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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 3 April 2012

Mardi 3 avril 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
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 April 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 avril 2012

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 POUR
DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 29, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.

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

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm pleased to resume the debate, the discussions that we started last week on Thursday. Time ran out before question period.

I do want to inform, or re-inform, the House and give a synopsis of what I had talked about during that debate. Certainly, I was looking at the case of bullying, trying to talk about it from a perspective of an academic debate—what is violence? What is bullying?—and going over some of the past legislation that even our party enacted on this cause, because I think that we are here to talk about protecting our kids. I think if we keep our kids as the focal point in this, we are in essence doing our jobs: That's protecting kids from harm.

I have about nine minutes left in this debate, and I do want to reiterate the fact that, as much as possible, I'm trying to rise above some of the politics that I think we're expecting to hear in this debate, and I think that that's an important thing to do. I think we can talk about bullying without talking about some of the heated issues that surround this particular bill. I'm hopeful that debate on both sides of the House can respect that.

I do want to talk a little bit about some of the meetings that I've had over the last little while that frankly have been humbling. I met with Roger Lawler, who is the chair of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. When I met him I asked him about his views on Bill 13, as I would in any circumstance where we're meeting a key stakeholder in our community, to get some feedback on the kinds of bills that we are talking about. Madam Speaker, like I said, his response was pretty humbling.

When talking about bullying in their schools in that school board, the chair, Roger Lawler, suggested that they're not focused on the politics of this issue; they're focused on the act. They're focused on the deed. They're focused on the fact that there is a bully and a person who is bullied.

So the school board actively seeks to address some of those concerns that they see therein, specifically, talking about the policies. Whether that person has been bullied because of race or religiosity or sexual orientation or whatever the case, that student is being treated and counselled accordingly. I found it very humbling that he did not seek an opportunity to engage in a highly political and sometimes even partisan answer in response to that.

I also met with another principal in the Waterloo Region District School Board who talked about what was already happening in his school. This is from Helmut Tinnes, who is the principal of Mary Johnston Public School, again in Waterloo region. He talked about two programs that they offered for bullies in their schools and in that school in particular. The first was called the Roots of Empathy program. The Roots of Empathy program is a unique Canadian program started in 1996. This program has shown significant progress, according to Mr. Tinnes, in reducing aggression among children while raising social emotional competence and increasing empathy. So we have a program, like the Roots Of Empathy, that essentially addresses the key concern that we see with respect to bullying.

Mr. Tinnes also talked about a second program, which is called the social skills development and bullying awareness workshops, which are hosted in our region by the John Howard Society. In this program a representative from the John Howard Society comes to talk to children about the issue of bullying, so we're raising awareness of what's happening. This is another workshop for parents, and how children and parents can recognize bullying and work with schools to combat bullying.

These are the things that are already happening in our schools. I suggest that we need an opportunity to have a bill before us that essentially amplifies what's already going on in our schools, so we need a bill that complements their efforts.

I want to talk a little bit about what happened at my son's school last week and during the course of the year—at Ayr Public School, where my son is in JK. They have monthly assemblies that actually address the concerns of bullying. What they're doing each month in these assemblies is they're talking about some of the

characteristics that we'd hope we could see and teach our kids to talk about. Really, we need one person in a group to stand up for the person being bullied. If we can find that one person to stand up to that bully, then a lot of the issues surrounding it can be mitigated. We won't see some of the negative effects, emotional and physical, that we would typically see.

So it was the JK room last week that actually had to do the assembly and did a skit. They were doing a skit on building character, building confidence in themselves. At the end of that assembly they sang a very important song. That song was *The More We Get Together, the Happier We'll Be*. I think a lot of us who have children or can remember back to when we were children and actually remember it—

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Can we sing it?

Mr. Rob Leone: The member for Guelph actually wants me to sing, I think. I'm not sure you really want me to sing.

I'm encouraged by the fact, though, that they'd like to sing *The More We Get Together, The Happier We'll Be*. I'm certainly hopeful that that synopsis is something that we see more and more in this House, in this place.

Madam Speaker, my wife is a psychologist in Waterloo region. She is a child psychologist. She talks and deals with issues of anxiety and depression. She often engages in therapy sessions with clients who have been bullied. It's certainly a very prevalent thing in our schools. The emotional effects that it has on people, I think, are incomprehensible if we have not ourselves been the bullied child. I think this is an issue that seriously deserves our attention and due consideration.

One of the things that are becoming more prevalent with respect to bullying in our schools is this issue of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is certainly something that I think we read about. It's in the public discourse. I don't think we know a lot about it, particularly about the effects that it has on kids, because cyberbullying effectively is the extent to which we use the Internet and social media to engage in some of the types of bullying that I expressed last week, including, for example, the direct verbal attack—which we could talk about—writing a letter, an email, sending a text message, posting something on a blog. We can also talk about how the Internet's being used to spread false rumours about kids.

Cyberbullying has a very important effect, I think, in our school system. It's one of the reasons why I have been a very strong defender of Bill 14, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo's bill, because it actually addresses cyberbullying in very great detail. It's a very important aspect of it, it's a newer aspect of it, and it certainly affects students throughout all the categories of being bullied.

Madam Speaker, I think cyberbullying is something that we need to address more concretely. Cyberbullying is one of those things that we read about a lot. As politicians, we might have been negatively affected by some cyberbullying ourselves, when things are sent by email or by text or are posted on a website that may or may not be

true about some person, with the explicit perspective of trying to embarrass, humiliate and otherwise demean political figures.

Interjections.

Mr. Rob Leone: I think it's important that we address that in a very specific way. I know the member for Peterborough doesn't want me to talk about cyberbullying, but that's okay. I think it's something that deserves a lot of merit.

I also know that we are looking here to come up with reasonable compromises when it comes to legislation. We're looking for reasonable compromises when it comes to some of the debates that we're seeing in this House, particularly with respect to Ornge and the effect that Ornge is having on our political process. We want answers to Ornge. We're not getting those answers to Ornge, and for that reason, Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Leone has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 0914 to 0944.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask all members to take their seats.

Mr. Leone has moved adjournment of the debate.

All in favour, please rise until counted.

All those opposed, please rise and be counted.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 19; the nays are 42.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

We will revert back to questions and comments.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I just wanted to share with you an article, actually, that was in a local paper from a young man who lives in my riding. His name is Jordan Setacci. He started to experience bullying when he moved from contact sports, like hockey, to dancing. He went on in his life—he's 25 years old—to pursue a career in dancing. He has danced with stars such as Lady Gaga. He has been in a number of movies, dancing, and he has recently, in the last couple of years, actually opened his own dance studio in St. Catharines.

He was out at a school in Port Colborne, which is in my riding, spreading the anti-bullying message. His remarks were, "Spread the message. Tell somebody about it if you're bullied. If you're observing bullying, tell somebody about it. Perhaps approach the bully and ask them not to do that, but don't just ignore it, because when you ignore it, it doesn't go away."

He knew that when he actually moved from hockey to dancing that he was perhaps going to be bullied, but he kind of took the plunge and he has made a very successful career for himself. He said when he was younger there was nobody around to talk to about bullying, so he encourages students to go to their teacher, go to their

guidance counsellor, go to their parent, go to somebody they trust. Until people actually start to talk about this issue and share the concerns that they have in their school or in the playground, nothing is going to happen to stop this from continuing. I thought that you'd be interested in the article, and I'm happy to speak on this.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise to speak in support of Bill 13. I was very disappointed my colleague opposite tried to stop this discussion when it's so important to debate, because this is what this Legislature is about: to give every one of us an opportunity to speak in support of or against a proposed legislation, Madam Speaker.

He made references to Roots of Empathy. Let me tell you what Roots of Empathy is. It started in the city of Toronto when I was a former school board trustee, Madam Speaker. If Mary Gordon found out the opposition member used her program, which is recognized internationally, she would be disappointed; I can tell you first-hand.

I know first-hand why we need Bill 13, Madam Speaker, when I hear the pain and the suffering of our young students, okay? In the Toronto Star today, it talks about the higher suicide rate amongst young people, and that's what this bill is all about. This bill will bring tougher consequences for bullying and hate-related activities, and also require all the school boards to support students who want to lead activities to promote understanding and respect. Sometimes we need to provide opportunity and space to allow young people to talk, to share and learn and support each other.

So why wouldn't this bill be supported by our colleague? I just don't understand, Madam Speaker. But given the challenge, I guess they need to hear from all of us.

But the other thing about this particular bill is the fact that it will raise awareness through the Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in legislation, to encourage discussion, encourage activities. But most importantly, it tells the community that it is okay to be different, it is okay to be unique. Most importantly, it's about protecting and supporting our students in all our schools, making our schools safe, Madam Speaker.

0950

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I appreciate the remarks made earlier this morning by the member from Cambridge, who spent some time dealing specifically with the bill.

Now, he did adjourn the debate, and I think it's important to put on the record why he adjourned the debate—but he did use all of his time with the exception of about one minute. He was trying to make the point that the Minister of Health has failed to deal with—I'd say the Premier has failed to deal with the Ornge helicopter issue adequately. We've been calling with our leader, Tim Hudak, for a select committee or for the minister to resign or some action to at least be apologetic.

This is another case where the government is simply bullying the opposition in terms of not showing any remorse or regrets in the wasteful spending and lack of governance in Ornge. So that's one example. That's why we're still, at this point in time—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: I could use this opportunity to adjourn the debate as well, but I won't.

What I will say is this: Last week, last Thursday, our member Elizabeth Witmer introduced Bill 14, and we debated it. It was debated on, and I think it's a very civil response, putting Bills 13 and 14 together. Bill 14, even the media has suggested, is a much more mature and well-developed bill. I'm going to outline, for those members here—when this Bill 13 goes to committee, we should be responding to some of the discussions we heard during that debate. There's a much clearer definition of bullying itself, which is fundamental to a bill, all of us agree.

Any form of bullying is reprehensible, unacceptable in society. All forms of bullying should be expunged from our system. There's early intervention and incorporation in curriculum; there's a provincial-wide ministry model of prevention; the development of a detailed school—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments and questions?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: First, I want to congratulate the member from Cambridge on his thoughts on bullying today. One thing he made a comment on was about how this is a heated issue, and the more I'm in the House listening to the debates on Bill 13, the more it comes to light that this is a heated issue. That's the very reason why we have to stay respectful and calm and deal with this: so that in the end, it will come out the best possible way to help our children be in a safe school and not experience any bullying in any form.

He also talked about the song *The More We Get Together, The Happier We'll Be*. When he said that, everybody had kind of a smile on their face, and the mood was a little easier—

Mr. Paul Miller: It won't last.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yeah, it won't last.

That song—obviously, those words mean something, and that's part of what Bill 13 is about: the power of words. If we can try to remember that the more we get along, the better things will be, the better this bill will be, and the more we're going to accomplish in this House for the betterment of our children, I think we're going to be in a far better place.

I also listened to a comment today after bells were called. Someone said, "Why can't we get along?" It was a member who said that on the other side of me, and then they got up and left. I thought about that. I thought, "Just because we don't agree doesn't mean we can't get along." Let's debate this bill and hear everybody's side. We don't have to agree on everything, but we certainly have to do the right thing and listen to each other and come up with the best bill for our children.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Cambridge has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rob Leone: I'd like to thank the member for Welland, the member for Scarborough–Agincourt, the member for Durham and the member for London–Fanshawe for their thoughtful comments and contributions to this debate.

I want to say very, very specifically that I hope the other side was actually listening to the comments that I made in this debate. Before I moved adjournment, I talked about how my son, who's in JK, had an assembly last week. It was an anti-bullying assembly, and it was an anti-bullying assembly to engender a sense of good character in our kids. The theme was co-operation, and they would have co-operation thoughts. The member from London–Fanshawe did remark on how friendly this place got when I mentioned the song *The More We Get Together*.

I'm talking about co-operation. We're talking about co-operation in trying to merge Bill 13 with Bill 14. But we're also talking about co-operation with respect to getting these select committees on Ornge up and running, which is something the opposition has requested for weeks, and we're not getting the co-operation from across the aisle, co-operation that they've actually said—on record, in Hansard, they actually said, “We will agree with the will of the House, and if it's the will of the House to set up those select committees, we're going to set up those select committees.” We still, here on April 3, do not have select committees in this Legislature. It's the reason why we moved adjournment of this House, and we're going to continue moving adjournment of the debate. We're going to continue moving it so long as we don't get the co-operation that we deserve on this side of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Thank you, Madam Chair. We'd like the debate to continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm happy to stand here today on Bill 13, the *Accepting Schools Act*. We know that bullying in our schools is causing too many of our children to take drastic actions, with the worst kinds of consequences. I am grateful that there is a true recognition and concern on this issue from all parties in this House.

On this issue, we must stand together to keep our children safe, to prevent teen suicide and to ensure that our schools have the tools and resources necessary to combat bullying of our youth. I'm happy to see that we have not one bill but two bills to debate on this issue, and I'm very keen to see these bills debated in detail in committee.

They say that life is in the details. That could not be truer than it is here today, especially when it comes to

how we support our children. We know that our children deserve the very best from our education system. From all of us here, we have the opportunity to show them that through our work on this bill, it can be done. We need to ensure that the children of our province know we understand and support their right to a system of education that is free from bullying and harassment. Every student has a right to a learning environment that is safe, secure and free from intimidation, and we fully support effective action to ensure the safety of every student in the province of Ontario.

I also want to thank everyone involved with the creating of these bills, those who crafted them and those who have worked so hard to ensure this issue has been brought to the forefront, to the attention of those of us who need to take the action our students can't take themselves, by shaping this legislation.

These bills aim to create safer and more accepting schools by designing bullying awareness and prevention weeks; requiring school boards to support student activities that promote equality; requiring groups using school property to abide by a code of conduct; and also requiring action for hate-motivated actions.

Effective bullying prevention requires a comprehensive approach that includes a clear and consistent language, consequences and raising awareness in class and within the community. We also need adequately resourced student supports along with meaningful student, parent and community engagement. There are many groups doing amazing work for our children, and we need to coordinate with those groups and listen to what they are telling us. Groups like Egale, Ontario GSAs, Canadian Auto Workers, CUPE Ontario, Canadian AIDS Society, PFLAG, Metropolitan Community Church of Ontario, and Catholics for Choice have all come together to address and support our children, and now it is our time.

Egale Canada has done amazing work for our teens, and we need to pay attention to their calls for real changes to our school systems and how we can improve the outcomes of those who are being bullied.

1000

According to *Every Class in Every School*, Egale's final report on homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in Canadian schools, 68% of transgender students, 55% of female sexual minority students and 42% of male sexual minority students reported being verbally harassed about their perceived gender or sexual orientation. Twenty percent of LGBTQ students and almost 10% of non-LGBTQ students reported being physically harassed or assaulted about their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Almost two thirds—64%—of LGBTQ students and 61% of students with LGBTQ parents reported that they feel unsafe at school.

These numbers are very shocking, or at least they are to me. I hope everyone pays very close attention to these numbers. These numbers represent real pain and fear our children experience when they go to school every day.

The worst part of it all is that these statistics are not the worst part of it. According to *Teen Health*, suicide

rates differ between boys and girls. Girls think of and attempt suicide about twice as often as boys and tend to attempt suicide by overdosing on drugs or cutting themselves. Yet boys die by suicide about four times as often as girls, perhaps because they tend to use more lethal methods such as firearms, hanging or jumping from heights.

There are some people who believe that bullying is only prevalent among our children struggling with sexuality or gender, but we know that is not the case. Racialized and special-needs children in this province are also suffering through real issues of bullying and harassment. These statistics are staggering and I am overwhelmed by the level of violence that our children are faced with every day. That is why I ask each of us here today to forgo our partisan ways and find a way to work together on this important bill. I urge everyone here to consider the consequences of finishing this legislative session without having real supports for students in place. The risk is too great and the price is too high to pay. We can't afford to lose one more child to this behaviour while we stand idly by and engage in a status quo governance. I understand that we are faced with different approaches. I understand that these bills may not be ideal. I also know that without prompt action of everyone here in this Legislature, we are risking another child. In light of that, I want to move this conversation towards how we can best support this bill and the goals it is trying to achieve.

Bill 13 ramps up the consequences for bullying but falls short in its support of student-led equality and awareness activities, including gay-straight alliances. I also know that this bill could do more to address the other factors at play when we consider school safety. There is little mention of access to professional supports, treatments and alternative programming for at-risk or special-needs students. We need to include and consider inadequate staffing and funding for anti-bullying programs, the growing inequities between schools, and the lack of social-skill-building opportunities in a curriculum that has become increasingly focused on narrow EQAO results.

My concerns for this bill are based upon the lack of resources and supports while calling for more punitive measures. Many experts caution that we must go beyond discipline; we need to restore hope through programs and initiatives that create prospects for success. This bill also does not attempt to address the inadequate staffing and supports for students who are the victims of bullying.

People for Education have sent along data that outlines several important ideas for us to include in our deliberations. One of the key factors they note is the roles of principals and how they have changed and have been expanded by numerous government directives, yet fewer and fewer schools in this province have a principal. Special-needs children, one out of three in the GTA alone in our elementary schools, are not getting recommended levels of support they require. More and more schools rely on fundraising for adequate playgrounds and school

supports, which we know are critical to keeping children healthy and active by teaching them important life lessons.

So, Speaker, there are many things that we can certainly discuss and improve upon in this bill. Bill 14 has some valid points as well. Ultimately, I'd like to see all of us work together and take the best of both bills to come out with something that's going to work for the children of our schools and the children in our lives.

I want to wrap up by telling a little story that I experienced when we were in public school. I had a friend of mine, and she was a lovely girl. I pretty much got along with everybody. I got along with the so-called bullies and I got along with the kids who were unfortunately being bullied. I befriended both parties, both people—and I hope to befriend both parties on this side of the House. But all kidding aside, my girlfriend—this girl was a lovely person, and for some reason, they'd zero in on her. To this day, I still communicate with her, and she holds on to those memories of the verbal torment and self-esteem issues. But there's a success story with her. She went on and is very successful in her own business, and she's very proud of her three children.

But I think what we have to look at, too, is that when children are bullied, a lot of people carry on that baggage, and it's not something that they get over easily. Some people rise above it, become tougher and don't let it affect them, but there are those where it does continue on into adulthood. So I do want to just mention her—her fight and her plight that she made—and just tell her that my thoughts are with her.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to follow up on the remarks from the member for London—Fanshawe. I think, in the short time that she's been here, she brings the right attitude to the job. I think, seriously, that the remarks she just made really, really mirror that attitude, and I thank her for it.

Often, you take a bill that comes before the House, and it's very abstract. But often in our daily life, things happen that make it real. Our constituency office, about two years ago, received a phone call from a parent who was at the emergency room of Oakville-Trafalgar hospital, who said, "I'm sitting here with my son. He tried to kill himself last night because he just couldn't put up with the teasing any more," because he had come out and declared to the world that he was a gay person. When you get that phone call and you're talking to the parent, all of a sudden all the bills and the initiatives and everything else don't really become that important. What you want to do is something for that individual at that time.

We have a group in Oakville called the Oakville Provincial Youth Advisory Committee. What it is is two students from each high school. I've always said, if you want to know what's happening in the schools, don't talk to the teachers, don't talk to the parents, go and talk to the kids. That's what we're able to do on a monthly basis

in Oakville, to actually hear from the students themselves.

They decided as a group that they were going to produce a video. We were fortunate enough to have in the group that year two young men who were just terrific filmmakers. In fact, since that time, they've been accepted at the Ryerson school of film. They came up with the video themselves—and this was before any initiatives came out of Queen's Park—and that video now is being used, I understand, by the Red Cross.

It gives us hope that the students are really leading the way on this. They're looking to Queen's Park and they're looking to us as legislators to treat this issue very, very seriously and to pass some legislation that's going to make their stay in school, for themselves and their colleagues, the sort of stay that we want them to have, free from the violence, the bullying and the harassment that lead to the sort of phone calls that I get and you've probably gotten from emergency—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise to make some comments on London–Fanshawe's 10-minute presentation.

I have to say as a parent that I want to get this right. As a legislator, we have a responsibility to ensure that our children are protected, whether they're in school or playing in sports in our communities. I want to make sure we do it right. Bill 14, Bill 13—I don't care. Let's just make sure it's done right.

1010

There is an example of a program in my community of Dufferin–Caledon that has been doing some excellent work—their mission includes the prevention of violence. Family Transition Place is who has been doing it since 2000, and they have a highly successful, multi-session program based in the local school program. I've actually been working with various Ministers of Education to try to go beyond the Dufferin–Caledon borders. It's an eight- to 10-week program that focuses on developing skills and attitudes that enable youth to build and maintain healthy relationships based on mutual respect. The program includes discussions around healthy body image, assertive communication skills, healthy anger strategies, bullying, cyberbullying, self-esteem and confidence.

Since the program began, feedback from the two school boards that are currently participating, the Upper Grand District School Board and the Peel District School Board, has been overwhelmingly positive. Family Transition Place and their small team of three young people has been basically overwhelmed with the amount of requests for, "Come into our school. Help us deal with an issue that we have been trying to handle and we can't get a handle on."

So I just want to give a shout-out to Family Transition Place. I would encourage all members and the Minister of Education to delve further into that program, because it is phenomenal.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to thank the member from London–Fanshawe for her good presentation. I can relate back to days long gone by, in the 1960s and 1970s, in my household. At the time, my mom was trying to get me to do figure skating and tennis. My dad wanted boxing, baseball and hockey. Guess who won: my dad. So I can understand the problem.

When I was in school, I was not the largest guy at the time. I grew later in life a little bit; in high school, I sprouted up. I was small but I was feisty, and I used to hate the bullies. I used to hate people bullying the little guys, and I had more than one altercation in school over the years, going after the bully, because I felt that they were not only using size; they were using intimidation and scare tactics. These kids were going home scared to death, afraid to come to school. I had one friend in particular that I used to walk to school with because he got picked on. There were a few fights in the ditches, I'll tell you, on the way to school and back.

I'll tell you, it's a sad day when kids pick on kids because they're different. I think that everyone has their rightful place in society and should be treated with respect and honour. I, for one, don't like bullies, and I, for one, would stand up against bullies.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: Just to continue my thoughts from last week on this very important topic of anti-bullying and Bill 13: As a chair of a student community council for many years in my riding of Pickering–Scarborough East and as a current member of the special advisory committee in the Durham District School Board, many people often ask me: "Why do we have to do this in the school environment? Isn't this the parents' responsibility to teach the proper values and behaviours at home?" To which I say, "Yes, it does start at home, but we do know that socialization, being at school, being with peers and friends, is where our values continue to get shaped and developed." In fact, the research shows that the relationships children have with their peers, with their teachers and so on, play as big a role, if not even a bigger role, as children progress through to high school and beyond, than even the relationships with immediate family members. So it is extremely important that this legislation focus on providing the right kind of accountability, the right kind of supports for people in the school environment, whether it's the bully, the bystander, the witness or the staff. It's all critical that it happens at school.

The McGuinty government is committed to passing this bill as soon as possible. We want this in place before September of this school year. We're committed to working with our colleagues to make this happen, and I strongly, strongly encourage the opposition not to play any games, not to ring any bells, and I call on them to help us pass this legislation as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for London–Fanshawe has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker, and those who commented on my thoughts on Bill 13. I think what I really want to say from the heart on Bill 13 is that the reasons why bullies do their bullying—we need to address that as well, because prevention, I think, starts first where the source is. Going back to when I was in public school, I think that's why I got along with—I wanted to understand why, and also advocate on my friend's part that she was a good person and, you know, "You've got to get to know her," so that these people would stop teasing her and verbally tormenting her.

I think understanding where it's coming from is very important, so that it can be prevented in the future—and also, of course, understanding the people who are the target of the bullying. They need support, and they need to have the proper resources in school to overcome this damage that can be done to your self-esteem and confidence over time so that they can grow into healthy young adults and eventually become parents and become just somebody who's content with who they are.

We know that those scars can follow you for quite some time when people call you Four Eyes. In my case, I was called Four Eyes. It never bothered me. I kind of thought it was the way it was and that was just a little—if you wore glasses, you were called Four Eyes. But there were other kids who took it harder, and that's what we have to remember. Not everybody will take a tease or bullying the same way, and the outcome can affect people differently.

So when we're designing this bill, I think we need to make sure we have the preventive measures and look at why people are bullying, why the children are bullying. And the people that are being bullied, let's try to help them to get over that type of trauma.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being past 10:15 of the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Julia Munro: It's my pleasure to welcome, from the Association of Condominium Managers, Dean McCabe, Robert Weinberg, Debbie Wilson and Steve Christodoulou. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to welcome and introduce the grade 10 class from Greenwood College School in the riding of St. Paul's. They're going to be joining us in the Legislature in a few minutes. They're here to tour the facility and witness democracy in action.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please join me in welcoming, from the Canadian Condominium Institute, Brian Horlick and Bob Girard.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm delighted to welcome back and to welcome the family of wonderful page Seph Marshall Burghardt. They are Richard Marshall, Madeline Burghardt, Raffi Marshall Burghardt, Tonnan

Marshall Burghardt, Paul Young, Kristin Marshall and Fiona Marshall-Young. We welcome you all to Queen's Park.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Welcome to Armand Conant, who's a constituent of mine in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, and Sally Thompson, who are here from the Canadian Condominium Institute.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today Ms. Ashlen Morrisson. She's a co-op student at Georgian College, and she has been working in my office in Orillia over the last four months. Welcome, Ashlen.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Mr. Speaker, I've got visitors from Newtonbrook Collegiate who are here. They're in the building, and I'm sure they'll join us shortly. I just wanted to welcome them.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today the Association of Condominium Managers, who will be meeting with members. I'm particularly excited that Brian Horlick, vice-president of the association, and Karen Reynolds, the treasurer, will be here. Welcome to Queen's Park. I look forward to our meeting.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to welcome to the Legislature the father and grandparents of Domenique Mastronardi, our legislative page from Chatham–Kent–Essex. Please join me in welcoming her father, Domenic; her nonno Diego; and her nonna Ascenzina Mastronardi to Queen's Park. Benvenuti.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Buon giorno.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario to the Legislature, and the Canadian Condominium Institute as well.

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On Monday, March 26, the member from Northumberland–Quinte West, Mr. Milligan, raised a point of privilege with respect to restrictions on his movement in the Legislative Building that he claimed he had experienced on Thursday, March 22.

The members from Beaches–East York, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Timmins–James Bay, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, and the official opposition and government House leaders also contributed to this point.

The member for Northumberland–Quinte West recounted how he was making his way along the second floor west hallway to a planned meeting in room 230. As he came in the vicinity of the government caucus room, room 247, the member says that he and the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound were physically blocked by an individual from moving down the hallway, apparently as a result of that person's mistaken belief that he and the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound were in that area in order to seek access to an event then taking place in room 247. By the member's own account, once it was

clarified that he and the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound were actually on their way to room 230, they were allowed to pass without further difficulty. I will return to this issue in a moment.

During the time I heard this point of privilege last Monday, the member from Beaches–East York recounted his own experience related to the event in room 247. Though the members for Northumberland–Quinte West and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound were not seeking to enter room 247, the member from Beaches–East York was, apparently at around the same time the member from Northumberland–Quinte West met the obstacle to his movement in that area. The member for Beaches–East York explained that, following a ceremony outside the Legislative Building in commemoration of Greek Independence Day, to which all MPPs were invited, an open invitation was apparently given for all participants to attend a reception related to this event inside the Legislative Building in the government caucus room, room 247.

As intimated by the experience of the member from Northumberland–Quinte West, this, in fact, was not intended to be a fully open event, and it is now quite clear that non-government members of the assembly were not intended to have access to the event in room 247, and in fact were not allowed to attend. This issue is collateral to the point of privilege, but I want to deal with it now.

First, I have no problem with the notion that the party caucus rooms are private spaces and that it is entirely up to each caucus to decide which individuals it is prepared to invite into its space. I think this is something all members accept, and I don't believe it is in dispute. Indeed, the member from Beaches–East York is not making the claim that he had the right to enter room 247 for the Greek Independence Day reception. However, it also does not seem to be contested that a rather open and unconditional invitation seems to have been communicated to those attending the ceremony out front of this building to attend the reception. This was either a miscommunication or an unfortunate lapse, but the result was a situation that I have no reason to doubt caused the extreme embarrassment to the member from Beaches–East York that he recounted to this House.

The matter arises from time to time as to difficulties MPPs sometimes have in attending or participating in events around the Legislative Assembly, events that are ostensibly either non-partisan or multi-partisan in nature. A recent example occurred in October 2010, raised by the then-member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, with respect to an event in the legislative dining room. The circumstances were not the same as those in this case, but the general principle is the same: the overall desire on the part of the Speaker for members from all parties to participate to the fullest extent possible in the various stakeholder events that occur on a regular basis at Queen's Park.

As Speaker Peters said in his ruling at that time, "The overall success of such events is surely more likely to be

achieved with good attendance by many members from all parties." Indeed, it was Speaker Peters' action as a result of that incident that resulted in the placement of monitors in each of the chamber lobbies that advise members of the various meetings, receptions and other events taking place at the Legislature.

In the face of a written apology subsequently received from the government House leader, I am prepared to accept that the embarrassing difficulty encountered by the member for Beaches–East York was the result of a regrettable communication problem. However, I want to echo Speaker Peters' sentiment from his ruling of 2010 and to strongly urge the organizers of such events to avoid future situations such as this. We are all members of this Legislative Assembly, representative of many diverse communities across the province. One would hope that whatever partisan sentiments exist could be overcome in the interests of properly welcoming guests and dignitaries to this place, particularly when it was celebrating something as universal as Greek Independence Day.

1040

I will return to the point of privilege raised by the member for Northumberland–Quinte West, which is centred around these same events. I cannot find a *prima facie* case of privilege being made out, for two reasons. First, by the member's own versions of the event, he was not obstructed in his movements in the building so much as he was briefly delayed due to what was, as has been established with respect to the member for Beaches–East York and as confirmed in a letter by the government House leader, a misunderstanding. This delay was short and I believe it was as a result of a genuine mix-up and not a deliberate effort to interfere with a member of this assembly.

Second, the member was not making his way to a parliamentary proceeding. The member's written submission makes reference to a 2010 ruling by Speaker Peters concerning the 2010 budget lock-up, in which it was stated:

"For a *prima facie* case of privilege to be established, it is enough to ascertain that members wanted to attend the House and were, at least for a time, and against their will, prevented from doing so. It is of no significance where such obstruction occurred or what parliamentary proceeding members were prevented from attending."

The reference to "parliamentary proceeding" is important, and elsewhere in the 2010 ruling, Speaker Peters explained why:

"The second consideration on this matter is the issue of whether the alleged interference prevented members from attending to their parliamentary work. According to the procedural authorities and many previous Speakers' rulings, parliamentary privilege protects members in the execution of their strictly parliamentary duties—not the constituency or other duties that may fairly be said to be part of their job descriptions. On this point, the 2nd edition of Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* states the following (at pages 222 and 223):

“The interference, however, must not only obstruct the member in his capacity as a member; it must obstruct or allege to obstruct a member in his parliamentary work.”

While I cannot find that a prima facie case of privilege has been established, I do not want to leave the impression that I don't take this matter seriously or that it is somehow acceptable to impede or delay a member of the Legislative Assembly, so long as he or she is not headed to the chamber or a committee meetings. No one has any business interfering with an MPP's movement around the public areas of this building, except perhaps in the case of a safety or security issue, and even then only by authorized personnel acting under my authority. It is otherwise not acceptable, and I was unhappy to learn that the events that gave rise to this point of privilege occurred.

I thank the member from Northumberland–Quinte West for raising this matter. It has given me an opportunity to offer this caution.

ORAL QUESTIONS

JOB CREATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: A simple question to the Premier: Premier, do you believe that lower business taxes lead to job creation and, conversely, that increasing business taxes will harm job creation in the great province of Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate very much the question. We believe in balance. We believe in both strong public services and a competitive business environment. We believe that's exactly what Ontarians, what our families and our businesses, are asking of us.

My honourable colleague will know that we have made tremendous progress in getting our taxes down. Whether we're talking about personal income taxes, corporate taxes, capital taxes or small business taxes, we have made tremendous progress in Ontario. In fact, on the corporate tax front today in Ontario, combined with the federal corporate tax, our taxes are lower than every US state. We're now on a very competitive footing with the European Union.

So again, I'm proud of our record. We've got our taxes down, but at this point in time it's important that we hit the pause button as a matter of balance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: It appears that Premier Wiggles is back for a second day. I had a very simple question: Do you believe it leads to job creation? I got a yes, a no and a maybe all in the same answer.

Premier, our position is clear. We believe that lower taxes on job creators will create jobs in the province of Ontario, will fire up our economy. This budget gave a choice of heading down two paths: one of celebrating mediocrity, that Ontario will always be in a decline of big deficits and runaway spending; or a plan that the Ontario

Progressive Conservatives believe in, to fire up job creation, that Ontario's destiny is to lead again, to be the strongest province in all of Confederation and the best place to find a good job.

Premier, it was shocking that your budget was totally vacant of new ideas on job creation, and it was a sadly weak approach on the deficit. Will you reconsider and get back on the path of lower business—

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

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I remind my honourable colleague of our record when it comes to reducing corporate taxes, making our business tax environment all the more competitive for Ontario businesses. In fact, we remain, in all of North America after California, the most attractive destination for foreign direct investment.

And I'll draw to my honourable colleague's attention something that is worthy of note. In 2002, my colleagues who were there at that point in time voted for a measure in the budget of the day that froze corporate taxes because they thought it was important to do so, given our economic circumstances. Why is it they felt it was appropriate and responsible at that time to do exactly that, but today of course it's another matter?

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I was proud to be part of the government that helped create a million new jobs in the province of Ontario, that led Canada and North America in job creation, Premier, which is what the Premier simply does not understand.

It is very disappointing that in a time when we're crying out for job creation, a new approach, the only new idea you had in this budget was some new council to study the problems. The 600,000 unemployed women and men don't have time for yet another study to tell them what they should know: Lower business taxes, get rid of your massive subsidies for wind and solar that are driving jobs out of the province through higher rates, invest in the skilled trades and adapt our proposal for 200,000 skilled trade jobs.

Premier, why are you rejecting every good idea that will help fire up the economy and move our province—

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

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's a matter of choices, Speaker. It's a matter of balance. Our decision in our budget to freeze further reductions of our corporate income tax will save us, over three years, \$1.5 billion. By applying the same approach to the business education tax, that saves us \$600 million. That's \$2.1 billion. With that, we can afford to go ahead with full-day kindergarten. We can afford to invest in the growth of the Ontario child benefit. We can afford to have small classes. We can afford to keep 20,000 people who work in our schools on the job. Those are the trade-offs that we engage in here.

It's a matter of balance. We've done on a lot on the corporate income tax front. Not even representatives in the business community are honestly coming forward and

saying that, at this point in time, we should further reduce corporate income taxes. They appreciate it's a time to make the right choices. It's a time to bring balance and prudence to our fiscal circumstances.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier on the lack of any kind of jobs plan in his recent budget. The Premier uses the terms "matter of choices" and "balanced." The Premier has made several choices when it comes to business taxes. In fact, you campaigned on increasing them, and you increased business tax in the province of Ontario. Then, we dragged you kicking and screaming to try to lower taxes, and now you're heading in the opposite direction to increase them again.

There's nothing balanced about this roller coaster ride you've taken business tax rates in the province. In fact, you're undermining confidence in the province of Ontario. I think it betrays your attitude when you say this saves the government money. In fact, you're basically saying that all that revenue is yours for the taking, except what you leave to stay in the pockets of families or businesses.

1050

We believe in lower taxes to fire up the economy. That's the path Ontario should be on. Premier, why do you have no jobs plan in your budget, with 600,000 unemployed women and men?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I think it's become apparent that, regardless of what we would have introduced by way of measures in this budget, the leader of the official opposition and his party had long ago decided they weren't going to support our budget. What they want to do is force an unnecessary \$150-million election on the people of Ontario.

What we need right now is certainty and stability. The economy remains just a little bit fragile. What we owe to Ontario families, what we owe to Ontario businesses and what we owe to the international investment community, who's looking for confidence in our economy today and tomorrow, is certainty and stability.

Our plan is a strong plan. It cuts our costs, it protects public services and it creates new jobs. That's what we need.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, we've seen eight years of reckless spending. We've seen eight years of tax hikes. We've seen eight years of foolish investments in corporate welfare schemes, like your recent WindTronics project in Windsor that took \$2.7 million and then closed their door. It is time for a change.

Of course, the Premier says that he's going to hit the pause button. He should hit the eject button on his failed economic policies and take us down a different path.

I know, Premier, that you seem to accept that Ontario is in decline and your role is to simply gently manage that decline. We see a better, stronger, more prosperous Ontario. We see a better future for our children and

grandchildren, but you need policies that will fire up the economy. You need a jobs plan, because you can't simply cut your way to prosperity. We've laid out good ideas, Premier. Which of our ideas will you actually take to help fire up our economy again?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, we're open to the good ones; it's just that we haven't heard many.

Again, I say to my honourable colleague, I think we need to be very, very honest with ourselves. From the get-go, from the moment that the leader of the official opposition entered the lock-up on budget day, he and his party had made up their minds that under no circumstances were they going to support this budget. What they want to do is force an unnecessary \$150-million publicly funded election on the people of Ontario, exactly at a time when our economy demands stability—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: You know, it was a surprisingly weak approach to the debt crisis in your budget, Premier, and a shocking absence of a jobs policy. We're going to stand up for Ontario families and say that there's a better future if we take a different path. We reject their approach, Speaker, which says that we should settle for mediocrity, that big government spending is a solution to our problems. We believe in a growth plan, and we believe in making the tough decisions to balance the books.

Premier, I was shocked to see that the federal government will actually balance their budget two years ahead of the province of Ontario, that their debts will actually be lower than the province of Ontario's. Can you tell me, has there been any time in the history of Confederation where the province of Ontario has run a bigger deficit and for a longer period of time than the national government of Canada? Isn't that an extraordinary failure of you and your finance minister to set priorities in this province?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Our budget, again, I say, makes the right choices. It puts us on track to balance by 2017-18. It protects our schools, it protects our health care and it creates 170,000 jobs, to be clear on that score. There's lots to like in our budget, Speaker.

But if you want to go to war with the unions, with teachers and doctors, you're not going to like our budget. If you want to make cuts to our schools and our health care, you're not going to like this budget. If you don't like balance, if you don't like prudence, if you don't like a resolve to do what is necessary at this point in our history, you're not going to like our budget.

But if, on the other hand, you want to protect our schools, you want to protect our health care, you want to create new jobs, you want to put us on a steady path to achieve balance by 2017-18, then there's lots to like in the budget that we've put forward.

Interjections.

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

New question?

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Families were looking to this budget to address their priorities. Instead, they were shown a budget with thousands of job losses, cuts in health care and shortcomings that are going to make their life much more expensive.

Steve from London writes that the budget is “unfair to the tens of thousands of people already on waiting lists for child care and health care services and supports.”

Does the Premier agree with Steve that this budget is unfair to families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, obviously I welcome the question from my honourable colleague, but I cannot share her perspective. I would encourage her to inform people, as she moves around the province, about the actual contents of our budget.

Let's talk about the single most important aspirational public service that we could possibly deliver to families, and that's the best possible education for their children. We are protecting and continuing to roll out full-day kindergarten. We are protecting small classes. We are protecting the jobs of our educational support workers who play such a vital role in delivering great-quality education to all our children.

We're protecting a 30%-off tuition grant that is benefiting low-income and middle-income families to ensure that all our children have access and affordability when it comes to pursuing college and university training in Ontario. That's what we're doing for Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, with phone calls, town hall meetings, door knocking, emails and newsletters, we've reached out to over 30,000 people for their thoughts on the budget. They agree that we need to balance the books, but they're concerned about balancing the burden, as well.

Karen from Windsor writes, “This budget is unfair to the poor and disabled citizens.”

Richard from Napanee says, “I do not like the budget because it places an unfair burden on the people and businesses at the low end of the economic ladder.”

What does the Premier say to people who feel his plan for balance puts an unfair burden on those who can least afford the hit?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, it's not surprising: The official opposition says that we're not going far enough; the leader of the NDP says that we've gone too far. I would say that, again, we've brought balance.

My honourable colleague the leader of the NDP said that it was important that we freeze corporate income taxes. We've done that, and we've gone one step further by freezing business education taxes.

She says that the wealthy are getting off scot-free. We have a new program, the first of its kind here in Ontario, that is going to require that our wealthiest seniors contribute more to the cost of their drugs. We think that is fair in our circumstances.

We've also found a way to continue to invest in a program in which we have a great deal of pride, and that's our Ontario child benefit.

Those are all dimensions of a budget which I think lend to it a very responsible, balanced and prudent character.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Theresa from Delaware, Ontario, writes, “I expect the elected members to work together and make things fair and workable in Ontario.”

Brian from Brantford says, “It is too early for another provincial election. Try to make this work.”

So instead of ruling—

Applause.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm glad the Liberals are on my side, Speaker. It's about time.

My question is about that very issue, about trying to make things work. Instead of ruling everything out, which is what we're hearing the Liberals say every single day, will the Premier listen to some of the proposals being put forward by families, work together with us and try to make this budget a little more fair for them?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, we've always maintained that we have an open mind and we will gladly entertain any thoughtful, responsible, constructive proposals put forward by either of the opposition parties. But we tried to lay out a few parameters.

Speaker, what we've said is we can't take on any new spending. I think Ontarians generally understand that.

They also know that we've got to balance by 2017-18; we made a commitment to that. We've also got to make sure we protect our public services, especially our schools and our health care, and we've got to find a way to build a stronger economy and build a stronger foundation for jobs and growth.

Those are the broad parameters, and inside those I am convinced that if there's a constructive proposal that comes forward from the other side, we'll be more than pleased to entertain that.

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ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. Ontarians know that we face some tough challenges. They know we have difficult choices to make, but they expect to be treated fairly.

Over the last week, Ontarians have shared their disappointment with a budget that leaves them falling behind. Aaron from Timmins writes that it's “simply not fair to insist on balancing the books on the backs of the people who drive the provincial economy.”

Will the Premier explain to people like Aaron why this budget has let so many families down?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I have a different perspective in terms of how our budget has been received. I think it has been, broadly speaking, well received. We lay no claim to doing anything perfectly in government; we're

made up entirely and exclusively of human beings. We're open to any suggestions for improvements to our budget, but I think we've got it just about right, Speaker.

Again, I say, the official opposition says that we're not going fast enough; the NDP say that we're going too fast. Speaker, we've tried to balance the economic needs with the needs for us to protect our schools, protect our health care and to, in fact, have a hard deadline for balance by 2017-18. We believe that the actions we're taking in this budget will inspire the confidence of families and businesses and, just as importantly, the international investment community.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: As I've already said, Ontarians understand the hardships that are facing our province and they're willing to do their part, but they expect everyone to carry a fair share; they don't feel like they've been given a fair shake.

Terry from Ottawa writes—I don't think it's your Terri from Ottawa, Mr. Premier—

Interjections.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Terry from Ottawa writes, "It is unfair to make the poorest in our society be burdened the most."

"This budget is grossly unfair to those in the lower social economic groups," says Steve from Mississauga.

My question is quite basic: Is the Premier ready to admit that Terry and Steve may have a point, and that this budget could be made a little more fair?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I want to put my honourable colleague on notice: I will be FOIing the telephone records or email records connected with that Terry from Ottawa, just to make sure.

Speaker, again, I say to my honourable colleague, we're open. We're not claiming that this is the best possible budget ever introduced by any government anywhere in the world. If there is a positive, constructive proposal that can come forward that's in keeping with those broad parameters that I've put in place, then, as I like to say, we're all ears, and we'd be very pleased to entertain any such positive proposals.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Sharlyn from Garson says the budget is "not fair to seniors," and Peter from Toronto wants the budget to "make sure that social assistance is indexed fairly."

It's clear that people across the province don't see the pain in this budget being shared fairly. What does the Premier say to those people who find this budget much, much less than fair?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague touched on seniors, and an important part of our budget speaks to seniors. In fact, Speaker, you will know, if you ever have the chance to go into a seniors' residence, quickly the talk will turn to their grandchildren and their future. What we're doing, as a government, is to make sure they have all the opportunities that they need to

grow up strong and succeed, which brings us back to education.

But, Speaker, I think the other thing that's really important to note is that our budget makes a deliberate transition, as part of the action plan put forward by the Minister of Health, that we put more focus on community-based care, that we transition from a heavy emphasis on hospital-based care to community-based care, especially including home care. That's one of the things that our budget does. That's one of the things that our budget specifically supports. In fact, we're increasing our funding for home care by some 4%.

So, again, I say to my honourable colleague, I think we're moving in the right direction. I think we have a great deal in common in terms of the values that inform this—

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

POWER PLANT

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, yesterday, you were on your feet defending the \$300-million legal trouble your government is in over the cancelled Mississauga power plant. At about the same time you were doing that, a massive shiny new transformer was holding up traffic while being delivered to that very site.

Minister, you had the perfect chance to tell us about that yesterday, yet you said nothing. Really, Minister, just how many more parts to this power plant to nowhere are going to be delivered? Please tell us and the residents of Mississauga: Is this power plant cancelled or not?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The power plant is not proceeding at that site. We've been very clear. I do appreciate the support of the official opposition for that decision, and I'm trusting that that support continues, not only from the Leader of the Opposition—he's spoken to it recently—but also from the member from Nipissing.

I understand that the equipment that was delivered to the site yesterday had been obtained a long time ago and was delivered only for storage. There is no construction proceeding at that site, I am advised, and discussions about the relocation and other options about the site and the equipment continue between the Ontario Power Authority and Greenfield.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My supplementary is: Minister, why should anybody believe you when your government says one thing and does something different on every single file? Not only does this government have this new transformer to play with, but now, more than that, we've learned that a 200,000-square-foot warehouse has been rented on Stanfield Road at the Queensway to store even more power plant equipment. Minister, why haven't you told us about this massive expense, and what else is being hidden in that warehouse?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I know the residents of Mississauga and the surrounding communities very much

supported the decision not to proceed with that plant. I heard—and I've heard many times—the official opposition support the decision not to proceed with that plant, so I appreciate the questions, and I reaffirm that that plant will not be proceeding at that site. And I trust that while my friend asks us about that decision not to proceed with the plant at that site, that in asking the question, his support for that decision is not wavering and that the residents of Mississauga and the surrounding communities do not need to take from his question that his support for something that they took a position on at the very beginning is no different than it was. They don't want the plant there any more than we—

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

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Last evening, a staff person from the Premier's office called into question the integrity of the Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Does the Premier agree with his government's blame game?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. John Milloy: The Standing Committee on Public Accounts is conducting very comprehensive hearings into the Ornge situation. They'll be meeting tomorrow, Wednesday, to hear from a series of witnesses, and I know at the moment they're in the process of going through the various preparations for the hearing.

Mr. Speaker, there have been questions raised about members of the opposition—just as they've asked about who on the government side knew what, I think it's completely appropriate that we ask who on the opposition side was given the so-called red flags about Ornge, including the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, the Chair of the committee, who we have been told did a two-hour tour of Ornge at the behest of a Conservative lobbyist in June 2010.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

1110

M^{me} France Gélinas: This is rather sad.

Back to the Premier: Here's exactly what one of your employees in your office said: "Norm Miller met with Ornge top executives in 2010. What did he tell them? Can he still be an impartial Chair at public hearings?"

This is a witch-hunt, Mr. Speaker, on opposition MPPs. Many of us have asked the right questions at the right time. This looks like either a desperate attack from or a sad commentary on this government. Or is it both? Which one is it, Mr. Premier?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Government House leader.

Interjections.

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

Government House leader.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Answer the question, John.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew will come to order—second time.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I'm having a hard time following the line of questioning. For week after week, we have been hearing from the opposition that because the Minister of Health had received a letter or received a briefing, somehow she should have known about the problems at Ornge.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. I do want to hear the answer.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville and the member from Durham will come to order.

Mr. John O'Toole: Disappointing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Again; second time.

Minister?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, we will not be held to a double standard on this side of the House. The simple fact is that when the opposition has stood up and questioned our dealings with Ornge over the past number of years, we have every right to go to the public accounts committee and ask: Why did the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, at the behest of a well-known Conservative lobbyist, Kelly Mitchell, who was involved in their campaign, when he went on a two-hour tour of Ornge—

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

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Reza Moridi: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. In 2003, Ontarians elected a bold and decisive government to help fix our apprenticeship system, which was left in a shambles by the previous Conservative government. That's why our government appointed Mr. Armstrong, who authored the 2008 Compulsory Certification Review report, which initiated the need for the College of Trades. The call for the college was further strengthened by Mr. Whitaker's report.

When Mr. Armstrong consulted the skilled trades industry, we found out that they wanted a greater voice in the decision-making process surrounding the apprenticeship and skilled trades system. Our government listened to them and took action by creating the College of Trades, an industry-driven body, to take on this task.

Constituents in my riding involved in the trades have been indicating that they want to participate in the ratio review process. When will the college call for ratio review submissions?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank my friend from Richmond Hill for his advocacy on apprenticeships and higher education and the great work he's done in that ministry over the years.

I find the opposition somewhat comical sometimes, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition had the

chutzpah to suggest that there's this mythical 200,000 apprenticeships out there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Direct to government on policy, please.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Our record is 28,000 apprenticeships per year. Theirs was 12,000. The most successful program in Ontario history, they call a failure. I guess theirs is a complete unmitigated disaster.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The College of Trades released today the—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Durham has now been warned.

Supplementary.

Mr. Reza Moridi: We have heard a lot of irresponsible accusations over the past few months from the members of the opposition, who are trying to tarnish the important work the College of Trades is doing.

It's great that the College of Trades has started a call for submissions to review the apprenticeship ratios for the 34 skilled trades. Many people in the skilled trades are pleased that the college will review ratios every four years, and they will be able to participate in ensuring that their views are considered in these important decisions.

The college is the best way to ensure that the needs of employers, employees, apprentices, the economy and the interests of the public are considered.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can the minister tell this House on what basis the decision will be made for ratio reviews?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: You wouldn't know it from some of the things you hear in this House, but the criteria that the panels measure was actually in the legislation. It has been published and it has been recirculated. Hearings are now starting on floor covering installers, hoisting engineers, mobile crane operators and tower crane operators as well as precast concrete erectors and cement concrete finishers.

As you know, for about 20 years, we had a very delayed apprenticeship program where only seven apprenticeships were approved. We have now more going to be released for consideration than, I think, historically has ever been approved. This is an open, transparent process of which anybody can do that.

I hope the opposition, for all the carping they've done, will actually show up and put their submissions in. I also want to acknowledge the third party, who have been very supportive of this process and have been very constructive. I want to thank them as well.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Health: In two short hours of hearings at the public accounts committee, the minister and her officials lost more credibility—and I might say the House leader is losing his rapidly. Rather than instill confidence by admitting that they failed in

their oversight responsibilities, as very clearly stated by the Auditor General, the minister and her officials continued to deny that they had any responsibility.

Can the minister tell us again today why we should have confidence not only in her, but, based on the performance of her deputy, who demonstrated that he hadn't even read that report, why we should have any confidence that this minister and her officials have the integrity they need to run that ministry?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I was very pleased to attend the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. I was invited for one hour, and I chose to be there for two and a half hours, because I think it's very important that the public does get straight answers, and that is exactly what we have provided.

We welcome the Auditor General's report. The Auditor General himself acknowledged that we have taken substantive, concrete action. The Auditor General has actually talked about the sea change of attitude since we put new management in place at Ornge. We've taken the appropriate actions. We are moving forward. There is new leadership in place. We have a new performance agreement in place. I have introduced legislation to entrench that in law. I look forward to the support from the member opposite.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: Well, clearly the ministry officials are taking their lead from their minister: deny responsibility, make excuses, deflect accountability, and when all else fails, shrug and blame someone else.

When asked why the emergency services branch of the ministry failed to ensure that the interiors of the new helicopters met even the most basic of standards, the deputy replied that the medical director of Ornge had misled the ministry. When asked why he was still the medical director, the new CEO said, "I see no reason to let him go."

New CEO, new board, new agreement and the same old lack of leadership and accountability and refusal to accept responsibility. When will the minister recognize that her refusal to accept responsibility has inspired a culture of incompetence at her ministry? When will she realize that and set an example and step aside?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. Please be seated. Please be seated. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I take my responsibility extremely seriously. Whether it comes to fixing the problems at Ornge or whether it comes to leading a transformation in the way we are delivering health care in this province, I take my responsibility to the public extremely seriously.

1120

I am focusing on the issues that matter to the people of this province, Speaker. I am focusing on issues of improving patient care, improving home care, improving community care. I am very focused on providing the best possible health care to the people of Ontario and getting

the best possible value for money. I'm proud of the work that the people in this province are doing, the people in health care, Speaker, and I completely reject—

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

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Let me share some more stories with you that we've been hearing directly from the people of this province, many of whom are concerned about a budget that does not distribute the burden equally across the people who live here.

Menno from London writes, "I dislike the austerity program that further impoverishes the most vulnerable and poor of our province." Or Rebecca from Toronto, who writes, "It is simply unfair to put deficit reduction on the backs of people on ODSP."

What does the minister have to say to people like Rebecca and/or Menno, who feel his plan for balance puts an unfair burden on those who can least afford it?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: What I would say to the individuals referenced and Ontarians across the province is that this government has pursued a strong and aggressive agenda on poverty, particularly children in poverty. Full-day kindergarten, which we are protecting in this budget, is very important to families of more modest means. We created and accelerated the Ontario child benefit. I remind the member opposite that he and his colleagues voted against it. We are proceeding with that. We're doing the additions over two years instead of one. It's not a choice we made lightly. It's not one that we like, but we are doing it because it's important to young people as well that we get back to balance by 2017-18.

We have increased social assistance rates seven times—13.7%—since we took office, Mr. Speaker. That record is important. We are continuing to build on that record—

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

Mr. Michael Prue: The sad reality is that you're not building on it at all.

On the budget, David from Ottawa writes, "It is unfair in some ways. It hits at the people who they feel are easiest to hit."

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Prue: Better check out which David that is, too.

Linda in Toronto writes, "There was no new funding for child care, which is desperately needed to avert a crisis, with many"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

Member?

Mr. Michael Prue: Linda from Toronto writes, "There was no new funding for child care, which is desperately needed to avert a crisis, with many centres being forced to close."

Will this minister and this Premier explain to people like Linda and David why this budget has let so many of them down?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'll remind the member opposite that the largest line item increase in this budget was for social services, Mr. Speaker: 2.7%.

There is more to do in a range of areas. We acknowledge that. We will continue to do that. We believe strongly the most important thing we can do for all Ontario families is to get the budget back to balance, restore and maintain those services that are vital to people of all means: a strong and vibrant education system, a public health care system that's accessible and working for all Ontarians. Those are the choices we made.

You simply can't argue about increasing spending on every line item day in, day out without saying how you'll get back to balance. We've laid out a plan. It protects education. It protects health care. It serves the most vulnerable in this province well. We made difficult choices. This—

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

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Attorney General. I'm sure all members will strongly believe that access to justice is a fundamental necessity in our judicial system. As a lawyer, Speaker, I have worked within our court system, and I can tell you that, sometimes, interacting with the justice system can be a very daunting experience for people. It is our responsibility to ensure that our constituents have the right tools and information to be able to use the system efficiently, as is their right. Helping people to know the forms to fill out, where to go for their court date, what they need to bring on that day, who they need to contact and many other circumstances like these is very important.

The government has previously committed to helping to modernize the justice system to make it easier for all Ontarians to get the information they need.

Through you, Speaker, would the Attorney General tell us what progress has been made on modernizing and how we are helping citizens more efficiently and easily access our justice system?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I thank the always hard-working member from Ottawa Centre for this question. I know he's very much interested in an accessible system of justice.

Of course, an effective and accessible system of justice has always been this government's priority. We've been modernizing the system over the years, and the Minister of Finance, in this year's budget, announced a further modernization. Our government will be taking the next steps in modernizing the system by providing some online services. For example, court forms: The filing of court documentation and the payment of court fees will in the future be able to be done online. This transformational initiative will improve access to justice

for Ontarians by moving to provide 24-hour online services.

We're also moving forward—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. John Gerretsen:—fully modernizing and electronic courtrooms that will provide the opportunity for remote appearances, reducing the need for witnesses to travel—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister. Another reminder that when I ask you and say at the end, “Thank you,” that means you sit down. If you make me stand up, you're just hurting my knees. So thank you.

Member.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Speaker. I'm sure the minister has so much to share. That's why it takes a little while. These are transformational changes.

These are important efforts. Everyone can see that our world has changed remarkably in the past number of years as the Internet and mobile technology have completely revolutionized the way in which we gather and use information and interact with the world around us. We must respond to the changing nature of how people are conducting their lives and doing business in the 21st century. It's important because it makes the system more cost-effective for those who use it, as well.

Speaker, through you, would the Attorney General tell us how we are ensuring that Ontarians have the right tools in this modern age to understand and use our justice system effectively?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Speaker, there's so much good news here and so little time to say it in, really.

Two years ago, the ministry launched the Ontario Court Forms Assistant, which is an online tool which helps people fill out 11 of the most commonly used Family Court and Small Claims Court forms quickly and easily. That's been a great advancement.

We're also using mobile technology to provide more and better ways to get important legal information in the hands of those who need it. Justice Ontario Mobile is a website for mobile device and smart phone users, based on the original Justice Ontario desktop website. This technology strengthens access to justice for Ontarians by making important legal information accessible online from almost anywhere a mobile device or a smart phone can be used.

These are great initiatives that should be supported by all the members in the House to make justice even more accessible to the people of Ontario.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Minister of Health. As we learned more and more about the scandal at Ornge last year, the minister on no less than 28 separate occasions stood in this House and made reference to replacing the board of directors at Ornge. March 6: “We replaced the board.” March 8: “We

replaced the board.” On March 22, when referring to replacing the board, the minister said, “That was my action.”

Mr. Speaker, for months now, the minister has insisted that she replaced the board. That's been her argument for not resigning. I'd like to ask the minister today, would she provide this House with the documentation that she sent to the board of directors terminating their employment at Ornge?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The bottom line is that there is a new board of directors in place, Speaker. The bottom line is that the old board of directors resigned en masse.

As the Auditor General's work continued, as the work of the ministry continued, as the work of the media continued, it became clear to the board of directors at Ornge that their time at—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You're misleading the House.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton will withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from York South, come to order.

Minister.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, the former board knew that their time at Ornge was up, and it was because they resigned that we've been able to put in place a new board. That new board is taking decisive action.

I met with the COO of Ornge. I met with the chair of the board of Ornge. I made it very clear to them that we were expecting—

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Mr. Speaker, again, my question is to the minister. We know that the minister cannot provide documentation that she fired the board because she did not. Last week at public accounts we learned that the board voluntarily resigned.

Despite this, on February 29, 2012, the minister stood in this House and told us and the public this: “We fired the CEO... We fired the board...”

Speaker, we have heard that this minister did not provide oversight. We have heard that this minister ignored all the red flags. We now know that this minister stood in this House and said she fired the board. She did not.

Will she now resign?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The new board is in place at Ornge under the very, very capable leadership of Ian Delaney, the new chair of the board.

When the new board was put in place, I gave them very clear—

Mr. Randy Hillier: Your leadership is in question. Your leadership—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Lennox, come to order.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —responsibilities. The first responsibility—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Peterborough, come to order.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —focus on patient safety. I think the issue of patient safety is of the—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Northumberland, come to order.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —and that is where they're putting their first energies.

They are also winding down all of the for-profits; some are already wound down, others are in the process of being wound down. They are addressing the fiscal issues that were raised by the Auditor General, Speaker, and they are taking that responsibility very, very seriously.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Withdrawn.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The board's responsibility was to work with the ministry to negotiate a new performance agreement, Speaker. We have done that. That new performance agreement is in place. It gives us significantly more oversight and requires more—

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

TOURISM

Ms. Sarah Campbell: My question is to the Premier. With the demise of the forest industry and with this government doing nothing productive to facilitate development of the Ring of Fire, northwestern Ontario's tourism sector is left to be the backbone of our economy. Tourism brings hundreds of millions of dollars into our region that would otherwise be spent elsewhere.

In recent years, the industry has been under attack by government policy, including tougher border restrictions and the imposition of the HST.

Now your government, the McGuinty government, plans to close all three of my region's tourist information centres, all of which are located at border crossings.

My question is simple: Will the Premier immediately take action to reverse this erroneous and misguided decision?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, to the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much for the question. Our government delivered a strong budget—a strong budget for a strong Ontario. In order to proactively eliminate the deficit and strengthen the economy, my ministry will transform its programs to secure a sustainable future for tourism, culture and sport.

As part of our plan, we will realign our tourism marketing services by focusing on online travel marketing activities. This will allow us to meet consumers' travel research preferences through major redevelopment

of Ontario's tourism information website, call centre and brochure distribution service.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Speaker, the numbers tell the story. A 2007 study by Industry Canada noted that while tourist activities contributed to regional economies in other regions of the province, most of the money spent is already in Ontario.

The northwest, on the other hand, is importing the vast majority of its tourism dollars from United States, Manitoba and western provinces. It found that the tourists we bring come in primarily to fish and hunt—it's true—but they're more likely to visit nature parks and historical sites along the way, places they learn about through tourist information centres that they visit once they cross the border. The Industry Canada study also found that those tourists spend nearly twice as much as Canadians do during their stay.

So I ask again: Will the Premier reverse his decision to help hard-working tourist operators bring money into the Ontario economy?

Hon. Michael Chan: Our government has taken a hard look at the way in which it delivers services to Ontarians. We are moving forward to achieve sustainable services. Ontario is stepping up its 24/7 electronic and Internet-based global marketing presence to meet consumers' travel research and booking preferences.

Speaker, let me tell you, visits to the province of Ontario's tourism information centres had dropped by 50% over the last decade as travellers adopted a self-service approach to travel research and—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, come to order.

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, we have installed 23 kiosks in 23 transportation centres. Closing the seven centres that have low and declining visitation makes good business sense.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: My question is for the Minister of the Environment. A clean, healthy environment is critical to our health, our economy and our quality of life. I am pleased to see the Ministry of the Environment continue to make strong investments in environmental protection so that Ontarians continue to have access to safe drinking water and clean air to breathe.

Speaker, through you, I'm wondering if the minister could elaborate on some of the key investments that will form the Ministry of the Environment's 2012-13 budget.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It's an excellent question. Our government is committed to protecting the environment, as everyone knows. We've made investing in environmental protection a priority. Since 2000-01, the ministry's budget has increased by 58%, or approximately \$128 million, to protect our air, land and water.

To achieve fiscal targets and to continue to provide the high level of environmental protection Ontarians expect and deserve, the ministry will continue to transform how

services are delivered. We will ensure that we continue to deliver on important environmental priorities such as strengthening the management, protection and conservation of Ontario's water resources, including enhancing actions to protect the Great Lakes; safeguarding Ontario's drinking water from source to tap; delivering on Ontario's climate change strategy; administering the new renewable energy approval system; maximizing waste diversion; and protecting Ontario's—

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

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: Thank you, Minister, for outlining those initiatives, all of which are important to my constituents in Windsor West and to our area with respect to the Great Lakes. The 2012 budget ensures that our government can continue providing strong environmental protection.

I understand the ministry is also working to transform how its services are delivered, as well as increasing efficiencies in their programs, especially for environmental approvals. I was pleased to hear that the government is working closely with a broad range of stakeholders to build a modern approvals system that is not only a win for businesses and the public, but more importantly, our environment.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of the Environment: Could you please elaborate on some of the proposed initiatives within the budget that touch on our government's modernization of our approval program?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I thank the member very much. She will be pleased to know that, as I'm very committed to moving Ontario into the electronic age, online, this year's budget touched on an important area of the ministry's mandate: modernization of the approvals process. Now, building on the changes made to our approvals process back in October 2011, the ministry will be looking to move to a full cost recovery for the environmental approvals site registration and environmental compliance approvals. You will note that this was a recommendation of Mr. Drummond in his recent report.

1140

The new EASR, an online tool, will support faster, smarter and streamlined government-to-business services. It's a new risk-based decision-making mechanisms for businesses seeking environmental approvals, with no change to environmental standards.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Todd Smith: From what we've heard again today, I'm not sure this government understands the dire job situation in the province of Ontario.

The question is for the Premier. When Bob Rae was in office, we all remember the record unemployment and over a million on the welfare rolls, and we had Rae days. The Ontario unemployment rate has now been higher than the national average for 62 months. Your budget delivered last week raised taxes on businesses of all sizes. We now have a sequel to Rae days in the province: It's Dalton's depression.

Given that there are 600,000 Ontarians out of work, why did the budget raise taxes on every business in the province, ensuring that the jobs go anywhere but Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I think the budget creates 170,000 net jobs across this province. It is a budget about jobs. An important part of that will be our southwestern Ontario development fund and our eastern Ontario development fund. That was before a committee of this Legislature just yesterday. As far as I can tell, up till now the PC Party is not supporting that fund.

I want to share with you some of the headlines that are occurring right across the province. Listen to this, from the Stratford Beacon Herald: "For Our MPP, Boss's Orders Trumped Needs of Riding."

Listen to this, from the St. Thomas Times-Journal: "Tory MPPs Miff Local Mayors."

Listen to this, from the Belleville Intelligencer: "Milligan Toed Party Line on EODF."

Mr. Speaker, the headlines go on and on. They're out of touch with eastern Ontario. They're out of touch with southwestern Ontario—

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

Mr. Todd Smith: Let me share a couple of more headlines for you, if I could.

Jack Mintz in the Financial Post says that your budget is actually going to cost 30,000 Ontario jobs.

The president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business tells me that this budget is more talk and little action. Actually, he says, "With government counting on business for growth and job creation, delaying ... tax measures is poorly timed."

This government is doing harm to small businesses, and you're relying on small businesses to get us out of this Dalton depression. How are small businesses supposed to create jobs when they've got a Premier who can't help himself from raising taxes on small businesses?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'd like to quote a mayor from southwest Ontario, Randy Hope, the mayor of Chatham-Kent. This is what he had to say: "A political party that thinks they understand business certainly doesn't if they voted against" that bill.

I agree with Mayor Hope. I agree with the people of southwestern Ontario. I agree with the people of eastern Ontario. We have to work hard to create jobs in the east. We have to work hard to create jobs in the west. These funds will be an important part of those efforts. They're an important part of this budget. If the PC Party really cared about jobs, they'd be standing up for those funds, they'd be supporting that legislation and they'd be supporting this budget.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. We just recently

found out, at the end of March, that the St. Joe's health centre in London has a surplus of 10 million mental health care dollars unspent. So patients are not getting the care they need in London. Please, Minister, explain why that is.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Health.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier, thank you. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, this government has made record investments in mental health right across Ontario: in community health, in addictions, often-times without the support of the third party.

I'm delighted to hear that they want to work together on the budget as we continue to make those investments and continue to make those important investments in mental health programs.

I had the opportunity, when I was younger, to run one of the largest addictions programs in Ontario at the time. I can tell you that the support this government gives to mental health and addictions is much greater than any previous government. I worked under, at the time, an NDP government, and they were judicious in cutting our funding year after year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1145 to 1500.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Oakville on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. I believe we have unanimous consent that all members of the Legislature be permitted to wear pins in remembrance of the brave soldiers who made the greatest sacrifice in the successful battle for Vimy Ridge.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we have unanimous consent?

Interjection: Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's my great pleasure to welcome Ms. Lorris Herenda and her son Richard Ribeiro from Richmond Hill, visiting the House.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOCKEY

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: March was a great month to be a hockey fan in Huron-Bruce, especially for four local communities. I want to congratulate Kincardine Knights high school boys' hockey team, who won the gold medal in OFSSA at the end of March. Kincardine was seeded

13th in this provincial tournament with no prior appearances, but they went undefeated through seven games over four days to take the title. A big shout-out goes to Garrett McFadden—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Were they nuclear-powered?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: No, no, but they were certainly powered up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No heckling.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Garrett McFadden was the only grade 9 student on the Knights, and he scored two goals and had two assists in the winning game, and he led the entire tournament in scoring.

Also, the Miller Insurance Midget Rep Kincardine Kinuks recently took home the all-Ontario championship as well.

Just this past Saturday, both Kincardine teams proudly paraded through town as Ontario champs.

Another big congratulation goes out to the Walkerton Juveniles. They're the first team to ever etch their name on the OMHA Doug Hearn's Juvenile BB trophy as they beat Mooretown in the finals. The great part about this team is that they just formed last year and proved that hard work and determination goes a long way.

I can't forget about the Mildmay Monarchs Pee-wee Rep team, who also won the OMHA DD title, beating out Lucknow, another Huron-Bruce local town, for the championship.

I want to say a great big thank you to all the coaches, parents and volunteers who worked so hard to make these championship realities come true.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Mr. Jonah Schein: I rise again in this Legislature to speak to an issue that's of great significance to people in my riding of Davenport and to folks across the city of Toronto. In the past few weeks, I've been canvassing with my staff team, with volunteers and talking to people in my riding about the dirty diesel train that's going to be going through the backyards of Davenport residents.

I've spoken with hundreds of families in Davenport and we all share the same concern: We're worried about our health; we're worried about the health of our children, about the health of seniors in our community. I'm here today to bring a message directly from Davenport to Dalton McGuinty: Sir, we do not want diesel trains in our backyard.

After much pressure from the community, the Liberals have admitted that diesel trains are bad for our health, and they've said that they will convert these trains to electric at some point in the distant future, but we need to have a firm deadline. We need to know when this is going to happen. Given what we're told about the current financial situation in Ontario, we think that it makes sense to do it once, to do it properly and to save taxpayers the money that they deserve. We need to do it right the first time. We need to know why Dalton McGuinty refuses to put the health of people in our community first.

YELLOW BRICK HOUSE

Mr. Reza Moridi: In my role as MPP, it's my privilege to have the opportunity to become familiar with the Yellow Brick House in Richmond Hill. The mission of Yellow Brick House is to empower women and children who are victims of domestic violence to rebuild their lives and live free of violence. I visited Yellow Brick House last week and saw first-hand the very critical work they do every day for the women and children in my riding of Richmond Hill.

I am proud to inform this House of Ms. Lorris Herenda's recognition for the Leading Women, Building Communities program. Ms. Herenda has served as the executive director at the Yellow Brick House for the past seven years. Along with her team, Ms. Herenda has worked tirelessly to meet the changing needs of the community and has implemented programs and services in response to the demands of abused women and their children in York region.

As I witnessed first-hand, she is regarded by the staff and her colleagues in the field as an expert and a true example of a great leader. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Ms. Herenda and the team at Yellow Brick House for the important work they do every day for women to live free of violence.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to bring to the attention of the Legislature a concern of the municipality of Dutton/Dunwich. Dutton/Dunwich is a rural community in the western part of my riding. It includes the hamlets of Wallacetown and Duttona Beach and the western parts of both Iona and Iona Station. The community houses a large agricultural community and is highly supported by the local Lions Club.

In the last two years, all but one of the municipality's doctors have ceased practising in this community. This leaves the current doctor overworked and leaves many other patients unable to have a local doctor and having to travel far distances to Chatham or London for a physician. The Dutton area would be in a real predicament if they were to lose their one remaining doctor due to volume burnout.

I want to commend Dr. Peter Sharman on his commitment and dedication to the community. The community is fortunate to have him. I'm calling on the government to review the criteria used to base the determination of an underserved area, as this municipality clearly needs assistance in attracting another physician to this rural community. The last thing anybody wants is further crowding of existing emergency waiting rooms in surrounding hospitals.

TORONTO BEACHES LIONS EASTER PARADE

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise today to talk about the largest Easter parade in Canada: the Beaches Easter

Parade. Now in its 46th year, it is put on by the Toronto Beaches Lions Club, and it is a wonderful, absolutely stupendous, day. People come from all over. We have antique streetcars, marching bands, floats, politicians, and candies given out to the kids. Clowns are walking up and down. Of course, the highlight of the day is the Easter bunny.

The Beaches parade starts at Neville Park, which is at the eastern end of the streetcar line, and goes all the way to Woodbine. It starts at 2 o'clock. The parade itself lasts about an hour and a half to two hours. We're hoping that families will come out to enjoy the day.

Even better: Come out early and discover the beach and one of the fine restaurants for lunch. Or, if you prefer, come just in time for the parade and stay after for dinner. We welcome everybody to come out and enjoy a truly, truly magnificent day in one of the finest areas of the city of Toronto and one of the best shopping areas in all of Toronto. While you're there, please look at the children and see what they're doing. Witness the magic through a child's eyes.

PARKINSON'S AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Bob Delaney: April is Parkinson's Awareness Month. Parkinson's disease is a chronic, progressive and increasingly disabling movement disorder that affects more than 40,000 Ontarians in every community in our province. One of the challenges that families face is to help their loved one overcome the social withdrawal that comes from not wanting others to see their hands shake. On bad days, even picking up a cup of tea is difficult.

Despite the desire of the Parkinson's patient to sleep a lot, research shows that physical activity improves strength, flexibility, balance and overall health for people with Parkinson's.

Parkinson's patients do not know whether, on any given day, they can even put on their wristwatch without help. They rely on their families to assist with the complex drug regimen and, when they can't go out, to bring the things to them that a Parkinson's patient loves to do.

During the past 30 years, the Parkinson's Society of Canada has funded more than \$19.5 million in Parkinson's research, granting 385 fellowships, grants and new investigator awards.

This year's Parkinson's Awareness Month theme is "Get Ready, Get Set, Get Moving." We need to help those with Parkinson's disease keep active, even as we keep fighting for treatments and hopefully for a cure.

LEEDS-GRENVILLE ARTS AND CULTURE

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to rise today to tell everyone in the province about something amazing that's just waiting to be discovered in the riding of Leeds-Grenville.

1510

Over the weekend, I had the opportunity to attend the gala opening of the Creative Journeys exhibit at the Marianne van Silfhout Gallery on the campus of St. Lawrence College in Brockville. I want to thank Connie Porteous, one of the second-year students, whose incredible and diverse artistic talents are on display at the show, for personally inviting me.

Beyond seeing the beautiful and powerful works of art, the gala was a great opportunity for me to meet these impressive young artists and speak to them about their work, their inspirations and their big dreams for the future.

I mentioned that there's something amazing happening in Leeds–Grenville. I'm speaking of the vibrant arts and culture community that has been cultivated in municipalities right across the riding. It's not just in Brockville, where, in particular, St. Lawrence College Fine Arts and Music Theatre performance programs have added so much to the already vibrant cultural fabric of Ontario. You'll also discover it in the world-class performances on stage at the Thousand Islands Playhouse in Gananoque and the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival in Prescott. Take a tour through the scenic countryside of Westport, Rideau Lakes and Merrickville to explore the natural beauty that inspires the many renowned artists whose studios dot the landscape.

Whether your destination is North Grenville, Athens, the shores of the St. Lawrence River in the township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, or anywhere in between, I encourage lovers of the arts to visit Leeds–Grenville this year. It's an experience you won't soon forget.

OAKVILLE AWARDS FOR BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature this afternoon and congratulate the winners of the Oakville Awards for Business Excellence. These awards are hosted annually by the Rotary Club of Oakville West, along with the Oakville Chamber of Commerce.

I'd like to congratulate the Wine Ladies—Georgia Mense-Chase and Susanne Seelig-Mense—who are the winners of the Entrepreneur of the Year; Linda Belanger and Winsor Macdonell from Genworth Financial Canada—the Community Builder of the Year; Large Company of the Year went to Adam Cruickshank and Fourmark Manufacturing; Christina Anderson and Homewood Suites by Hilton were awarded the Restaurant/Hospitality/Tourism Provider of the Year; Dan Welland from Factory Tile Depot won Small Company of the Year honours; and Kristin and David Courtney from MEDChair Halton were recognized as the Professional Service Provider of the Year.

Also, I think it's great to add that the night raised more than \$40,000 for a number of the great Rotary youth and

academic programs that are made available in the community and internationally.

My congratulations and those of all my colleagues go out to the winners and to all those who were nominated for the awards in the first place.

I'd also like to thank the sponsors and, once again, the Rotary Club of Oakville West and the Oakville Chamber of Commerce for this fantastic event that they host every year in the great community of Oakville.

MINOR HOCKEY

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I rise today to pay tribute to the hard work and skill demonstrated by the young members of the hockey team in Quinte West. The Scaletta Group Novice A Hawks, a group of seven-to-nine-year-old players, won the Ontario Minor Hockey Association title in a real cliffhanger by winning the best-of-seven series with a dramatic game 7 win over the Belleville Junior Bulls.

Led by their captain, Zack Brooks, who scored an impressive 134 goals this year, the most ever scored by a Trenton rep hockey player, the members of the victorious team were Caden Deery, Brody Brooks, Lucas Belej, Gavin Camp, Andrew DiCresce, Tyler Gauvin, Evan Jerrett, Matthew Lombardi, Ethan Scaletta, Brock Sallans, Connor St. Pierre, Ashley Taylor and Kendrick Webster.

Top-notch coaching was provided by Bevett Horner, Ian Brooks and Scott Scaletta. Their trainer was Joey Scott, and the proud team manager was Joseph DiCresce.

To all the team members and the coaching staff, I'd like to offer my sincere congratulations to the Hawks for their splendid victory.

Let me just say to all NHL scouts who are watching this broadcast to keep an eye on Quinte West in the years to come if they're looking for the next Sidney Crosby.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Don't you mean Gretzky? Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT (ELECTION OF CHAIR OF YORK REGION), 2012 LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MUNICIPALITÉS (ÉLECTION DU PRÉSIDENT DE LA RÉGION DE YORK)

Mr. Moridi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 60, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 to provide that the head of council for The Regional Municipality of York must be elected / Projet de loi 60, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités pour prévoir que le président du conseil de la municipalité régionale de York doit être élu.

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. Reza Moridi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Municipal Act, 2001, is amended to provide that the head of council of the regional municipality of York must be elected and may not be appointed.

PETITIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm on the ball today, I can tell you that. I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"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"—the municipalities—"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 other areas; 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" immediately "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" and provincially significant wetlands, specifically in my riding in the area of Durham, but indeed across the province of Ontario.

I'm pleased to sign in support of this and give it to Asha, one of the pages here.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition here on behalf of a lot of people from all over Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north's economy; and

"Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

"Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

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

"That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets at Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately."

I wholeheartedly agree, add my signature and would like to give it to Lauren.

CELLULAR TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, I've got a petition signed by some residents in my community. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the operation of cellular commercial transmission equipment on new or existing cell towers has been proposed near residential areas in Oakville and other communities around the province; and

"Whereas Industry Canada has ultimate authority to approve the location of cellular communications transmission equipment under the federal Radiocommunication Act; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario has no jurisdiction in the placement of cell communications, equipment or services; and

"Whereas many area residents and local elected officials have expressed concerns with the location due to its proximity to residential areas"—it goes on, Speaker:

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

"That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada review the siting of cellular commercial communications transmission equipment in residential areas; and

"That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada place a moratorium on the installation of cellular commercial communication transmission equipment on new or existing towers within 1,000 metres of residential homes until an improved separation distance is established by the federal government."

Speaker, I agree with this. I'd sign it if I could. I'm going to send it down with Aylin.

1520

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I rise to read a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas on April 22, 2002, Premier Dalton McGuinty signed a pledge in North Bay to never privatize the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission; and

“Whereas high energy prices have forced northern Ontario businesses to close or move, including Xstrata, which had moved its Timmins smelter operations to Quebec and made up 10% of Ontario Northland railway’s business; and

“Whereas some 60 lumber mills have closed across northern Ontario in recent years with a loss of 10,000 resource jobs, and Ontario fell from being the number one mining jurisdiction in the world to number 23” primarily “due to high taxes and government red tape, resulting in the erosion of Ontario Northland’s commercial customer base; and

“Whereas the Far North Act that has banned development and turned much of northern Ontario into a virtual museum is the biggest barrier to new job creation in northern Ontario and cost Ontario Northland business; and

“Whereas the ONTC was completely omitted from the province’s northern growth plan issued two years ago; and

“Whereas the former MPP for Nipissing” held “an election campaign announcement on September 30, 2011, regarding what is now known to be a non-existent strategic alliance between the ONTC and Metrolinx; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario on March 23, 2012, announced it would wind down and divest itself of the ONTC and its assets with no prior consultation with community stakeholders in Nipissing and across north-eastern Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, hereby” ask the Premier to explain his decision.

I approve of this and sign this petition.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Miller: Once again, I’m presenting over 1,600 petitions. They’re coming in by the thousands.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

“Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario’s horse racing and breeding industry;

“Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

“Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

“Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

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

“Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect

the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program.”

I agree with this, Speaker. I’m putting my name to it, and Kyle will be bringing it down.

CELLULAR TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition that’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I’d like to especially thank Beverly and Ted Taylor of Ridgeside Lane in Oakville for having submitted it. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the operation of cellular commercial transmission equipment on new or existing cell towers has been proposed near residential areas in Oakville and other communities around the province;

“Whereas Industry Canada has ultimate authority to approve the location of cellular communications transmission equipment under the federal Radiocommunication Act;

“Whereas the province of Ontario has no jurisdiction in the placement of cell communications equipment or services;

“Whereas many area residents and local elected officials have expressed concerns with the location due to its proximity to residential areas;

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

“That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada review the siting of cellular commercial communications transmission equipment in residential areas; and

“That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada place a moratorium on the installation of cellular commercial communication transmission equipment on new or existing towers within 1,000 metres of residential homes until an improved separation distance is established by the federal government.”

Speaker, I am pleased to sign this petition and to send it down with page Felix.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values; and

“Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

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

“That the Ministry of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent ... study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines.”

I affix my name to this petition.

EASTERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Phil McNeely: The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It comes from Ottawa–Orléans and the parents of Avalon Public School.

“Whereas the community of Orléans will be hit hard”—I’m sorry, I have the wrong one in my hand, Speaker. I’ll have to start over.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:” This comes from the people in Orléans who are concerned with the movement of federal jobs from Orléans.

“Whereas the community of Orléans will be hit hard with the movement of 10,000 jobs from downtown to Kanata;

“Whereas the move of employment away from the east end will force many residents to move to the Kanata area and property values that have already fallen about 5% will fall further;

“Whereas the eastern Ontario development fund is designed to help businesses create new jobs and invest in new technologies, equipment and skills training;

“Whereas another goal of the eastern Ontario development fund is to support economic development projects that will attract or retain investment in Ontario-based industries and communities; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has pledged to continue the EODF past its original four-year mandate;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request that the Legislature ensure that the eastern Ontario development fund extends to the geographic area including Orléans to assist job growth in the face of a federal decision to dramatically affect the sustainability of areas east of the downtown core of Ottawa, including Orléans.”

I agree with this petition and sign it and I send it forward with Seph.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

“Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario’s horse racing and breeding industry;

“Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

“Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

“Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

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

“Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program.”

I will affix my name and send it.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I have a petition from my residents of York South–Weston in regards to St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston.

“Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded, with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and

“Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

“Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

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

“Respectfully request full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice.”

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and send it over with Emma.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It won’t be any surprise that literally thousands and thousands of people in Huron–Bruce, after last week’s announcements, are putting their signature to petitions, and today I present to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

1530

“Whereas the closure of the Bluewater Youth Centre will have a negative economic impact on Goderich and the surrounding area; and

“Whereas there is a need to deal with overcrowding in the Ontario correctional system; and

“Whereas the federal Bill C-10, the Safe Streets and Communities Act, will increase the population in the Ontario correctional system over the next four years; and

“Whereas the Bluewater Youth Centre would need very little retrofitting and the staff would need minimal retraining to open as a medium-secure correctional facility which could hold more than 200 beds required by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services; and

“Whereas specialized treatment programs within the correctional system such as drug treatment, mental health issues,” for example, “could be offered with the skilled support staff currently in place; and

“Whereas we believe that this is the most economical way to add ... 200 beds to the Ontario correctional system, as the building is in place and staff are currently hired to run such a facility;

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

“That the government engage in meaningful community and employee consultation in order to find alternate uses within the youth services or correctional services system for this facility, thereby preventing job losses and economic hardship for an area already badly impacted by plant closures and tornado damage.”

I totally agree with this petition, I affix my signature and I'll give it to Emily.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas everyone agrees that Ontarians should have access to healthy, clean drinking water from a secure source;

“Whereas, under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario regulation 319/08, public health inspectors are required to undertake risk assessments of small drinking water systems;

“Whereas many of these small drinking water systems are located in small businesses, Royal Canadian Legion halls, churches and other community facilities in rural Ontario with neither the budget to pay for the expensive testing required nor the volunteers to transport water samples to provincially accredited laboratories in urban centres hours away; and

“Whereas the history of test results at a small drinking water system location is only a small factor in the risk assessment, to the point where sites with a decade or more of clean test results may still be required to conduct monthly or weekly testing;

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

“That the Minister of Health amend Ontario regulation 319/08 to give the testing track record of a small drinking water system greater weight in the risk assessment process.”

I agree with the petition and will affix my signature, and I'll send it to the table with page Abigail.

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)

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 22, 2012, on the motion for 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 Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Algoma–Manitoulin has the floor.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Speaker. I'll be splitting the time with my colleague from Bramalea–Mississauga.

Je voulais seulement terminer ce que j'avais commencé à dire au sujet de cette proposition. C'est que l'idée en arrière du budget, oui, ça aide. Et puis, oui, essentiellement, ça ne serait pas une méchante idée qu'on partage l'aide qui est nécessaire, mais ça n'adresse pas le gros besoin dans ce domaine, et puis c'est ça qui est vraiment concernant sur le sujet.

Si on regarde le projet de loi comme il est écrit, ça aide un petit peu. Ça ôte le mal un petit peu. Mais vraiment, ça n'adresse pas les besoins qui ont été identifiés par plusieurs personnes dans les communautés.

Il faudrait vraiment qu'on envisage ce bill-ci pour que ça aide plus, pour qu'il y ait plus de personnes à la table et pour que l'on puisse partager la nécessité et puis le besoin pour tout le monde dans notre communauté.

Avec cela, madame, je vais transférer mon temps à mon ami, et puis M. Jagmeet Singh va continuer.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm happy to join the debate on this G30, the Family Caregiver Leave Act, and I'm happy to add my voice to some of the concerns that were raised.

To begin with, I think this is a positive initiative. It addresses those individuals who want to take a leave to take care of or to provide necessary care for their family while there is a serious medical condition. So, off the bat, that's a very important step to take.

One of the concerns that has come up, though, is that when we have this type of leave given, we have to ensure that people are aware of their rights. There are many opportunities and many areas where employees don't know what their rights are and what they can access, what they can do and what they can't do, so it's very important that while we provide this ability for people to take this leave, we should also ensure that this is disseminated so that people are aware of their rights.

The other concern that's raised is that while we are giving people the opportunity to take time to care for their family, to leave their employment for that purpose, it's very difficult to take any substantial leave from work if there's no income supplement. So, while it's a positive step, it's concerning that there isn't that support. I would call on the government and call on my colleagues to ensure that there is an additional level of support, that perhaps we speak with and negotiate with the federal government to ensure that EI would be expanded to address this and provide some additional supplements to those who are taking this leave.

Interjection.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: That would be great.

There are a number of colleagues we can speak to from the federal caucus perhaps. I implore all colleagues to address their local federal MP on this issue.

There are a number of other leaves that are already in existence in Ontario. There is pregnancy leave, parental leave, organ donor leave, personal emergency leave and declared emergency leave. So this rounds out the opportunities given for family members to take that time out and address the concerns that their family members may have when they're ill.

We've contacted stakeholders who are certainly in support of this initiative.

Let's talk about some of the real needs, some of the real stories to capture the essence of why this bill is important—if we look at, for example, a 49-year-old mother, and she's in need of long-term care, and this mother cannot be cared for at home unless she has support from her family. If we have, for example, a wife who has had a heart attack and her husband also had a stroke, we have a husband and a wife who are in a particular circumstance where they're both unable to care for each other. In that circumstance, we need another family member to step in.

These are real stories; people experience this all the time. These are heartbreaking stories. Situations that are already quite difficult become even worse when people can't take the time out to care for their families. It's definitely an important initiative, and there are real faces to these stories.

Again, let's look at some of the realities. What individual would be able to take two months off without a paycheque? Madam Speaker, the likelihood of that happening is very low, particularly given the economic circumstances that we have right now in Ontario. I would be hard-pressed to think of any example of very many families where they could take that much time off work. Again, it is important, but we have to look at the reality of, how many families can really take that time off?

There is also an additional factor to weigh in. When we look at the idea of supplementing the income of those people who wish to take advantage of this leave, there is a cost-cutting benefit to the fact that we have family members who are willing to care for their ill or unwell family. If they're able to do that, it takes a burden off of the health care system. So it provides a cost-cutting as well.

1540

For example, if we have a family member who's willing to take the time off from work and wants to care for his or her unwell or ill family member, that's care that could be at a hospital. That's care that's a cost-cutting in terms of not putting that burden on a hospital, not putting that burden on the health care system in general and allowing that individual to stay in their own home. So we give greater dignity to the life of an individual who wants to stay in their own home. We also provide a cost savings for the hospital or the health care provider who doesn't

have to spend that money on caring for that individual, and the family member is able to do it.

In addition, there's also a certain value that can't be quantified with respect to having your own family member care for you as opposed to someone else. So there's a certain advantage of having someone you know well, someone who you know loves and cares for you, providing you with that one-on-one care as opposed to relying on the health care system; though sometimes there's a necessity where there's an acute illness, where there are some special needs that only a qualified medical professional can provide. In those circumstances where we don't, this leave will provide an alternative to relying on the standard services from a hospital or from a medical health care provider.

If we factor this cost savings in, it's another argument that militates in favour of providing an income supplement of some sort. So I come back to the reality that, though it's a good initiative, let's look at some alternatives to provide some real incentive or some real support for those people who do take advantage of this leave and provide them with some income supplements so that they can actually provide the care but also have the financial resources to actually take that time off from work. If you look at the bill, it provides an unpaid job-protected leave of absence and gives them an opportunity to provide care or support for certain family members who have a serious medical condition.

The other issue that comes in is this protected leave of absence. While someone is taking that leave of absence, we have to ensure that both the employee and the employer are aware of this law so that an employee who wants to take advantage of the leave is not faced with any reprisal from the employer. We have to ensure that there are checks and balances in place so that an employee who does take this leave doesn't come back to the job and then find that their position is no longer available or they have to complete or conduct or perform duties that they weren't initially trained for, or they preferred a certain area and they enjoyed that area, and now because they've taken this leave they're no longer able to do that. We need to ensure that there's some protection in place so that employees do not face any negative repercussions if they take part in this leave. That comes down to ensuring that we have adequate enforcement of employment standards, and it also requires that we have proper education in terms of employees and employers both knowing what their rights are and what their obligations and their duties are.

It speaks to a larger picture of employment standards in general and the fact that, in Ontario, we have worked hard to create a climate where workers are protected. There is still a lot of work that remains to be done and some areas that require greater work and greater attention, particularly the enforcement aspect. I think that's something that we can work towards: ensuring that we have more qualified and more personnel in general so that we can enforce employment standards in the workplace, and that would include ensuring that employees

don't suffer repercussions from engaging in or participating in or accessing this leave. But in all areas of employment, we need to ensure that employees are protected and that their workplaces are safe. That would require us taking a look at the regulations and the oversight and the enforcement of employment standards.

So when we discuss any of the proposals that come before this House, there's a law that addresses one area, but the reality is that there is a bigger picture. In this context, when we're looking at the Family Caregiver Leave Act, it also requires us to look at employment standards generally; it also requires us to look at employment oversight and enforcement. So that requires us to give some consideration to the steps that we're taking as a province to ensure that our workers are taken care of, that our workers have a safe environment, and that these laws are implemented in a manner in which the employee and the employer are both aware of what their rights and obligations are and that there is some protection for an employee who does wish to take part in this leave.

Again, I think it's a great step, a great initiative. There are a couple of areas which have not been addressed by the bill, and I think we should look at that in terms of accessing some income supplements as well as ensuring that both the employee and the employer know what their rights are.

Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I want to thank the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton for his comments and his suggestions to the bill. It seems evident that he understands that this bill would allow those facing difficult family situations time off work in the comfort of knowing that their jobs are secure.

I wanted to address a couple of points that he made during his speech. The first one is, he was wondering if we intend to ask the federal government to extend employment insurance, and, yes, the government does intend, the ministry intends, to ask the federal government to extend employment insurance to those who would take this new family caregiver leave—if the bill is passed, obviously.

The other point that I wanted to address is, he asked how many people, how many families, can afford to take the time off. I just wanted to make sure to clarify that an employee can take up to eight weeks but could take simply one week, two weeks, whatever is needed in the specific case. It doesn't have to be the whole eight weeks. It's a leave of absence according to the time that is needed at that time.

The proposed leave would apply to all employees who are covered by the ESA, the Employment Standards Act, whether they're full-time, whether they're part-time, permanent or term contract. So again, there's no requirement that an employee be employed for a particular length of time as well. There's no minimum there, so the bill would foresee that as well.

I want to thank him for his comments and look forward to hearing more.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton is clearly a very well-spoken advocate type. As a trained lawyer and as an NDP member, he speaks with some authority and an informed vision.

Our position on this is, who could be against doing the right thing, except Dalton McGuinty? He's got this thing structured in such a way that it's ham-fisted. If you look at it, first of all, you have to take a week at a time. If you're the person that wants to take time off to bring your mother or father or other significant person to an appointment, for instance, you may have to take a Monday off, or a Friday. No, you have to take the whole week.

Not only that, but there's not one cent in this bill to help the working poor in Ontario. It's really discouraging when I look at it. It's chalked up that you must have a note from the doctor that the significant other is going to die imminently. Well, what doctor is going to say that? They are there to save your life.

This bill is structured like all the bills. It's got a trap door in it, unfortunately. When you walk in, you think you're safe. Watch out, because to me—our leader, Tim Hudak, has made it very clear: It's about jobs and the economy. The best help for families in this situation is to get them a decent job. These people can take up to 13 weeks off with no pay. Welcome to Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. Then they're blaming Stephen Harper for not extending the 13 weeks in unemployment insurance benefits. But if you look at the law federally, there are already provisions for family leave within the Employment Standards Act, as well as the federal laws on employment as well.

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So I think this is a shell. It's like one of those Russian dolls that you open up and there's another one inside and another one, and when you get to the bottom, there's nothing. That's what it's like.

Unfortunately, I'll be supporting it because it's—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's my pleasure to give my remarks mainly on the remarks from the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. I would agree that this is a positive initiative, but it's a very small positive initiative.

I would like to also comment on the member from York South–Weston. While we don't have to take the whole eight weeks, we can just take a week, quite frankly, if a family—and it's the family caregiver leave. What I'm most concerned with is a lot of families, specifically in my riding, are low-income families, and whether it's one week or two weeks—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Where's the money?

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes. That's part of the problem. It's easy for us to discuss that here and I think we would all like to improve this to actually—I like the idea of getting unemployment insurance. But once again, that doesn't help everyone.

It bothers us a little bit when you introduce a bill that depends on another government to provide the money. I really don't know if that's—once again, we are in favour of this bill going forward. Who would vote against a bill like this? But there are going to be people who will not be able—the people who really need it—the people who can afford to take the time off aren't the ones who really need the help. That's where we're having a big problem with this bill. Somehow we have to get around that, that the people—and I'm going to repeat it again, because it's the most important thing: The people who really need this bill, the way this bill is structured, can't afford to access it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd first like to begin by thanking the member from York South–Weston, the member from Durham and my own colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane for adding their voices and for speaking on the bill as well, and responding to some of my comments.

I thank the member for York South–Weston for addressing some of those concerns with respect to how long, that you're not limited by the—you don't have to take the full eight weeks. I appreciate that.

I also echo some of the concerns raised by the member for Durham: that weekly requirement, having to take a week's slot at a time. We may need to address that in committee. Some greater flexibility may be required. It might address some of the concerns that we've raised, that the realities of life, given the fact that people may not be able to take a full week off economically or financially—they may be able to take a day or two off, and that's an option that might assist.

I think the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane echoed my concerns very well and we're obviously on the same page with respect to the most vulnerable people in society—those who really need this leave. The members of society who would want to take part in this are the ones who are in the worst position to take part in it because they could not afford to not have an income supplement.

I agree that we could look at having the federal government expand EI, but again, it's problematic when we're relying on another source of funding that's not within our control, that's not within our ambit, that's not within our ability to control, essentially.

So I think we have to look at our own coffers to see if we can access some funds, if we can look at some of the suggestions, perhaps, that our leader Andrea Horwath has presented and find some funding so that we can actually assist those families who are hardest off and provide them with a mechanism so that they can actually access this leave.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): First of all, I'd like to apologize for missing the opportunity for one more speaker. I certainly hope that will be accommodated as we move along this afternoon.

Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there has been

six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise.

Hon. John Milloy: Madam Speaker, we would like debate to continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further debate? The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and—
Applause.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you for that round of applause. I'm going to share my time with the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

We're here today speaking of the Family Caregiver Leave Act, Bill 30, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave. As someone who spent more than 20 years in the health care profession as a nurse and probably over three decades of looking after family members—because that kind of goes along with being a nurse in your family; you're the one tagged with the health care—you can certainly see the impact that a debilitating disease or a sudden current illness has on families. Such illnesses, especially when they involve an elderly parent or child, are certainly heartbreaking and the family do need that time and opportunity to care for their loved ones.

But I must say that I really don't see how this bill fills a unique need that is not already addressed elsewhere in the current Employment Standards Act, and the third party mentioned this a few times too, in their remarks just previously, since the government decided not to participate in the rotation for some reason.

Anyway, the family medical leave provision, which is detailed in item 49.1 of the Employment Standards Act—a little technical, but I want to get it out there—provides for up to eight weeks of unpaid leave on compassionate grounds when a family member is diagnosed by a qualified health practitioner as likely to pass away within 26 weeks. I realize that there is always some subjectivity when health care professionals offer a prognosis. However, the act tries to be very specific in this regard as to when the leave would be applicable. And the act clearly specifies which distressed family members would qualify an employee for being granted family medical leave.

With regard to this leave, the federal government committed to supporting the individual with up to six weeks of employment insurance benefits, which is what was previously discussed. Also, they need some employment insurance; they need some money to be able to take that leave. So that's already in the existing Employment Standards Act. It's just reality; you have bills to pay but you need to take care of your family member. You have to have some type of compensation to enable you to do that.

Another provision in the Employment Standards Act which details the granting of unpaid leave is the personal emergency leave, which is detailed in item 50. So a lot of

these things that the act presently before us is supposed to do already exist.

I haven't got anybody phoning my office saying we need to change the family caregivers leave that's in the Employment Standards Act; they're not calling. They're calling about the scandals that exist with this government, especially in respect to Ornge and why this government is not taking responsibility at an earlier date but not even having responsibility now. We in the opposition have been calling for a select committee.

Madam Speaker, based on that, I have nothing else to really do but use the tools that are [*inaudible*] to us in the Legislature and call for an adjournment of the debate until there's a select committee on Ornge established.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Scott has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1559 to 1629.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Scott has moved adjournment of the debate.

All in favour, please rise until counted.

All those opposed, please rise until counted.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 22; the nays are 42.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rejoin the debate. I'm a little disappointed that we weren't successful in getting the select committee on Ornge, but it's okay—

Mr. John Yakabuski: But the minister promised we'd have—

Ms. Laurie Scott: They did promise.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'll resume debate on Bill 30, which is the Family Caregiver Leave Act, which I have said really doesn't do anything that doesn't exist, that people aren't already using, which I think is very indicative of what this government is about. Donald Drummond really didn't recommend that this act needed to be changed. It wasn't one of the top priorities. But, oh yes, you guys are ignoring that report, aren't you? So it really doesn't matter.

In fact, this government is very good at giving the perception of activity, which again we're witnessing over here—the work of an illusionist. This government, shrouded in smoke and mirrors, not only on the health file but on this—on the Premier's office door, I half expect to see a disclaimer that says, "Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain." Really, Madam Speaker, that is kind of what you're getting from this government: bringing in acts that don't make any sense.

People in my riding are worried about services in health care, getting more services. They can't get labs in their own community; they have to travel. So when they see Ornge and the expenditure in health care, the wasted millions of dollars—we want to get to the bottom of that, because health care dollars need to be spent where they should be spent and not wasted on scandals like Ornge. So I call for adjournment of the House, Madam Speaker.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order. Ms. Scott has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1633 to 1703.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I would ask all members to take their seats. Order.

Ms. Scott has moved adjournment of the House.

All in favour, please rise until counted.

All right; sit down.

All those opposed, please rise until counted.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 24; the nays are 43.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

Further debate? The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak on Bill 30, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave. This bill was introduced on December 8, 2011, and it's very important to debate this bill.

I have several concerns with this bill. I am concerned with the limited consultations that the ministry has done in drafting this legislation. You would think that there would be detailed consultations with employees, small businesses, those in the health care field and many corporations across the province of Ontario. There was a real lack of this on behalf of the ministry—to consult the industry at all.

According to ministry personnel, they have little or no evidence that there are people being denied time off from their employment to provide care for their loved ones. The Ministry of Labour staff also said that there hasn't been any significant demand for this legislation.

Speaker, let me remind you that we are staring directly in the face of a \$30-billion deficit. We have 600,000 men and women out of work, and we have billion-dollar scandals like Ornge unfolding daily. We need a select committee on Ornge, something that the minister herself agreed to if the will of the Legislature supported it.

Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. McNaughton has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1706 to 1736.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask all members to take their seats.

Mr. McNaughton has moved adjournment of the debate.

All in favour, please rise until counted.

All those opposed, please rise until counted.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 21; the nays are 37.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

The member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Thank you, Speaker. As critic of economic development and innovation, I find it shocking that this government would introduce a bill that not only, not just by itself—but approaches the suggestion that Ontario employers and job creators are somehow taking advantage of their own staff by denying them job-protected employment.

As the members on this side of the House know, this is the most scandal-plagued government in the history of the province of Ontario. I was here as a page in 1991, when Bob Rae had a deficit of \$10 billion. That was nothing compared to the deficit that Dalton McGuinty has Ontario in: a made-in-Ontario \$30-billion deficit.

Speaker, 600,000 people in the province of Ontario are unemployed, thanks to Dalton McGuinty and his govern-

ment. This government is a government full of billion-dollar boondoggles. We have eHealth, we have the Mississauga gas plant, we have the Oakville gas plant, and we have Ornge.

Speaker, we need a select committee on Ornge.

I move for adjournment of the House.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order. Mr. McNaughton has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1740 to 1810.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. McNaughton has moved adjournment of the House.

All in favour, please rise until counted.

All opposed, please rise until you're counted.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 49; the nays are 1.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1811.

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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
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Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
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Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
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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

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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
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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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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Grant Crack, Kim Craitor
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris
Rob Leone, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Teresa Piruzza
Bob Delaney, Victor Fedeli
Cindy Forster, Monte McNaughton
Yasir Naqvi, Teresa Piruzza
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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Peter Tabuns, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
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Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren
Paul Miller, Rob E. Milligan
Shafiq Qaadri
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Gilles Bisson, Donna H. Cansfield
Steve Clark, Garfield Dunlop
Jeff Leal, Lisa MacLeod
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
Toby Barrett, France Gélinas
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
Reza Moridi, Jerry J. Ouellette
Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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Michael Coteau, Grant Crack
Vic Dhillon, Randy Hillier
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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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