will need to steady themselves in turbulent times and to lead a rich and satisfying life.

I'm pleased to support, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to thank the member from Scarborough—Agincourt for bringing forth, once again, this very important issue of child obesity.

Unfortunately, bringing forward a bill that just makes one-month-of-the-year awareness of the issue isn't enough; we actually have to have some action around child obesity.

As my colleague from Nickel Belt already expressed, the NDP have been trying to do that. In the last government, they brought forth a number of initiatives that were not supported by the Liberal government. We spoke out about the issue of adding the HST to fitness programs, which impacts families' ability to actually provide sports and exercise activities for the children. We also tried to work with the government on initiatives to get improvement in health promotion.

I know, as a registered nurse and sitting for eight or nine years, I guess, as a member of a public health board in Niagara, that health funding is less than 1% for health promotion in our municipalities. We also know that outcomes from health care only provide about 25%. The rest of things like social determinants and health promotion make up the other 75%. So it's very important that we support health promotion and take action on these issues.

I was reading an article earlier today. There clearly is a link now between poverty and obesity, not only in children but in adults. I know that, at a local level, many of the programs that are supported from business and from local governments and from charitable agencies to get kids into sport activities and cultural activities, to get them active, are underfunded as well. Many times, the kids only have the opportunity for one year in that program. So if they come from poor families, yes, they may get active for one year, but at the end of that year their family still can't support the activities they need to keep them healthy. Things like competitive swimming cost \$1,000 a year. Things like hockey can cost a couple of thousand dollars a year. So it's more important to ensure that families and the poorer children in our province actually have the opportunity to have healthy foods, that they have enough money to be able to purchase those healthy foods. Certainly I will be supporting this initiative but hope that we can make some amendments to make it stronger.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to be able to stand and support the motion by my colleague the member for Scarborough—Agincourt to create a child obesity awareness month, a month which would be held each May.

As we've heard today already, the World Health Organization has stated that childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health issues of the 21st century. According to their estimate, 42 million children globally under five years of age—that's under five years of age—are already considered to be overweight. In Canada, it's estimated that 26% of our children nationwide are either obese or overweight. That's a tripling of that statistic in the last three decades, so clearly this is an escalating problem.

We know that clearly that's an alarming statistic, particularly because we know from medical research that if a child is overweight early in life, they're likely much later in life to have difficulty with diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis and a variety of other issues.

Our government has already taken a couple of steps to intervene in this cycle with respect to the whole issue of physical activity. In our first term, we introduced the requirement that for children in elementary schools there be a daily phys ed. program for 20 minutes so that we could make sure that at least with the elementary-aged children they're getting some activity each and every day.

In our last term, we passed a bill called Healthy Foods for Healthy Schools and it did three things. First of all, it banned trans fats from being sold in school—and that's foods that have trans fats in them, obviously—predominantly in school cafeterias, but also things like vending machines and so on. It focused on processed trans fat, because that's where the research shows that the problems are. There are small amounts of naturally occurring trans fats in dairy products and in ruminant meats, and those products are exempted because, as I said, it's the processed trans fats where we have the research that shows that they're problematic.

We've banned junk food from school vending machines. The third point of this was the very important step of setting up more complete nutritional guidelines for foods that are routinely served in schools. Again, that mainly impacts school cafeterias.

Contrary to some of the media hype that you got when this went into effect last fall, it actually is possible to have, for example, trans-fat-free French fries. So you could have French fries that meet the rules, because the issue is about, in many cases, not just the food but how the food is cooked. But we know that's not enough.

We know that there are things that we can do as adults to set the rules in place but there's a much bigger conversation that we need to have with parents, and with teenagers in particular, who control their own diets, about how we lower the intake of foods that are problematic. That's where the member's motion is so important. Because having a childhood obesity awareness month

would enable us to engage parents, children and the larger community in how we prevent this. So I'm certainly supporting the motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rod Jackson: I commend the member from Scarborough—Agincourt on this issue. It's my pleasure to speak to this today. Obesity affects millions of Canadians. Over the past 24 years alone, the rate of overweight and obesity among Canadian children aged two to 17 has grown from 15% to 26%; it has almost doubled in the past few years. That in itself is a troubling token that we need to take attention of. In Ontario, our population has a rate of overweight and obesity that's higher than the national average too, currently at 28%. Awareness of this growing problem is just the beginning of a much-needed revitalization approach for a healthier lifestyle in our province and, indeed, in our communities.

We're all aware of the negative impacts that child obesity poses in our communities; we see it every day. Weight problems in childhood are likely to persist in children into their adult years. Teenagers who are obese have an 80% chance—an 80% chance—of remaining obese as adults, and this has a terrible burden on our health care system as well.

As our children transition into their adulthood, young adults find themselves developing serious health conditions, as we've heard from other speakers, including type 2 diabetes, which can have dramatic effects on your health peripherally, coronary artery disease and kidney disease, just to name a couple.

The economic repercussions to our health care system are huge and obvious. Especially at a time when we are looking to reduce burdens on our health care system, I think it's incumbent on us to do whatever we can to make sure that we reduce the incidences of childhood obesity, and obesity generally in our community, as those children get older and become adults and have children of their own.

As a parent myself—I have two young children, eight and 10 years old—I'm conscious of my responsibility as a parent and as an adult, with the opportunity I need to present to my children to give them physical activities, things to do, and feed them properly and healthily.

I know that both my young son and my young daughter are heavily involved in hockey, baseball and soccer. But you know what? It's not enough; I'm willing to admit that. They need to do more.

As we get more and more technologically advanced, we find that our kids are becoming less and less physically involved. It's up to us as parents alone to make sure that we rectify that.

Every child in our province should have an equal opportunity to develop and enjoy the active daily routine. This should not be limited, however, only to families who can afford it, nor to one month of the year. This should be something that is ongoing.

Childhood obesity is an ongoing battle that requires the full commitment of every parent and child in our province and our country.

I truly encourage parents and children throughout Ontario to join the debate, get involved in their communities as coaches and teachers, and just involve your kids, even in your own neighbourhood.

Let's use May awareness month as a motivator to make Ontario the fittest province in Canada. Speaker, I pledge support to this motion. I support it, and I will remain committed to promoting an active and healthy lifestyle for all, especially in my community. I'll do my part.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I see I've got just a minute on the clock. I want to congratulate the member from Scarborough–Agincourt on bringing about this initiative. I think it's important. But, of course, I don't think it will go far enough. We need tangible measures to help our children transition to what it used to be. I can harken back to my days as a kid, where it wasn't so much organized sports that provided my activity, it was the unorganized sports, the hours upon hours that you spent outside playing road hockey. We need to get kids more active again in schools but also provide them and their families with the socio-economic leverage and ability and freedom to be able to give these kids the ability to get out and get active again.

But I appreciate the effort, and we will be supporting your initiative.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: I want to congratulate my colleague from Scarborough–Agincourt for her dedication to children's health, and for the outreach and justifiable support she's received from many fields, most notably in the education and health care sector, including from Chris Bolton, the chair of the Toronto District School Board, who wrote to her expressing complete and utter support for this. So congratulations to my honourable member.

The member herself is the most excellent member to bring this forward, as a nurse and as a teacher in the nursing profession. I can think of no better person to bring this resolution forward. And it's my pleasure to speak to this resolution today as a mother of two young teenagers, also as the parliamentary assistant for children and youth services, and as a volunteer with many children's programs in my riding of Pickering–Scarborough East.

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Children and children's health have always been very important to me, and I want to speak to why this resolution is so important in Ontario for all of its citizens and how it complements the many other programs and services our government has delivered for the province of Ontario.

As we all know, nutritious foods help kids learn and help kids get the most out of their school day. As part of the Ontario government poverty reduction strategy, which is very much focused on children, we have in-

vested heavily over the last several years in the school nutrition program that is delivered by schools and community agencies.

When we focus on issues of obesity, I strongly believe the most important thing is to focus on wellness and fitness and less on weight. I hear this from people in my riding. I hear it from dietitians and other experts. As the mum of two young teenagers, I know first-hand the big issue for many children and teens is body image. Diet alone is not the answer to our issues regarding obesity. We know that 87% of Canadian children do not meet physical activity guidelines for the most optimal health and growth.

I am proud that our government has introduced many programs and services that speak to the importance of focusing on wellness and fitness for children and teens. I agree with my colleagues opposite that more can be done, but we do need to recognize—we've made many steps to support a reduction of obesity—why it makes so much sense to support this resolution going forward.

We implemented the children's tax credit to help families offset the costs associated with various sports-related activities. Our government also proudly introduced a healthy food for schools act in 2008, which set nutrition standards for food and beverages sold in schools. We also introduced the health and physical ed. curriculum requirements to provide a minimum of 20 minutes of daily physical activity.

I do want to reinforce my earlier point that the biggest issue, in my view and the view of many others, is body image. Diet alone is not the answer to our issues in solving obesity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'm pleased to take part in this, and I congratulate the member from Scarborough–Agincourt. It would be a bill that I'd be pleased to support. We know that obesity is something that's a crisis in North America. It's not just an Ontario thing; it's not just in Canada; it's a crisis in North America and, indeed, in places throughout the world. And we know that child obesity leads to adult obesity.

I think back to my own youth. I was a fairly active person. I certainly wasn't obese when I was young, and there were very few children who were obese, and look how we've grown up as a generation. We've come to a point, the people of my generation, the people who are—may I say that I'm over 50? There's a lot of obesity.

Mr. Rob Leone: You look young, Ted.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: There's some disbelief in that. But there's a lot of obesity in the over-50, and we were very fit when we were young. Can you imagine what this generation is going to look like when they get to be over 50?

And the problems that we have in our generation—I mean, who amongst us doesn't know the name Lipitor or Crestor? Those are two drugs that we're very familiar with, and they help our generation, but they can only help to a point. If this generation grows up to be anything

worse than we are, as the member for Kitchener pointed out, they won't be outliving their parents, and that's the first time that has happened, I believe, in the history of the world.

So it gives me great pleasure to support this bill and to participate and promote it in May so that we can bring this to the fore and make sure that people understand the crisis situation that we're in—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. The member for Scarborough–Agincourt has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my colleagues from Kitchener–Waterloo, Nickel Belt, Oak Ridges–Markham, Burlington, Welland, Barrie, Essex, Halton, Guelph and Pickering–Scarborough East. Thank you so much for your feedback and suggestions about how to improve this resolution.

The proposed childhood obesity awareness month will not solve or address all the issues associated with childhood obesity, but it will raise awareness and promote and educate about this health and economic issue affecting our young people. The recent Drummond report noted that we need to spend more time to address the areas of disease prevention and health promotion. He also further stated that this province “should do more to reverse the trend in childhood obesity.”

Your support of my resolution today will encourage the health professionals, the educators, the parents, the children, the youth, the business community and the sports teams, coming together to address childhood obesity. More importantly, we are raising a generation—and my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo reiterated this—of young people who may be dying before their parents. That is totally unacceptable. It is our duty in this House to ensure that we do every measure and every action to promote healthy, active living. The passage of my resolution will not only support healthy, active living, but also healthy eating.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to address the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We shall take the vote at the end of this particular session.

PUBLIC SAFETY RELATED TO DOGS
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA SÉCURITÉ
PUBLIQUE LIÉE AUX CHIENS

Mr. Hillier moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 16, An Act to amend the Animals for Research Act and the Dog Owners' Liability Act with respect to pit bulls / Projet de loi 16, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la recherche et la Loi sur la responsabilité des propriétaires de chiens en ce qui a trait aux pit-bulls.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. I first want to thank and congratulate the members from Niagara and Parkdale–High Park for joining with me to sponsor this very important bill today.

I would also like to thank everyone who is here in the galleries today and who have been at the rally earlier today at Queen's Park, in support, again, of this very important bill at Queen's Park. We've had hundreds of people from around the province come here to Queen's Park today. It's unfortunate that we weren't allowed to wear our yellow scarves when we asked for unanimous consent earlier today.

There are a number of flaws in our present legislation that are causing harm and creating injustice with regard to pit bulls and other dogs that share the same appearance as them. This bill seeks to address these flaws.

First off, I should restate the genesis of this bill for the record. In 2005, after a few very high-profile media stories of dog attacks, mostly here in the Toronto area, the Liberal government introduced the Dog Owners' Liability Act, which banned pit bulls. Although the standing committee of the House heard from many, many experts who denounced the premise of the bill, the bill was still passed into law above their concerns and without regard to the scientific evidence. It was clear to everyone that the government of the day felt significant pressure to be seen as doing something, regardless if it was doing the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, good public policy is driven by the interests of our constituents, by science and by evidence, not by media hysteria or bold headlines and slogans. The failings of the Dog Owners' Liability Act are clear.

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First, pit bull terriers are not a breed; they are an amalgamation of various dog breeds, and there is no scientific or practical means to determine what is indeed a pit bull. The fact that there is no objective means to classify a dog as a pit bull in the eyes of the law has been used to overturn breed-specific legislation all around the world. This fatal flaw in the breed-specific legislation leaves a dog owner with no recourse against it, with no remedy should a dog catcher state he or she believes the dog is a pit bull. Speaker, a law that provides for no defence, no remedy and no recourse cannot be just, cannot be fair and cannot be reasonable.

This flaw, this denial of basic Canadian justice, of life, liberty and property, has led to the seizure and mortality of thousands of peaceful, loving family pets. Let's make sure we put this into context and use real-life and not just hypothetical examples. People have been out walking their dogs—in this province, in Ontario—on the sidewalk or in the park when suddenly their dog has been seized, taken from their possession and eventually carted off and killed.

There was a case of a young boy who—this was in the UK but with similar legislation—committed suicide

because his dog was seized and destroyed. His dog was neither aggressive nor violent, but it was killed because it looked like it was a pit bull. Speaker and colleagues, law without remedies is not law but tyranny.

Secondly, the law is and has been ineffective. In spite of the pit bull ban, the number of dog bites in Ontario has remained flat, it has remained stagnant. According to the study of the Toronto Humane Society—for the member from Willowdale—whose members are here in attendance today, the number of dog bites in 2005, the year of the Dog Owners' Liability Act, was 5,428. The number in 2010 was 5,345—a difference of 50. The lack of a real reduction in the number of dog bites in the province confirms the evidence of sources as varied as the government of Australia's New South Wales, the University of Manitoba's faculty of medicine, the German veterinary university and the University of British Columbia's animal welfare program in concluding that pit bulls are no more likely to be violent than any other dog.

We ought to be able to see with clarity the folly of this present legislation. Friends, I have known and witnessed far more injuries from cattle and horses than from pit bulls. Ought we to destroy horses and cattle to protect ourselves from that possible injury? I have seen far more injuries from swimming pools, bicycles and hockey than from pit bulls or any other dog. Should we ban those activities as well to safeguard the people of Ontario? The real question and objective of dog legislation ought to be how we punish those people who wilfully pose a threat or a danger to society by either training or creating dogs that pose a real and credible danger to others. There are provisions within this bill to punish those who engage in these harmful activities. I would encourage everyone in this House that reasoned and thoughtful amendments could strengthen those provisions, should the bill be sent to committee.

Sweden has incorporated such provisions that allow the police to seize animals that pose a threat from criminals and other known violent people. Sweden—and the city of Calgary, which has a similar program—has seen a significant drop in the number of dog bites and has penalized irresponsible owners in the process.

Let me end with a few last thoughts. I have two dogs that could be viewed as subject to seizure under the existing Dog Owners' Liability Act. They are my family's pets and have never shown aggression, let alone attacked or bitten anyone. You can ask Christina Blizzard her view, because she came to the house and visited those dogs as well. They've never bitten anyone and never shown any aggression, but should I take them out for a walk in the park, it could prove fatal to the lives of Robbie and Titan.

Lastly, I'd like to read from Hansard and from the words of Dalton McGuinty Sr., who served this Legislature for many years. The following is an excerpt from a statement Dalton McGuinty Sr. made while tabling a petition in this House on December 22, 1987: "There is ... a paw print on this paper"—this petition—

"of one Tory McGuinty, who is the McGuinty family pit bull terrier."

I hope today the Premier—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They called their dog "Tory"?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Yes. It's in Hansard, December 22, 1987.

I hope today the Premier realizes that his childhood family pet was not a threat to either him or the public.

It's time to put the responsibility on the dog owners, not dogs like Tory McGuinty or Robbie or Titan.

Mr. Speaker, I enjoy this institution immensely, and good public policy is paramount. As you walk from this side of Queen's Park to my offices in the north wing, there is an inscription, and it says: "A place where mind and soul learn freedom's ways." That is a benchmark that was put forward and inscribed in the walls of this Legislature: "Where mind and soul learn freedom's ways."

Mr. Speaker, good public policy requires emotion, it requires compassion, but it also requires reason. That is what is missing in the Dog Owners' Liability Act: reason. It was a bill that was brought forward emotionally and due to media hysteria. I think it's time that we take a step back and reflect on and contemplate the words of our predecessors who came before us and who built this institution. Let us find freedom's ways with a vote on Bill 16. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: First and foremost, like my predecessor in this debate, I want to thank everyone who's here representing many different organizations, from the Canadian Kennel Club to the Dog Legislation Council of Canada. Certainly, veterinarian associations have also supported us in this. In fact, I can't think of any organization that really loves animals, that supports animals, that doesn't support us on this. So I want to thank you for all your activism over the last seven years and all your trials and tribulations.

You know, there was this incredible uproar about the death of 100 sled dogs in BC. We all read about that—100 sled dogs euthanized. Yet here we live in a province where, by conservative estimates, thousands of dogs have been euthanized, not because of anything they've done, but simply because of the way they look.

Now, if Ontarians were to truly know these facts—and, trust me, they are beginning to wake up to these facts, judging from the thousands of emails we've received; I think my office gets seven to 10 per day for the last many years that I've been elected—and certainly from the petitions—again, thousands of petitions—that have been signed, and certainly from people in my own constituency who call our office, we know that the word is getting out there. We know that, across Ontario, people are outraged when they actually know the truth behind this bill.

1500

Cesar Millan said it best, I think. He said that in the 1970s, they blamed Dobermans. In the 1980s, they

blamed Rottweilers. In the 1990s, they blamed pit bulls and still blame pit bulls. When will they blame humans?

We know that the owners of dangerous dogs are dangerous people. We know that it's the deed; it's not the breed. We know that German shepherds, Labrador retrievers and chihuahuas are as capable of biting. The stats show, in fact, that German shepherds and huskies, for example, are more capable of biting than so-called pit bulls—keeping in mind the reality that there is no such thing as a pit bull.

We know this; these are the facts. These have been borne out by scientific studies around the world, to speak to some of the heckling that came from the member from Willowdale.

One of the expert witnesses, by the way, who actually was used by the McGuinty cabinet and by the then-Attorney General when they first brought in this bill was a city dog catcher in Toledo, Ohio. He was the expert witness. Do you know what happened to him? He got fired. Do you know what happened in Ohio? They overturned the breed-specific ban because it wasn't based on evidence.

Do you know where else they've overturned it? They've overturned it in Banff, Vancouver, New Brunswick—all repealed—Montana, the Netherlands, Scotland, Germany, Italy—that banned, by the way, 90 different breeds—Sweden and, in fact, most of Europe. The UK, Australia and New Zealand are all going through the same process we are here. It's just a matter of time, folks, before this ridiculous and cruel legislation is put to rest around the world. There's no doubt about that.

In fact, I find this a really telling statistic: 12 US states have laws prohibiting breed-specific bans—prohibiting them. That's the situation around the world. Anybody who watched the Westminster dog show, or who loves dog shows—I know we have members here who breed dogs. Whoever watched that show would have seen, paraded around the ring, American pit bulls and American Staffordshire Terriers as champions. Whoever has watched the Dog Whisperer, the most famous dog trainer in the world, will know that Daddy was his dog that trained other dogs and that now, Junior, another so-called pit bull, is training other dogs. He uses them as his go-to dogs for training, the most famous dog trainer in the world—who, by the way, when he came to Toronto, wasn't allowed to bring his dog here for fear the dog would be snatched and euthanized.

You know, it's interesting. When I first introduced this bill, Hershey's law—and I want to say just a word of shout out to Hershey, the therapy dog who can no longer do therapy because, guess what, he meets the definition of a pit bull.

When I first was elected and first introduced this bill, I earned the distinction of having the quote of the year by French CBC, and this is approximately what I said: "The way the bill is crafted by description only"—it says things like "broad shoulders," "short hair," "wide forehead"—"it would describe most of the male members of this House"—except, I said, for the long, skinny tail, and we can't tell that because they wear trousers.

I mean, the average person on the street gets how ridiculous this is. I tell Labrador retriever owners that their dog fits the definition of this bill. Of course, they would never pick on Labrador retrievers because they could prove that they were purebreds. But anything short of a purebred that's not a so-called pit bull look-alike is absolutely at risk.

My dog is at risk. I have an English bull terrier named Victoria. She's the love of our family's life. Now, she's not covered by this bill. "Why not?" I say. Well, Don Cherry has one; maybe that's why not; I don't know. Celebrities have them; maybe we don't go after celebrities.

In fact, that's another interesting aspect of this bill: You don't see them driving through the streets of Rose-dale or Forest Hill, picking dogs out of those people's backyards. You see them targeting those people who can't fight back. That's what they do. They're targeting seniors, new immigrants, people without the financial resources to hire a lawyer to fight this bill. That's a shameful, shameful aspect of this bill, and we know that's the way it's being implemented.

If you're looking at our health, this bill actually threatens the health of Ontarians. Why? Because it focuses on the breed and not on the deed. It ties up our precious animal control services in hauling away innocent dogs because of the way they look and not looking at dogs that aren't so innocent—and the owners, by the way, who are the guiltiest of all. If we want to strengthen dangerous dog legislation—and we do; everyone in this House does—we want to look at ways of getting at the owners and holding them liable for what their dog does, whether it's a chihuahua, a husky, a German shepherd or something that meets the definition of this bill. Hold the owners liable.

The other side of the coin, as you've heard already, is education. We have to educate children and others about how to approach dogs, what to do around dogs. This is what has proven to be effective in every other jurisdiction.

Even the Attorney General, bless his cotton socks, who introduced this bill could not pick a pit bull out of a lineup. We know that because we asked him to, and he picked the wrong dog. The reality is there are very, very few purebred American pit bulls or American Staffordshires anywhere—I think there are about 200 in Ontario—and yet there have been thousands of dogs killed. Who are these dogs? What are these dogs? I'll tell you who they are and what they are: They're dogs whose owners gave up the fight or couldn't afford to fight back. That's the true tragedy. It cost tens of thousands of dollars to hire experts and lawyers to try to prove your dog is not something that fits the bill—which, as I said, just describes every male member of this chamber, not to mention most of our dogs and, by the way, most of the dogs in the shelters.

Thank you, Toronto Humane Society and other humane societies who stood up for animals. If you look through the animals that are there to be adopted, you're

going to see lots of animals that fit the description of this bill. Do we want to euthanize them too? That's sad; that's cruel; that's immoral. That's what this bill is.

How to sum up? It seems like a long time, my friends who are all here; a long time. A lot of money has been spent. A lot of rallies have been gone to. A lot of defences have been entered into. A lot of jurisdictions have gone through this. This has tied up the time and the effort of tens of thousands of people around the world, for a bill—and bills, by the way, that have been rescinded in other jurisdictions, one by one—whose time has simply passed. It was a bill that was brought in because of media hype around a couple of bites. It was a bill that was used in the worst possible political way to pander to the worst possible human instincts. It had nothing to do with the dogs.

If it's your dog—and you know who I'm speaking to out there, because it may be your dog—who's picked up and taken away and you have to fight to get it back or watch it euthanized, my goodness, it ceases to be about this place, it ceases to be about laws, it ceases to be about scientific studies, and it becomes about something far more important, and that is a beloved member of your family, a friend to your children, a comrade in arms; a dog that protects you, loves you, looks after you. It becomes about them, and that's why everyone is here today. Tens of thousands of Ontarians have appealed to their MPPs, to say, "Please do the right thing," because they recognize that this is about their dog. And it could be about your dogs. It could be about the Minister of Education; it could be about her Shar-Pei. It could be about somebody else's mixed breed. If they come for the pit bulls first, they're going to come for the English bull terriers or the bulldogs next, or the German shepherds or the Dobermans. They're going to come for any dog that ever bites anyone and say, "Hah. Look, here we have a danger."

So, my friends, let's start where we are. Let's stop the insanity, let's overturn this bill and let's leave people and their pets in peace, finally, and let these people go back home to pat their dogs and go for a walk. Thank you.

1510

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Kim Craitor: It's always a pleasure to stand here, particularly on this bill.

I want to say a couple of things before I make my presentation. I didn't have a chance to recognize some people who are here. I want to recognize Greg Benito; his wife, Jennifer; and Jordan, who took the time to come up from Fort Erie. They are avid supporters of pit bulls and dogs across this province.

I also want to recognize Paige Sim and Donna Dempsie, who drove, starting at 4 o'clock this morning, from Ottawa to be here as well. So thank you very much.

I'm really pleased to stand here as one of the co-sponsors of Mr. Hillier's bill, along with Ms. DiNovo. What I'm simply asking for is that this House supports

passage of this bill from second reading to move on to committee.

I want to share with you—some people have asked me, "Well, why?" First, I want to make it perfectly clear: When this bill was being proposed—I'm with the government. I was with the Liberal Party. I was there. I can tell you in all sincerity that the thought in the room when they talked about this was, "How do we protect people?" That's what drove this. The remarks were well spoken about the media really driving it, too, and suggesting that it's the government's responsibility. "You need to find a solution. You need to protect people." That all drove—it doesn't make it right, but that's the background. I'm simply saying, the intent of putting the bill forward was for the right reason, but I didn't agree with it. I didn't vote in favour of it at the time.

So this is not new to me, because I draw from my experiences as a city councillor in Niagara Falls. I chaired the animal bylaw committee that we had there, and we went through this. I remember it like it was yesterday. We had some significant incidents of dog bites, and we as a committee were trying to determine, "What are we going to do as a municipality?" We held public meetings. We had people come to the chamber of council, and it was very emotional. I remember some of the suggestions put on the table about, "Can we ban dogs? How do we deal with owners?" In the conclusion, we made some changes to our bylaw, but the biggest thing that I remember clearly from that whole process was that the public was saying, "Don't look at the dog. Look at the owner. Make the owner accountable." That was the message that I remember clearly, and it always stuck with me. When the legislation was proposed, I thought, "This is like déjà vu for me. I have been through this."

I want to say a couple of things as well. I am just amazed at the number of phone calls, emails and letters that I've received—all of us; I have boxes of them. I took the time—and I don't usually try to call everybody outside my riding of Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie. You can't call everybody in the whole province, but I actually took some time to call some of the people up, whether it was from Sault Ste. Marie or Timmins. I called some of the people up who were very critical of me for supporting this bill. We had a very positive conversation. We didn't sway each other, but I realized that their heart was in the right place, too. Even though they were upset with me, they all agreed that there had to be some legislation to make owners accountable. They didn't disagree with that at all. I'm saying that on both sides of the issue, there is that common feeling: "How do we protect the public and make sure that they're safe?"

The emails and phone calls were amazing. I could probably spend four days reading all the material that we got. But there are a couple of things that I'm going to highlight from some of the emails or letters:

"Finally, some common sense prevails; a heartfelt thank you from a dog lover of all breeds." That was the

interesting thing. All the emails and phone calls came from dog owners of all breeds. It wasn't just people who may own a pit bull or are passionate about them. They were about dog owners who care about dogs. It was irrelevant to them that this was not their dog that we were talking about in the legislation. They just felt strongly that this wasn't the right way to go.

"Thank you so much for your brave, bold and courageous support in joining forces with Randy Hillier and Cheri DiNovo...."

"Thank you for your support. As a pit bull rescuer for many years, I thank you for having the courage and intelligence to fight the travesty that is in Ontario."

"Thank you for co-sponsoring" the bill.

I want to tell you about one situation I even had in my own riding. I actually had a person call me and say, "You passed the legislation, and I'm sure there's a pit bull at my neighbour's house. You're the MPP. I want you to go out and enforce it." Because we didn't have anything to enforce the legislation; we passed it, but we had no standard way of going out throughout all of Ontario ensuring that this legislation is done properly.

I said to the individual, "I'll take a look at it." What am I going to do? I made a few phone calls. I called city hall and said, "Did anybody call you about this situation?" I was telling them what it was for, and one of the councillors I was speaking to said, "You need to know, Kim, what's happening to you is that you're getting pulled into something. The neighbour doesn't like the other neighbour. The neighbour that he doesn't like happens to have a dog and he thinks the dog may look like a pit bull, so he's trying to use you as a way of getting back at his neighbour."

The point I'm simply making is, I found out from across this province that—oh, I can't even imagine the number of people who had their dogs taken away because somebody decided it looked like a pit bull. Somebody just decided. In some municipalities, they didn't have anybody to do it so they relied on a phone call from a neighbour or a private individual saying, "I think that's a pit bull. You've got to go out there and do something." But we never had anything across this province to make sure the legislation was at least done fairly across the board.

I'm standing up simply because I believe in this. It's not about politics. It's not about the Conservatives. It's not about the NDP. I just personally believe and strongly believe that the legislation, well-meaning as it was intended to be, was not the right legislation. What we should have been dealing with is how we make owners of all dogs accountable and responsible. That's what we need to do. So I'm really pleased to be in support of this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm very pleased to be able to have the opportunity to speak today in support of Bill 16. It is almost seven years since this government passed the bill we recognize as the pit bull ban.

There are two issues that I wish to focus on in my remarks today. The first is the hearings themselves. I attended every deputation in communities around the province. There was no credible organization supporting the government—not the OSPCA, not the humane society, not the Canadian Kennel Club, not the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, not the Canada Safety Council—no one, in fact.

It was also brought to our attention by representatives who came from the United States and spoke about the American experience where, at that time in 2005, 13 states had bans specifically prohibiting breed-specific bans.

Today—and the member for Parkdale–High Park mentioned it—the state of Ohio is currently considering the law to remove pit bulls from the definition of "vicious dog" in state law, and it has gone to the governor to sign.

It was during this period of time that I offered the government an alternative to the ban, which was Bill 161. It would come as no surprise to you that they went ahead with their own bill instead. But in 2005, everyone agreed on the necessity of dangerous dog legislation. Everyone opposed a breed-specific ban. And it was regardless of the evidence—the government pursued its plan and passed the bill into an act.

Is it working? Well, you have heard from the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington of the work that the Toronto Humane Society has done and the statistics that it has released. Certainly the kind of change that they are able to show in the numbers is relatively small when we consider the true cost of this bill.

1520

That brings me to the second focus of my remarks. It involves the people who have joined us here today, and it involves the people across this province who have been, quite frankly, the victims of the pit bull ban.

Let me take you back to that, seven years ago. People who obey the law, work hard and pay taxes suddenly found themselves on the wrong side of the law. They discovered that their happy, healthy family pet had them on the wrong side of the law. He looked like a pit bull type of dog.

Even then, these owners felt there was a mistake, I can tell you from the conversations I had with so many of you who attended those deputations. They'd come up to me and say, "Well, the government's going to change its mind, after they've listened to all this expert advice, isn't it? Surely, when other jurisdictions have already gone through this experience and discovered that this is the wrong thing to be doing—that it has nothing to do with what the dog looks like—surely they know that they can go online and find other jurisdictions that have excellent vicious dog legislation that works." They couldn't believe that this was happening. These owners felt that there had to be a mistake. How could the government betray them?

After all, since pre-industrial times, people who share the parliamentary tradition that we have know they are

innocent until proven guilty. Little did they know that the fundamental principle of democratic government had been removed in this act. People woke up to a new reality. These families would have to mount a defence to prove that their family pet was not a pit bull type. Untold thousands could not afford to mount a legal defence. Thousands of dogs were euthanized.

This has nothing to do with dangerous dogs. It has everything to do with a political agenda.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. David Zimmer: I think it's important to look at some of the history leading up to this legislation.

Pre-2005—in the years leading up to 2005—members of this chamber will recall that there was a particularly nasty spate of pit bull attacks on children, on citizens walking in the park and on citizens walking in the street. These were vicious, vicious attacks: children killed, faces ripped off and the like. The member opposite talks about dog bites. In fact, they were vicious, life-threatening attacks.

There was a public outcry to do something about pit bulls. The legislation was brought in. It received second reading here, and it went off to committee.

The member opposite said there were a number of institutions that appeared at the committee hearings, which she attended, and they were opposed to the legislation. I, as the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General, attended every one of those hearings. There were huge numbers of ordinary citizens coming in off the street in the various communities where the committee had hearings, and to a person, the ordinary, reasonable Ontario citizen said, "Protect us from these vicious pit bull attacks. Protect our children; protect our parents. Make the streets safe; make the parks safe." So we introduced the legislation.

I can say that at the committee we saw medical reports of the results of these attacks. We saw the photographs of what happened to children and senior citizens and young adults who were attacked—horrific, horrific injuries.

Anyway, the legislation passed. And here's how reasonable the legislation is: Really, what it says is, if you've got a pit bull, you've got to have it spayed, neutered, leashed and muzzled. That's all; that's what it says. In return for that, look at the protections that Ontario citizens on the street get. If somebody will merely spay, neuter, leash and muzzle their pit bull, we would be spared from these vicious, vicious life-threatening attacks. That's why, across the board in Ontario, reasonable Ontarians said, "That's a reasonable price to pay in exchange for protection from these kinds of attacks." All we're asking pit bull owners to do is to meet us a part of the way. If you've got a pit bull, spay it, neuter it, keep it on a leash and keep it muzzled. That's a reasonable approach to this issue. For those four things—spay, neuter, leash, muzzle—we protect our families from these vicious pit bull attacks.

That's why, when push came to shove, the average Ontarian out there on the street saw the reasonableness of

the legislation, saw the inherent protections and realized that when the pit bull lobby was attacking the legislation—and the member opposite from Parkdale very subtly, in kind of a sly, sleight-of-hand way, referred to dog bites. There's a big difference between a dog bite and having, as we saw in photographs—we read medical reports of children with their faces torn off; adults, men and women, with their genitalia chewed off. It was vicious—

Laughter.

Mr. David Zimmer: You laugh; you laugh. But if you go to the reports, the exhibits of the standing committee—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order. Order. I would ask the members on this side to keep order, please.

Mr. David Zimmer: That's why, notwithstanding everything the pit bull lobby says, the average Ontarian in your ridings, in your communities, supported the legislation, and that's why, when the pit bull lobby took the legislation to the courts to have it overturned—what did the courts say? The courts said that it was reasonable legislation for the harm that it protected from. It only asked for those four simple things: leash, muzzle, spay, neuter.

It's a reasonable piece of legislation given the protections that it provides to the citizens of Ontario, and that's why the ordinary, average citizen supported the legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I stand in support of Bill 16, the Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, initiated by my colleague Randy Hillier. Even better, this is a tripartisan bill being sponsored by Ms. DiNovo of the third party and Mr. Craitor of the government. So members of all three parties support this bill. It is a good bill which reverses the stereotyping, the breed-specific discrimination against pit bulls that has occurred over the last seven years.

At the core of it, this issue is about responsibility, the responsibility of owning a dog. Whether in the city or the country, dogs are the responsibility of their owners. It is the responsibility of the owner to bring up their dog and treat it with care. Indeed, most dog owners consider their pets as family members.

An owner who treats their dog with meanness will get a mean dog. An owner who treats his dog with kindness and consideration will get a dog with a good nature and a good temperament. This dog will be a safe and enjoyable pet.

1530

Pit bulls are not a pure breed and cannot be identified as such. This is a further reason why this amendment bill should be passed. We can't properly identify the type of dog that is being considered a pit bull. Many dogs have been euthanized by animal control that later were proven

to be of a different breed. This is a cruel and unacceptable result.

I'd like to cite some important information on this issue from around the world and from our backyard. When the German veterinary university studied different breeds of dogs, they found that "pit-bull-type dogs did not show any significant difference as far as aggressive behaviour is concerned." In Australia, the New South Wales government found that American pit bull terriers were responsible for the smallest number of attacks of studied dog types, and "when average severity of bites is considered, American pit bull terriers were sixth of the six breeds studied."

The Centers for Disease Control found that "there is currently no accurate way to identify the number of dogs of a particular breed and consequently no measure to determine what breeds are more likely to bite or kill." The University of Manitoba's faculty of medicine says that only one of 28 media-reported dog attacks causing fatalities between 1990 and 1997 in Canada involved a pit bull breed. Finally, the Toronto Humane Society reports that the number of dog bites in Ontario has not been reduced when comparing the year 2005, when this act came into force, to 2009. So this act has not reduced the prevalence of dog bites in our province.

We know that an abusive dog owner will get a mean dog. We know that a kind dog owner will get a good-natured dog. People should be held responsible for the actions of their dogs.

I support Bill 16, the Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, and I urge you all to do the same.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to join the debate today to support my colleagues' Bill 16. I think it's high time that we finally repeal this misguided breed-specific legislation. I am pleased today to be able to talk about some of my constituents. They've sent me numerous emails, and I want to read some of their comments into the record, Speaker, with your indulgence, because I think what they're saying today is very pertinent.

An old friend of mine from Athens, Dan McGivern, has been a breeder of the Staffordshire bull terrier for 30 years. His quote: "I am now looking at my aging dogs and wondering what I will do when my animals born prior to the passing of this ridiculous law die and I'm left to choose another breed to stay within the law. I certainly will give up on breeding, and likely on dog ownership." That's from someone I can't believe would say that, because he's such a dog lover.

Michelle Brew of Brockville contacted me this week to point out that Governor Kasich of Ohio signed a bill on Tuesday that would remove breed-specific language. That state now has legislation that does what we need to do today in Ontario, and that's punish irresponsible owners and violent dogs, not loveable family pets.

Angela Greter of Kemptville offered this hope. She wants "to see Ontario become a world leader introducing

effective legislation that prosecutes the true criminals, the thoughtless dog owners that are allowing or even encouraging their dogs to bite others." I can't agree more with Angela.

Samantha Kutowy of Kemptville was an owner of a pit bull for 12 years that never harmed a human being or another animal in the dog's entire life. Again, she can't believe that we're targeting specific dog breeds.

Jean Dabros of Lansdowne wrote that she lives "in fear of government" because of what could happen to her beloved dog. Terrible.

Melanie Nabert of Oxford Station talks about the discrimination and the fact that we need higher fines and jail time for things like animal cruelty and non-responsible owners.

Finally, I want to go back to the original debate, where my predecessor, now-Senator Runciman, talked about the sensational headlines that put this government into that previous legislation.

I think today we have to look at what's happening in the province. We've got a lot of what you put in to undo. That's a big job for us, to try to undo some of the wrongs.

So you know what? On that side of the House, you're going to get a chance. You're going to get a chance today to do a do-over, and I hope you take that opportunity to do that do-over and repeal this legislation and pass Bill 16.

Thank goodness for the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, that he would move across party lines and put this bill forward today. You should all support Bill 16.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to indeed thank everybody today for being here. I want to thank my colleagues who have co-sponsored this bill with me. I want to thank all of the thoughtful comments. But I think after hearing—you know, in my presentation I talked about the media hysteria that was generated in 2005. This ought not to be a political or partisan discussion, but that statement by the member from Willowdale demonstrates that he swallowed that sensationalism hook, line and sinker, and he's not been able to get it out since. I have never heard such a ridiculous, unthoughtful, mindless response to a thoughtful bill before this House.

Speaker, let's keep this—I know that there are some who want to sensationalize things; it ought not to be. This needs to be discussed, as it has been by all other members, in a thoughtful way. It needs to be put before this House. We need to bring it forth, pass it today, bring it forward to a committee and have those thoughtful discussions and conversations in the committee, where, indeed, expert evidence can be brought forward once again; that we get right decisions made and that we stop this harmful, unjust activity that's going on of killing thousands of friendly family pets because they might appear to look like some other dog that the member from Willowdale gets shivers over.

Thank you, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will take the vote at the end of the session.

JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE JUIF

Mr. Colle moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to proclaim the month of May Jewish Heritage Month / Projet de loi 17, Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois du patrimoine juif.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation. Mr. Colle.

Mr. Mike Colle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to thank my co-sponsors, the member from Parkdale–High Park and the member from Thornhill, for supporting this initiative. I really appreciate that.

I would also like to thank a number of distinguished guests who are here today. With us today we have Larry Tanenbaum, the chairman of Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment; we have, from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, Stephen Adler and Howard English; from B'nai Brith Canada, we have Dr. Aubrey Zidenberg and Ruth Klein; from CJPAC, we have Rachel Chertkoff and Tomer Chervinsky; from the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies, we have Avi Benlolo and Stacey Starkman; from the UJA of greater Toronto, we have Jeff Springer; from the Jewish Family Institute, we have Ellie Bass; from the Toronto Jewish Music Week festival, we have Judy Jacobs; and we also have Bernie Farber, Karen Mock, Howard Brown, and Roz Lofsky. Thank you for being here.

I just want to read into the record that, hopefully, with this proclamation of May as Jewish Heritage Month, we can acknowledge and honour all Jewish Ontarians who, through their everyday actions, work to provide a better life for future generations by joining hands with all who seek equality and opportunity. In this month, may we recall that the history and unique identity of Jewish Ontarians is part of the grand narrative of our province, forged in friendships and shared wisdom between people of all faiths.

1540

Mr. Speaker, with this bill, we have an opportunity really to recognize the pioneers of Ontario who, over the last 200 years, have helped build this great province, from Kenora to Cornwall, and hopefully the passage of this bill will give all of us an opportunity, Jews and non-Jews, to recognize and celebrate in this great part of Ontario's heritage.

We have chosen the month of May because there are many significant events that occur in the month of May. There's the UJA Walk With Israel that occurs in May; B'nai Brith Canada has its annual policy conference; the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre Spirit of Hope benefit takes place; there's the Holocaust Remembrance Day that takes place, according to the calendar; Israel

Independence Day is celebrated; the Jewish Film Festival takes place during that month; Jewish Music Week is celebrated; and also, in the United States of America, various presidents, from George W. Bush to President Obama, have proclaimed May to be Jewish American Heritage Month.

As many of us know, in all of our communities, we have incredible pioneers, and I hope that this month will give us an opportunity to recognize the pioneers that come from the Jewish faith. They live in communities small and large. It goes back over 200 years, and they lived and worked in small communities, from Bancroft to Hamilton. In fact, 60% of all Jewish Canadians live in our province, and there have been many important Jewish Ontarians who grew up outside of the big city of Toronto. Broadcaster and trailblazer Barbara Frum was from Niagara Falls, and we all know her great contributions to broadcasting. Isaac Waterman from London, Ontario, founded Imperial Oil in 1880. Senator David Croll was the mayor of Windsor, and he became a Senator in Ottawa. Bora Laskin was born in Thunder Bay and became the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. Fanny Bobbie Rosenfeld grew up in Barrie, and she was named Canada's athlete of the half-century and won medals in both the Summer Olympics and Winter Olympics. Justice Michael Moldaver, who was just named to the Supreme Court of Canada, hails from Peterborough.

There are so many individuals who have contributed in their own communities to build a better Ontario. Their names are too countless to refer to, but I'm going to try and refer to some of them who have made a real difference in this incredible province.

If you look in theatre, there are people like Eugene Levy, who used to live just up the street here on Avenue Road, in fact; Howie Mandel; Honest Ed Mirvish—what he did for theatre in Canada and the world; the singer Amy Sky; Wayne and Shuster; and Celia Franca, founder of the National Ballet of Canada.

In the field of law, there are just so many numerous incredible contributors who have helped to make incredible contributions. One gentleman who deserves recognition is Abraham Lief. Justice Lief, actually, is the father of Ontario family law. And there's the honourable Sidney Linden.

We've had great political leaders like Nathan Phillips, who was from Brockville, Ontario. We had Phil Givens, mayor of Toronto. We've had Mel Lastman. We've had Paul Godfrey as Metro chairman, who is now publisher of the National Post, and who was an incredible leader here in the city of Toronto and the province. These are some of the people who have contributed a great deal.

I wanted to mention two individuals that have quite a unique contribution, I thought, and are typical of the incredible spirit and tenacity of Ontarians of Jewish heritage. One is David Goldberg from Hamilton. He was a Royal Canadian Air Force fighter pilot in World War II.

Talk about tenacity. David Goldberg was shot down in France. He avoided capture. He literally walked all the

way through France with the help of the French underground; walked through Spain, the Pyrenees, and ended up back in England. A month later, what did David Goldberg do? He volunteered again, went back to the front and continued to fight for democracy and freedom.

David Goldberg flew 235 missions as a fighter pilot. Then he came back to Hamilton, went to Osgoode Law School, became an outstanding lawyer, practised law and was a full-time reservist while he was practising law. So David Goldberg is typical of the incredible tenacity and the generosity of our Canadians of Jewish heritage.

Another interesting story is the story of the Green family. Lipa Green—the father of sons Harold and Al Green—started with his sons as chimney sweepers and cleaners. They used to sweep and clean chimneys. From sweeping and cleaning chimneys, they started repairing chimneys. From that they went on, with the bricks they were accumulating from repairing chimneys, to building houses. They went on to become founders of one of the largest construction development companies in Canada, the Greenwin firm, which has built housing all over Ontario. In fact, the Green family is also known for their incredible philanthropy to the arts, to sculpture, to the Reena Foundation. They're an incredibly philanthropic family.

Or I could mention the family of Larry Tanenbaum, whose father, Abraham, came by ship from Poland in 1912 and started acquiring scrap metal. From scrap metal he eventually created one of Canada's most formidable construction companies.

These are the people in the Jewish community who helped build this country and are still building this country. Whether they be architects like Jack Diamond, or the wonderful contributors to the arts; whether it be the philanthropy of the Sonshine family; Peter Munk, the industrialist and entrepreneur; Murray Koffler and the incredible contributions that he made; the Tanenbaum family; Joseph Rotman; Seymour Schulich—all these people were builders, entrepreneurs, risk-takers, pioneers, and always generous and always very, very proud of their Jewish roots and loving of their Canadian roots.

They have left marks that are still with us today. If you look at Holy Blossom synagogue, a beautiful work of architecture up Bathurst; Beth Tzedec; the Kiever Shul in Kensington Market, one of the oldest shuls. I know there's also what they call the Parkdale shul, the Junction Shul—beautiful works of architecture.

There's also the influence they've had on our cuisine, our food, our music. Oddly enough, this year, the United Bakers Dairy Restaurant in my riding is celebrating their 100th anniversary. The Ladovsky family has been operating this bakery in Toronto for over 100 years, and this May they will be celebrating that centenary. *Mazel tov* to the Ladovsky family.

Mr. Speaker, I've just given you a snapshot of the incredible diversity, generosity, loyalty—in fact, in World War II, over 16,000 young Jewish men volunteered to fight for Canada. Over 30% of the population of Jewish males over the age of 21 volunteered to fight for

Canada, and they served this country well in time of war and they served this country well in time of peace.

1550

I just hope that with the passage of this bill, we can recognize the contributions not only of those who are well known and have made contributions but all the unsung heroes who have made Ontario their home and have, over the last 200 years, really made a difference and really contributed to making this the great province and the great country that it is.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Shurman: What a great day this is for Ontario. High time that we did this, so I rise today to join my colleagues in support of Bill 17, An Act to proclaim the month of May Jewish Heritage Month.

Before I go any further, I'd like to pay special tribute to my colleague the member for Eglinton—Lawrence for coming up with this idea and for inviting myself and the member for Parkdale—High Park to co-sponsor the bill with him. It's a genuine display of non-partisanship and something that is long overdue in our province.

Thornhill, which of course I represent, has the largest Jewish population in the province of Ontario—at last count, something like 60 synagogues in Thornhill alone, and probably 10 more since I did that count.

People often wonder about us, about us as a community, a community that has been around in one form or another for many thousands of years. For example, here in Ontario, people will often ask, "Why are so many of you professionals? Why do so many of you own businesses?" The answer is actually quite simple. It's because, in the early 19th century, when Jewish immigrants started to arrive in the province of Ontario, they couldn't get jobs in the big corporate set-ups that existed at the time, so they had to go on the necessity-being-the-mother-of-invention idea and invent jobs. Inventing a job meant you either became a professional or you started a business, and some of these things survive today.

Of course, we've gotten past the days where there are corporate barriers to Jewish people, and, for that matter, any other people in this wonderful diverse province that we have.

That's part of the history, and that's one of the things that we can expose when we introduce Bill 17 and wind up with a law that creates Jewish Heritage Month. Bill 17 is precisely about that. It's about recognizing Jewish Ontarians and their many contributions to our province's history. Ontario was founded by new Canadians, who took it upon themselves to build a great province, and indeed, that's what we have in Ontario.

The first Jewish immigrants, as I mentioned, struggled when they arrived in the early part of the 19th century. They established their small businesses to support themselves and their families. My colleague from Eglinton—Lawrence has very well enunciated the same list of people that I have here, who are great contributors from the community.

I might add, in medicine, Dr. Rena Buckstein in haematology and Dr. A.I. Wolinsky in anaesthesiology;

in business, Peter Munk, the founder and chairman of Barrick Gold; Joseph Rotman, of Clairvest; Heather Reisman, founder and CEO of Indigo Books—the list goes on and on.

In sports, you mentioned Mr. Tanenbaum, who's with us today—go, Leafs, go!—and Dan Shulman of TSN and ESPN. There are just so many.

Institutions founded by the Jewish community to help serve the growing immigrant population of Ontario—and this again may surprise some people—Mount Sinai Hospital was founded originally to serve Toronto's poor, Yiddish-speaking immigrant population. Can you imagine that beautiful edifice on University Avenue starting that way? It welcomed Jewish doctors and medical interns, who were often rejected by other institutions back in the day. Mount Sinai has grown, of course, into one of North America's top teaching, research and medical institutions.

Baycrest hospital and home for the aged was founded by the Ezras Noshem Society, which was a charitable women's group, to care for the elderly. This facility, too, has grown into one of Canada's leading institutions in aging and brain health research and innovation.

May, as Mr. Colle of Eglinton–Lawrence has duly noted, is a really important month. It's when we mark Holocaust Remembrance Day, or Yom ha-Shoah, when we remember those who were lost in that tragedy; Israeli Independence Day, or Yom Ha'atzmaut, marking Israel's declaration of independence; a UJA walk for Israel, which raises money and awareness for the cause of Israel, so well represented in Canada by our Prime Minister, Stephen Harper; the Jewish film festival; and Jewish Music Week. It is fitting that May be the month designated as Jewish Heritage Month.

In conclusion, this bill has received the endorsement of prominent members of the Jewish community, many of whom are represented here today—organizations as well as individuals. Interestingly, it's also endorsed by the National Congress of Italian Canadians for whom we—I was involved in this as well—helped pass Italian Heritage Month for another great builder group in the province of Ontario last year.

Hundreds of communities have helped build this province. Bills like Bill 17 help us, as Ontarians, to illustrate and recognize these contributions, and I urge all of my parliamentary colleagues to join me in support of Bill 17 and see to its speedy passage here today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure and a privilege to rise and speak to this bill. I welcome our guests here, as have been welcomed before.

At the risk of breaching some protocol here, I just want to show that in my riding, the Junction Shul just celebrated its 100th anniversary. I was there to celebrate that. It was a joyous, joyous occasion. I found myself talking to this delightful gentleman in his 80s—I didn't know who he was—and he was talking about his own particular history.

He was talking about how his family came to the Junction when the Junction was a very poor, very Jewish area prior to World War I and how he got involved in the scrap metal business—this was his grandfather Abraham—and how he was one of the founders of the Junction Shul, and then how the sons went into the business. I said, “So, are you still in the business?” He said, “No, no, I moved from that into other things.”

I discovered later that the gentleman I was speaking to was Joey Tanenbaum. I discovered at that point also that he was the gentleman who was gracious enough not only to have kept, in part, the Junction Shul alive, but also to provide the wonderful scotch for the l'chaim party after the celebration of the Junction Shul.

My history is interwoven with Jewish Heritage Month in the sense that I grew up in a very Jewish neighbourhood. People say, “Where was that?” I say, “The Annex.” I grew up in the Annex and just to the south of me was Spadina Avenue, which was all Jewish back then, and Kensington Market, which was all Jewish back then. In fact, Huron Street public school was an interesting mix between Italians and Jews. That was the Annex and that was Spadina and Kensington Market.

I went to all my friends' bar mitzvahs. I don't remember bat mitzvahs back then, but the bar mitzvahs weren't anything like the bar mitzvahs my children have gone to. They were usually held around the kitchen tables. They were held just with the family—very, very different times but all part of Jewish Heritage Month.

I also want to bring attention to some of the incredible history of Jews in Canada, which I don't think anybody really knows, that's not part of the community, and that is, that their contributions go way back to the 18th century. In fact, the first Jew we have on record who emigrated here came back in 1738 and went to French Canada back then. Of course, it was totally different. She snuck in dressed as a man. The feminist in me loves this story. She snuck in dressed as a man and she was deported because she wouldn't convert to Catholicism—very cool—and then, of course, proceeded to come in more and more after that.

And another stat, too, which I love to share is that B'nai Brith was founded in 1875. Most people don't know that, either, and I think these are facts we should celebrate. This is how far back the history goes.

Of course, it's not always bright, and part of this—and I think the member from Thornhill alluded to this—is that we, as Canadians and Ontarians, have to share the dark side of how Jewish immigrants were treated here as well. I grew up with my father, who was of course not Jewish—Italian-Canadian Catholic—talking about the race riots in Christie Pits when Nazis would beat up Jews. I grew up with stories about how horrible it was that out in the Beach—the member from the Beaches here—on the boardwalk it said, “No Jews or dogs allowed,” and that was within memory.

I grew up with the story told to me by my family about how Canada turned away the vast majority of Jewish immigrants who wanted to emigrate here between 1930

and 1939. I think we accepted 4,000 out of 800,000. So we need to remember the dark background, to remember that we need to celebrate what has been accomplished since then, and despite that. These accomplishments have been done despite that.

1600

Again, it's interesting: The member from Thornhill mentions the legal profession and the professions where Jewish immigrants have excelled, but in fact, they weren't allowed in to study in those professions for most of the history of their immigration here. There were quotas in government, too. The city of Toronto had quotas and would not allow Jews to be policemen or work for the transit system. That's all part of the backdrop of the celebration that we need to remember, because we remember that this was all overcome as part of it, and that it was, of course, completely legal not to hire somebody or rent to somebody because they were Jewish. All of that is part of the background, which continues today, by the way. There are still horrendous acts of anti-Semitism that go on. So that's the background.

The foreground, however, of this bill is celebration. It's celebrating the great accomplishments and, of course, all that continues to be accomplished, too.

Another intersection of my life and this story is that one of the first times I ever interacted in a political context was when I got invited to have lunch with the mayor. I think I was eight years old at that time, and it was because I took part—completely innocently; I didn't realize I had. Photographers came to our schoolyard and took a picture of me with my best friend, who happened to be a Jamaican Canadian—one of the first, actually, in our school, the only young black woman in our school. I was pretty fair, and there's a picture of me and her whispering to each other; it was for the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews. I still have that poster. It's framed in my office here at Queen's Park, if you ever want to look at it.

So again, a forefront agency that worked to overcome racism, overcome stigmatism, overcome oppression, and again, really an institution that was founded by Jewish immigrants and their descendants.

I'm going to leave some time for my colleague. In fact, what was really interesting is we were kind of jostling for time. We both wanted to speak to this bill, so that in itself says something. We're excited about it; we're excited about the celebrations that are going to happen in May, we hope, and we're excited about being able to share all of this experience with everyone out there.

I also just want to close by saying that if you ever come to Parkdale–High Park, you have to go to 56 Maria Street in the Junction and go to the Junction Shul. One of the delightful things about the Junction Shul is that it had a rabbi for only a very short period of its history. It has been led by the congregants. They only come together now to worship for High Holidays, but it's the oldest synagogue that has been in continuous service, at least

for High Holidays, in Ontario. And I'm the beneficiary, having it in my riding. Its doors tend to not always be open, but if you give me a shout, I'm happy and they're happy to take you on a tour of it, because it truly is a landmark. It's truly beautiful—some of the most beautiful art, lovingly preserved by the founding families of that shul, and brought together in a wonderful book.

This is part of our heritage, this is part of the Jewish heritage, and this will become part of Jewish Heritage Month. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Paul Miller: I too will join in this conversation and am very proud to be part of it. I'm from the Hamilton area and we have a very proud Jewish community in our city. They have contributed over many decades to our city, building industry and business, and also take an active part in our community on many, many levels—in sports, in arts and music; they have been a major contributor to the landscape of Hamilton.

I also can say that I married into a Jewish family; I married into the Paikin family, and my lovely wife and I have spent many years together. I'm quite proud of her heritage, and I being Scottish, she's taken quite an interest in my heritage too. So we've shared some wonderful stories and have gone over a lot of colourful maps, and we have some destinations we'd like to visit. I certainly would love to go to the Holy Land one day with her and partake in some of the traditions and the wonderful culture.

The Jewish community has had many, many, many hills to climb over the years, and they've stuck it out. They've been brave troopers and they have overcome many, many setbacks to become a major part of the Canadian landscape.

I, too, as Cheri DiNovo spoke of, have had many friends in the community. I've worked with them in the steel mills. I've played sports with them, and many of them have become close friends. People, in general, share more in common than a lot of us would like to admit. I'll tell you, it has been a character builder for me. It certainly has made me proud to be part of their community and part of their heritage, as well as—they actually have open arms. The rabbi that my wife had, Rabbi Baskin, was a very—how would I put it? I don't like to use the word "liberal." I don't want to give you guys any credit, but he was a very liberal type. He certainly was open to all other faiths, and he was very, very co-operative in our community. He supported and got very active in the politics in our community. At every function for mayors or in elections, he was involved heavily and spoke at many of the community events. He was well-spoken, well-read and a tremendous, tremendous guy. We really appreciated his contribution to our community. Rabbi Baskin will always be remembered for his contributions to the Hamilton scene.

I can leave a little time for Cheri to finish off, because she did such a great job and I'm actually running out of steam here.

I just want to say congratulations. It's long overdue. Let's hope that we can open some more doors that have been shut for many years.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I want to first thank MPP Colle for introducing this important bill, but also the two co-sponsors: MPPs DiNovo and Shurman.

I am honoured to rise in the House today to offer my support and, frankly, my admiration for all that Ontario's Jewish community has accomplished and all that lies ahead.

It's right that we as a Legislature, as elected officials and as citizens of this great province should recognize the month of May as Jewish Heritage Month, because in celebrating the Jewish community, we celebrate a community of citizens whose achievements and successes serve as a model for how we all can contribute to civic life in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm blessed to represent the great riding of St. Paul's, and in my riding—we have nothing close to MPP Shurman's count—we have five synagogues: Beth Tzedec, Beth Sholom, Forest Hill Jewish Centre, the Chabad of Midtown, and Holy Blossom Temple.

Two weeks ago, the Jewish community in St. Paul's, and at Holy Blossom in particular, lost one of its most treasured members. Rabbi Gunther Plaut lived a storied life. He was a dedicated teacher and scholar. After fleeing Germany to escape the horrors of the Nazis, he became a tireless defender of human rights, of pluralism and of openness. Like the rabbis in attendance today from my constituency and beyond its borders, and like the Jewish community as a whole, he reached beyond his faith community to lift us all up.

That act of reaching out is a quality that I believe defines the Jewish community here in Ontario, through individuals but also through organizations like the United Jewish Appeal, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee, the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, B'nai Brith, all of whom have representatives here today, and so many others.

The Jewish community has reached out and has established itself as an indispensable part of our larger community, to the point that your heritage is our heritage. As Ontarians and as Canadians, your achievements are successes that we celebrate together. Your history and your heritage is one that we are inspired by together.

One of the greatest honours that I have had as an MPP was to participate last year, for the second time, in a ceremony on May 19 of last year, with Premier McGuinty, the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem and 19 survivors of the Holocaust. These 19 men and women, these survivors, carry your history and your heritage within themselves. By their very presence, by their act of survival, they taught me so much about resilience, about what it means not just to carry on in the face of unspeakable, unimaginable tragedy, but to never forget—and most of all, to build. Through the numerous events

I've had the privilege to attend, even in just the last year, I've seen the strength of the community that you've built together.

1610

Here in Ontario our Jewish community has achieved so much, overcome so much and built so much. This bill is a small act of recognition for all that you have contributed to this great province and this country.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak in support of Bill 17, a bill proposing that the month of May be recognized as Jewish Heritage Month in Ontario. I'd also like to welcome our guests to the gallery today.

I'd like to start by applauding the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for bringing this important bill forward, and my colleagues the members from Thornhill and Parkdale–High Park for agreeing to co-sponsor it.

The Jewish community's rich contribution to Canadian culture, science, business and innovation has done much to enhance the fabric of our multicultural society. From medicine to law, politics to philanthropy, it's hard to think of a professional field that has not been positively impacted by the Jewish community.

It is so fitting that the month of May has been chosen as the month to recognize Jewish heritage, because among other important events, May also marks Holocaust Remembrance Day and Israel Independence Day.

Jewish Heritage Month would also give us the opportunity to recognize the phenomenal contributions many Jewish Canadians have made to our province. Rather than mentioning the many names that have already been mentioned by many of my colleagues, I'd like to recognize a particular field that I think many members of Canada's Jewish community have made a significant impact on, and that's in the area of business, particularly the area of business innovation.

As we know, we're facing very difficult economic times here in Ontario, and I think we need to look elsewhere for some inspiration. We have a significant innovation gap here in Ontario which affects our productivity and our ability to compete on the world stage. It's so fitting that so many Jewish Canadians have stepped up to the plate to make connections with Israel to form some partnerships—places that we can learn from.

Israel is well known as an innovation incubator, as a start-up nation, and there have been some very positive connections that have been made with the assistance of many members of the Jewish community, with both the federal government and the provincial government, particularly in the area of brain research, which is going on now. There are many other opportunities.

I would say that I recently had the opportunity to visit Israel several weeks ago and had the opportunity to visit Technion, the Israel Institute of Technology, and the Weizmann Institute of Science. There's some wonderful work that's being done there that we could truly learn from.

So I want to celebrate that, particularly today. There's much we can learn here in Ontario, much that we can work on together so that we will have so much to celebrate and to be grateful for during the month of May.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want, in this brief minute, to express my support for Bill 17. I want to say, as an Italian Canadian, that the Jews and the Italians have grown up together in the area of Trinity-Spadina and have moved along Bathurst, where the Jewish community is on the eastern part of Bathurst and the Italian community is on the western part, all the way from the lake up to Thornhill and beyond. It's quite a fascinating history that we share together.

The other little history I want to share is that my wife, who happens to be Chilean, is half Jewish, so it seems that the Italians and the Jews are connected in that way as well.

And in this brief 20 seconds I want to express my admiration to the Jewish community as a whole in two areas in particular; that is, the incredible commitment they have to anti-racism and human rights. That is something that I attribute to them as a community, and I wanted to express that in the brief minute that I have.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I'm delighted to rise today in support of Bill 17.

In 1760, General Amherst, who captured Montreal for the British, had Jews in his regiment, including four officers who were Jews. The most prominent was Lieutenant Aaron Hart. After his service, he settled in Quebec. One of his sons was elected to the Legislature of Lower Canada on April 11, 1807, becoming the first Jew in an official opposition in the British Empire. At his swearing-in, he took his oath on a Hebrew Bible, which so enraged the Catholic population that he was expelled from the Legislature. The Legislature dismissed him in 1808 and 1809. He was re-elected again, but Jews were not allowed to hold elected office in Canada until a generation later.

This discrimination continued in various forms for many years. I'm old enough to remember where there were restrictive practices at clubs, resorts and workplaces, just to name a few, and I lived through that. There was no discrimination against me, but when I graduated from university, my first job, as an industrial designer, was with Dunlop Rubber. The most common comment I got from my Jewish friends: "How did a Jew get hired by Dunlop Rubber?" There was a perception that these corporations—not a perception, a reality—were not hiring.

Since these early days, the Jewish community has grown, prospered and participated fully in the life and culture of Ontario. Almost 20,000 Jewish Canadians volunteered to fight for Canada during the Second World War. This was the largest percentage of participation by any ethnic community.

After the war, roughly 40,000 Holocaust survivors came to Canada, settling mostly in Montreal and Toronto. I had the honour 18 years ago of participating in the first honouring of individual Holocaust survivors in the Legislature for their outstanding contribution to Ontario.

Today, we are acknowledging the significant contributions made by the Jewish community in the fields of medicine, law, politics, art, business and philanthropy. I want to add another interesting irony: In the early 1980s, I was the chairman of the Toronto Harbour Commission. One of the big issues of the day was that the harbour police and the port police were being duplicated by the Toronto police, and there was a huge issue in the community because of the expense. Over the years, there could never be a resolution. So on a particular day, I sat down with two of my friends: Paul Godfrey, who was the chairman of Metro at the time; Phil Givens, the previous mayor, who is now the chairman of the police commission; and Monte Kwinter, the chairman of the harbour commission, and we ironed out a deal that put this particular problem at rest.

The greater irony is that it took place in a building that even then was not allowing any Jews to be members. Here we were talking about it, and we said to each other, "If only our forefathers could see us now. Here we are solving this problem."

Of course, since that time, things have improved, but as Cheri has said, there is still latent anti-Semitism out there. This particular bill is going to do a great deal toward bringing the general community together as we celebrate Jewish Heritage Month in May.

I am delighted to support it, and I hope that all of us will continue to support it. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'm very pleased to take part in today's events. The only surprise that I have today is that there isn't already a Jewish Heritage Month in Ontario, as they have been such an integral part of our community and our province for so long.

I was very pleased in 1997 to be able to pass the Holocaust Memorial Day Act, which was the first time a Holocaust memorial act was passed anywhere in the world outside of Israel. So Ontario led the way in passing the first Holocaust memorial act—the Holocaust Memorial Day Act. Since that time, all 10 provinces have passed Holocaust memorial acts, and I believe that the count in the United States is over 30 states. So Ontario led the way in the Holocaust memorial area.

This year, Holocaust Memorial Day falls on the 27th of the month of Nisan. In the Julian calendar, that day translates to April 19. So it's a little early this year, as occurs from time to time, and maybe we'll celebrate it on April 19 or maybe we'll celebrate it on May 1. We'll see how things go.

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Many of us have spoken about the names that have been listed here, and it's interesting that—I would like to

make a few comments because many of them bring back memories or represent people that I've know.

Barbara Frum I met a number of times when she was on CBC. Of course, I enjoy reading her son's articles. It's very difficult to find—of course, the fourth estate isn't here right now, but they listen in their offices, so you have to always be careful what you say about the press because they're always listening. But I just say that it's difficult to find a conservative reporter, a conservative journalist. Whenever I see a byline by David Frum, of course I scan it carefully. It is difficult to find a conservative writer. David is.

Some of the other names that pop out: Honest Ed Mirvish. If there was a father of Canadian theatre, it was Ed Mirvish. He brings back wonderful memories of just a great guy who built live theatre in Toronto to become—I think we have the third most active live theatre of any city in the world, following London and New York. Toronto runs number three, and it's much to his credit that he made those things happen.

Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster: I remember those two guys on TV—67 appearances on Ed Sullivan. But more than that, I remember them at the Toronto Maple Leaf games. Especially Johnny Wayne was a huge fan.

Mr. John O'Toole: That's when they used to win.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Well, I tell you, one of the memories that I have of the 1967 Stanley Cup championships: When we won, they were on the ice that year. Who knows? It's February, and we're still in contention.

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Get a goalie. The deadline's coming; you need one.

Anyway, great, great memories.

Peter Munk: The world's largest gold trader, and gold is trading at \$1,800 an ounce or whatever. As gold has moved up and down, who amongst us hasn't made a few bucks on a gold stock in this province? Great memories of him.

Sam Shopsowitz: Boy, the best corned beef sandwich that you can have anywhere in the province.

It goes on; I could go on.

Sam Sniderman: My father used to go down to Sam's record shop on Yonge Street to buy classical records.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I know I'm going over, Speaker—to buy classical records. It was one of the few places you could get a huge selection.

It's just part and parcel of our heritage in Ontario, and it's just so right that we have this month of May.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Leal: It's truly an honour for me to get some remarks on the record this afternoon with regard to this bill, An Act to proclaim the month of May Jewish Heritage Month. I want to share with the Legislature this afternoon a bit of the Jewish heritage in my riding of Peterborough.

The first Jewish man known to have settled in Peterborough was a shoemaker, Mr. L. Kert, who arrived in 1881. Other early Jews came too, including Moses Levin and Phillip Schulman; both were merchants, and both, of course, moved on to Toronto.

Around the turn of the 20th century, three of the patriarchs of the Peterborough community came to settle in our community: Abraham Low, David Florence and Abraham Swartz. Several years later, they were joined by Mr. A. Cohen, Mr. Elkin and Mr. Fineberg.

These community pioneers had to work hard to make ends meet because they could not afford to hire a shochet or a teacher. However, they spent the money necessary to get kosher meat from Toronto. They also took turns hosting services in their homes and teaching the children.

David Florence and Abraham Low both settled in Peterborough in 1905, as did many other Jewish immigrants. Both men also started as material recyclers. David Florence had first arrived in Canada in 1901, going to Kingston and then to Toronto before settling in Peterborough. He worked for six years before he felt ready to send for his wife, Fanny, and their children, who were then in Lithuania.

In the first and second decades of the 20th century, Peterborough's Jewish population continued to grow. Messrs. Sukloff, Black, Cherney, Zacks, Green and Fine arrived in this period. All stayed to raise their families and become important parts of the Peterborough community.

By the mid-1950s, 78.7% of Peterborough's Jews had been born in Canada and another 20.5% were naturalized Canadians, meaning that almost all members of the community had Canadian citizenship.

A remarkable story in innovation and expansion is that of the Cherney brothers, Harry, Meyer and Lou. The growth of their furniture businesses is a good example of the remarkable results that a surprising number of determined and hard-working immigrants were able to achieve.

In the 1960s, Peterborough's Jewish community built the Beth Israel Synagogue, just east of the Peterborough Regional Health Centre. Peterborough's Jewish community built our community, and that's what we're very thankful for, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. David Zimmer: Speaker, it's my great pleasure to speak in favour of Jewish heritage day in Ontario. Everybody has made remarks about the tremendous contribution that the Jewish community has made. The month of May will recognize that contribution of the community, and it will recognize the contribution of the individuals that we've all heard about.

But there's a second purpose behind Jewish Heritage Month, and that is tying in with the Jewish community's great tradition of education and awareness. In Toronto, there are vast numbers of people, huge numbers of new immigrants, for instance, that have come into the city and

into the province. Many of these new groups, and indeed many of the groups that have been here for generations, although somewhat aware of the great Jewish cultural traditions and the great Jewish contribution to our community, still do not appreciate the depth and the quality of that contribution.

I rather expect that during the month of May, when we look at the agenda of all of the events that the Jewish community is going to host, the awareness of the Jewish contribution to life in Ontario is just going to be explosive throughout all of the other communities. I think that's a good thing, when you think of the society that we're trying to build here in Ontario, where all religious groups, all ethnic groups, all racial groups—we want everyone to live together harmoniously. One of the ways we do that is by understanding each other's culture, by appreciating each other's culture and building together.

I think that's the great benefit of a whole month of Jewish heritage events, awareness events and education events. It takes away some of the mystery; it answers some of the questions that other groups have about the Jewish community, and to the extent that we understand each other, that's good for Ontario and that's good for the Jewish community.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence, you have two minutes for a reply.

Mr. Mike Colle: I want to give my sincere thanks to all the members on both sides of the House who spoke so eloquently and passionately about this bill. I know that so many of you would like to speak even more, but time is limited. But I do really appreciate your heartfelt support on both sides.

I also would like to thank my rabbi, Rabbi Yossi Sapirman, who inspired me to do this, at Beth Torah Congregation. I'd also like to thank Dustin Cohen in my office, my executive assistant, for his incredible work, and my legislative intern, Craig Ruttan, who has done so much good work on this. They really went all out on this.

There were so many amazing comments made by all the members here. The member from Halton mentioned Sniderman. Well, I go back to Sniderman being on College Street, next to Kwinter's, at College and Grace, where we used to get the 45s. Lombardi was on the other side and Becker's was there, the deli. Like the member from Parkdale, I grew up at College and Grace, so we had a real mix. It was hard not to be schizophrenic: Were you Jewish? Were you Italian? Were you Catholic? But that's how we grew up in Toronto, and it was a wonderful time in the 1950s. We didn't play soccer; we played baseball, and our heroes were the same.

I just want to say that I dedicate this bill to my mother, who, as a young woman, was a seamstress and worked for one of the best tailors in Toronto, Mr. Wolfgang Pitka at Spadina and Dundas, who used to make suits for John Robarts.

They would tell my mother all the stories about being shanghaied Jews, coming all the way from Russia to

Vladivostok to Shanghai. So my mother learned how to cook cheesecake, how to do latkes, how to do kishkas.

Anyway, thank you so very much. Bye-bye.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 10, standing in the name of Ms. Wong.

Ms. Wong has moved private member's notice of motion number 7. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC SAFETY RELATED TO DOGS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE LIÉE AUX CHIENS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Hillier has moved second reading of Bill 16. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will take the vote after the next item.

JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE JUIF

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Colle has moved second reading of Bill 17. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE JUIF

Mr. Colle moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to proclaim the month of May Jewish Heritage Month / Projet de loi 17, Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois du patrimoine juif.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? The motion is carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

PUBLIC SAFETY RELATED TO DOGS
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA SÉCURITÉ
PUBLIQUE LIÉE AUX CHIENS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll now call in the members for the vote. It'll be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1633 to 1638.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Hillier has moved second reading of Bill 16. All those in favour, rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harris, Michael	Natyshak, Taras
Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Nicholls, Rick
Bailey, Robert	Horwath, Andrea	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bisson, Gilles	Jackson, Rod	Prue, Michael
Campbell, Sarah	Jones, Sylvia	Schein, Jonah
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Leone, Rob	Shurman, Peter
Colle, Mike	MacLaren, Jack	Singh, Jagmeet
Crack, Grant	Mantha, Michael	Smith, Todd
Craiton, Kim	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	McDonell, Jim	Taylor, Monique
Dunlop, Garfield	McKenna, Jane	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McNaughton, Monte	Vanthof, John
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Paul	Walker, Bill
Forster, Cindy	Milligan, Rob E.	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Naqvi, Yasir
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Piruzza, Teresa
Coteau, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Dameria, Dipika	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Delaney, Bob	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Dhillon, Vic	Mangat, Amrit	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Moridi, Reza	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Murray, Glen R.	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 51; the nays are 26.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Lanark.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'd like to have the bill referred to regulations and private bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Is the majority in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills? The majority being in agreement, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Bradley has moved adjournment of the House. Do I have agreement? Agreed.

This House stands adjourned until Monday at 10:30.

The House adjourned at 1643.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
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
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milligan, Rob E. (PC) Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris
Rob Leone, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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

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Cindy Forster, Monte McNaughton
Yasir Naqvi, Teresa Piruzza
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

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Joe Dickson, Rosario Marchese
David Oraziotti, Laurie Scott
Todd Smith, Jeff Yurek
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

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Bill Mauro, Jim McDonell
Phil McNeely, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren
Paul Miller, Rob E. Milligan
Shafiq Qadri
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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Gilles Bisson, Donna H. Cansfield
Steve Clark, Garfield Dunlop
Jeff Leal, Lisa MacLeod
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

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Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
Reza Moridi, Jerry J. Ouellette
Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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

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Vic Dhillon, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Mario Sergio
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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

Chair / Président: Vacant
Ted Chudleigh, Dipika Damerla
Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Ernie Hardeman, Tracy MacCharles
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Jane McKenna
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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