



No. 55

N° 55

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 40th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 40^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 17 May 2012

Jeudi 17 mai 2012

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 17 May 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 17 mai 2012

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**STRONG ACTION FOR ONTARIO ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2012**

**LOI DE 2012 SUR UNE ACTION
ÉNERGIQUE POUR L'ONTARIO
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)**

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 16, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 55, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / *Projet de loi 55, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.*

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

Mrs. Jane McKenna: It's my pleasure to rise in the House today and lend my voice to the ongoing debate on Bill 55. This bill addresses the technical measures that are being put forward by the government to enact the 2012 budget. Consistent with the marketing around that document, this is titled the Strong Action for Ontario Act, but of course Bill 55 shares more than a branding flavour with the budget. It also shares the same weakness of the budget. The words are supposed to be simple and reassuring, but once you get into the nuts and bolts of the thing, it's another story entirely.

We can look to financial experts for clues as to the strengths of the budget, a budget that increased taxes and spending in the face of a \$16-billion deficit. Once this government's budget motion passed, it didn't take long for the verdict to come in. Inside of two days, we got word from the credit rating agency Standard and Poor's that our outlook had been downgraded from stable to negative. Another day, another bit of bad financial news. This time it was credit agency Moody's, which one-upped S&P and actually downgraded the province's credit rating. Moody's pointed to the province's obese debt and leisurely path to fiscal balance as the key reason for the move.

The Liberal government is happy to write off these kinds of events when it serves its interests: "If the ratings agencies make a sour face when they look at our books, well, sticks and stones and all that. Who cares what the

credit rating agency has to say? It's basically just a horoscope for the Bay Street set." If it's good news from the credit rating agencies, well, then, slap a gold star on the report card and get it to the fridge so the Premier can stick it up. That kind of on-again, off-again regard for the value of financial analysis might work as a conversational device here in the House or as a tool to shrug off a scrum out in the hallway but, ultimately, these verdicts carry more weight than the government likes to let on.

It's true that these moves don't mean that the province is doomed—there was always time for sense to prevail—but what it does mean, almost certainly, is that we're getting a warning sign. This is the canary in the coal mine that the government can't bring itself to shut down. These ratings will almost certainly mean that if we don't sort out the province's books, the way we borrow money—whether we can, how much it will cost us when we do—will be impacted at some point in the future. This is bound to drive up borrowing costs and bleed scarce tax dollars from essential programs.

But this government continues to act as it did in the fall, when the Auditor General took us inside the Liberal hot dog factory and shone a flashlight inside the machines. The state of denial wafting across from the other side of the House is thick, Speaker. This government is still spending money it doesn't have: spending \$1.8 million an hour more than it takes in; still making big promises with plenty of loopholes and fine print; still rolling out the marketing material to make it all seem like mother's milk. Instead of doing some soul-searching when analysis issued these warnings, the government goes merrily along with its head in the clouds.

My only explanation is that they're mistaking all those red flags for Liberal fan boys. Those of us on this side of the House and many of those outside of the Legislature recognize the warning signs for what they are. Again, this goes back to what my party, the official opposition, has been saying about this government for quite some time. It's cold comfort to be right on this count.

It doesn't bode well for the province that the party opposite continues to stubbornly dismiss this criticism. Again, this is a government that is unwilling to live within its means and that has no real plan to create jobs, other than rubbing that lucky rabbit's foot; I'm sure it has a bald patch by now. They'll tell you that this budget speaks to this and speaks to that, and that is certainly true. There is a lot of talk, a lot of wordplay and a lot of hot air.

This budget was put together in a vacuum in the dark by people who selectively teleconferenced rather than

holding pre-budget hearings. So instead of getting a sense of what Ontarians really want, about where the needs actually are and without tapping into the experts of the private sector, this government has stayed in its bubble. Ontarians understand that we need to tighten our belts. They know about how being in debt up to your eyeballs can cramp your lifestyle. They get it.

Ontario's business gets it. They know that capital is mobile and that investors can go where they feel they stand the greatest odds of being successful, just like skilled trades workers can, just like new Canadians can. Why would someone voluntarily go where their taxes are high, the debt and the structural deficit are being maintained as respectfully as an historic site, where hydro rates are crushing and where red tape chokes out new growth? It's an open question.

I held a prosperity round table in Burlington in the week before the budget vote, a business community brainstorming session that stimulated a lot of discussion. The member from Thornhill joined us for that afternoon, and I'm sure he can attest to the events of the day. We heard from small start-ups, established landmark businesses, highly specialized organizations and ones that were amazingly diverse. We heard from passionate professionals working in the health care, education and financial sectors, real estate, construction, skilled trades, the service industry, waste management and much more. We had a great exchange of ideas. We heard a lot of determination to turn things around.

But we also heard a number of concerns about the budget and the path this government is on. There are no performance measures in this government, and there's so much waste and duplication. There are far too many agencies, boards and commissions. The government is constantly getting in the way. It does nothing to help small businesses do more.

"We have so much red tape to go through, as a small business of 120 employees, that we need to staff two more to make sure we're compliant with all the regulations at every level of government," said one small business owner.

"Health care is fragmented, and patients are treated far more poorly than they were in the past. Hospital administrators are not doctors. Ask the doctors how to improve health care," said a doctor.

"Renewable energy is a great thing. We all believe in it. But you have to ask yourself, 'At what cost?' With those rates, I can't hire and I can't invest back into my own business," said another business owner.

People see being pro-business as a bad thing. But businesses create jobs and businesses benefit everyone, not just the CEO or the owner who gets paid to take the risk. Businesses are organic creatures that employ people.

There's no vision in the Liberal budget, and there's no structural change, which is really what is needed. How are we going to make Ontario great again when the current government has no plan and no vision? On that, Speaker, I am going to take this moment to adjourn this debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Burlington has moved adjournment of the debate. Agreed? I heard a no.

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 0910 to 0940.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mrs. McKenna has moved adjournment of the debate.

All in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please stand and remain standing.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 14; the nays are 29.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost. The member for Burlington, you have the floor.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Mr. Speaker, it would be reckless and irresponsible not to call for a select committee. That's why I did continue to ask for adjournment of the debate, because Ornge continues to get worse.

Once again, there is always time for sense to prevail. Despite the warning signs, despite the government's failure to rein in spending, failure to root out inefficiencies and waste, failure to create jobs or inspire the confidence of the credit rating agencies, Ontario can still have a bright future, but getting there is going to demand more than the same old, same old response. Courage asks us to step out of our comfort zone. Honesty is also helpful. Reduced spending increases are obviously not the same as reducing spending. The budget makes a big show of a belt-tightening budget, but it's very much in the same vein as previous budgets, which are part of the reason why this government has managed to double the provincial debt from where it was in 2003 until now.

With new ideas and the commitment to make them work, Ontario can return to its place of pride as an economic powerhouse, but in order to be able to do that, Speaker, first we need to get the fundamentals right.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I listened intently to the bell ringing in that whole debate, and I thought it was a rather interesting tone to the whole sound. I'm getting kind of used to them, if you know what I mean.

Anyway, in regard to the budget bill, everybody understands that in the last election the three parties had the same goal, and that was that we need to be able to manage our expenditures and get back to balance by 2017-18. Clearly, Andrea Horwath and our party were very clear on that, and we believe that is a goal that must be maintained.

However, the approach that this government has taken toward this budget is a bit, how would you say, harsh. It is an austerity-type budget that probably does more to cool down the economy than it does to warm it up. I just say to myself that there are different ways of being able to achieve that balance. It would seem to me that the government would be well advised to try to find ways to

do a number of things. One, we need to manage our expenditures; there's no question about that. With any government, any private budget, any business budget, you always have to look at the bottom line and ask, "Am I spending wisely?" I think it is incumbent upon government to be able to do that.

But on the other side, we need to look at how we can grow revenue. You grow revenue not necessarily by just building casinos, as has been the penchant of this government, but by taking a look at different initiatives that are able to stimulate growth in your economy so that, in fact, you have more revenue coming in, which assists you in getting the revenue to be able to pay for the things that need to be done.

But remember why we're here. We're in a deficit situation because governments have decided to go down the road of corporate and personal tax cuts that have taken the revenue away from the province and its ability to pay for the services that we have. I believe it's a part of a master stroke on the part of the right wing to underfund our public services to create the crisis that allows them to privatize. I'm just surprised that the government is falling into that trap as well.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: I was delighted that despite the very challenging economic circumstances facing the province of Ontario—and I know time is limited for each speaker, and the speaker was not able to make reference to this—the government of Ontario is funding the project, which is the Joseph Brant hospital project in Burlington, Ontario, and also a renovation and expansion project at Cambridge.

Now, I have heard from the opposition from time to time—I know there's another project in Simcoe North as well. What's interesting about all three of those ridings—because I have read someone from the Conservative caucus say somewhere that while in the Conservative ridings they're not proceeding with projects, in government-held ridings they are. I can't remember—maybe the members from Burlington and Cambridge can tell me. My memory does not go back to the last time we elected a Liberal in either one of those ridings. It's been a long, long time before we have done that. We simply looked at the need for those particular projects, and the one in Simcoe North as well. Mr. Dunlop, I know, is very delighted to see that expenditure of somewhere well over \$400 million. This is very important, that we continue with those projects.

What happens is, I keep hearing from the opposite side that somehow we should be cutting more. But then, when we do not proceed with a specific project in the time frame we had hoped to do so, we're accused of being partisan or of not operating our government appropriately. I think we're trying to establish that balance that is important. I am disappointed, and I think if she had more time she would have mentioned that balance.

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

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm pleased to stand in support of our PC caucus member from Burlington. Certainly, I will

address the fact that the ridings of Cambridge and Burlington have been long-time PC ridings, and they will remain long-time PC ridings on account of good representation.

See, the problem is this: Since the budget was tabled at the end of March, the size of our provincial debt has increased by \$2 billion—\$2 billion. So, yes, we have a need in this province to set some priorities and we need to be able to fund those priorities based on need. They don't get that on that side. They like to make these decisions on politics; they like to make these decisions on the fact that they might gain or save some Liberal seats. That's how they make decisions on that side of the House.

We believe that we need to make sure the fundamentals are in place to have those priorities based on need met. Growing the size of our debt by \$2 billion in two months is no recipe for us to have the kind of fiscal situation that allows us to invest in the priorities that we desire. And we don't agree with the NDP. We don't think that we have a revenue problem in the province of Ontario; we have a spending problem in the province of Ontario. Spending has increased by \$20 billion since 2008—\$20 billion. This was supposed to be one-time stimulus spending, that has continued year after year. Even in this year's budget, the austerity budget, we see the government's spending going up by 2.5%. This is supposed to be an austerity budget. Where is the austerity? Debts are going up. Deficits aren't going down. That's the record of the Liberal government. Their priorities are out of whack. We stand by our priorities and we're able to fund those.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a pleasure to be able to address this matter this morning. My colleague from the good area of Timmins spoke about the fundamental problem with this government, which has been its ongoing addiction to tax cuts, both at the corporate level and looking at the personal level.

Speaker, you cannot run a government by constantly cutting your revenue. If in fact this Reagan approach to economics was successful, we would have seen increased employment in Canada, in Ontario, and increased business investment. But the reality is, when you look at the last decade, when you look at each tax cut, it has been accompanied by a reduction in investment in Ontario by business. The tax cuts have made sure that corporations are tax rich, but they've undermined the investments we need in health, education and infrastructure.

0950

I also want to note, Speaker, that this government is proceeding, even though it is facing problems with its credit rating, with investments in nuclear power that are going to undermine the credit rating of this province.

In April, Ontario Power Generation was given a rating of A-1 by Standard and Poor's. What's most interesting is that if the province of Ontario was not there to guarantee the operations of OPG, its rating would have been BBB, the same rating as Ireland, Italy and Spain. They

listed, in their reasons for giving them a low credit rating, the risk of nuclear technology. This government says that it's disciplined fiscally, but in fact it is not.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Response from the member from Burlington.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Thank you so much, Speaker, and thank you so much for everybody's input as well.

I'd like to say that, sitting here, it is shocking to me the situation that we are in. If we just do the math, and we do \$1.8 million more an hour than we take in, and we take the \$500 million, let's say, that we get from the 23,000 people who make over \$500,000 a year, which we won't, but let's say we do, that money was spent within 10 days. People don't seem to realize the Band-Aid effects that we do, where that has gotten us and where that is going to go.

The other sad thing is, I had a round table in Burlington, like I had said, and I had all kinds of very diverse people there—big companies, small companies, doctors, nurses—and the number one thing was, when they sat there, they said, "Do you know, Jane, what people don't seem to realize is, you might only think it's 23,000 people who are affected, but we are the engine, we are the entrepreneurs who continue to keep Ontario where it is and where it needs to go. The sad thing is, what you don't understand is, capital is mobile, and we will not invest in high debt, high taxes and high energy; we don't have to. So, my business, although I employ 100 people, the other fellow who employs 200 people, they don't have to stay in Burlington. Why would they?" So we are slowly, absolutely killing all of the things we need to be the best place that we can possibly live.

So, what part of it are we not understanding? When I sit here on the other side as the opposition, it is immoral, reckless and irresponsible to leave this for our children, our grandchildren, to be in the situation that we are in. You've taken a loan at our taxpayers' expense and put us in a position that no one deserves to be in, and to patronize us any more for what has continued to go on with a budget that says nothing is appalling to me.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to join the debate today, as always. It's an honour, of course, to stand in the House.

I've got a couple of things to talk about. I've got my riding to talk about, the challenges of the area that I represent, Essex—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I've just been advised by the table that you've already spoken on the budget bill.

Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you, Speaker. I was eager to hear my colleague from Essex speak, because I know he had volumes to say.

I want to follow a couple of themes in this particular debate, and I want to start with the one I just raised in questions and comments to the previous speaker. There has been a move across North America and across Europe

on the part of the right wing to argue that tax cuts are the way to prosperity. If you listen to the Bushes of the world, the Sarkozys and the Dalton McGuintys of the world, and the Harrises before that, there has been this belief that if you cut taxes, and you cut them deep enough and fast enough, it is going to prime the pump of the economy and it's going to put us into prosperity. I just want to say that it has been totally debunked.

When you take a look at what has happened around the world, all it has managed to do is remove the essential funding that's necessary to be able to fund those services that we also need in our public services, such as health care, education, the maintenance of our highways, paying for policing, firefighting and all of those other essential services that we do in the province of Ontario.

I don't argue, for a second, that we should be raising a lot of taxes. That's not what my argument is. My argument is that we build services in this province based on a certain amount of revenue at the time, and the revenue was calculated to be whatever it was on the taxes that were being charged. Along comes the right wing, first guys like Mike Harris, then Brian Mulroney and George Bush, Dalton McGuinty, Monsieur Sarkozy, Mr. Cameron and others, who are all of the same ilk, saying if you cut those taxes that, in fact, what you're going to do is prime the pump. Well, we found that it has done completely the opposite. In fact, what you've done is you've severely underfunded the ability of the government to provide the services that they have.

That is where I think the original intention was in lowering those taxes. The right wing didn't care so much about their friends being able to put more money in their pockets. There's just this ingrained belief that somehow or other government should not be in the business of doing a whole bunch of things that it's doing now. If you underfund the system, you'll throw it into crisis. It's a little bit like what Mr. Snobelen had said at the time that he was the Minister of Education: If you create a crisis, it creates the backdrop to make the changes that we want, ideologically, within the education system.

It's the same when it comes to the cutting of corporate taxes. If you cut corporate taxes and you cut taxes to higher-income Canadians and Ontarians, what you eventually do is underfund the system. When you underfund the system, all that people know is, "I'm waiting longer at the lineup to get services somewhere." Either the police officer takes longer to get to the accident scene, the hospital is not able to see you as quickly as they should, or the services that you need, as far as permits to do whatever, take longer than they should. So you've underfunded the system, created a crisis, and in the end, the public says, "Well, I don't know. Something's not working. You've got to fix it."

Then along comes another right-wing government that says, "Okay. The way to fix that now is through austerity." So now we've got the McGuinty government, like the Sarkozy government, like the George Bush government, like the Brian Mulroney and like the Mr. Harper governments, all the same, saying, "Austerity is the only way to be able to deal with this."

Well, you're seeing in Europe that there's a backlash to that whole ideology. You saw the results of the election in France where a socialist president was elected on the basis that there is a different way to deal with deficits. You don't have to strictly do austerity. You have to have a balanced approach that, yes, government has to manage its expenses and that we need to make sure we're frugal in how we spend the dollars of the taxpayer, but there are other things that we also need to do, as a way of being able to find balance within our budgets.

I would argue that the government is not as aggressive as they need to be on the other things. I support the government, in the sense of trying to ensure that we are smart about how we spend public dollars and how we administer our public services, but I just want to say upfront, we're not all that bad as it is. If you take a look at how we deliver services in this province, we do it pretty efficiently. If you look at the cost of health care per capita in Ontario, as compared to the United States, we do it far more efficiently than they do in the United States. I would say the same goes for a whole bunch of other services that we provide.

Why not look at the other side of the equation? Why not look at the revenue side? So, for example, Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats in the last round of negotiations around the budget motion said that in order to support the budget motion—not necessarily the budget, but the budget motion—that we wanted the government to move on a surtax of two points for income earners over \$500,000. We said that that's ultimately reasonable because it says two things: one, that we're able to demonstrate that it's not just the people at the bottom that are having to bear the weight of trying to balance the budget—those people whose jobs are going to be cut and those people who are not going to get the services they need etc.—but that there's a sharing of the pain. Those people that are doing well in our economy, who can afford to pay, pay a little bit more. That has gotten us about another \$500 million that allows us, then, to ensure that we can, maybe, not close some of those services in health care systems across this province. It allows us, maybe, not to lay off as many teachers; allows us, maybe, not to reduce services when it comes to policing or fire or whatever other public services we offer. It's not enough to balance the whole budget, but it is part of the answer.

The other part of it, I believe—and this is where the government is missing the boat—is in being able to prime the economy in a way that you're able to create stimulus in the private sector. I'm not arguing just building capital infrastructure programs, because of course that's important, but also looking at how government can be of assistance to the private sector to be able to create more economic opportunity within Ontario.

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For example, one of the things that a lot of people in all of our ridings tell us is that if you're a small entrepreneur and you're trying to start up a business, it's hard to get capitalized. Trying to borrow money from the banks is very difficult to do, because they want to ensure that

they have as much security as they can to minimize the risk, and the entrepreneur who is trying to start up the business opportunity, he or she may have a great idea but has a real problem trying to capitalize the enterprise.

Now, I'm not saying that government should just give grants out to businesses; I wouldn't argue that for a second. But I think what government can do is create programs that assist the private sector in being able to do some of the things they've got to do. For example, you could backstop loans. The northern heritage fund at one time—no longer—used to backstop loans to the private sector in a much more important way than it does now. It allowed a lot of entrepreneurs across northern Ontario to start businesses that are still in existence today, and they were able to secure those loans so they could create wealth, create jobs in our communities, and those tax dollars, by way of those economic activities, came back to the general revenue of Ontario.

In some cases, some of those businesses failed, but at least the money that was spent in the economy in order to start up that new business enterprise was goods being purchased within the communities, and some jobs created over a period of time. So the loss wasn't as much as you would think.

I think that's one thing you can do. You can have a way of being able to backstop loans so that the entrepreneur has to come up with their money, has to borrow money, but the government could be playing a much more important role when it comes to helping backstop those loans.

The other thing you can do is what we've been suggesting to the government and that we somewhat negotiated inside the agreement on the budget motion, and that is to give tax credits to enterprises that create jobs and do investment in the province of Ontario. Why should you give anybody a tax cut in a corporation or a business if they're not going to give you some return on that money that you're giving them towards creating jobs and wealth in Ontario? As social Democrats, as New Democrats in Ontario, Andrea Horwath is saying, "Only reward the job creators. Don't give the money to the ones that are going to take the profits to the Cayman Islands, but give the money to those people who say, 'You know what? I'm prepared to invest in Ontario. I want to retool my factory. I want to do R&D work on something that's going to create wealth in Ontario. I want to create jobs.'" You say to those people, "We'll give you a refundable tax credit for part of that investment as an incentive for you to invest in the province of Ontario."

Doing those kinds of things doesn't cost Ontario a lot of money, but what it does do is create a whole lot of stimulus within your economy on the private sector side, where business says, "You know what? Ontario is an interesting place to do business. Maybe I'll invest there."

We can look at our friends in Quebec who have looked at how you do development in the Far North. They have come to terms with First Nations when it comes to how you're able to do development in the Far North in a way that respects First Nations and the cultural

interests that they have in their land and at the same time give them an opportunity to get some economic return on what is happening on their own traditional lands.

I was talking to a mining company last week that says that the difference between doing business in Ontario and doing business in Quebec is night and day; it's easier in Quebec because the province of Quebec understands that creating economic wealth and doing that in conjunction with First Nations is good for First Nations and good for Quebec.

If we were doing those kinds of things here in Ontario, I would argue we'd be able to build the wealth that allows us to close the gap by 2017-18, to be able to balance the budget, something that's important to do, but looks at a balanced approach and doing something that makes far more sense than what this government is doing now.

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

Mr. Mario Sergio: I enjoyed the comments by the member for Timmins–James Bay. He's a long-standing member of the House, and I know he cares a lot about his community and the people, especially up in the north area where he comes from.

I have to say that this, if I'm correct, is the ninth budget that this government has brought forward since we have taken power. We have gone through some wonderful economic times, some not-so-good times and some terrible times. But I have to say that since we came to power, we did deliver the goods during the good times, and we are trying to do our very best during very serious economic times.

At this particular time, even when the Drummond report was telling us to do certain things that would have slowed down the assistance that we are providing in health care and in education and in creating jobs or providing more affordable housing, we said, "No, there are certain things that we are committed to and we'll go along and we'll do those, especially in health care and education."

We have seen the direction of the government in this existing budget here. I think we should move it forward, Speaker. I think we should have the opportunity to do the things that we want to do because we mean well for the people of Ontario, especially in health care and education.

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

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm glad I have another opportunity to address this budget debate. I want to thank the member for Timmins–James Bay for his enlightened comments on the budget. I think that he raises a number of points, some of which, of course, we agree with; others, of course, we don't. That's just part of the way things work in this place. At least we can say of the NDP that they stand on principles, and we stand on principles. I'm not sure those folks across the aisle quite do the same thing. I'm not really sure what principles they stand on.

I have to say as well that the Minister of the Environment, the member for St. Catharines, pointed out in his

comments during the member from Burlington's turn—he targeted myself, he targeted the member for Burlington in terms of our hospital infrastructure projects. But let me turn the tables on them. How many jobs were lost in the member for St. Catharines' riding? How much money was spent to save the seat for the member for Mississauga South, on the gas plant? How much was saved or spent on the fact that the Oakville gas plant was turned on?

These folks aren't even agreeing with the decisions they make on these plants. The Liberal cabinet decided to go to the gas plant in Mississauga. The member for Mississauga South was reported as saying that that was just a foolish idea. In fact, I don't know if I can use the word "dumb" in this place, but that's what he was quoted in the paper as saying.

They're spending money each and every day trying to save or gain Liberal seats, and we have this \$15-billion deficit—this monstrosity of a deficit—more than three times the size of the deficit in all the other provinces combined. That's what we see. If they think that is principle that they're standing by, I don't know.

I'm standing by what we say here: Rein in government spending, get this deficit under control.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always a privilege and a pleasure to be in this House when the member from Timmins–James Bay talks about the experiences that he has had and the ideas and the views that he carries with the vast years of experience that he has had in this House.

One issue he touched on was actually the funding formula, as far as some of the services that are available here in the province. The concern is where this government is going with privatization. We've seen where privatization has led us with the Conservative government in the past years. It's something that you should learn from, not to go down that road, because you're really going to be taking away the essential services that we need in many of our communities.

Underfunding, in a lot of what is in this budget, is going to affect the MNR, is going to affect the Ministry of the Environment. These are essential ministries that need the funding in order to get those projects and the good ideas that are going forward. We've identified many, many, many good projects that would address a lot of our concerns in these industries, especially in the MNR and the MOE. But these projects that have been studied and analyzed are sitting on shelves. And why are they sitting—sitting on shelves?

Laughter.

Mr. Michael Mantha: That was close. I'll blame that on my French.

Why they are sitting on shelves is because we don't have the capacity to implement a lot of those policies. They're great ideas. Our biologists are no longer with the MNR. Our game wardens are struggling in order to make their job a successful one in order for them to be happy with their own conscience as far as doing their jobs.

So I'm really happy when I hear that the government is going to really consider the propositions that we've made in order to bring tax credits to employers that create jobs—but do it. Don't just say it; do it.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I enjoyed the comments from the member from Timmins–James Bay and the previous speaker. The NDP has been accused in the past of sitting on the fence. That's the first time I've heard it put that way.

I really want to thank the member from Timmins–James Bay. I think he brings forward some sincere opinions, some sincere ideas, as to how he would change the budget bill. I think that was really the way that the NDP approached this: They looked to the Liberal government and they said, "Put forward a budget, and we'll take a look at it." Contrast that with the approach that was taken on the other side of the floor, where the Conservative Party decided that no matter what was put forward, they were opposing the bill, and their members were instructed to oppose the bill.

The member from Cambridge talks about projects as if somebody else is building these projects. The hospital fairy builds the hospitals in the province of Ontario. The fact is, that money comes from the taxpayers of Ontario. The fact is, it comes from the budget, and you either support the budget and the projects contained within, or you don't. If you don't support the budget, then be straight with the people in your own constituency. Go back to your riding and tell people you don't support the building of the hospital. But have the courage to do that. Have the courage to do that. Go back and face the people in your riding and tell people, "I didn't support the hospital. I don't think we should be spending on the hospital, because I've got these great ideas and I'd bring in a different budget some other way, and somebody else will build your hospital."

You've got to take responsibility. You can't suck and blow on this. People aren't going to build the hospital for you. It has to be the people in your riding who pay for the hospital. Be honest with those people and tell them the truth. It's that simple. Own up to them. You were instructed by your leader to vote against your own hospital, and you know it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Timmins–James Bay, two minutes to reply.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I think it's rather unfortunate when we start imputing motives to members in the House. I think we're all honourable members. We may see things differently, but at the end of the day people do things for the reasons they do them.

I just want to go back to what I was trying to say in the debate and that is, there are really two points that I was trying to make. All of us agree that we need to balance the budget by 2017-18. New Democrats and Andrea Horwath have been clear on that. It was in our platform. That's where we want to go.

Where we take difference from the government is, their approach only looks at one particular side of the

equation. Should there be an eye towards managing public services in a more efficient way? Absolutely. I think you need to be careful in how you do that; you don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. But certainly we can take a look at ways of saving money and how we deliver our services. That doesn't necessarily mean to say we have to lay off a bunch of people.

On the other hand, we need to look at what we do on the revenue side, and there's not just directly increasing taxation as the only means to raise revenues. We did the 2% for those people over \$500,000. I think that was vastly reasonable. It was popular; it was supported by almost 80% of the population, and I believe that's why the government adopted that NDP idea, put forward by Andrea Horwath.

The other one is, we need to look at how we can stimulate the private sector, and you do that by creating the incentives that are necessary for them to be able to invest in Ontario, but you only do that for those who are prepared to create jobs and make that actual investment. So you can do the investment tax credit that we proposed to the government that says those who create jobs and do actual investments can get some of that money back by way of an investment tax credit.

You can also look at backstopping loans, because capitalization is the biggest problem that business is having, contrary to what a lot of people would believe. Trying to get money from the banks is very difficult, or raising it on the stock market. So if the government is able to do backstopping of loans, I think it goes a long way to assisting the private sector and stimulating growth in the economy.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Steve Clark: I know that she's not yet in the chamber, but she soon will be. I would like to welcome Denise Wood, the executive director of the Alzheimer Society of Leeds–Grenville, who's here for their lobby day. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I've got a couple of introductions. Carolyn Cybulski, executive director; Susan McLean, volunteer and former caregiver of the Alzheimer Society of Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma District; and Lorraine LeBlanc and Sharon Barthel from the Alzheimer Society of Sudbury–Manitoulin are going to be joining us today.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'd like to welcome Elizabeth McLellan, who's interning in our office for the summer, to the Legislature today.

Mr. Bill Walker: I would like to welcome Deborah Barker and Pauline Diemert, visitors from the Alzheimer society, to Queen's Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I, as well, would like to welcome representatives from the Alzheimer Society of Toronto: Marija Padjen, a constituent, and Cathy Barrick. Welcome.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I have two groups to introduce today. I'd like to welcome page Dia's parents, who are here to join us today. We have Dalia, her mom; Jayanta, her dad; and Rupayan, her brother, who are joining us today. Welcome.

Secondly, I'd like to welcome the members of the Alzheimer Society: David Harvey, Paul Hargreaves and Naguib Gouda. I'd also like to remind all the members to please come and attend the reception today at noon in room 230. Thank you very much.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Please join me in welcoming my oldest and most loyal friend, Kevin Harley, from Barrie, here today to the chamber.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have some guests in the west gallery: Mr. Dan Munro, from National Helicopters Inc.; Mr. Michael Skrobica, from the Air Transport Association of Canada; Bob Mackie, from Thunder Airlines; and Frank Behrendt, from SkyCare. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to welcome people from the Alzheimer Society of Ontario. David Harvey is here, and Bob Renaud from Windsor and Elco Drost from Niagara Falls, amongst a number of others who have been introduced. Thank you.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Mr. Speaker, it's my distinct pleasure to welcome four visitors to the members' gallery this morning. First, I welcome two women from the Alzheimer Society, who are here taking part in awareness day activities at Queen's Park: Sharon Osvold, a caregiver from Brighton and volunteer with the organization; and Laura Hare, the executive director of the Alzheimer Society chapter covering Hastings, Brighton and Quinte West. Your knowledge and insight into this disease is appreciated, and I thank you for travelling to visit Queen's Park today.

Secondly, I welcome two very bright students from St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School in Brampton. They have become YouTube superstars in their quest to restore choice to high school cafeterias. Mr. Brian Baah and Samuel Battista, welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ça me fait extrêmement plaisir de présenter une de mes bonnes amies, M^{me} Lorraine LeBlanc, qui est également la directrice générale de la Société Alzheimer de Sudbury, as well as one of her volunteers, Mrs. Sharon Barthel, who came today for Alzheimer Society day at Queen's Park.

M. Shafiq Qadri: Je veux accueillir un ami et un collègue. Speaker, I take this opportunity to welcome a friend and colleague, the honourable Naguib Gouda, who is formerly of that noble institution, the Ontario Medical Association, and now part of the Alzheimer Society of Toronto. I recognize him, as he was one of my mentors during the master's certificate in leadership at the Schulich School of Business.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I'd like to welcome here today one of my constituents, Michael Skrobica, who is vice-president of the Air Transport Association of Canada. He is here with three of his colleagues from the Air Transport Association of Canada. Welcome, Michael.

Mr. Kim Craiton: I'm really pleased to introduce some special ladies from my riding of Niagara Falls. They're here with the Alzheimer Association of Ontario; they're with the Niagara chapter. Across from me are Teena Kindt and Elco Drost. Welcome.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'd like to extend a warm welcome to Loren Freid, the executive director of the Alzheimer Society of York Region.

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: I'd like to welcome some people from Windsor as well. It's Sally Bennett, who's the CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Windsor and Essex county and is of course here for the focus today, and another introduction of Bob Renaud, who's involved both in Windsor and provincially with the Alzheimer Society. Welcome, and I look forward to meeting with you later.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Not that anyone would want to steal the Speaker's thunder, but in the Speaker's gallery today, we have, from the great riding of Brant, Vic Prendergast, the incoming president of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario. Joining Vic, we have Gale Carey, the CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm working on it.

WEARING OF BRACELETS AND PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture on a point of order.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear bracelets in recognition of International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have had a request for unanimous consent to wear the bracelet, and I believe there's a pin that's attached to it so we can wear the pin and the bracelet. Do we agree? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Acting Premier. It has now been literally months since this Legislature expressed its will to have a select committee of the Legislature to look into the Ornge scandal. The government has refused to accommodate that. Then the public accounts committee passed a motion asking for an expanded mandate to better do its work to get to the bottom of this scandal. The government continues to ignore that request.

Yesterday, we had evidence of why the Standing Committee on Public Accounts needs that expanded mandate. We heard once again that a senior person in the Ministry of Health was told in July 2008 of ongoings at Ornge that should have been of serious concern to the minister of the day. Now we don't even have time to call that witness.

I want to know from the government: Will they, today—

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

Mr. Frank Klees: —agree to the expanded mandate of that committee so that we can get on with doing our work?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. John Milloy: I think all members of this Legislature should recognize the good work that is being done by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Based on the testimony or the hearings that were heard yesterday, I'm pleased to report that the public accounts committee has sat for 29 hours. They've heard from 33 witnesses. The meeting of that committee is governed by a motion that was passed unanimously in this House. The committee will continue to meet. They have plans to hear from other witnesses.

I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that the member used to stand up and say that there's not enough time to hear from witnesses. Do you know what? The committee, finally, as it has the right to do, has changed and will in fact be devoting more hours to those witnesses. As well as the work that's being done by public accounts, it's based on a very comprehensive report done by the AG. We have the OPP looking into it—

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

Hon. John Milloy: —and we have a piece of legislation in front of this House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we move to the supplementary, I want to remind all members to try to stay within the time allotment for answering and questioning, please. When I say “thank you,” that's the end of your wrap-up.

Supplementary.

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, could it be possible that the government is refusing to agree to the additional sittings because it doesn't want to have insiders exposed for their contradictory statements, overt lies to the committee about their lobbying efforts of the government, as we heard yesterday? Is that the reason that the government is blocking the work that the public accounts committee wants to make?

I want to hear from the House leader why possibly he would not be willing to give us the mandate that the committee has requested. What are you hiding?

1040

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if I'm the only one here who finds it ironic that the honourable member whose party has been blocking legislation, has been tying up committees and is in fact blocking Bill 50, a piece of legislation which will enact the recommenda-

tions that we heard from the Auditor General—that he has the gall to stand here today and somehow criticize us as blocking a committee. The fact of the matter is—as I said, 29 hours and 33 witnesses.

If the honourable member wants to hold hearings on the floor of the House, then let's talk again about Kelly Mitchell. Let's talk and this document that I referenced last week on how to lobby the Progressive Conservative Party, which Mr. Mitchell was paid \$7,000 for writing. Let's talk about the section, “step 1—Make Peace with Frank Klees.”

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

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I know you're saying thank you. I will be happy in the supplementary to quote—

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

Mr. Frank Klees: First, I want to thank the House leader for pointing out that the only member that Ornge was intending to make peace with was with me, because I was getting under their skin for exposing their scandal. That's what that was about.

The fact of the matter is that this House leader continues to block our intention to get to the bottom of how the Premier, how the Minister of Finance, how the Minister of Health was lobbied and told, basically in no—there wasn't even an attempt to hide the fact that they were trying to massage the Ornge deal past the Minister of Health. That's what was testified to yesterday.

I'm going to give the House leader one more chance. Will the House leader, in front of everyone who is watching him, agree to stand up and say that the public accounts committee will be given all the time that it needs to get to the root of the problem of this Ornge—

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

Interjections.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, if the member insists upon having hearings here on the floor of the House, let me continue to quote from this document about how to lobby the PC Party. This is my favourite, Mr. Speaker; they will enjoy this:

“It will be important to tell the Ornge story—from beginning to present—during any meeting narrative—and to show how Ornge's business model and practices are entirely aligned with the Conservative platform....”

Kelly Mitchell, a prominent Conservative lobbyist, someone who raised tens of thousands of dollars for that party, was paid \$7,000 to write that. There are questions about Kelly Mitchell and his relationship with Lynne Golding, with Guy Giorno, with a whole cast of Conservative—

Interjections.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Nobody's buying that, John.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That'll do.

Interjection.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'll withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You may finish.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, 29 hours, 33 witnesses, and the committee will continue to meet. I think it's fascinating the information that has come forward about individuals like Kelly Mitchell and other prominent Conservatives and what they were doing with Ornge.

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

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, if there's anyone who's hiding anything, I don't think you would look at this side of the House.

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

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Health. For months now, Ontarians have watched as the Minister of Health, through her inaction and an absence of leadership, undermines the integrity of the province's air ambulance system. The Minister of Health has continually denied responsibility for the corruption and has refused to be held accountable for the serious risks to patient safety. The minister has done a severe disservice to the people of this province with their failed leadership and refusal to put the safety of patients above her own political ambitions.

Yesterday, the public accounts committee heard yet even more damning testimony from former Ornge executives. Yet again, we learned that several highly connected Liberal insiders lobbied the government on behalf of Ornge.

So I ask the minister, when will she come clean and admit to this House that Don Guy and Alfred Apps played significant roles in facilitating the corruption that occurred—

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I think all of us recognize the good work—certainly on this side of the House—that's being done by the public accounts committee. I think we should let that committee do its work.

But if the honourable members across the way insist upon engaging in some sort of kangaroo court here on the floor of the House with these drive-by smears, let me raise some other issues, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to know more about how it came to pass that Ornge established a satellite operation at the Oshawa Municipal Airport. Here's what we know from the committee: Last week, a former Ornge executive said that he opposed the move and that it was a very poor choice, for a host of the reasons. We also know, however, that the member for Whitby–Oshawa not only lobbied to get a base at the airport in her riding, but she posed for a very snazzy photo which appeared in a local publication.

So again, if they want to hold hearings on the floor of the House, perhaps they could stand and answer some of those questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Again to the minister: The minister must be embarrassed by that pathetic response. Surely the people of Ontario deserve better.

It is no longer fair to say "corruption" at Ornge. The corruption and ineptitude is now very much entrenched in the Liberal Party and this Liberal government. Liberal Party president Alf Apps and the Premier's former chief of staff and current campaign director, Don Guy, lobbied numerous government ministries and political staff to prevent accountability and mask serious legal and safety issues at Ornge.

Speaker, when will the minister apologize to the people of Ontario for her party and government's role in the biggest corruption scandal ever to hit Ontario?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Before I turn to the minister, I will offer a caution. The member is getting desperately close to being unparliamentary. I caution him—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. I don't need your coaching either. Order, please. This is serious stuff that I need to deal with, and I need to hear clearly.

I'm offering a caution. The member is desperately close to using unparliamentary language to the place. I caution him.

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, members of this Legislature know the strong action that was taken by the Minister of Health. We now have a new board at Ornge. We have a new CEO at Ornge. She called in the forensic auditors, and unfortunately, due to information that was uncovered, she had to call in the OPP, which is undertaking an investigation. The Auditor General has looked into the Ornge situation. We have hearings before the public accounts committee and we have a very important piece of legislation in front of this Legislature. The answer I want to know is why a piece of legislation that is based upon the Auditor General's findings is being held up by the actions of the members opposite.

If they want to continue with the drive-by smears and throw partisan barbs, tell us about Rick Potter and Guy Giorno and Lynne Golding and Kelly Mitchell, and the list goes on—some of the most prominent Conservatives in the province of Ontario, who are up to their eyeballs in the Ornge fiasco.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Minister, that's simply not good enough. You're a minister of the crown and you failed to act accordingly. Your behaviour on this matter is unbecoming of the office you hold. You and your government owe the people of this province an apology.

Your government has stonewalled every single attempt this Legislature has made to get to the bottom of

this scandal. I've said in the past weeks that this scandal was knocking at the Premier's door. Speaker, I was wrong. This scandal has let itself in, poured itself a drink and taken a seat at the Premier's desk. This isn't an Ornge scandal; this is a Liberal scandal.

I ask the minister: Who in your office and the Premier's office spoke with Alf Apps or Don Guy or the myriad of other Liberal insiders about the schemes to defraud Ontario's taxpayers?

Hon. John Milloy: On this side of the House, we are not going to disrespect the good work of the public accounts committee. The fact of the matter is, they have sat for 29 hours, they have heard from 33 witnesses and they continue to conduct hearings.

The real question is, when the Auditor General came forward with recommendations, those recommendations were put into a piece of legislation, Bill 50. Why does the opposition, through childish games, through bell-ringing—not through debate, but through a childish, juvenile approach—why are they blocking an important piece of legislation, the final piece of the puzzle addressing the problems that have been discovered at Ornge? That is the real question and that is where the opposition has to show some responsibility and allow Bill 50 to proceed.

1050

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre adjoint. Last month, the Premier told this House that he had had one meeting with Dr. Chris Mazza. He even told us the date: October 30, 2005. Testimony introduced yesterday at public accounts completely contradicts that statement.

Does the Acting Premier have anything to say about that?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I had an opportunity to review the testimony yesterday, as well as the Hansard, and I found the two to be entirely consistent. The Premier did indicate in his response in the House that in fact the one meeting that he did reference was the one that he had a clear recollection of, and then he also indicated there may have been other meetings because—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan:—literally with thousands of people every month. He was very clear, in my view, about that response.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: An email tabled yesterday at committee said that former Liberal Party president Alfred Apps—I think everybody is familiar with this name by now—referred to a meeting between the Premier and Dr. Mazza that took place on June 19, 2007. I will quote from Mr. Apps: It “went perfectly.”

Is the Acting Premier able to tell us, as we continue to dig into Ornge, how many more of those meetings will we find?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. John Milloy: The Deputy Premier has answered the question about the Premier's meeting. But again, if the members want to hold hearings on the floor of the House, then let's talk about the Oshawa airport and why, when senior Ornge executives were against it, did one of the prominent members of the Conservative Party oppose not only lobby for it, but get her picture taken so that she could go out and support Ornge and now, all of a sudden, seems to be forgetting that incident.

What about Kelly Mitchell and his very, very close ties to the Conservative Party and the fact that he was paid \$7,000 to put together a strategy document—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Hon. John Milloy:—go to Conservatives to talk about how Ornge fit nicely—as I said, to show how Ornge's business model and practices are entirely aligned with the Conservative platform.

Again, if they want to hold hearings on the floor of the House, I think there is a myriad of questions about the ties between the Conservative Party and so many people involved with Ornge.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, Mr. Apps also referred to plans for further meetings with the Premier over dinner, yet another contradiction to the Premier's claim. I think, frankly, that this government has some explaining to do. The Premier said that he met Dr. Mazza once, but evidence keeps emerging that well-connected Liberal insiders arranged more than one meeting.

When is our Premier going to come out of hiding and clear this up?

Hon. John Milloy: The Deputy Premier has responded to the issue of the Premier meeting these individuals, and the Premier himself, on April 25 in this House, spoke to this. He has indicated that he may have attended an event where Dr. Mazza was present, but I think we all recognize that the Premier of this province meets thousands of people at events.

The bigger question is, how do we move forward to improve the governance of Ornge? The Minister of Health has taken some very strong steps but there's one piece of the puzzle missing, and that is incorporating the recommendations of the Auditor General into a piece of legislation, Bill 50.

I ask my friend in the New Democratic Party, will she join with the Liberal government to make sure that we can stop the childish bell-ringing of the official opposition and make sure this very important piece of legislation moves forward? If she really believes in making improvements at Ornge, she would join us in those efforts.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, Mr. Jacob Blum, a former executive at Ornge, provided his diary to the Standing Committee

on Public Accounts. His notes indicated, from December 10, 2007, that Don Guy, the former chief of staff to the Premier and the Liberal campaign director, had meetings with the Ministry of Finance and would set up more meetings with finance and the AG.

As you know, lobbying consists of meeting public officials and arranging meetings with public office holders. Is the Acting Premier ready to say that Mr. Guy did not arrange or attend meetings with public officials or office holders regarding Ornge?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I think we need to correct the record, again, if they want to hold hearings here on the floor of the House. There was a partial diary that came forward from Mr. Jacob Blum. He was there at committee. I think it's important, when he speaks about Jacob Blum, that he should also talk about his sterling Progressive Conservative ties. In fact, members may want to know that Mr. Blum was the PC campaign manager in Toronto Centre. He joins a growing list—from Rick Potter, Guy Giorno, Lynne Golding, Kelly Mitchell—of members of the Progressive Conservative Party with ties to—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Are you calling him a liar?

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

Carry on.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, Mr. Speaker, I think we should allow the committee to do its work. They have now heard from 33 witnesses, including a number of individuals that he asked about in his question. They've asked for information coming forward. Let's let the committee do its work, but let's look forward to Bill 50.

Again, I ask the New Democratic Party, will you join with the government in trying to defeat this childish bell-ringing that we hear from the Progressive Conservatives?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, through you again to the Acting Premier: Mr. Blum's diary goes on to say that Don Guy will ensure that Ornge gets a fair hearing and that he was confident that he can manage the outcomes. Is that a service that Mr. Guy regularly performs for this Liberal government? If so, isn't that lobbying?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, again, I don't favour holding hearings in question period through some sort of kangaroo court, but if the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton wants that, then perhaps he can explain to this House why he opposed a motion in front of the committee to ask Mr. Blum, this prominent Conservative, to produce his full diary. Why did he oppose such a motion so that we could have seen all the facts, going forward, about Mr. Blum and his ties to Ornge, as well as, as I say, his ties to the Conservative Party opposite?

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Again, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Premier.

Here's what people really see. Liberal insiders with close connections to the Premier and to the cabinet—including Don Guy, a man who some would say got them their jobs—were paid hundreds of thousands of dollars and claim that they never raised Ornge with the Premier and never arranged any meetings with the government. Evidence submitted yesterday contradicts this claim completely.

Who does the Acting Premier think the people of Ontario will believe? Isn't it clear at this point that we need more time to get to the truth, to find out what really happened with Ornge?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Cambridge, come to order and be in your own seat.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I got a sense you might not have heard me. The member from Cambridge will come to order, and he's not in his own seat.

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, again, if the honourable member wants to get to the truth, maybe he should stop defending the Progressive Conservative campaign manager in the riding of Toronto Centre.

The fact of the matter is, he asked what the people of Ontario want. You know what? The people of Ontario want to make sure that we have strengthened oversight of Ornge. I want to congratulate the Minister of Health, who has taken some very, very important steps to change the structure and the governance of Ornge, with one exception; there's one exception left, and that is responding to the Auditor General's report through a very important piece of legislation in this Legislature.

I ask all the opposition parties: Why are they blocking that legislation? Why are they blocking the good work of a highly respected officer of this Legislature, the Auditor General?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe-Grey has a problem; he sits right beside me. So I would ask him to refrain.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I don't either.

New question.

1100

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, yesterday I raised a question regarding the protection of the personal and private information of Ontarians now that this information is being stored in the United States. You stated, "We have built ... tough protections into the company's contract. They cannot disclose any information without prior approval from us."

It sounds good, but Minister, were you aware that under the terms of the United States Patriot Act, the United States government has the right to access information on

Canadians if it is stored in the US or accessible electronically? The Patriot Act supersedes any private contracts. Minister, do you still maintain that the personal information of Ontarians is well protected?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I do appreciate the question, and I appreciate the opportunity to respond. We take privacy very, very seriously. I want to be able to say very clearly that the company awarded the contract is contractually obligated to follow Ontario's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act as part of its agreement with us. The company cannot directly or indirectly use, collect or disclose any personal information for any purposes not authorized by our ministry. They must keep these records secure. They must prevent any loss, misuse, unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration and destruction. The fact is, we are very, very clear in terms of those protections, and we have every confidence that the privacy of Ontarians is secure.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question was about United States laws, not the company's. According to your own ministry, 730,000 licences have been processed by Active Outdoors in Tennessee; 730,000 Ontarians have now had their personal information shipped to the United States, and it can be accessed by the US government.

In light of the provisions of the United States' Patriot Act, do you now agree that your ministry may be responsible for a serious and major breach of privacy protection for Ontario citizens?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, we are very, very confident that the privacy of Ontarians is secure based upon the contractual agreement we came to with the company that was awarded the contract. I'll repeat what I said. The obligations are very clear. They agreed to it. They signed off on it. They need to keep the records secure. They need to prevent any loss, any misuse, any unauthorized access, any disclosure, alteration or destruction of the records themselves. They cannot directly or indirectly use, collect or disclose any personal information—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member has reached the point where he is now warned—the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Finish, please.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, may I say to all the members of the Legislature, we are very confident that the privacy of Ontarians who are using that system is indeed secure. That is something that's an absolute priority for us. It will follow the freedom of information, privacy and protection act.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Yesterday the United Nations special rapporteur on food security raised concerns about hunger and food bank use in Canada. He called Canada's social protection system "broken" and

urged governments to make sure "the poorest families are not obliged to sacrifice food in order to pay for ... housing." Can the minister, under these circumstances, explain to struggling families why his government is cutting the community start-up and maintenance benefit, which helps people on social assistance faced with emergency moving or repair costs?

Hon. John Milloy: As I've said before in this House, I don't think any member or any party has a monopoly on concern for those who are marginalized in the province of Ontario. We recognize the fact that we need a major transformation of our social assistance system, which is why we have taken a number of very important steps, including the appointment of Frances Lankin, a highly respected former member of this Legislature and a former minister, and Munir Sheikh, to take a look at the social assistance system.

On the housing system, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of the work that my ministry has been doing in the Ministry of Housing in terms of bundling together and transferring a number of programs aimed at homelessness and preventing homelessness and giving municipalities the flexibility they need so that they can provide support where it's needed. As part of that, we are taking a portion of the CSUMB program and adding it to that program where it makes sense and gives the flexibility that's needed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I can't believe that the minister is proud of cutting funds to people on social assistance. That's sad; it's shameful. He should be ashamed, not proud.

Thousands of families on social assistance are losing—and this is how much they're losing—up to \$1,500 in emergency support every two years. This money helps people who face unforeseen events—like bed bug infestations, hospitalization, even those escaping domestic violence—that force them to move or pay for repairs.

People from London to Sudbury to Sault Ste. Marie are emailing us, protesting this unnecessary and harsh cut. They want to know: How does taking hundreds of dollars away from families who can barely afford a roof over their heads or food on the table constitute a step forward?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, we are undertaking one of the most significant reviews of social assistance that has been done in decades.

I think I've noted here, Mr. Speaker, during the last election being asked to go to a round table on poverty with other candidates. I looked through the New Democratic Party platform four times until I could find the three sentences at the bottom of their platform that talked about—guess what?—the review of social assistance that we're taking and the fact that they're looking forward to it.

Our government's record when it comes to supporting the most vulnerable—through work that we've done in terms of the Ontario child benefit; in terms of the student nutrition program, which supports over 600,000 children;

through the hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars that we've put into supportive housing; through the new, innovative long-term housing strategy we're putting forward—I am proud of our record and I am proud of the work that we'll be doing as the commission reports in the next month or two.

GREENBELT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a question today for the Minister of the Environment. We saw a new study that was released on Wednesday. It's showing that jobs are just flourishing across the greenbelt. The resource-rich region of Ontario is more than just green space and vibrant countryside; it's also a major and considerable contributor to the job market in this province. The greenbelt has got over 1.8 million acres of green space, it's got farmland, vibrant communities, forests, wetlands, watersheds, and they are all permanently protected now under this world-leading legislation.

But, Speaker, what I want to know through you: I'm wondering if the minister could please speak to the details of the report that was released on Wednesday, which was prepared by the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm pleased to share that with the House. I want to first of all take the opportunity to convey our appreciation to the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation for the very important work they do of promoting greenbelt-grown food, helping greenbelt farmers implement environmental farm plans and publicizing recreation opportunities on the greenbelt.

The greenbelt has been globally recognized as a successful land use planning model, and now I'm pleased to say we can add successful economic model to the list of greenbelt accomplishments. The study was released yesterday, and it found the total economic impact of greenbelt-associated activity exceeds \$9.1 billion annually province-wide, and \$1.5 billion of that economic activity takes place in Niagara. Some 161,000 full-time equivalent jobs in sectors such as agriculture and tourism are dependent on the greenbelt.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the minister for that response.

The same study goes on to show that the greenbelt, with its 1.8 million acres of protected farmland and green space, is not only the greater Golden Horseshoe's bread basket, but it also proves to be a key economic driver. The report identifies that farmland is one of the leading land use classifications within that greenbelt. More than half the greenbelt is used for agriculture, and we find out now we've got over 7,000 farms, primarily because of ideal farming conditions, that can be found on the greenbelt itself.

Speaker, again through you: Would the minister please speak to the role that agriculture plays in the economic success of the greenbelt here in Ontario?

Hon. James J. Bradley: The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm very proud to applaud the continued vitality and growth of greenbelt farms, businesses and communities important to the Ontario economy. Many greenbelt-grown foods are available in grocery stores, farmers' markets and restaurants. The greenbelt is indeed providing a source of fresh local food to Ontario consumers, which research tells us Ontarians prefer and tend to purchase over other products.

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Our government is very proud of the strong work of greenbelt farmers, municipalities, food processors and businesses. I'm going to join the Minister of the Environment in thanking the greenbelt foundation for this study, which showcases the economic contributions to the provincial economy—\$9.1 billion—by ordinary, everyday farmers.

HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Minister, I'm sure you've seen the video by two students from Brampton. In that video, Brian Baah and Samuel Battista, who are present in the gallery today, offer a very important message. These two young adults provide an informative yet funny presentation on how their freedom of choice has been violated by this Liberal government. Brian and Samuel are two of the students you have denied precisely the food options which are available to you and your Liberal colleagues every day, right here in the Legislature.

Minister, why are you denying students—who in some cases are old enough to vote and join the armed forces to fight and die for this great country—the freedom to buy the same foods you can buy?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Children in Ontario deserve the best start in life. Childhood obesity is reaching epidemic proportions, not only here in Ontario but in Canada and around the Western world. We are convinced that the policy of healthy foods in our schools is good for kids.

Interjection: Nutritional guidelines.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We follow nutritional guidelines, my colleague reminds me. So, Mr. Speaker, we don't agree with your guests who are here in the House. We don't agree with you. We're not going to change the policy. We choose, in fact, to make sure our children have healthy choices, and those healthy choices include apples that are grown on Ontario farms. They include all kinds of healthy choices, part of Foodland Ontario.

Instead of protecting cheeseburgers, protect Ontario farms. Sell apples and other fruits that are grown right here in Ontario—

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

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Minister, the cafeteria in the Catholic high school in Trenton has closed due to the lack of sales since your new policy was implemented. The TDSB has suggested they have already lost \$700,000 in cafeteria revenue, money that went towards school

trips, sports equipment, and arts and music programs. The Toronto Catholic board has said they are considering closing their cafeterias—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm hearing shouting back and forth while the question is being asked.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like the Attorney General to listen. I'm hearing shouting back and forth, even when the question is being asked. Thank you.

Finish your question, please.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: [*Inaudible*] closing their cafeterias. The Premier has indicated he doesn't care. So your so-called food choice program eliminates students' ability to make conscious and independent choices for themselves.

The Ontario PC Party believes in empowering students and educating them on healthy choices, not dictating to them what they can and cannot eat. Minister, before more cafeteria workers are fired, before more students are forced off school grounds to eat lunch, will you do the—

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think this is the new Tory white paper, Pathways to Obesity.

Mr. Speaker, we completely disagree with you. To those creative young people here, we don't agree with them. You may be the party of cheeseburgers; we're the party of healthy kids and healthy lifestyles.

I hope those young people will turn their creative juices to extolling the virtues of Ontario-grown fruits and vegetables. I hope they will turn their creative juices to produce a video on the benefits of milk that's produced right here in Ontario. I hope they will make a YouTube video that urges people to eat chicken that is produced right here in Ontario.

The party of cheeseburgers and whitewash, we have to—

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

Interjections.

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

I did hear a few comments that were very dangerously close to unparliamentary, and I couldn't identify the individuals. So I would recommend very carefully of the type of language that gets said in this place.

Having said that, it's now time for the next question.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for—

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Kenora–Rainy River.

Interjection: Kenora–Rainy River.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let's all do that together: Kenora–Rainy River.

Interjections: Kenora–Rainy River.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. About a

month ago, I asked the Minister of Natural Resources why he decided to take jobs out of Ontario and outsource them to Tennessee. The answer to that question was not satisfactory.

Since that time, people across the province have raised serious concerns relating to the privacy of information that is collected and stored in the United States and subject to their privacy laws. This morning, I shared those concerns with the privacy commissioner and have urged an investigation.

Why are Ontarians losing out on jobs because services are being sold off to companies in other countries, all while putting our privacy at risk?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Again, I appreciate the opportunity to clarify the situation. The fact is that the contract was awarded in a fair and competitive procurement process to a company in Tennessee to help us automate a system to provide licences to anglers and hunters in a more efficient and faster way and a way, that allows them to access it from their home, from ServiceOntario centres, from a number of issuers.

In terms of the privacy issue, again, I want to provide real assurance that the company that was awarded the contract is contractually obligated to follow Ontario's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. They cannot in any way, directly or indirectly, use, collect or disclose any personal information. The fact is, if indeed the privacy commissioner chooses to investigate this or look into this, we will welcome, obviously, the comments of the privacy commissioner, but we feel very confident that the privacy of Ontarians is secure.

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

Ms. Sarah Campbell: There's close to 600,000 people out of work in this province, and now more jobs that could very well be performed by people in this province as a public service have been outsourced to the United States for profit. Ontarians have to call a number in Tennessee to get their Outdoors Card, fishing licence, and to report their wild turkey hunt. Even the moose tag draw happens in Tennessee.

Given the fact that we've had many complaints about the moose tag draw, Minister, do you think the fact that this draw happens in Tennessee will increase their confidence?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: The fact is that the Outdoors Card centre is still in Peterborough. Our Ministry of Natural Resources people are still in charge of that process. They're still doing that. The company in Tennessee that was awarded that contract is working, in terms of the vendors and the machines, to help make the licensing process run in a more efficient fashion. There are by no means significant jobs attached to that. We are still very much in control of the Outdoors centre and our MNR offices in Peterborough.

The fact is that, indeed, we've got 730,000 licences that have been issued. We are very, very pleased about the fact that, now, a system is in place that is going to be easier and more efficient for people to access and get

their cards. Indeed, I do not think those concerns are warranted.

PAN AM GAMES

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: My question today is for the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games.

Minister, during the next three years, the games will be one of the largest economic drivers in the Golden Horseshoe. The games will create thousands of jobs, and the long-term community benefit will be felt across Ontario and in my wonderful riding of Pickering–Scarborough East, the host of the state-of-the-art aquatics facility at the University of Toronto Scarborough campus. This will be a legacy long-term training facility; it's not a two-week event.

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My constituents have asked about the Pan Am budget. They want to know how much the games will cost and how the plans are progressing. Minister, what's the status of the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games budget?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you to the member for Pickering–Scarborough East for her question. She is correct: Many were anxious for this update, and none more so than me.

Ontario is proud to be hosting the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games, and we look forward to welcoming athletes and officials from over 41 countries to Toronto and Ontario. The games will create, indeed, 15,000 jobs and showcase Ontario as a great place to visit, invest and do business. As the member correctly mentioned, it will be one of the largest economic drivers in the region over the next three years.

Together with Toronto 2015, we recently released the updated Pan Am and Parapan American Games budget. The overall budget remains unchanged at \$1.449 billion, and the government of Ontario's commitment remains at \$500 million. The federal government is also committing \$500 million.

I'm very pleased that the games are moving ahead well and they are on track.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: I know my constituents of Pickering–Scarborough East are very excited about the opportunity to host the games set to be played at the U of T Scarborough campus.

While we're all looking forward to watching the games and cheering everyone on, we know that organizing the games is an enormous undertaking. Knowing this, it's especially important we do everything possible to manage the costs.

Minister, what steps are being taken to deliver the games on budget and manage any risk? How will Ontarians be kept up to date as the planning process proceeds?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you again to the member.

We recognize the importance of budget oversight, and I take that responsibility very seriously. As of March 31, 2012, 3.7% of the total 2015 Pan Am Parapan American Games budget has been spent. The majority of the budget

will be spent in 2014 and 2015, and the organizing committee is taking extra steps to contain those costs by reducing the footprint of the games through venue clustering.

We're also pleased that there's an \$82-million contingency reserve in the operating budget. We're implementing strict financial reporting and risk management processes. Moreover, 2015 has committed to providing ongoing public status reports, including budget updates, beginning this fall.

I'm pleased to say that the budget has been reviewed and confirmed by independent third party auditors and financial experts.

The people's games, Mr. Speaker, will be an enormous social and economic benefit for the whole province.

RED TAPE REDUCTION

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, you know the challenges that businesses face in Ontario today: a \$16-billion deficit, soaring energy costs, and a red tape burden that takes \$11 billion out of our economy each year.

This afternoon, you and your party will have the opportunity to support my private members' bill that takes real, legislated action to tackle the red tape burden in Ontario. It's my belief that we can face this challenge together and head on and help clear the way for job creators to not just survive, but thrive.

I'm asking you, Deputy Premier: Will you support this important bill, Bill 62, the Legislative Oversight of Regulations Act?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Members on this side of the House, in private members' hour, all vote the way they see fit. I applaud the member for his initiative, and I look forward to hearing the debate this afternoon to see where that goes.

But I want to know why the member won't allow the southwest economic development fund to get approval. When I think of Chatham and Blenheim and Leamington, which are all in that member's riding—instead of standing up for Chatham, instead of standing up for Blenheim, instead of standing up for the good people of Chatham–Kent–Essex, he stands back. That region has gone through a number of challenges related to the economy. We've worked to bring investments. We've created the new southwest fund. I hope the member opposite will stop ringing the bells and start speaking for his constituents, many of whom I've heard from, who want this fund passed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Deputy Premier. I still remain optimistic that we can address this challenge, but your response does disappoint our small business owners. One such employer tells me that he spends hours filling out redundant paperwork for trucks at his building shop in London with information the government already has.

It's 2012. Unemployment is still above the national average. CFIB says that we're still seeing billions drained from our economy through hundreds of thousands of regulations and red tape. And now we have to factor in credit rating downgrades from Moody's and Standard and Poor's.

So, Deputy Premier, I ask you again, will you encourage your members to stand up and support legislative action against this crippling red tape that holds back Ontario businesses?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I would like to remind the member opposite about our Open for Business initiative, which the Canadian Federation of Independent Business gave us a B minus on. They welcomed it.

Here's what it did: It reduced the red tape and regulatory burden by 17% and eliminated 80,000 regulatory burdens. That B minus was a higher grade than the previous Conservative government got in their initiatives.

We also harmonized the sales tax and had the largest regulatory reduction in the history of the province. That party voted against it, Mr. Speaker. Their federal colleagues had the good sense to support it, both with cash and with moral support.

So to the member opposite, I hope you will vote for the southwest Ontario economic development fund so that we can work with the greenhouse growers in southern Ontario, we can work with the automotive manufacturers and automotive parts suppliers that are laced between Windsor and London, and many who are in Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Our plan is working. It's the right plan. I urge the member—

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

ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. CLUAH was intended to serve as MNR's poster child for turning large tracts of land in northern Ontario into a model for tourism development, but citizens' committees tasked with providing input in the limited instances of consultation weigh heavily on the side of special-interest groups, and the public cannot participate. As a result, people in Wawa, Gogama, Massey, Hornepayne and Dubreuilville, to name a few, have seen public access to lands severely restricted in areas that have been available to them for generations.

Minister, when will this government respect and recognize the rights of citizens of Ontario and ensure fair access to our natural resources?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I very much appreciate the question from my colleague. The fact is, Ontarians have tremendous access to crown land. The vast majority of crown land has no restrictions at all. We are really fortunate, I think, to have a free land use policy where people can enjoy all kinds of activities in terms of our crown land.

But in the interests of Ontarians' safety, not all crown access roads can always remain open. I think the member knows that. When forestry access roads, for example, are built and companies are no longer accessing them, it's difficult to maintain them and keep them safe for travel. I think the member, again, will understand that. Crown roads are then only closed to vehicles and remain open to Ontarians who want to enjoy outside activities.

Certainly we are always open to more discussions about this, but the fact is, we are very lucky to have a free land use policy in the province of Ontario and—

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: Minister, I need to remind you that the long weekend is upon us, hunting season is around the corner, and constituents in my riding are looking for answers—also in northern Ontario.

MNR is preventing public access on roads bordering crown lands simply because a remote tourism operator has a lot on a huge lake. The Public Lands Act, section 3, outlines that 25% or more of crown land that borders a lake must be reserved for public use. By ignoring its obligation to the people of Ontario, MNR has created a two-tier system of access to our shared resources.

What right does MNR have to violate the law and to restrict the access of traditional users to those lands but allow access to only the privileged few?

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Hon. Michael Gravelle: Again, I do appreciate the question. I want to say, again, that Ontarians have extraordinary access to crown land, and the vast majority of crown land has no restrictions at all. There are some cases, I will obviously acknowledge, where access to crown land is restricted, to help create and build strong local economies by supporting Ontario's remote tourism industry, and that's about us always trying to find a balance. Even at that stage, crown lands are only really closed to vehicles and remain open to Ontarians to enjoy outside activities in these remote areas and to get there.

I'm certainly very happy to have a further conversation with the member about this, but I think he'd be very, very pleased with the open access to Ontario's crown lands that all Ontarians enjoy.

VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the Attorney General. It's important to bring to light the extraordinary challenges that everyday Ontarians face after being victims of crime, and the Attorney General spoke last month of the importance of victim of crime awareness.

Many of us in this House know someone who has been a victim of crime, some more serious than others. For many, it is often a long and difficult road back to recovery. As the member for York-South Weston, I am aware that victims of crime rely on friends and family for support during these difficult times, although sometimes

the support of loved ones is not enough and can often put strain on even the strongest of bonds.

Acknowledging these challenges is an important demonstration to those who have been victimized by crime, and the government has a responsibility to help on the road back to recovery. What measures are we putting in place as a government?

Hon. John Gerretsen: National Victims of Crime Awareness Week is a very important part of our whole criminal justice system, and the services that are provided for victims of crime are certainly light years ahead of where they used to be 20 or 30 years ago.

The work that our ministry and government does for victims of crime includes delivering innovative support programs and making it easier for victims and families to seek the justice they deserve. I'll just give you a couple of examples.

Victim crisis assistance and referral services work closely with local police. VCARS staff and volunteers help victims and provide much-needed support. Last year, you may be interested in knowing, 71,000 individuals—our neighbours, friends and loved ones—were helped by VCARS. More recently, we launched the Family Court support worker program, which helps victims of domestic violence who are involved in the family law process.

As well, the Office for Victims of Crime released a handbook, which is very useful as well in that regard.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Mr. Speaker, my next question is again for the Attorney General. The needs of victims of crime need to be addressed in a fulsome manner. I'm proud to live in a province and to be part of a government that shows compassion, courtesy and respect for all crime victims.

But a prevalent reality for victims is not to proactively seek the community supports that are available to them. In most cases, especially at the outset, victims or loved ones of victims are too distraught to effectively learn about victim programs that can help them. In other cases, some are initially in denial of the potential impacts of being a victim and don't bother to seek help. Having a good victim support system is one thing, but if victims aren't using it, what is the use of having it? How are we creating an appropriate and effective link?

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

Hon. John Gerretsen: I know that the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services is looking forward to answering this question.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you for this very important question. It's absolutely necessary that we help victims get back on their feet in the aftermath of a crime. That's why my ministry has recently worked with police and victim service providers to strengthen the police guideline for victim assistance.

We have streamlined the process to ensure victims are connected quickly to the support services available in their communities. Now, not only are police officers

providing victim services information to victims; they are also providing victim-related information on a timely basis to the appropriate community agency unless the victim especially declines this assistance.

Today I want to thank the AG for releasing this handbook, *Living Beyond the Murder of a Loved One: Information for Families and Others Affected by Homicide*.

MINISTRY GRANTS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I want to read a quote from a local newspaper, attributed to the mayor of the municipality of Bluewater upon receiving \$7.5 million: "I still wake up at night, wondering if this is going to happen," he said." The March 22 article goes on to say that, "Unlike most funding, the municipality didn't apply through a grant application but was approached by the province."

Minister, is this standard practice?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: We're very proud of our rural economic development program and the funds that we've been able to provide to municipalities. My understanding is that this project will support economic development in the Bluewater area, and that's good. If the member opposite is anxious to not see that money extended to that municipality, perhaps she could get the council to say that they don't want it, but I doubt very much that's going to happen.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you. Minister, four years ago, right before an election, the Minister of Citizenship was caught shovelling money out the door, like the million-dollar cricket club grant, without bothering with things like applications or accountability.

The reckless use of taxpayers' money doesn't stop there. The previous Minister of Agriculture signed the formal agreement with the municipality of Bluewater and you amended it less than two months later to rush the cash out the door, and took reporting and accountability measures out of the agreement. Minister, something isn't right. The ministry never announced this money and reportedly had the municipality sign a confidentiality agreement. Will you ask the auditor to look into this, or, if you have details of the grant, share them with the people in the Legislature?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm a little confused. This is the party opposite that wanted to stop the uploading to the province. This is the party opposite that, in the election campaign, wouldn't stand in their place and make a commitment to municipalities like Bluewater. Our government is proud of the strategic investments that we've made in the municipality of Bluewater in support of the economic development in that region.

This area has faced significant barriers. I'll tell you, notwithstanding the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All of you, come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: —mischievousness of the question, they were very, very pleased to get the money.

VISITOR

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

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just quickly like to introduce my daughter, Destinee, to the House today. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We absolutely know that that's not a point of order, but we do absolutely welcome your daughter for being here.

Don't go away with any bad impressions.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would want to use that moment to also say to this House at this time that this is the last day for our pages. As I have always done, and I even heckled that we should make them stay, they have to be on, so I think we should show our appreciation for the wonderful work that they've done. To all our pages: Thank you.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have to make a quick editorial. I was told that this is the brightest group that we've ever had here during this time period.

Mr. John Yakubuski: I can add that they have great taste in vocals and music.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There is no deferred vote. This House stands recessed till 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome some people from my area. Chris Braney is the CEO for the Durham Alzheimer Society. Chris is in the members' gallery, along with Janelle Bush, who is from my home riding but is working in Durham for the summer. Also, we have Laura Hare, who is the executive director of the Belleville-Hastings Alzheimer Society and my old golf partner; and Linda Jackson is the executive director of the Prince Edward County Alzheimer Society. We have Sharon Osvold, as well, who is an Alzheimer's caregiver. Welcome to the Legislature. It's great to have you here.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: It's my great honour to welcome to the Legislature a number of guests who are on hand today to lend their voices for the support of Bill 81, Inherited Heart Rhythm Disorders Awareness Act, 2012. We have Blake Hurst, founder of Parents Advocating for Cardiac Education; Mary Lewis, vice-president of research, advocacy and health promotion, Ontario, for the Heart and Stroke Foundation; Dr. Joel A. Kirsh,

pediatric cardiologist for the Hospital for Sick Children; and Alan and Debbie Corrance. Welcome to Queen's Park, and thank you so much for being here.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to introduce Connor Maitland, who is here. He's the brother of page Carley Maitland. Actually, Connor was a page here six years ago. Welcome, Connor.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All in the family.

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, there is—and I'm embarrassed to say this, because I've lost my note. The parents and friends of lesbians and gays are here today, having a reception this afternoon. I don't have the note with me with the time and the room.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's 4:30, room 230.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's 4:30, room 230. I want to thank my friend from Parkdale–High Park. It would be very wonderful if a number of us would show up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That heckling, I'll accept.

Further introductions? Members' statements. Oh, is that an introduction—

Mr. David Zimmer: Yes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Willowdale for an introduction.

Mr. David Zimmer: Thank you, Speaker. I was just a little slow on my feet there.

I would like to introduce some members of the Ontario Museum Association. They are Marie Lalonde, who is the executive director; and Yves Théoret, who is the vice-president, the managing director, and he has special responsibilities for the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome our guests.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PFLAG CANADA

Mrs. Jane McKenna: It is my honour to rise today in the House, on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, to recognize PFLAG Canada, Canada's only national organization that helps all Canadians who are struggling with issues of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Irene Miller, president of Toronto PFLAG, is here at Queen's Park today, along with Helen Kennedy, executive director of Egale Canada, to recognize and stand in support of International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

PFLAG Canada offers support for LBGTT individuals and also for parents when sons and daughters come out. PFLAG Canada educates and provides resources to parents, families, friends and colleagues with questions or concerns 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

All people, whatever their path in life, have a right to equal treatment without discrimination because of gender

identity or gender. When it comes down to it, reaching the full potential of who you are as an individual is really about fully experiencing the authentic you. It's about being secure in yourself and living your story. On this journey, PFLAG offers valuable support. The organization is there to help all those who are navigating these issues in a world that doesn't always make room for diversity.

REMIX PROJECT

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I would like to acknowledge the phenomenal work an organization in my riding is doing for at-risk youth in communities across Toronto.

The Remix Project, which has offices in Liberty Village, is empowering young people from some of Toronto's most impoverished areas through the arts. By providing training and partnering with groups such as Music Canada, the Remix Project gives at-risk youth an entry point into a myriad of creative fields, including graphic design, illustration, fashion design, videography, photography, writing, music recording and film.

Organizations like the Remix Project remind us that our most impoverished communities are not a liability but an incredible reservoir of untapped potential. The artists who graduate from this organization are proof that investing in our less-privileged young people not only yields a great return on investment but also trains young professionals who can share their skills with other members of their communities.

It was a great honour to tour the Remix Project and meet the members of this organization, many of them graduates of their own program, but it is an even bigger honour to know that they are changing the lives of so many people by doing their work in my riding.

UNITED BAKERS DAIRY RESTAURANT

Mr. Mike Colle: This month, an incredible, iconic landmark in Toronto and in my riding, the United Bakers restaurant, is celebrating 100 years. UB, as it's called, used to be on Dundas, then it moved to Spadina, and now it's in my riding at Bathurst and Lawrence.

It is really the heart and soul of the Jewish community in Toronto. If you haven't been there, you're not Jewish. You have to go there. You meet everybody: judges, mayors, schleppers. You meet Toronto's Toronto people.

They have incredible pea soup—the best in all of the globe—bagels, the scrambled eggs, the coffee, the blintzes.

It is a true meeting place where people will argue, yell at each other, hug each other—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just like this place.

Mr. Mike Colle: But the food is much better there at the United Bakers Dairy Restaurant.

It is owned by the Ladovsky family that came from Poland in 1912. They put their heart and soul—in fact, they were part of the union movement. They organized

the confectionary workers on Spadina back in the old days.

Anyway, if you want to really say you've visited Toronto, you have to go to the United Bakers Dairy Restaurant. You're always welcome, but make sure you're not on a diet. Go there any time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm very hungry. Thank you.

Member from Sarnia–Lambton.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Mr. Robert Bailey: I as well, Speaker.

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is taking a dangerous risk with the safety of corrections officers and inmates at the Sarnia Jail. The ministry is overcrowding the Sarnia Jail and is now operating this facility at 145% capacity. Inmates are being stuffed three to a cell and forced to sleep on the floor in day areas outside of regular cells. At the same time, the ministry has left the jail critically understaffed and important security roles are being left unfilled.

In the event of an emergency, this understaffing jeopardizes both the safety of staff on duty and the safety of the inmates themselves. The local jail guards' union has written to the minister's office, saying, "We are in serious trouble here. Hopefully no one gets killed or injured because of the lack of staff."

The inevitable outcome of overcrowding in the Sarnia Jail will be a tragedy. At larger facilities like London's Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, where violence is rampant, overcrowding has been cited in numerous lawsuits, two coroners' inquests and a homicide investigation.

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services must act now to address the dangerous conditions they've created at the Sarnia Jail before there is an incident leading to serious injury or loss of life.

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

Mr. Michael Mantha: Today I would like to highlight the important work of the Royal Canadian Legions. Across my riding, this province and this country, Legions are working hard at making our communities a better place. As one of Canada's largest community-based service organizations, who have contributed millions of dollars in volunteer hours, I want to thank them for all that they do.

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I have had the opportunity to attend many events this year sponsored by the Legions. I recently attended their public speaking competition. Important initiatives like this are key in the development of self-confidence in our youth.

I am looking forward to this week, when my wife and I will become associate members of Legion Branch 561—and I encourage you all to do so in your communities.

I am proud to say that family members of mine have served in the Canadian military and served in World War II.

I also want to send my thoughts and prayers to Comrade Manuel from Legion Branch 561 and his family. Comrade Manuel is undergoing triple bypass surgery today and is presently in intensive care. His fellow legionnaires, friends and I wish for a speedy recovery.

Thank you to all the men and women in the Royal Canadian Legion for your hard work and dedication in making our society a better place.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm pleased to share that now more children will have access to mental health services in Peel region.

Last week, the Minister of Children and Youth Services joined me at Associated Youth Services of Peel to announce funding that will help create a more coordinated and responsive mental health care system in Peel region.

In a May 9 editorial, the Toronto Star wrote, "Without proper health services and community support, childhood mental illness can stress families to the breaking point. Children drop out of school, wind up in homeless shelters or, worse still, the prison system." I agree.

The federal government should implement the recommendations of the Mental Health Commission of Canada without delay.

The Peel region can do even better as our government is now funding to the Peel region proportional to its population.

I commend Associated Youth Services of Peel for their hard work and dedication.

WASTE DIVERSION

Mr. Michael Harris: Recently, the Minister of the Environment chose to make businesses pay for the Liberal government's failure to properly manage waste diversion in Ontario.

Last year, the Liberal government idly stood by, allowing Stewardship Ontario to rack up massive deficits in eight of the nine phase 1 hazardous waste categories it manages.

Now, the Minister of the Environment is forcing businesses to clean up the Liberal government's financial mess by charging additional fees for his deficit recovery plan. With no regard for accountability, the minister rushed these changes through the back door and is now hiding behind a complex layer of bureaucracy involving Stewardship Ontario and Waste Diversion Ontario. As a result, companies like Monarch Oil in Kitchener-Waterloo have received bills from Stewardship Ontario with recycling fee increases reaching as much as 120%.

Businesses must do their part to help promote recycling, yes, but they should not have to finance multi-

million dollar deficits which are the result of bad policy decisions by this government.

Clearly, Ontario's waste diversion apparatus is broken. When businesses are just handed a bill by a government-assisted monopoly with little to no explanation, something has got to change.

We've all seen what happens when governments and the agencies they are responsible for operate under a shroud of secrecy. You end up with Ornge.

It's time that the Liberal government recognizes that the only way to move waste diversion forward in Ontario is to establish proper oversight of the recycling program.

MUSEUMS

Mr. David Zimmer: I rise today on behalf of the Ontario Museum Association to recognize Museum Month and International Museum Day on May 18—that's tomorrow. It's a time when museums around the world and in Ontario celebrate their important role in building vibrant, livable communities where authentic learning experiences are enjoyed by all visitors.

During the summer season and throughout the year, Ontario's 600 museums, art galleries and historic sites will welcome about 19 million visitors, providing a real exploration of Ontario's heritage.

Ontario's museums act as catalysts for tourism and innovation in our province. This year is especially important because of the War of 1812 commemoration activities.

Across Ontario, the museum sector employs 8,000 professionals and 16,000 volunteers who create these outstanding programs and visitor experiences.

On International Museum Day on May 18, I encourage everyone in Ontario in every city and town to visit a museum in Ontario of your choice; in fact, visit several.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Ted Arnott: On behalf of the people of Wellington-Halton Hills, I want to thank the Minister of Transportation for his decision to cancel alternative 4-3 of the GTA West Corridor study. Sometimes the wheels of government move slowly, but other times they move at breathtaking speed. On Tuesday, I tabled a resolution calling on the minister to announce that he was ending further consideration of alternative 4-3. Less than 24 hours after that resolution was tabled, the minister decided to deal with the issue, and yesterday he initiated a meeting with the mayor of Halton Hills to deliver the good news.

I want to thank the countless individuals who have worked so tirelessly to bring about this resolution: the town of Halton Hills council, Halton regional council, and members of CRASHH, especially Wendy Bruchal, for all the work that they have done. This victory belongs to them.

For almost a year, my staff and I have worked hard to bring attention to the issue in this House. In September, I

outlined a 10-point plan of the steps I wanted to take. One by one, we checked off the points before Christmas. I have raised it on multiple occasions in this House. I have written and spoken directly to both the Premier and the Minister of Transportation, drafted a petition, and pushed for a briefing with senior staff at the Ministry of Transportation.

Over the past year, we've all worked so hard to bring about this conclusion. I want to congratulate my constituents for working together to put an end to alternative 4-3.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CONDOMINIUM AMENDMENT ACT (RECOVERY OF COMMON EXPENSES), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES CONDOMINIUMS (RECOUVREMENT DES DÉPENSES COMMUNES)

Mr. Sergio moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to amend the Condominium Act, 1998 with respect to the recovery of common expenses / *Projet de loi 95, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur les condominiums en ce qui a trait au recouvrement des dépenses communes.*

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. Mario Sergio: Yes, indeed, Speaker. I have a very short explanatory note.

The bill amends the Condominium Act, 1998. The amendments provide that if an owner of a condominium unit defaults in the obligation to contribute to the common expenses, a mortgagee of the unit is liable to pay the amount that is unpaid by the owner, and other related costs.

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE AMENDMENT ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE COMMERCE ÉLECTRONIQUE

Mr. Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 96, An Act to amend the Electronic Commerce Act, 2000 / *Projet de loi 96, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur le commerce électronique.*

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. Todd Smith: The bill amends the Electronic Commerce Act, 2000, and removes the current exemption from the act for documents, including agreements of purchase and sale, that create or transfer interest in land and require registration to be effective against third parties. However, those documents are subject to the requirements of subsection 11(3) of the act relating to the reliability of electronic signatures.

It will remove a lot of red tape that real estate agents are facing these days. I'm happy to present this with my co-sponsor from Ottawa Centre.

1320

PETITIONS

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

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

"Whereas a report from Ontario's Auditor General on the province's air ambulance service, Ornge, found a web of questionable financial deals where tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars have been wasted and public safety compromised;

"Whereas Ornge officials created a 'mini-conglomerate' of private entities that enriched former senior officers and left taxpayers on the hook for \$300 million in debt;

"Whereas government funding for Ornge climbed 20% to \$700 million, while the number of patients it airlifted actually declined;

"Whereas a subsidiary of Ornge bought the head office building in Mississauga for just over \$15 million and then leased it back to Ornge at a rate 40% higher than fair market rent;

"Whereas the Liberal Minister of Health completely failed in her duty to provide proper oversight of Ornge;

"Whereas this latest scandal follows the eHealth boondoggle where over \$2 billion in health dollars were wasted;

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

"The government of Ontario immediately appoint a special all-party select committee to investigate the scandals surrounding Ornge."

These petition names were collected at a home show that I did in the riding. I'm pleased to affix my name to it and give it to page Dia.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt.

"Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and substandard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes; and

"Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently don't complain because they fear

repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are being left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

“Whereas Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada where the Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes. We need accountability, transparency and consistency in our long-term-care home system;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include Ontario’s long-term-care homes in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Georgia to bring it to the Clerk.

RADIATION SAFETY

Mr. Reza Moridi: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) is in serious need of modernization;

“Whereas the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) is not in harmony with all the following acts, regulations, guidelines and codes: the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario, the radiation protection regulations of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, the safety codes of Health Canada and the radiation protection guidelines of the International Commission on Radiological Protection;

“Whereas dental hygienists need to be able to prescribe X-rays and to be designated as radiation protection officers in order to provide their clients with safe and convenient access to a medically necessary procedure, as is already the case in many comparable jurisdictions;

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

“To express support for the motion filed on April 17, 2012, by Reza Moridi, the member from Richmond Hill, that asks the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to establish a committee consisting of experts to review the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) and its regulations, make recommendations on how to modernize this act, and bring it to 21st-century standards, so that it becomes responsive to the safety of patients and the public and to include all forms of radiation that are currently used in the health care sector for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.”

I fully agree with this petition, I sign it and pass it down to page Sabrina.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Mr. Robert Bailey: I rise today to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the proposed closure of the Sarnia Jail will impact 76 employees and result in a loss of over \$6 million to the local Sarnia–Lambton community; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government states that the Sarnia Jail is underutilized while in fact it is currently at 105% capacity; and

“Whereas there are no costs currently associated with transporting inmates from the Sarnia Jail to the Sarnia courthouse, and transporting inmates from Windsor to Sarnia will greatly increase costs”—and safety—“costs which may become a burden to the city of Sarnia and thus local taxpayers; and

“Whereas the mayor, local OPP, the Sarnia police chief, the RCMP, aboriginal police, First Nations chiefs and the Canadian border services were not consulted prior to the Sarnia Jail closure announcement, and if closed, Sarnia would become the busiest border crossing in Ontario without a jail;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the McGuinty Liberal government immediately conduct a public review of the Sarnia Jail and make that cost-benefit analysis available to the public prior to its closure.”

I agree with this, will sign it and send it down with Katarina.

RADIATION SAFETY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) is in serious need of modernization;

“Whereas the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) is not in harmony with all the following acts, regulations, guidelines and codes: the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario, the radiation protection regulations of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, the safety codes of Health Canada and the radiation protection guidelines of the International Commission on Radiological Protection;

“Whereas dental hygienists need to be able to prescribe X-rays and to be designated as radiation protection officers in order to provide their clients with safe and convenient access to a medically necessary procedure, as is already the case in many comparable jurisdictions;

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

“To express support for the motion filed on April 17, 2012, by Dr. Reza Moridi, the member from Richmond Hill, that asks the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to establish a committee consisting of experts to review the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) and its regulations, make recommendations on how to modernize this act, and bring it to 21st-century standards, so that it becomes responsive to the safety of patients and the public and to include all forms of radiation that are currently used in the health care sector for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.”

I agree with this petition, will sign it and send it to the table with page Noah.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Todd Smith: This was forwarded to me from some concerned residents in the St. Catharines area.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas" hundreds of people "in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and" dozens of "families have been bought out of their homes;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas" more than "80 municipal councils, representing" more than "two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

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

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning."

I agree with this petition, will sign it and send it to the table with Shaumik.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Mr. Jonah Schein: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas diesel trains are a health hazard for people who live near them;

"Whereas more toxic fumes will be created by the 400 daily trains than the car trips they are meant to replace;

"Whereas the planned air-rail link does not serve the communities through which it passes and will be priced beyond the reach of most commuters;

"Whereas all major cities in the world with train service between their downtown core and the airport use electric trains;

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

"That the province of Ontario stop building the air-rail link for diesel and move to electrify the route immediately;

"That the air-rail link be designed, operated and priced as an affordable transportation option between all points along its route."

I agree with this petition. I will affix my name to it and give it to page Ranbir.

CELLULAR TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a petition signed by a number of people in my riding of Oakville. 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;

"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."

I agree with this, Speaker, will sign it and send it down with Georgia.

1330

PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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

"Whereas supported-living residents in southwestern and eastern Ontario were subjected to picketing outside their homes during labour strikes in 2007 and 2009; and

"Whereas residents and neighbours had to endure megaphones, picket lines, portable bathrooms and shining lights at all hours of the day and night on their" residential "streets; and

"Whereas individuals with intellectual disabilities and the organizations who support them fought for years to break down barriers and live in inclusive communities; and

"Whereas Bill 23 passed first reading in the Ontario Legislature on December 6, 2011;

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

"That the members of the Legislative Assembly vote in support of Sylvia Jones's Bill 23—the Protecting Vulnerable People Against Picketing Act."

I obviously support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Noah to take to the table.

RADIATION SAFETY

Mr. Joe Dickson: An addition to the HARP petition:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) is in serious need of modernization;

“Whereas the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) is not in harmony with all the following acts, regulations, guidelines and codes: the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario, the radiation protection regulations of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, the safety codes of Health Canada and the radiation protection guidelines of the International Commission on Radiological Protection;

“Whereas dental hygienists need to be able to prescribe X-rays and to be designated as radiation protection officers in order to provide their clients with safe and convenient access to a medically necessary procedure, as is already the case in many comparable jurisdictions;

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

“To express support for the motion filed on April 17, 2012, by Reza Moridi, the member from Richmond Hill, that asks the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to establish a committee consisting of experts to review the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) and its regulations, make recommendations on how to modernize this act, and bring it to 21st-century standards, so that it becomes responsive to the safety of patients and the public and to include all forms of radiation that are currently used in the health care sector for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.”

I have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, and I will pass it to Carley. I have already signed it and I'm pleased to present it.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario dealing with the scandal at Ornge.

“Whereas the report from Ontario's Auditor General on the province's air ambulance service, Ornge”—spelled without the “A”; the “A” stands for “accountability”—“found a web of questionable financial deals where tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars have been wasted and public safety compromised; and

“Whereas Ornge officials created a ‘mini-conglomerate’ of private entities that enriched former senior officers and left taxpayers on the hook for” over “\$300 million in debt; and

“Whereas government funding for Ornge climbed 20% to \$700 million, while the number of patients it airlifted actually declined; and

“Whereas a subsidiary of Ornge bought the head office building in Mississauga for just over \$15 million and then leased it back to Ornge at a rate 40% higher than fair market rent; and

“Whereas the Liberal Minister of Health completely failed in her duty to provide proper oversight of Ornge; and

“Whereas the latest scandal follows the eHealth boondoggle where over \$2 billion in health dollars were wasted;

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

“The government of Ontario immediately appoint a special all-party select committee to investigate the scandals surrounding Ornge.”

I'm pleased to sign this petition as I'm in complete agreement with it, and I pass it to our page Gillian.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This petition reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I couldn't agree more. Yet another family pet has been taken into incarceration. Over 1,000 dogs euthanized already for nothing they did, except for the way they looked.

So I'm going to sign this, and I'm going to give it to Talin to deliver to the desk.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

ONTARIO SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR L'ASSOCIATION DES INGÉNIEURS DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Kwinter moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act respecting the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers / Projet de loi 15, Loi concernant l'Association des ingénieurs de l'Ontario.

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

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to acknowledge guests representing OSPE who are in the House today: Edwina McGroddy, Danny Young, Nadine Miller, Paul Acchione and Valerie Davidson.

Like other major professions in Ontario, the practice of professional engineering in this province is licensed and strictly regulated. Since 1922, licensing practices and

regulatory standards for the engineering profession have been governed by Professional Engineers Ontario, the PEO, as directed by the Professional Engineers Act, in order to protect public safety and well-being.

Before 2000, Ontario's professional engineers did not have a body dedicated solely to advocating for the interests of engineers, leaving PEO to handle this function in addition to licensing and regulation. By the 1990s, many professional engineers had long seen an inherent conflict of interest, with only one body seeking to protect the interests of the public and the interests of engineers simultaneously. Engineers felt that, like doctors, lawyers and other professionals, engineers ought to have a separate body dedicated solely to advocating for their interests.

Many professions also have a member interest body, which, as the name suggests, is dedicated to looking after the welfare and concerns of its members. This type of organization is not involved in setting standards of practice or qualifications, but rather acts to promote the interests of its members in the eyes of the public, the government and the profession itself.

In the medical field, for example, the College of Physicians and Surgeons protects the public interest, granting licences and carrying out disciplinary action where needed. The interests of doctors are looked after by the Ontario Medical Association, which lobbies government and speaks to the public on behalf of the profession. Within the legal profession, the Law Society of Upper Canada sets standards for the practice of law and suspends lawyers for unethical practice, and the Ontario Bar Association speaks out on behalf of the profession and also provides member services like workshops and training for lawyers. Both the OMA and the OBA are long-standing organizations, and the public is aware of the distinct role of each.

In 2000, engineers created this body, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, or OSPE. OSPE is the advocacy and member services organization representing the interests of engineers across Ontario. Since it was created, OSPE has worked to advance the professional and economic interests of engineers by advocating with governments, industry and the public. PEO has always been, and continues to be, the regulatory and licensing body for the engineering profession.

During the debate on Bill 148 in 2011, Norm Sterling, the long-serving former MPP for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, who is both a lawyer and an engineer, had this to say:

“I want to indicate to my good friend Mr. Kwinter my support for his legislation today....

“I was very, very happy when, prior to 2000, the engineering profession started to look at advocacy, because I felt that the regulating body, the Professional Engineers of Ontario as they were then and are now, were not adequately representing to the public the wonderful contributions our engineers make to our province....

“I can't be prouder to be an engineer, and I urge everybody to support Mr. Kwinter and his bill.”

1340

Besides advocacy, OSPE also provides important member services. OSPE publishes research and shares information pertinent to the profession, including fee schedules, salary benchmarking and policy recommendations on a range of subjects from infrastructure to energy. OSPE provides job listings and career planning tools for engineering graduates, professional engineers and engineers who are newcomers to Canada.

OSPE also provides Ontario's engineering community with valuable opportunities for ongoing professional development, which includes technical learning, management workshops and specific courses designed to help engineering graduates pursue the path of licensure and professional practice.

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers is a unifying organization that acts as a powerful voice for engineers. It is a body that builds community and raises awareness among all Ontarians of the vital contributions that engineers make.

PEO has always been and continues to be the regulatory and licensing body for the engineering profession. Bill 15 formalizes in legislation the role of OSPE as the advocacy and member services body for engineers in Ontario.

The purpose of the bill is to solidify with a legislative framework the work that OSPE has already undertaken for more than a decade. Bill 15 is also aimed at providing much-needed clarity about the separate and distinct roles of OSPE and PEO. This is a distinction that needs to be made. In existence for just over a decade, OSPE is a relatively new organization, and while OSPE has made significant progress on behalf of the profession, it is still a constant struggle for OSPE to clarify its identity and how it is distinct from PEO.

The legislative framework provided by Bill 15 will strengthen OSPE, thereby strengthening the engineering profession and providing greater clarity for all of the stakeholders.

Many professions have a member-interest body, which, as the name suggests, is dedicated to looking after the welfare and concern of its members. This type of organization is not involved in setting standards of practice or qualification, but rather acts to promote the interests of its members in the eyes of the public, the government and the profession itself.

The regulator, PEO, can only advocate within the framework of self-regulation. A separate and distinct body, with the freedom to dedicate itself to the full scope of advocacy and empowered by legislation, will ensure that the voice of professional engineers can be heard on a full spectrum of issues.

In recent weeks, many of you have heard rather vehement opposition to Bill 15 from the regulator, PEO. Allow me to provide some history regarding Bill 15.

Bill 15 was originally introduced by me as a private member's bill, Bill 148, on December 8, 2010. Bill 148 passed second reading on March 3, 2011, with all-party support and absolutely no objection from PEO. The only

reason Bill 148 did not proceed to third reading was because of the provincial election in 2011. I felt strongly enough about the bill to reintroduce Bill 15 in November 2011.

Bill 15 is verbatim—there isn't a word changed in it—the same as Bill 148. On March 3, 2011, there wasn't any opposition to Bill 148, nor was there a campaign by PEO to block it. PEO has now released a strong position statement against Bill 15 and has undertaken concerted efforts via lobbyists and people who are sitting in the audience right now to block its passage. PEO now asserts that language used in the bill could contravene the Professional Engineers Act and create confusion due to the use of the term “professional engineer.” For these reasons, PEO has pressed OSPE to withdraw Bill 15.

Rather than withdraw the bill, OSPE has always indicated its willingness to mutually arrive at acceptable terminology to alleviate PEO's concerns. I've personally discussed this matter with OSPE on several occasions and I'm confident that OSPE will work with PEO on this once the bill is open for debate and it passes to second reading.

PEO also now argues that OSPE simply doesn't need this piece of legislation. At the same time, PEO has not easily relinquished its decades-old tradition of taking responsibility for both self-government and member interests. For example, PEO has a formal program that engages its members in advocacy. PEO has a department dedicated to engineering and public policy. PEO holds events that celebrate engineering and recognize engineering achievement. These programs are not focused strictly on licensing and regulation, and this is why OSPE believes it does need Bill 15.

In my opinion, Bill 15 makes sense. It is a non-threatening bill that is merely designed to formalize the distinction between PEO and OSPE. It is not anything new. It will serve to clarify and fully distinguish the respective roles of each body, thereby preventing overlays that compromise between the two and create confusion.

I know many of my colleagues and friends across the chamber agree. At OSPE's Queen's Park reception on March 6, representatives from each party spoke in favour of Bill 15. We heard very supportive comments from Christine Elliott, Progressive Conservative MPP for Whitby–Oshawa and deputy leader of the official opposition. We also heard impassioned words of support from Jagmeet Singh, NDP MPP for Bramalea–Gore–Malton. Many other MPPs have since expressed support for the bill.

After today's vote, PEO will continue to regulate and protect the public interest and OSPE will continue to do what it has been doing since 2000, which is to promote and advocate on behalf of the engineers. This bill, essentially, elevates an internal agreement in principle between the two organizations into statute in the province of Ontario. By doing this, we help the public in Ontario to recognize the profession in an official way and we allow this particular organization to receive the respect it deserves in our community. Furthermore, we help to

distinguish the relationship between the two organizations, providing clarity for government, engineers and society at large.

By passing Bill 15 into law, the Ontario government has an opportunity to provide clarity to Ontario engineers and the public in supporting delineation between advocacy and regulation for the engineering profession in Ontario. PEO speaks for the public; OSPE speaks for engineers. This legislation is necessary to help policy-makers and others to understand what is happening. I urge all members to support it.

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

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I rise today to speak to this private members' bill, Bill 15, An Act respecting the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. This bill proposes to enshrine in legislation the existence of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. Since 1922, the licensing practice and regulatory standards for the engineering profession have been governed by Professional Engineers Ontario.

The Professional Engineers Act protects public safety by mandating Professional Engineers Ontario to license and regulate the industry. By the 1990s, many professional engineers had long seen an inherent conflict of interest, with only one body seeking to protect the interests of the public as well as the interests of engineers at the same time. Professional Engineers Ontario decided that their authority and activities should be restricted to the licensing and regulation of engineers, with the objectives of establishing and monitoring high standards for the profession. In this way, Professional Engineers Ontario protects the public interest.

Engineers felt that, like other professionals, they should have a separate organization dedicated solely to advocating for the interest of their profession. So in 2000, engineers created the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. This society was created to look after the interests of engineers in Ontario, to be their advocacy arm. This was a good step. As one can appreciate, a regulatory body such as Professional Engineers Ontario shouldn't be advocating on behalf of its members. It would be like asking building inspectors to promote the interests of developers.

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One can also appreciate the other side of the coin. An advocacy body such as the Society of Professional Engineers shouldn't be regulating or licensing their industry. It would be like putting Greenpeace in charge of regulating the protection of our environment or putting PETA in charge of making laws against animal cruelty.

So these two organizations, Professional Engineers Ontario and the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, now exist in concert with each other. Both depend on the other in their separate but complementary roles. I feel this is the way it is supposed to be, the regulatory arm separate from the advocacy arm. All parties are accepting and supportive of the status quo.

As I've mentioned, other professionals like lawyers or doctors do have arm's-length organizations that advocate

on their behalf, but these advocacy groups don't have provincial legislation defining their existence. I do not see the need to create an act to legislatively legitimize the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers as an advocacy group. The society is operating very well as it is.

The interests of Ontarians are well served by the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. This is an unneeded bill which I will be voting against. Thank you.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to speak to this bill from a couple of points that need to be made.

Obviously, I've been contacted by professional engineers in the riding of Timmins–James Bay who do have concerns with this bill insofar as they think of it as, I guess—the simple way of putting it—a bit of an intrusion on to their responsibilities as a regulator.

Now, I know that the Society of Professional Engineers is saying no, that's not the case, that what they're trying to do with this bill is to clarify the roles of the two, one as the advocacy and the other being the regulatory, and making sure that there isn't a crossover or an illusion of making it look as if the society has responsibility for regulatory matters that otherwise is not the case. There is a bit of a controversy, I guess is the way you can put it, in this particular bill.

However, I think the way you fix that is by sending it to committee. In the end, I have some sympathy for what the professional engineers are saying, because they fought long and they fought hard to get what they've got. They are professionals, and it is to the public's interest and to the consumer's interest to make sure that the regulatory authorities of the professional societies of engineers are respected, because it is the measure by which they are able to police themselves when it comes to what practitioners are doing in their particular practice. If you didn't have that clear authority, what would you do if an engineer was to do something wrong? Clearly, this is a self-regulated body, and we need to make sure that we maintain the authority for them to be able to do what's right when it comes to what their profession is there to do.

On the other hand, what the society is about is essentially dealing with trying to educate people on what is going on, why you should be using professional engineers etc., and what they're trying to do by this act is what has happened in other professions where, on the one hand, you have the regulatory side that's recognized by the act, and the advocacy side is recognized as a separate organization. I think there's some logic to all of that.

I just want to say upfront that I want to register some objection on behalf of the professional engineers, because I think they do have a point, but I don't think it's a point that should prevent us from having this debate and allowing this bill to go to committee to be able to deal with things.

I just want to touch on a couple of things, and I just want to go through the act as an explanation.

The first problem that the professional engineers have is in section 1 under "Definition." They are saying

there's some ambiguity here, and you can argue this both ways, to be blunt. I can argue both sides of the argument at the same time to show that I'm an equal-opportunity kind of debater.

The argument on the part of the professional engineers is that it lends itself to making people think that somehow or other the Society of Professional Engineers has some kind of authority over the practice and the regulation of what an engineer has to do, because what it does in the definition is define both: "'licensed professional engineer' means an individual who holds a licence to engage in the practice of professional engineering under the Professional Engineers Act"; and "'Society' means the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers." That would kind of make it clear in my mind that they are two different things.

But then it goes on to say—and this is where a bit of the debate needs to be clarified as far as this particular definition, where it says, "No effect on rights of professional engineers." I think what you're trying to do in this act is to clarify that in fact, the society doesn't have any authority over the regulator, because it goes on to say, "This act does not affect the rights, obligations, qualifications or requirements related to the practice of engineering in Ontario, including the qualifications required to be a licensed professional engineer."

I would assume, and I'd like to hear back from the drafter of the bill, that what you're trying to get at here is to say, "Let's make it clear"—that's what you're trying to say—but there are those who say that that's not clear enough. I think you've heard the argument, and I don't think holding up this bill and not voting for it is a way to fix it. I think the way you fix it is to let it go to committee, and depending what comes out of committee, if it ever comes back for third reading, then we have a final decision to make: Should we vote in favour or against, based on what was amended?

Then we get into section 4, which is the objectives of the bill. Under section 4, which is quite lengthy, actually—it goes all the way up to section (i). It says:

"The objects of the society are,

"(a) to represent the interests of licensed professional engineers in Ontario, including speaking on their behalf...."

I think that's one of the places that the engineers have a little bit of a problem, because, yes, the Society of Professional Engineers is there to be essentially the people that do the advocacy, and I take it that that's what is being said in that section. But again, the way it was explained to me by the professional engineers—they want that be clearer, that this should not be interpreted as meaning to the general public that in fact they're the authority of the professional engineers. They're only the advocacy. So they're saying that they want a bit of clarity in that.

I think it's a fair point, and I think we need to hear from people who are in the profession, who do this from day to day. We need to hear from both the society and the licensed professional engineers, to hear what they have to say as far as the logical arguments, and if amendments

are needed, I think clause-by-clause is where we can deal with that when it gets to committee, should it pass the House.

Then it goes on:

“(b) to encourage the use of professional engineering services in Ontario”—full stop. I don’t think anybody disagrees with that, neither the society nor the professional engineers.

“(c) to promote and encourage, through its members, participation in the engineering profession”—I don’t think there’s much of an argument there. I think we understand what that’s all about.

“(d) to strive to make the implications of registration with the society more meaningful in Ontario”—I think that is, again, a section where a few questions have been raised. I know the members’ heard the argument, so I’m it not going to go through them here because I don’t have enough time, but I think they want a little bit of clarity on that particular one.

“(e) to assist licensed professional engineers to achieve and maintain the highest possible standards in the practice of professional engineering”—I understand what that means. I’m pretty sure that it means to say what it says, but again, they want a little bit of clarity there, that it shouldn’t infer that they’re sort of in charge of engineers, because, really, that’s the regulator’s role as far as that.

“(f) to provide risk management assistance to its members for the benefit of the member’s practice and for public protection”—I think that’s pretty clear.

“(g) to provide affinity and other related services to its members, including sponsoring and making recommendations regarding professional indemnity and other insurances and services that address the business and private needs of its members”—again, I think it’s pretty clear what you’re trying to get there as the author of the bill. But as explained to me, a few questions need to be asked around that section in committee, and I think you’re going to probably hear a little bit coming from the professional engineers on that one. I kind of get what you’re trying to get at, but I guess what I’m saying is that some see this as a bit of a crossover to what the responsibilities of the engineers actually are. But I think that could be clarified.

“(h) to sponsor programs, awards and services that promote excellence in the study and application of professional engineering in Ontario and elsewhere”—pretty straightforward.

And lastly, “(i) to recognize and honour significant achievements made by Ontario’s licensed professional engineers”—who’s going to argue with that? That’s motherhood and apple pie.

Those are sort of the objections that I’ve heard as brought to me both in Timmins and Kapuskasing by professional engineers we met with or talked to on the phone or who sent me emails. I actually got a fair amount of correspondence on this. I thought it was rather interesting.

I don’t want to be remiss, because there are people, as you know, who are professional engineers all across this

province, but one is near and dear to my heart: the brother of Cheri DiNovo, who’s a professional engineer, Paul DiNovo. I know he’s vastly interested in this particular bill and wants to do everything he can in order to promote the use of professional engineers in the province of Ontario. I figure—

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Ms. Cheri DiNovo: He’s retired.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He retired? Oh my God, I didn’t know that part. Did he get a pension? That’s what I need to find out. Anyway, that’s a whole other story.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Do we get a pension if we pass this bill?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Listen, maybe. Who knows, right?

The point is, professional engineers have come a long way over the last 30 years, to where they’re now a self-regulated body. I think people are more and more proud of that, because what it has done is really help to make sure there’s a standard applied to the work; that those people who hire them, as far as getting their services, and the contractors and firms that have them, know there’s a certain standard that’s met.

I think that what you’re seeing as far as blowback is that people are proud of what they’re doing, and they’re saying to themselves, “Listen, we don’t want in any way to make it look as if we’re going to weaken down what professional engineers are all about. We need to make sure we maintain that vision and that people see professional engineers as a profession that is truly transparent, as far as what they’re required to do and what their qualifications are, and if any issues need to be dealt with, what authority the regulatory bodies have over any misconduct or anything that might have been done.”

I look forward to this particular debate in committee. I think that would be the time to address the rest of them.

I just end on this one final point. Over the years, we get lobbied by a lot of people in this place. But I’ve got to tell you, the engineers and the CAs and CGAs are probably among—would you say—the most vociferous, and I mean that in a nice way. They understand that it’s important to make contact with their local member of provincial Parliament and bring their issues to us so that we become a little bit more knowledgeable. Some of the other professions out there just take it for granted. How often do you hear from the Ontario Medical Association membership in your riding? I think I meet with them maybe once every couple of years.

My point is, the Ontario Professional Engineers are always inviting us to their annual meetings. They’re meeting with us in our offices. The CAs and the CGAs do the same kind of thing, and I would just encourage other professions to do the same. Sit down with your local member of provincial Parliament; tell them what your association is up to, what’s going on; invite them out to annual meetings and whatever, so that we, as legislators, can be more in tune with what the issues are and what’s required of us as legislators to assist them in their work.

I just want to applaud both the society and the professional engineers for doing a really good job of

getting out and doing that, because I think it allows us to have a much more civil debate here in the Legislature.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: As a scientist and engineer, and a member of this House, I am particularly interested in issues related to the engineering profession.

I spoke to this bill last year, in the last Parliament, when it was debated as Bill 148. Bill 15 is, word by word, the exact same bill. As was the case last year, I'm again very pleased to speak to Bill 15, An Act respecting the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, and to speak in support of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers.

I believe that securing the position of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers through legislation will benefit the people of Ontario, ensuring that both the public and policy-makers know exactly who speaks on behalf of engineers, whose input has such a paramount and strong impact on Ontario's economy and well-being.

The value of engineers in society is no secret. Engineers are leaders in research and innovation in all industry sectors in Ontario. They are integral to the quality of life we in Ontario enjoy. We boast vibrant, world-class cities. We benefit from exceptional health care. We enjoy clean, safe drinking water and state-of-the-art transportation systems. We are creating thousands of jobs and helping to put Canada on the global map through our innovations in biotechnology, information technology, green energy and other knowledge-based sectors. None of this would be possible without the work of engineers. Indeed, our economic strength as a province is directly related to the work that engineers do every day.

Every single day we encounter countless products of engineering, from the food we eat to the vehicles we drive, from the electricity we use to the myriad devices we rely on to keep us connected. Engineers make our society run safely and smoothly.

The fact that the public does not know how important engineers are has been a challenge for this profession for some time, and it is one of the main reasons why the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers was created. Engineers know how important their work is, but they must work hard to share that knowledge with the rest of Ontarians.

Besides promoting the professional and economic interests of engineers, part of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers' mandate is to highlight and advance engineering innovation. The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers is actively working with various government ministries and committees, such as the Building Advisory Council, to assist in streamlining effective building code regulations to make Ontario more innovative and efficient in the design and development of structures.

Through the Ministry of Energy, the Ontario Power Authority, the Independent Electricity System Operator and others, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers

is providing vital input to help our province contain electricity costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure that Ontarians do not pay more for electricity produced here than our counterparts in neighbouring provinces and jurisdictions.

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers also successfully lobbied to retain domestic jobs and intellectual property through the thoughtful restructuring of Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers is supporting the professional interests of engineers by advocating for inclusion of professional engineers in regulations in instances where engineering is performed. For example, Ontario regulation 153/04 stipulates that only professional engineers or geoscientists may perform record of site condition on environmental assessments. Such demand-side legislation should be in place for all regulations that cover situations in which engineering is performed.

The public is aware that Professional Engineers Ontario, PEO, acts as the licensing and regulating body for professional engineers in Ontario and it is the go-to organization for complaints and disciplinary procedures and matters.

While it is true that there may be times when advocating for the professional interests of engineers and advocating for public safety converge, the separation of advocacy from regulation is a tenet of regulated professions that safeguards the interests of the profession.

Mr. Speaker, it's not a difficult decision for me to support Bill 15, and I hope my colleagues in this House will do the same.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: I rise today on Bill 15, An Act representing the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. I've been a licensed professional engineer for more than 30 years, a proud Queen's engineer and a former director of the eastern Ontario chapter.

Professional engineers have played a huge role in this country's development, from their design of roads and bridges and military support even before Confederation, to supporting our manufacturing, electrical, mining, chemical and aerospace industries, just to name a few.

The engineering profession is charged with the task of turning pure science into practical applications that we use every day and ensuring that the public interest and safety is looked after.

In the Professional Engineers Act, the term "professional engineer" is a protected title. This is to ensure that the public can be assured that those who call themselves professional engineers are fully qualified and licensed, and provide the adequate insurance behind them.

During many of my opportunities to address students in my former role as mayor of South Glengarry and now in my current role as MPP, I've always discussed the important and rewarding career that the engineering field provided and recommended that the students look into and consider it for themselves.

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As when I was in high school, I find that most students do not understand the profession and are not aware of the opportunities that it makes available to them. It is really a sad state of affairs, considering the huge shortage of engineers that is forecasted to face our industries in the near future. And we all know the importance of the role this profession plays in the future of Ontario and Canada.

All this is to say that this suggests that there is a real role for the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers to play in promoting and looking after the concerns of the industry.

But I cannot support this bill, as to enshrine the organization in legislation would only serve to confuse the public even more. This is not done, as we see in other professions, where the advocacy organizations work hand in hand with the licensed professionals without legislation. Members of the society do not have to be professional engineers, and in fact, approximately one third are not. One could easily see the public being confused and truly believing a member of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers to be licensed to fulfill the duties of a professional engineer when, clearly, they do not have to be.

Numerous times in my role as mayor, we would see developers come in with plans that were signed off on by somebody who had a title sometimes very close, and they'd be very upset when they were told we could not accept the plans, for a number of reasons. One is, we need to know that the person who signed the plans is actually qualified to do the work. As important, or more importantly, it is required in law that we have the insurance behind it and that the developer have the insurance behind it. If there's a mistake in the design, he has a place to go. He can take it up in the courts. Without that professional engineer, he does not have that.

Public safety must be paramount in our consideration of this bill. You can clearly see the opportunity for confusion. Mr. Speaker, while I support the need for an advocacy group for the benefit of professional engineers and the public, I cannot support the legislation. The Professional Engineers Act was put into legislation to protect the public, and adding new legislation only serves to confuse the public, and that would be wrong. I strongly encourage the members of the Legislature to vote against this bill.

The last time this bill came before the House, the Professional Engineers of Ontario stood aside and did nothing, and that was because they were told the bill would die, as it did. But that is no reason why we should pass this bill, just because we believe it may die again.

It is clear that the association of professional engineers does not need legislation to function, so why take action that serves only to confuse the public? The medical and legal professions do not have legislation, so why would we do something for this profession? We already have many people who take on these titles that are close and somewhat confusing to the public, and now we are only enshrining another confusing title into the books.

I speak against this and recommend that my colleagues in this Legislature do the same.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: I appreciate the effort by my colleague from York Centre to present, for the second time, his bill that proposes to separate advocacy and regulation through the delineation of the Professional Engineers of Ontario, or PEO, and the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, or OSPE. As he pointed out, this is the second time it has come before the Legislature, the first time—an identical bill—being in December 2010.

Engineers, of course, are only now coming to the choice of having two separate and distinct bodies: PEO, to handle licensing and self-regulation in order to protect the public, as some of the other speakers have noted; and OSPE, to handle advocacy and member services, in the interests of engineers.

It's worth making mention that engineers do not have to make this decision but that this bill is going to offer professional engineers that choice. Ultimately, engineers, through their input, possibly at committee, will choose how they wish to proceed. As a Legislature, of course, we'll respect that choice.

Engineers have played a very proud role in the development of our province, our country and our communities, and in many of our families. We all have friends and relatives who are electrical, mechanical, civil or solid-state engineers. With a little nod to a lot of our farmer friends, I can truthfully say, "Like your iPad? Thank an engineer."

Engineers are recognized by their trademark iron ring, and engineers are, by and large, by nature, optimists. They build things. They change the world, in literal terms, and where we talk in figurative terms about bridge building, to an engineer that means iron over a span. Engineers, of course, put a man on the moon—most of those guys were in their 20s. Engineers put humanity's body of knowledge onto little pieces of silicon that we can and do access anywhere, any time. Engineers, of course, give rise to their own brand of tongue-in-cheek humour. For example, if you are not part of the solution, you must be part of the precipitate.

Lawyers, of course, are regulated by the Law Society of Upper Canada. Members' services for lawyers and advocacy on their behalf are handled by the Ontario Bar Association. The Ontario Bar Association was established in 1907. Similarly, physicians are regulated and licensed by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, but the interests of doctors are borne by the Ontario Medical Association, which has been in existence since 1880. Clearly, just to use these two examples, these organizations have been around for a long time. Practitioners are very clear about the distinction between regulator and advocate for their respective professions. Similarly, the public is clear about which body to turn to when they have a problem.

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers suggests that Bill 15 would clearly delineate in the eyes of

the public, of consumers of engineering services, and of engineers in government, that PEO works in the interests of the public and OSPE works on behalf of its members. OSPE was established in 2000, and comparatively speaking it's a very young organization. There are more than 75,000 licensed engineers in Ontario. Not all of them are fully aware of the distinctions between OSPE and PEO. So the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers still faces an uphill curve in clearly establishing its identity.

The legislative framework provided by Bill 15 suggests that it provides greater clarity for all stakeholders, thereby strengthening the engineering profession as a whole in Ontario. Now, my colleague from Timmins—James Bay points out that the bill asks the Ontario Legislature to send it to committee for further input from the profession, from those who consume engineering services, from the public and from others with a stake in engineering. Bill 15 is intended to formalize in legislation the role of OSPE as the advocacy and members' services body for engineers in Ontario, and points out that these are activities that OSPE has already undertaken effectively for more than a decade.

One would then ask, so what's the next step? Well, the bill may not pass here, in which case there is no next step, or the bill may pass today and be referred to a committee, where it can gain some input from the stakeholders and then may or may not be called for third reading, which gives us another chance to decide whether or not this is or isn't a good idea. It offers the engineering profession, the public, stakeholders, and indeed the Legislature a chance to continue to examine the issue and to make what we hope will be a truly informed choice.

Speaker, I thank you very much for your time to discuss the bill, and I urge all of my colleagues to give it consideration and to make what is, in their minds, an informed choice.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon to debate Bill 15, An Act respecting the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. As the newly appointed critic of the Attorney General, I have had an opportunity to meet and speak with stakeholders who have an interest in Bill 15. I would like to thank them for accommodating me and providing me with their input prior to today's vote. I very much appreciated your advice.

What I found is that two organizations in Ontario have two very different views on whether Bill 15 should proceed: the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers on the one hand, and Professional Engineers Ontario on the other. I think it's worthwhile to take stock of where we are right now regarding these two engineering-related organizations, as well as the engineering profession in general.

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The OSPE is an organization that offers important advocacy and member services for engineers in Ontario. Their organization is voluntary, and it is made up of in-

dividuals who pay for the benefits of being a member. The OSPE's role is similar to other advocacy and membership services organizations such as the Ontario Bar Association.

PEO, on the other hand, is a licensing and regulating body for Ontario's engineers. Membership in PEO is mandatory for all engineers in the province. You must be a member of PEO in good standing to call yourself a professional engineer, an engineer or any similar title that could portray you as being qualified to practise professional engineering. In essence, the PEO fulfills the same role for engineers as the College of Physicians and Surgeons for doctors or the Law Society of Upper Canada for lawyers. Right now, there are approximately 73,000 licensed professional engineers in Ontario, all of whom, of course, are members of PEO.

The OSPE was formed around 2000 because PEO membership felt there was a conflict of interest in PEO being both the regulator and the advocacy body for Ontario engineers. While the OSPE has been operating as the advocacy body since then, PEO has been the professions regulator since the 1920s. Therefore, what we have had for the last 10 years is a separation of regulatory and advocacy responsibilities in the engineering profession, which brings me now to Bill 15, which we are debating here today.

This bill has been brought forward to bring clarity to the separation of responsibilities by laying out in legislation what the OSPE is and what it does. Legislating the OSPE's role does not have much precedence in the way of advocacy bodies having their mandates set out in legislation. What I mean is, there are currently many advocacy bodies in the province performing these mandates without the need for legislation.

I'd like to share some of the organizations, because I think they set a positive example of what is possible without the need for legislation: the Ontario Library Association, the Ontario Association of Social Workers, the Ontario Pharmacists' Association, the Paralegal Society of Ontario, the Registered Nurses' Association and the Ontario Bar Association, which I mentioned earlier. All of these organizations currently represent their members' interests without legislative authority from a separate piece of legislation to govern their education and advocacy role.

It is for these reasons that I think OSPE is doing an important job representing its members, and in principle, I agree with the separation of advocacy and regulatory responsibilities. So whether this legislation passes or not, we will need to ensure that the profession continues to work together to resolve their differences moving forward. Thank you, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you very much. Further debate?

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Point of order, Mr. Speaker: It's my distinct pleasure to welcome two visitors to the members' gallery this afternoon. These men represent Step by Step, the organ donation awareness charity that has conducted eight province-wide campaigns to date:

Constable Ojo Tewogbade is the chair, and Mr. Clairmont Humphrey is the vice-chair.

Constable Ojo has done exceptional work to involve the Toronto police in his worthy cause, while Mr. Clairmont Humphrey has actually donated part of his liver to save the life of an 18-month-old child.

Thank you, gentlemen, for the exceptional work you do to increase awareness of the need for organ donation in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you to the member, but that's not a point of order. But welcome to the Legislature.

The member for York West, a two-minute response.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Mr. Speaker, it's York Centre.

When I was first approached by OSPE, I thought this would be a very easy thing to do just by sending this particular bill to the committee on regulations and private bills. I was informed by legislative counsel that it can't happen because we're asking something that the act that provides for Professional Engineers Ontario—that it prohibits OSPE from advocating on behalf of the engineers. I mean, we had this whole argument saying why we need this, and this is why we need it. So we had to come forward with a separate bill.

Since 2000, they have been doing that in conjunction with each other. This just regulates it so that there is legislation that gives them that authority and allows them to be able to do what they have to do, and that is to promote the best interests of the profession.

It's an interesting comment: In the PEO information backgrounder on Bill 15, there's a statement that states, "PEO is unclear why the government would support legislation for any advocacy body, whose primary purpose is member self-interest and active lobbying of government and regulators." So they're in a direct conflict. They don't want anybody to have that authority, which is exactly what they want.

Notwithstanding that, Professional Engineers Ontario put out an information piece that shows that there is a separation. They show right here that the professional engineers are the regulator in the interest of the public and OSPE is the advocate in the interest of its members. I think, at the very least, this thing should go to committee so that they can talk about it, they can discuss it at length and decide, as everyone has said—and it was interesting for me to listen to them. Everybody says, "I think it's great. I think it's great that they should be there as advocates; we just don't want them enshrined them in law." What are they afraid of? I can assure you also that people won't go up to you and say, "Are you a member of OSPE or are you a member of Professional Engineers Ontario?" That is not going to happen. The fact that there are over 7,000 members of OSPE tells you that there's a significant number of people in the profession who think that they should have the right to be able to advocate on behalf of their profession.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We'll vote on this bill at the end of regular business.

LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT OF REGULATIONS ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LA SURVEILLANCE LÉGISLATIVE DES RÈGLEMENTS

Mr. Nicholls moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 62, An Act to provide for the legislative oversight of regulations / Projet de loi 62, Loi visant à prévoir la surveillance législative des règlements.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's a pleasure for me to rise today for the second reading of my first piece of private members' legislation, Bill 62, the Legislative Oversight of Regulations Act, 2012. It's a very humbling moment as well. I want to thank my constituents in the riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex for their confidence in me, which is the reason why I'm able to be here today. I represent our home with pride.

When I was first elected to the Legislature as an MPP, I had a particular goal in mind: to do my part in making Ontario the greatest economic power in the nation once again. During the campaign, I was asked over and over by families what I would do as an MPP to create jobs in the province, to get them back on their feet and back to work.

When the global recession hit and it got much harder to operate a business in Ontario, my riding was hit particularly hard. Our workers tried their best to carry on, much as they always had, with patience and with fortitude. But now the job has fallen to us to do what we can to help our home-grown businesses to not just survive, but to thrive. It's to that end that I'm pleased to introduce Bill 62, the Legislative Oversight of Regulations Act. I believe this is an important step that each party will agree with, one that will bring more accountability to the regulatory oversight within Ontario and will demonstrate to business owners across the province that we're here, all of us, to make job creation easier and not harder.

It's no longer a secret that the red tape burden in Ontario has spun wildly out of control. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has perhaps been the most vocal champion of wrangling the red tape challenge for our province before the costs of that burden further weigh down our ability to recover our economy from the brink of disaster.

What does it cost us? According to the CFIB, it could be as high as \$11 billion a year, the sum total of nearly 400,000 regulations in our province alone. Now, if you ask any business owner, these are not numbers that inspire confidence. These are not numbers that attract rampant investment in the industries at which Ontario used to excel, such as manufacturing.

In fact, the CFIB did exactly that earlier this year. They asked business owners to express what confidence they had in our ability, the ability of the members of this

Legislature, to get Ontario's economic recovery right. Their replies were not heartening: 78% of respondents wanted quick action, but most of them said that they were not seeing it from Queen's Park. Now, in speaking with my constituents, I've heard much of the same: They're frustrated; they fear for the future of their businesses amidst a \$16-billion deficit, growing energy rates and a laundry list of regulations that has grown out of control.

1430

I'd like to tell you a story, if I may, Speaker. A few months ago, I was speaking with one of my constituents, a small business owner in the wonderful little town of Wheatley, which is a community of less than 2,000 people. This gentleman operates a fish store that employs 27 people. One day, his plant was undergoing a provincial inspection. The business owner was told that a tray in his processing room was going to have to be replaced. The reason? The tray was used to collect fish guts, which would never be used for any kind of human consumption, and it was made of aluminum, not stainless steel. A replacement, he told me, would cost his business \$1,200. He said that he would potentially be subject to fines if the conditions were not met. "This is regulation run amok," he said to me, putting it in better words than I could ever. "We're not High Liner; we're a small business." Indeed, it's often small businesses that are hit the hardest. Regulations that are designed for much larger companies don't often consider the effect on a company that employs eight instead of 80.

We spoke with the owner of a family-owned-and-operated building centre in London earlier today. The proprietor told us of the hours that he had to spend renewing a commercial vehicle operator's registry for each and every one of the vehicles in his fleet. The problem is that he was asked to supply information to the ministry that the ministry already had access to. "Why," he said, "am I spending \$50 and risking having my vehicles go without licence just to provide information that's already in the system?" It's a good question.

Why does the owner of a cottage rental service in Haliburton have to comply with two separate and distinct regulatory bodies, one for real estate and one for travel agents? Perhaps it makes sense on paper—she's providing both a travel service and renting out property—but she is threatened with losing her insurance because by operating under one agency, she is illegally not operating under another.

It's time to take heed. It's time to stand up for our business owners, not let them down, and that's why I believe this bill is an important step forward.

Allow me to tell the Legislature and the rest of Ontario what this bill does. We have a problem in Ontario: Businesses are being held back by more red tape and overregulation at every turn. Government has made it harder, not easier, for job creators to expand into the areas that need them most. How does this bill address those issues? It recognizes the need for a more comprehensive system of regulation management than we currently have. What this bill will accomplish from the

outset is the creation of a registry of regulations, a document in three volumes that I'd like to call the sunbeam list.

If that sounds familiar, well, it should. Much like the current sunshine list, the sunbeam list will keep the government system of regulations open and accountable to the people of Ontario. It's a document designed to measure and track the progress that must be made if we are to help home-grown businesses not just thrive, but expand.

Volume 1 will list each one of the hundreds of thousands of government regulations as line items. The items will be clear, concise, and easier to track and research. Volume 2 will then take each of those regulations and describe them in full, so that business owners can quickly find out exactly what they're dealing with when faced with a regulatory challenge. Lastly, volume 3 is my personal favourite. As both sides of this Legislature move forward towards real red tape reductions and work together on clearing the way for powerful job growth, volume 3 of the sunbeam list will track each of the outdated regulations that have been removed. With any luck, one volume will grow smaller as another grows larger. As the brush from the red tape forest is cleared, we will have proof positive that Ontario is going to be a place once again where businesses are welcome, where both large and small businesses don't have to shut their doors because they cannot manage the regulatory barriers that are in fact in their way.

But we won't stop there. That is the transparency part of the bill. We must strive as well to stay accountable to job creators that power our great province.

As my colleague from Oxford discovered in March 2011, it is possible for red tape reduction efforts to go off the rails, especially within larger government bureaucracies. Secret internal documents from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs revealed that certain red tape reduction efforts were being fast-tracked not through hard work but by sleight of hand, hiding one regulation inside another or not counting others. We owe it to business owners to ensure that when we say we are eliminating needless regulations, we're actually doing so. For that reason, Speaker, this bill will give the Auditor General the power to conduct a yearly audit of the third volume of the registry, ensuring that regulations the government claims to remove are actually gone for good.

Next, new regulations, despite their nobility of purpose, all too often come with a cost to businesses that they affect, as the CFIB has demonstrated. That is why this bill will ensure that every new regulation proposed by the government be subject to a cost-benefit analysis upon proposal. That way, there will be no confusion, no hidden expenses passed along to business operators unexpectedly. This, I believe, will be a substantial step forward in restoring the public's faith in their elected officials—that's all of us, Speaker—to recognize the challenges that we all face. And it will make planning for the next fiscal year easier, ensuring some stability in uncertain economic times.

I mentioned at the beginning of my speech that, through effective collaboration of all parties, we can individually demonstrate to the families in our ridings that we are committed to putting an economic structure in place in Ontario that creates jobs. We can do that by not spending more than we take in, by making solid commitments that achieve measurable goals, and by taking a fresh approach to job creation that puts accountability to business owners first.

I want to stress that none of us works alone in these goals. To the general public, it may sometimes seem that way, though. We can and must work together. That's why I'm proud to be part of a caucus that has taken numerous steps to address the serious issue of over-regulation in Ontario over the last year.

In conclusion, I just want to mention this: There is progress being made. We have heard from other of our colleagues throughout our caucus and others as well that they're attempting to eliminate and reduce the red tape. So, again, there is progress being made, to the credit of everyone here on all sides of the House. The progress has been reasonable. Each of us wants to pave the way for job creation while responsibly protecting the regulations we do need, those that safeguard our health, our food and our families. But I believe we can do more.

There remains a multi-billion dollar burden. There remain hundreds of thousands of regulations that must be addressed. We must not lose our momentum, confirming the worst fears of business owners across the province that when push comes to shove, their elected members will disappear. That's not only their fear; it's mine as well.

I hope I can count on the support of the Legislature this afternoon for businesses and families not just in my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex, but for those constituents in ridings such as Mississauga, Peterborough, and right up to Kenora-Rainy River.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to hearing from my other colleagues in the House later on this afternoon and to a vote, positive, on Bill 62. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Timmons-James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I've got to say that the member's going to both like and not like what I have to say in regard to this particular bill.

I want to speak on behalf of the New Democratic caucus, and I specifically want to speak to this as a member who's been here for some 20-plus years and as House leader for the New Democratic Party.

Listen, there's a real problem in this Legislature, and that is that over the years we've transferred the responsibility for drafting legislation from this Legislature to the cabinet. Let me explain how that happened.

When I got here some 20-odd years ago, very little was left in legislation to the way of regulation. A bill would be drafted. Once the bill was drafted, it would pass second reading; it would go into committee; there would be hearings, there would be discussion, there would be amendment, and very little was left to regulation. In fact,

almost 100% of the bills back then essentially said, "The minister shall," and this is what the 'shalls' are all about and this is the way it's going to work," so that legislators and, more importantly, the public understood what the drafter of the bill, being the government, wanted. The bill went through the process and eventually passed at third reading with the full knowledge of what the bill would do.

1440

Over the years, what we've now done is we've drafted bills so that in virtually every section of the bill, the detail is left to regulation, which essentially says that once the bill has left this House after third reading, this Legislature has no more say about what that bill is going to do.

Let me just give you one example. There was a bill passed in this House some time ago in regard to municipalities having to have a referendum when it comes to the creation of casinos. The original intent of that bill was to give the idea that a municipality had to have a referendum in the case of a casino. That was the intent of the bill when it left this House. By leaving that particular section open to regulation—because eventually the regulation was enacted, and the regulation was 347/00—it essentially made sure that any municipality that wanted a casino had to have a referendum. Well, guess what? The government has now introduced an amendment to this regulation and has scrapped it. Essentially, what they've done is the complete opposite: Now you no longer have to have a referendum in order to have a casino in your community. The only thing that you have to do, as per the regulation, is prepare a business case, set out the costs, demonstrate the viability and other matters that are considered to be appropriate, and then you have to have a consultation with the public, and the public has to write you in written form, for them to be able to say what they think about it. Then it's entirely up to the municipality, without a referendum, to allow the casino to be created in your community. That was not the intent of what this Legislature said when that bill was drafted. The intent of the bill was to give municipalities and, more importantly, the citizens of those municipalities or reserves the ability to have a say by direct referendum: "Should a casino be created in my community or on my reserve?" That was the intent of the bill when it left this House. But because we now delegate our authority to regulation, the cabinet has decided to do completely the opposite of what this House pronounced itself on.

So the issue, to me, is that we should take a bill such as is being suggested now and not deal with what the member wants—because what he wants is more red tape, essentially, and I'll get to that a little bit later. We should be reasserting our authority, as members of this Legislature, that whatever leaves this House leaves with the full view and the full knowledge of what is intended by the legislation, and to leave to regulation very little in regard to what the cabinet can do later.

Let me give you another example. A Parliament could decide, let's say today, to have a bill to say that the walls

of this assembly are white. That is the intent of what the bill would say. We leave it all up to regulation, a cabinet is then sworn in some elections later, maybe a totally different government, and they decide, "We can destroy the wall." Nothing would prevent them from doing that. Would that have been the intent of the original bill? The intent of the original bill would have been to make the wall white. But a future cabinet, and not even in the full scrutiny of the public, can decide to destroy the wall.

My point is, the fact that this Legislature has allowed governments to draft bills and has allowed, in some cases, private members to draft bills that delegate our authority to regulation is a bad, bad thing. What we should be doing is ensuring that with bills drafted, there is little in the way of regulation, and where there is regulation, there needs to be an established process by which members know what the regulations are before it gets out of committee. How do we, as committee members of this Legislature, know what the bill is going to do if we don't know what the regulation is going to say? What we always have are these debates in committee about, "Well, the bill intends to make sure that the sky is blue," and all the members say, "Okay, I understand the intent. The sky is supposed to be blue." Then the regulations are drafted by bureaucrats and others and come to cabinet for approval, and that particular bill ends up turning the sky purple. Was that the intent of the legislation? No.

The member's bill that he brings forward today says, "I want to make sure that only those regulations that deal with business, that may add a cost, have to be reviewed"—in a way that is highly bureaucratic, I would say. You would add cost to the government greatly if the only intent of what you're trying to do is to make sure that we understand the full economic impact of a regulation. I think that is not the issue. I think that's a bogus issue. The issue is, this House should not let a bill out of its sight unless it knows what the hell the regulation is. That's what we should be doing.

Now, I think the bill should go to committee. I disagree wholeheartedly with what you're doing. I think saying that the Ministry of Finance has to give me a full accounting of how much it's going to cost, and then once that's done the public auditor has got to do the same, we're going to be spending millions of dollars trying to deal with regulations that quite frankly should have never been drafted in the first place, because it is the right of this assembly and our responsibility to decide what legislation is going to be, and not the cabinet of Ontario.

So I say we need to take a look at this bill in committee so that we can actually get at the real issue. I will not support you in committee in what you're trying to do with the regulations. Neither will any New Democrat in regard to saying we need to review regulations only for the idea of reducing cost to business, because the issue is that we should be fully accounting what we're going to do in this Legislature by way of drafting bills in a way that they're clear, and, when regulation is necessary, that the regulations are made available prior to us voting at third reading; in other words, while it's in committee.

And here's the second part. If there is a change to regulation—let's say that there is a regulation that needs to be drafted, and there are times where you'll have to redraft the regulation because of some circumstance—there needs to be a mechanism once a change to a regulation is done after third reading that that regulation is not enacted unless it comes back to this Legislature. Otherwise, this is dictatorship by the back door. Essentially, what you end up with is that a government today could pass a bill saying, "I want the sky to be blue," and the government tomorrow could come back and say, "No, it's going to be purple," and that was not the intent of the assembly.

So the other issue we need to look at in committee is not the red tape thing. I think that's a silly idea. But the bigger issue—and I don't mean that in a patronizing way; it's just my view, sorry. I'm a bit worked up about this. We need to look at a process that says that once a regulation has been passed through the committee process and approved in legislation after third reading, that when a government decides to change a regulation, there needs to be a mechanism. Either those regulations are all referred to a committee for scrutiny and approval or they are referred back to the House, and there are different ways of doing it. I quite frankly don't trust cabinet to do it, and I've been in government and I know well what can happen with cabinets when it comes to decisions on regulation. Every government is just as bad when it comes to their history on this thing. The only thing I will say is that in the time that we were in government, 1990 to 1995, we left very little to regulation in the bills that we drafted. Since that time, in virtually every bill that goes through this House, most of the sections are left open to regulation. At the end of the day, it's the cabinet that decides what's going to be in the regulation, so that members are here making a decision on a bill, and the entire bill can have a completely different meaning by way of the regulation.

And once the regulation is done, we have nothing to say about it, other than to say, "I'd like the regulation to come back to regs and private bills." And let me read you the three-page section in the standing orders that says I can't do anything about it, because under the standing orders, once a regulation is made, we can go back and look at it, but we can't change the outcome of what the regulation is.

In this case, we have Mr. McNaughton, who introduced a bill saying there should be a referendum in municipalities. Well, guess what? The government, by way of regulation, has essentially gotten rid of the necessity to have one, and when you draft your bill—and I haven't looked at it in detail—if you leave it to regulation, you could end up having the same thing happen to your bill.

So I'm saying to the member, we're going to allow this bill to go to second reading, and do not—I say again, do not, N-O-T—think that New Democrats are supporting the idea of what the member is trying to do on the Red Tape Commission, because what he's trying to do is

essentially say the only time we should review a regulation is when it has to do with how it's going to affect business. Well, there are a whole bunch of other people. What about drinking water in this province? What about environmental regulation? What about how we deal with everything else when it comes to bills in this province, when it comes to regulation and the effect those regulations will have on Ontarians through the bills that are drafted in this House?

So we will allow the bill to go forward, but we want to make it extremely clear this is not an endorsement on the idea of what the member is trying to do by way of, I think, creating more red tape and costing more money to only review those things that affect business.

1450

My argument is we should do that with everything. We should have full knowledge of what a bill is when it leaves this place, and we should know what the regulations are and what they're going to do. Then, once regulations are changed for some reason after the initial passage of the bill, there needs to be a process of approval through one of our committees or through this House, because otherwise, by the back door the government of the day and governments in the future are going to be able to do pretty well what they want with legislation.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm pleased to join this discussion of the proposal by the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex. I want to start off by saying, for viewers, that this is actually a good example of how a Legislature ought to work. There's a difference between what we're discussing here in terms of the legislation and the person who has proposed it. One of my mentors here, the member for Vaughan, once said to me, "It's okay to be tough on the bill, but you've got to be soft on the people."

So I do have to say a few things about the bill proposed by the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex. It's my opportunity, first of all, to publicly welcome him to the Ontario Legislature and to say congratulations on his election last year. I notice, in watching him, that he's very respectful of his role as part of the continuum of government in Ontario. He's moderate in his tone, and he tries to be constructive in his criticism. And criticism is his job, because he's a member of the opposition.

He offers, for example, a great standard in maintaining decorum, and he would follow some of his other proud colleagues such as my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora, also a member whom those of us here on the government side respect for his decorum and his respect for the government and what we do here. In fact, I would say that others in his caucus would do well to emulate his fine example.

But in the spirit of being soft on the member but hard on the legislation, let's talk about the legislation. Now, we know the member didn't draft this private member's bill. In fact, this bill or something like it is raised regularly by opposition members in every Parliament, in

every session, by every government. No party in government would propose to enact this, although that said, I have a lot of common ground with the comments made by my colleague from Timmins–James Bay, particularly when he says that when we propose a bill here and we discuss a bill here, when that bill leaves this Legislature its intent should be very clear. But the problem with the bill proposed by the member is that it doesn't get anyone, as he says, back on their feet. In fact, it only gets bureaucrats to sit on their rear to shuffle paper, to create databases and to generate endless miles of blue tape in creating cost-benefit analyses.

For example, the member's proposals would require a cost-benefit analysis for regulations when we already have the Ontario Regulatory Registry. He says we want bureaucrats either in the Ministry of Finance or the Auditor General's office to do analyses on proposed regulations when the already existing Regulatory Registry is a one-stop website where businesses can view and comment on regulatory proposals that impact them and learn about recently approved regulations.

All ministries are required to post regulatory proposals for a minimum of 45 days, and approved regulations affecting business on the Regulatory Registry, which is linked to the Environmental Registry. Experience to date indicates that compliance has been steadily improving since its introduction. In other words, it already works. Why replicate it?

As well, within the province there is a cap-and-trade provision. A cap and trade requires ministries, for example, to revoke two regulations for every new or amending regulation that's brought forward. Since it was introduced four years ago, three times as many regulations have been revoked, compared to new regulations passed.

Speaker, what I'm saying here is that however well-intended this member may have been, this familiar old package of bringing regulations back to the Legislature, which would require the member—to be entirely fair to him—to forgo the idea of rising for the summer in June, probably to get back into the practice of sitting until 9:30 or midnight when the Legislature is in session and to sit a great deal longer, and in so doing, to spend a lot less time with his constituents and a lot less time doing the job that the people who sent him here elected him to do and to spend a lot more time sifting through routine paperwork on the minutiae of government, which really don't belong in the Legislature once we pass the legislation—and here I'm going to agree with my colleague from Timmins–James Bay—with essentially its intent clear and encapsulated in well-drafted regulations. This would create red tape, not combat it.

There are a couple of pieces of regulation-saving initiatives that I think I'd like to mention that our government has enacted in the years we've been here. I would like particularly to talk about the introduction of one that has killed thousands and thousands of pages of regulation, and that would be the harmonized sales tax. That has eliminated 80,000 regulatory requirements and

burdens since 2008—a 17% reduction in red tape. It means that tax reforms have saved businesses from having to file two tax returns; now they only file one to one level of government. That, to me, is just one example, and I know my colleague from Peterborough will discuss more of the ways in which our government has reduced red tape and saved businesses money.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: I'm happy to speak on behalf of the private member's bill put forward by our friend from Chatham–Kent–Essex. His first private member's bill is a good one, despite what the other members have said. I think it's a fantastic piece of legislation, and it's something that we've heard about time and time again.

The member from Mississauga–Streetsville said that governments and opposition parties have been talking about it for years and years and years. The reason they've been talking about it for years and years and years is because it's a big problem and it continues to be big a problem, especially under the current government here in Ontario. So congratulations to our member from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

Our party, the PC Party, and our leader, Tim Hudak, take red tape very seriously. That's why our leader appointed me as the red tape critic and that's why our leader has also said that, in the next PC government, when it arrives, there will be a minister in charge of red tape. It's that cumbersome for our businesses in the province of Ontario.

The simple fact is that the government has made this bill necessary. This government has never really had a strategy for helping small business. They've relied on a series of one-offs and table scraps tossed at some of our most important job creators—and I meet with them every day in my small business portfolio. As a matter of fact, in eastern Ontario, 76% of the businesses there, in Prince Edward–Hastings and elsewhere—and I look forward to hearing the member from Peterborough talk because I know that he has a lot of small businesses in his riding that are struggling right now, and a lot of them have less than 10 employees. That's the definition of a small business. That means they don't qualify for the government's big corporate welfare schemes that exist right now. They just don't affect small businesses. Those small businesses need us, here in the Legislature, to reduce the regulation that they're trying to deal with. They need us to reduce their tax burden.

As the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex said, it's costing small businesses in the province of Ontario \$11 billion every year to deal with red tape. The CFIB, which he referenced a couple of times during his speech, says that it's costing small business owners six to 10 hours a week to deal with red tape issues and government bureaucracy. I think it's such a great idea that the member has come forward with this sunbeam list to shine a light on what exists in the province right now and the problems that our small businesses are facing.

This bill goes a long way to making government more accountable to small business owners across the prov-

ince, from Belleville to Chatham and from Toronto to Tobermory. It's an effort to help small business and I think it's a great effort.

Our small business owners and entrepreneurs in Ontario take enormous risks for the economy and they have to deal with over 380,000 different pieces of provincial red tape. That's just the red tape and regulations that exist here in the province. There are almost 600 agencies in the province of Ontario now. So we need action, and we need action today. I think it's great that this bill has come forward.

The Liberals have already sort of talked about the fact that this is a spend bill, but you may have to spend a tiny little bit to save a fortune, as a result of this bill. It's the kind of excuse that you hear when you don't really have an answer. That's what it is.

1500

Back in my OHL play-by-play days with the Belleville Bulls in the Ontario Hockey League, there was a goaltender who, on the back of his mask, actually had this quote. It said, "There are two things in life: results and excuses." We're getting excuses over there, but we would get results with this bill.

I think it's clear to anyone who has been paying attention that this government is short on results. There's no end to their excuses. Small businesses in Ontario need our help today, not in two years, after the ministry has commissioned a study—or promised to review it or hired more bureaucrats to analyze it then decided to ignore it because it proposed something the government didn't like.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to tell you a quick story about a seniors' residence that was being constructed in my riding. It was a great local project. It hired local tradespeople, used local contractors and local engineers. We're talking about four millimetres here, about the width of that finger. All of the light switches that were in the building had to be moved down this much—four millimetres—because of regulation.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Which finger was that?

Mr. Todd Smith: It was probably that one, actually. Four millimetres.

It would have cost that contractor hundreds of thousands of dollars to go through and fix them all. It's time the government got off the back of small business owners in the province of Ontario.

Congratulations to the member for a great bill.

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: I know the opposition were egging me on to get on the record this afternoon, and I am pleased to do so.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Is this about the Endangered Species Act?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Well, let me get to that in a moment, I say to the Minister of the Environment.

I really like and respect the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex. We've had some great conversations since the election of last October—

Hon. James J. Bradley: He has a Dale Carnegie voice.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Minister of the Environment, order, please.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I would have thought that the member might bring forward another private member's bill, one that the previous member, Mr. Hoy, had brought forward: the renaming of the riding to Chatham-Kent-Leamington, because Leamington, of course, is the only portion of Essex county that is indeed in that riding. May I suggest to the member that, down the road, he may want to bring forward that private member's bill, which would adequately reflect geographically the great history of Leamington in that riding. I know there would be unanimous support on this side of the House for that particular private member's bill, so I'll leave that with him.

But you know, Bill 62 is interesting. It talks about small businesses in the province of Ontario. By gosh, I just happen to have a letter here from a small business entity in Peterborough, and I want to get it on the record. It's from Dynacast, regarding the eastern Ontario development fund. This letter just came into my office May 7. It says:

"Dear Jeff"—very personal.

"The EODF program has come to a successful conclusion for us.

"We are grateful for the financial assistance that we received, which helped support investment in capital assets with respect to the Montreal business transfer and investment in automation equipment and facility improvement as well as other important initiatives. These initiatives have had a positive influence on the Peterborough plant in terms of revenue growth and increase in head count.

"On behalf of Simon Newman, our CEO; Adrian Murphy, our CFO; Herve Mallet, our general manager, and everyone in our plant, we want to thank you for your support.

"Regards,

"Bill Davie

"Vice-President

"Dynacast Ltd.

"Peterborough."

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that is a great letter from a great success story of a small business in my community.

When I had town halls in Peterborough riding on the HST, the greatest thing that small businesses told me was to have one set of tax returns.

Hon. James J. Bradley: That's what Bob Runciman said.

Mr. Jeff Leal: That is what Senator Runciman said many years ago.

Interjection: Less paperwork.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Let me tell you, the advantage of that is less paperwork. At that particular time, they used to file their PST returns at one point of time in the calendar year; another point of time with regard to federal remittances for the GST—

Hon. James J. Bradley: That was red tape.

Mr. Jeff Leal: That was red tape, because you had to have two sets of accountants, two sets of books and lots of red tape. This was a way to have our own Red Tape Commission, to get rid of that red tape for small businesses.

I want to remind the member that there was a previous Red Tape Commission, and I want to talk about something very serious this afternoon.

If the members opposite will take the time to read the report of Justice Dennis O'Connor, Justice O'Connor did the review of the most tragic events in Walkerton, Ontario. If you take the time to review that royal commission, he went on to say that the Red Tape Commission had recommended the elimination of regulations within the Ministry of the Environment, which was one of the causes—I want to be fair here: one of the causes—that led to the tragic circumstances that happened in Walkerton.

I know that my friend from Chatham-Kent-Essex is very sensitive to that issue. It is in his part of Ontario, and I know he takes that very seriously. But on a more positive note—I want to be positive, because the member himself is a very positive guy—as part of the review of the standing orders, something the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly is looking at, I just want to refer to section 59.

Section 59, right now, deals with the estimates procedure. Something we may consider seriously is to take a look at maybe providing within the standing orders a way to review regulations, and that could be the purview of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, which I'm a member of, Mr. Bisson is a member of and the member from Nepean-Carleton is part of. This is a way to take a look at this issue—as I said, I want to be positive. We could take a look at this issue within the standing orders and maybe implement a mechanism that we already have in the standing orders, as it relates to estimates, to take a look at the kind of initiative the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex wants to look at.

Hon. James J. Bradley: As long as it doesn't gut the Endangered Species Act.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I say to my good friend the member from St. Catharines and the Minister of the Environment that we want to make sure we don't gut the Endangered Species Act, but I really want to say to my friend that this could go to committee to take a look at revising the standing orders to incorporate some of the good ideas he has.

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

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm glad to speak on this bill put forward by my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex (Leamington).

Hon. James J. Bradley: Boy, is this a right-wing caucus now.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Oh, come on now. We've got to look back. The NDP made some good comments here, and I hope that Mr. Bisson, if he's adamant about his

changes—he's not talking; he's actually working forward to make the changes that he's proposing.

Overall, when we talk about reducing regulations, first and foremost in our minds here is safety. We would definitely not touch regulations that deal with safety. This bill basically is to deal with business regulations and red tape that's out there.

If you look back at the last eight years and where our province has evolved, we now have almost a doubling of our debt, our deficit is at \$15 billion and heading toward \$30 billion, and our unemployment has been the highest in Canada for the last 64 months.

Interjections.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: We need to work to get our economy back on track—yes, I'm getting heckled here. Yesterday we introduced our wage freeze legislation, and that's step one. Mr. Nicholls's bill is step two. We're going to start cutting regulations. If you talk to small businesses—I know the government on the other side isn't used to consulting with people. If you actually sit down and talk, they are concerned with regulations, because it actually hinders them growing, let alone forming a business.

I'll show you a few examples. I have a butcher in town, and his complaint is not with the regulations on safety; it's the problem that the regulations and red tape are ongoing changing and it's hard for him to even keep up. He's got to pull himself from working to deal with the ongoing changes to regulations that are occurring monthly. I think it's ridiculous for a small business to be having constant changes.

The other aspect of this bill that I like is the cost-benefit analysis. I think it's excellent to see how the bills and laws you're putting forward are going to affect business. I'm still waiting; I haven't heard yet when the government is going to table the cost-benefit analysis of the changes at WSIB for contractors or home building businesses, how that's going to affect them, considering they already have insurance to cover them that's private and cheap and covers them 24-7, whereas now they have to take out WSIB and probably have to cut down on whom they employ, because more money will be going toward covering them.

So I fully support—I'm not going to take my full minutes, because Mr. McDonnell wants to take some time.

1510

My last point is—this is just typical of the Liberal government's malaise to our economy—this morning we had a good question put forth by Chatham-Kent-Essex, and he was proud that CFIB gave us a B-minus rating. I think if you're the government in power, you should be continually aiming for an A plus, because that's what we deserve for the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I rise today to talk on Bill 62, the Legislative Oversight of Regulations Act, the sunbeam list, and support the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Every day I hear from my constituents the problems they are having in completing almost any task in this

province. They question the merits of starting or running a business. While we must protect the interests of the province, there are literally hundreds of thousands of regulations—that's hundreds of thousands, 300,000 or 400,000. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, it costs our economy over \$11 billion a year. They also go on to say that reducing this regulatory burden on business is a clear way to jump-start Ontario's job creation ability and to boost our economic competitiveness.

Under this Liberal government, we now have many competitive disadvantages, causing our unemployment to be higher than the national average for more than five years, making Ontario a have-not province for the first time in history—another first for this government—truly a sad state of affairs.

But it is no wonder, when we are seeing things like the Green Energy Act, that has taken our electricity rate from one of the lowest in the world to the highest in North America by 2013—10 short years—our biggest advantage, squandered by this government. When we have such a surplus of power created under this McGuinty government, with the loss of over 300,000 manufacturing jobs, why are we paying guaranteed hydro rates that are more than 20 times more than what we can sell it for? Truly a failed experiment that is saddling us with billions of dollars of debt that our children and our children's children will have to pay off—all this, while we shut down nuclear plants and spill water over hydro dams, just to cut our old, established, cheap energy, green energy—that of nuclear and hydro—to reduce the amount of surplus power we are paying our neighbours and competitors to take from us—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Could I ask the member—

Mr. Jim McDonnell: —so that we can accept this newer solar and wind energy at ridiculous levels.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Tie in your comments to the bill, quickly.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: Okay.

Speaker, we must think of our future and start to look at ways to encourage and spark new businesses that will hire our youth and our many unemployed Ontarians—over 600,000—that this McGuinty government is responsible for, those who are looking to live the life that was available to our parents and ourselves, a life that is quickly becoming unaffordable and out of reach of our children.

This bill is just the first step that is required to bring this province back to its former proud status as the engine of the Canadian economy and a “have” province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this Legislature to support this bill for our children and our children's children and ourselves, so that our pensions and benefits, that we are counting on, will be available for us tomorrow and not removed as a condition of a bailout that is forced upon us by foreign interests, as we saw in Greece, because we can't afford this mushrooming debt that is being saddled upon us by this Liberal government.

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

The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I would like to thank all of my colleagues who, in fact, spoke favourably of this bill, although we may have some differing ideas with regard to this. I do appreciate, though, the additional light that the members shed on this sunbeam list that we talked about this afternoon. I truly do appreciate that.

But you know, Speaker, I'd just like to say a couple of things here. First of all, rising regulation, without proper stakeholder consultation, obviously costs businesses. It costs them a lot. As the Canadian Federation of Independent Business identified, it's costing small businesses throughout Ontario over \$11 billion right now.

Some may argue that this is a "cost" bill. Well, I can assure you that what it may cost to implement pales in significance to what it's currently costing small businesses throughout Ontario these days.

It's interesting to also note that when rising costs occur, it not only costs businesses, but they have to increase the cost of their goods and services, and those costs get passed on to the consumers, the taxpayers. Again, that's not fair at all.

In some cases, over-regulation has forced businesses to go out of business. That costs jobs. Or, in other ways, if they don't go out of business, sometimes they have to shut down certain profit centres because of over-regulation in an area that they are working in. So we do have a concern about that as well.

There was a comment made earlier that perhaps there are elements of this bill that are already in place and it's already working—so the comment was, "Well, then, why replicate it?" As much as I seriously respect the comments, let me remind the members that maybe it isn't working all that well because of the added costs too.

Again, I would like to thank everyone. I look forward to hearing a positive response.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We'll take the vote at the end of regular business.

INHERITED HEART RHYTHM
DISORDERS AWARENESS ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION
AUX TROUBLES DU RYTHME
CARDIAQUE HÉRÉDITAIRES

Mrs. McKenna moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to raise awareness about inherited heart rhythm disorders / Projet de loi 81, Loi visant à sensibiliser davantage le public aux troubles du rythme cardiaque héréditaires.

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

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my co-sponsors on this bill, the member from Oakville and the member from Hamilton Mountain, who have helped bring forward Bill 81, the Inherited Heart Rhythm Disorders Awareness Act, 2012. The intention of this bill is to raise awareness of the warning symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest in children and youth.

Inherited heart rhythm disorders are a silent killer, a group of rare diseases. Most young people who have IHRDs appear to be perfectly healthy and show no signs of this potentially lethal condition. For as many as half of the young people who IHRD kills, death is the first sign of this disease.

This legislation, among the first of its kind in North America, would greatly improve our ability to recognize early warning signs and take substantial steps to prevent needless tragedies.

Fabrice Muamba is a fearless young man. He grew up in the Democratic Republic of the Congo at a time when the country was rocked by civil war. During his teenage years, he escaped that conflict, fleeing to the UK with his family. Fabrice couldn't speak English when he arrived, but he was a quick study, both in school and on the field. He took to England's football culture quickly and enthusiastically. Just nine years after arriving, he was signing a multi-million pound contract with the Bolton Wanderers. He would go on to make around 150 game appearances for the club as a star middle fielder.

One match stands out. It was on St. Patrick's Day of this year. Just before halftime during a tied quarter-final match, Fabrice collapsed on the turf near the centre circle, cut down by a sudden cardiac arrest. Medics rushed to his aid. They tried unsuccessfully to revive him for 48 minutes, even before he arrived at the hospital. It ultimately took 78 minutes and 15 shocks to restart his heart. Doctors nearly pronounced him dead twice, but he survived.

Not all are so lucky. The last quarter-century has seen a number of high-profile deaths because of sudden cardiac arrest among young athletes. Some happen in the spotlight; most do not. In November 1995, 28-year-old champion pairs skater Sergei Grinkov, half of a beloved figure skating team that had won two Olympic gold medals, collapsed and died while on the ice with his wife and partner practising for the Stars on Ice tour.

1520

High-profile dramas like these summon the world to mourn as one. But medical specialists tell us that these cases are far more common than most of us realize. Pediatric sudden cardiac arrests claim the lives of some 120 young Ontarians under the age of 35 every year. IHRD is the leading cause of death in competitive athletes.

These cases strike at the heart of every community. On Halloween day in 2006, a 16-year-old boy collapsed and died in his classroom at a high school in my riding of Burlington. At this time, there were no defibrillators on school premises, so staff performed CPR, but to no

success. In the wake of that sudden, tragic death, an autopsy revealed that the young man had been living with an undiagnosed inherited heart rhythm disorder. There was one small mercy that emerged from this loss: Several family members, including a parent, uncles and cousins, have since been diagnosed with IHRD.

Not two months later, on Boxing Day in the same year, a 17-year-old Oakville high school student, an only child, collapsed and died on the ice while playing in a Christmas hockey tournament. Despite prompt CPR and the use of the arena's defibrillator, he did not survive. Yet, again, a young man's death had at least one positive legacy. Following her son's death, his mother tested positive for IHRD.

What's more, as a result of those two deaths, both school boards in Halton committed to placing defibrillators in all of the high schools. That decision would soon prove its worth, saving the life of a child. In the spring of 2010, a young woman was running track at an Oakville high school when she was gripped by sudden cardiac arrest and collapsed without warning. She was successfully resuscitated by staff and students performing CPR and using the school's defibrillator. She is still alive today, thriving, despite the serious and life-changing diagnosis of IHRD.

Later, in the summer of 2010, a 12-year-old Georgetown boy slipped into cardiac arrest while swimming in a neighbour's pool. Again, the event led to a broader diagnosis, and today that young man and his two sisters are living with diagnosed IHRD.

I could go on and on because stories like these, tragic or not, are far too common. They happen, on average, every three days to a young athlete who will be lost to sudden cardiac arrest brought on by inherited heart rhythm disorder, or IHRD.

Even so, the sudden and unexpected death of a completely healthy young person always knocks the wind out of us. The impact can be devastating for the family and the community. Along with the raw grief of friends and family, shock waves roll out through the community as students, school officials and health care workers struggle with the loss. Those closest to the loss cannot help but wonder what they could have done differently, what they might have done, to prevent a death. Who, if anyone, is to blame? At such times, we search for an answer to hold on to something, to steady ourselves, to make sense of an event that can strip the universe of meaning.

An enormous amount of research has been generated during the past 10 years evaluating the causes and events surrounding sudden cardiac arrest and screening mechanisms for identifying those at risk. We understand it better than ever today, but it is still mysterious enough to go undetected in most people. In the absence of symptoms, 95% of all sudden cardiac arrest victims will die on the scene. According to the American Heart Association, the chance of surviving sudden cardiac arrest drops by up to 10% with every minute that passes after the heart attack.

We have learned from young people who have survived a cardiac event that in about half of the cases,

fainting during physical activity is clearly a warning sign that can be just weeks or months prior to sudden cardiac arrest. Awareness of a timely response to telltale warning signs such as fainting, palpitation, and shortness of breath during physical activity can help us to prevent unnecessary deaths.

Bill 81, the Inherited Heart Rhythm Disorders Awareness Act, offers a straightforward prescription. It requires school boards and sport officials to call 911 and notify a child's parents or guardian if they suspect that a child has fainted during physical activity at a school or in an extracurricular activity.

Provincial sports organizations and their affiliate and member organizations must take reasonable steps to ensure that these requirements are met. That single phone call will lead to a simple ECG test that will determine whether IHRD is present. In 95% of cases it will merely be a faint, but where we find a genetic disorder, we have saved a life. In fact, we may have saved more than one life. The reason is that IHRD is a genetic disease, and quite often doctors will extend the diagnosis to other family members who, like the affected student, show no outward signs of the condition.

Bill 81 also provides that no action for damages may be commenced against a school board employee, coach, referee or other official associated with the sports organization for acts of omission committed in good faith. But it does, however, offer very clear guidelines for making sure that our young people can take part in these healthy, character-building pastimes with a greater degree of safety and security.

Three simple tools—preparedness, vigilance and timely response—can make a world of difference, give all of us more peace of mind and, most importantly, help prevent unnecessary deaths. We need not wait to make a diagnosis of IHRD. Having the coroner uncover the disease after a child has died is not the best option. Having a child lapse into cardiac arrest and then have to be resuscitated and pulled back to life is not the best diagnostic tool. We know that, in most cases, an early warning sign is a simple fainting spell. In a small but insignificant number of faints, particularly those associated with physical activity or emotional distress, these episodes can be red-flagged. We should recognize the red flag for what it is, and through the consistent application of low-cost and effective awareness strategies we can significantly reduce the toll of these diseases on Ontario families. Thank you so much.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you to the member from Burlington for bringing this very important bill forward and for allowing me and the member for Oakville to co-sponsor it. I believe that it truly is a good bill.

The member from Burlington visited my office with a guest who we have in the House today. He was really great about explaining the importance of this bill and what it identifies to the children of our society of Ontario. That would be Mr. Blake Hurst. He's from public safety education coordination in Halton.

It's very important that we recognize things like this happening in our society and the fact that a small bill like this can raise awareness. It's very important to know that educating our teachers and our sports organizations will make a difference in saving lives of children throughout this province day after day.

Again, I'd also like to thank family members who are with us today, who were kind enough to be part of a media release this morning that brought this Bill 81 forward and brave enough to stand up for children in the future with the tragedy that they faced in their lives. All the best to them.

I'm very proud to stand for this because over 700 Canadians have died through this undiagnosed cardiac rhythm disorder, and at least half of them did show symptoms prior to death. Possibly a month or two previous to their having cardiac arrest, they were fainting or having dizziness, something to show that there was something going on in this child's life. A simple phone call to 911 and having that child tested through a simple ECG could have saved a life, and not just their life but the lives of family members who could also be carrying this disease, unknown to themselves. So it really is a huge bill in raising awareness.

1530

Like the member previous to me said, it's quite in line with Sabrina's Law, something that we know was passed through this Legislature also, something as simple as a peanut allergy. Now we know in schools that our kids don't go to school with peanut butter sandwiches, with peanut butter cookies, because it hurts children. Nobody knew about it. We all went to school with peanut butter sandwiches and nobody thought anything different of it. Today, none of our children go to school with peanuts, because of the awareness that was able to be brought forward with Sabrina's Law. That is something that we're very hopeful will happen with this bill being brought forward today.

It's as simple as calling 911, notifying the parents, making sure that there is a communication plan in place for them in the schools and that the schools are asking for this information, and to keep records on file that will travel with these children through school, through sports organizations, making sure that everybody is aware that there has been an issue with this child. That could save that child's life in the future. That child may be lucky, because for half of the children who do have a diagnosis or have fainted, there is no problem with them. So it's just about making sure, double-checking, crossing the t's, dotting the i's, making sure that we can possibly save every possible life in the meantime.

There have been children in Hamilton that have faced this also—healthy children, children in sports activities, children on the ice, children on soccer fields. We have adults who have had sudden cardiac arrest on a soccer field in the middle of a major game, and it could have been diagnosed if possibly there was something throughout the family history that could have been noted.

So it's a very important bill. I'm so proud of and thankful for all of the work that the member for Burling-

ton and her team have done on this and the backbone that they put behind it in making sure that we did get the press release this morning and that we are at the forefront, bringing it forward.

Like I said, there are children right across the province—young people in Hamilton. I have a story here from the Spectator about a child in 2007, a 13-year-old girl at school, a grade 8 student. It's so unfortunate. The list goes on and on. Of course, we won't name those people here today for the business of their personal families and how that would make them feel. But it has been an ongoing issue for many years.

Dr. Joel Kirsh has been leading the way on this through Toronto Sick Kids hospital, making sure that he's out there in the forefront on how much awareness we can bring forward.

Some of the symptoms to watch for, like the member before me said, are fainting, shortness of breath or palpitations just weeks or months prior to a serious occurrence happening, and making sure that we're just standing there, watching our children and knowing that we're on top of these things.

Key messages: It's as simple as requiring school employees and sports coaches to call 911 if the pupil or player is suspected of fainting during physical activities. So there isn't a lot that needs to be done after this bill. It's not about having any severe costs. It's an easy bill to enact. We really do hope and need everybody across the House to make sure that we're supporting that, and I know that's happening here today.

I'll give a few minutes to our health critic to say a few extra words on this. I know that I'm just 100% behind this and I would like, again, to thank our other members for joining in this.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It is a pleasure today to rise in the House and join with my colleagues from two other parties. We often have different opinions, but on this, we don't have a different opinion; on this, we're united. We're three continuous communities: Oakville, Burlington, Hamilton. We've all come together, largely as a result of something happening that, as a parent, would be your worst nightmare.

In the member's gallery today, we're joined by two people that I met a few months ago and I got to know their very, very tragic story about their son Alex. Debbie and Alan Corrance are here with us today. The story that they told me about Alex was that he was a very athletic young man. He was 17; he was 6 foot 2 inches; he was 190 pounds—a strapping young man—and he was an elite athlete, the last person in the world you'd think would have something wrong with him. He was doing what he loved doing one day. He was playing hockey for a AAA team in Mississauga, the Rebels, a midget team, and he passed away during the game. The last thing you think of when you go into the hockey rink is that you may not be coming back. That's a young man in the prime of his life in a shape just—most of us would just

love to be in that kind of shape. I think it just highlights the diagnosis being so difficult to detect.

When you hear about something like this—and, as a parent, your heart goes out to other parents—you think, “Isn’t that awful. I wish we could do something about.” Often, we’re not able to do anything about it, but in this case, thanks to the work of the member from Burlington, she’s brought forward what I think are some very practical and implementable suggestions that we can all come together on in this House and do something about. What that is is that often, prior to a major event like this, there are little clues along the way. The member from Hamilton outlined one of them as fainting. If you’re undergoing some extreme physical exertion and you faint, often we just pass that off and say, “I guess the person blacked out,” and we just move on. What we’re suggesting is that that may be a clue, that that may be a hint that we need to do something about that.

We were fortunate today to be joined at the media release by Dr. Joel Kirsh. He gave us more of a medical side of things. He told us the things to look out for, but he also gave me a lot of hope that, if we’re able to pass this through the House, if we’re able to get this through committee, if we’re able to get this into our schools and into our athletic teams, we can do something that will save the lives of young men like Alex.

It’s not often as a Legislature that you get to do that type of thing. Often the things we deal with are very abstract in nature. They’re policy-driven. This is something that’s very practical. It could be implemented very easily because we’ve got a model that we can base it on, that being Sabrina’s Law, which I think has met with the approval of people around the province of Ontario. So we’ve got proof that this can work.

When we get Alan and Debbie coming to us, asking their legislators, their elected officials from all three parties to do something; when you’ve got people from all three parties who are prepared to do something, I think it’s incumbent upon this House to support this bill.

I know I’ve talked to the other members in my own caucus about it. I understand that it will receive support from all three parties today, and I think that’s a fantastic thing. So I’m urging members today to seize the opportunity that comes around maybe once every few years or few months. Let’s all pull together. There are two people in the gallery there who would like to see us do that.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I’m pleased to rise today in support of my Ontario PC caucus colleague, the member for Burlington, Jane McKenna, and Bill 81, An Act to raise awareness about inherited heart rhythm disorders.

I want to take a moment first to commend her for bringing this important piece of legislation. I want to join with the member for Burlington in also thanking the member for Hamilton Mountain and also the member for Oakville for co-sponsoring the bill.

1540

In my part of the province, in eastern Ontario, you can’t raise an issue of children’s health without saying

how fortunate we are to have the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario in the city of Ottawa. The doctors and nurses at CHEO are literally life-saving angels, who have graced the lives of so many families in my riding of Leeds–Grenville and in eastern Ontario. I know that the member for Ottawa–Orléans is here, and I’m sure he concurs with my statement.

I had the opportunity to visit the hospital’s website and learn about their arrhythmia clinic, a specialized unit for children who have, or who are at risk of having, an abnormal heart rhythm. It’s another example of the world-class treatment available at CHEO. But the key to ensuring that children get to that unit is to get help before tragedy strikes. That’s where I think Bill 81 can really, definitely make a difference.

Visiting the CHEO site, I was struck by the video that shows a young street hockey player—a fit and healthy-looking teen—collapse during a game. As a parent, it’s quite a disturbing scene.

But what’s more shocking is to know that a child could faint during physical activity and it might not be reported. It may be dismissed as too much activity, maybe a bit of over-exertion in the heat. If that happens, a coach or a teacher needs to take those extra steps to notify the child’s parents, which, obviously, as some members have already stated, could ultimately result in saving that young life. By simply requiring that a 911 call is made and that a child’s parents are notified, Bill 81 ensures that that warning sign is heard loud and clearly. When those steps are taken, a child gets to a CHEO and gets that treatment that they need.

I urge everyone who is here to go to the CHEO website to watch that video, and also to take time to explore the Canadian SADS Foundation website, to see the pictures of some of those approximately 700 young Canadians whose lives are lost every year to sudden arrhythmia death syndrome. If you do that, I think you’ll understand why this bill is so crucial. It’s a very reasonable measure to address an important issue affecting the health and well-being of our children.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak in favour of Bill 81, Speaker.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is a pleasure for me to add my voice to those who have spoken before me about this important act, Bill 81.

Every now and again in this House, we have an opportunity to do some good, and I think this afternoon is going to be one of those opportunities, where people on all sides of the House can see that we can use the spotlight, if you’ll allow me to call it that way, that the Legislature can bring to an issue, and use this for the good of the people of Ontario.

This afternoon, through working together on all sides of the House, we will share a spotlight on this important issue and, hopefully, that spotlight will grow throughout the province so that, as has been said before, we will be able to save lives, we will be able to identify people with

inherited heart rhythm disorders and keep them from having an actual heart attack.

I, too, wanted to share a story. My husband is a firefighter and also a first responder. I will always remember—my kids were still in high school at the time and were part of the track and field team. The team was preparing for a big meet. They were doing one of the long runs through the bush in Sudbury when my husband got the call. The call was that one of the young runners had collapsed, way far into the bush, and somebody needed to go get him.

I will always remember that day, because we had bought new sneakers for our son—we paid a whole lot of money—and this kid happened to have the same running shoes we had just bought the week before. It was not our son—it was a member of the team—but it could have been. So that kind of stuck with us.

There had been warning signs, but people didn't know. After the fact, everybody looked back and said, "How come we didn't know? How come we didn't act before?" Well, because the awareness was not there. Nobody knew. I'm not here to blame them. They would have gladly helped save that child, but nobody knew.

Now, today, we have a chance to tell every Ontarian in this province that if a child—and 50% of them will have symptoms; 50% of them will have fainting spells, will say that they don't feel good. That should trigger a red flag to the coach, to the teachers right away. Don't let that go by. Use the power that you have to share that information. Do call. Let them know they have to seek medical treatment.

It's an easy task. An ECG doesn't hurt, doesn't do anything. It's fast and it will give you information, and in health care, information is power. The minute you know, then you can act and you can do what we all want to do: Help one another live healthy, long lives.

Once you have been diagnosed, once you know, you will learn to cope with it. You will learn to live a happy, long, healthy life. But when you don't know, then first responders and people working in the ambulance business will continue to get the call that a young, healthy, fit, beautiful, young human being has collapsed in the middle of a sports event. They're often good athletes and, all of a sudden, they are gone. It is a tragedy every time this happens, and a tragedy that is preventable.

Here, today, by putting our efforts together, by shining a light on this issue, we will prevent that. Let's pull together and do that.

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

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: Whenever I look at a bill, I like to look at the facts and the evidence. We have so many health situations in our province, I think, that are worthy of consideration for a bill to be put forward, probably more than are coming forward now.

So I did my homework and I talked to some of my colleagues in the medical profession. I also thought about children and youth in our province, as a mother, as a parliamentary assistant for children and youth, and as an

advocate for childhood diseases, which sometimes statistically do not show a compelling picture. For example, children with childhood cancers are a very small population relative to the adult population, but when I look at that, I think about the future of our children and advocating for their future.

I think this bill, An Act to raise awareness about inherited heart rhythm disorders, is similar to that. It's similar to our concussion bill we brought forward. I think sometimes we focus too much on the smaller numbers associated with childhood illnesses and incidents. We also view our children as very resilient and strong, and most of them are, thankfully. But similar to our concussion bill, I think sometimes we forget that there could be a problem; that if something happens, like fainting, it could be a symptom of another problem. Getting kids back out on a sports field or returning them to the classroom too quickly is where we run into trouble, whether it's concussions or what we're talking about here today, Bill 81, to raise awareness about inherited heart rhythm disorders. So I want to congratulate the MPPs from Burlington, Oakville and Hamilton Mountain on bringing this forward.

I think the evidence is compelling in this case. The diseases we're talking about here today in Bill 81 are among the leading causes of death in pediatric and young persons, so there's evidence there, Speaker. Secondly, in more than half of young people that are affected by this, it kills, and death is the first expression of this disease.

So again, I think it's compelling, even if statistically it's smaller relative to the adult population.

1550

In fact, I have a member of my staff who had a very serious heart condition at a young age. He was lucky to be treated at a very young age and is doing great now. But he might have been the exception because there wouldn't have been legislation such as this to embed some practices in the school setting.

I know first-hand, as a chair of school community councils for years and years in my community of Pickering-Scarborough East, that the health and safety of our students is as important as the education curriculum. When you come right down to it, safety actually sometimes is job one in the school, and educating them is a really close second.

I think this bill supports the health and safety of our children. It's a well-thought-out bill that will, I think, prevent illness and injury. It will cause everyone in the system to be aware that something might be a symptom of a bigger problem. Again, I congratulate my colleagues for bringing this forward.

I think that's all I'm going to say at this point because I'm going to share my time with my other colleagues. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this bill today.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to rise today and speak in support of Bill 81, the Inherited Heart Rhythm Disorders Awareness Act, put forth by my

colleague from Burlington. I'm so pleased to stand because it's the right thing to do. I know, as a parent, this is near and dear to my colleague's heart. I want to congratulate her for tabling and debating and hosting the media awareness session earlier today because this piece of legislation is an important issue we all need to be aware of and to talk about.

It's something that I'm familiar with in the sense that both my mother and my two sisters each have heart murmurs, if you will. So we're very tuned in to this particular issue. We can't look away from the fact that sudden cardiac arrest occurs in young, otherwise healthy people who have a genetically inherited heart rhythm disorder. These folks appear to be healthy. What I think is important are some of the measures in this bill, because we have to make people more aware that sudden cardiac arrest can happen at any time to any person.

I've been blessed with a very sports-loving family. We've been absolutely spoiled by our experiences in both hockey and fastball. But I'll never forget the day that I arrived at an arena and the trainer came running for us because Deidra was in the dressing room in tears, she was having such fast heart palpitations. There's nothing more fearful than seeing somebody so distressed and knowing you can't do anything about it. When all the tears dried and we settled things down, we found out that she had an energy drink ahead of practice. That's a whole discussion for another day, but it made me very, very much aware of how drastic this can be. It just absolutely breaks my heart when IHRD makes the news due to a young person collapsing doing something they absolutely love.

That is why Bill 81, introduced today, is so important. This bill requires all school employees to call 911 when a student is suspected of fainting while performing a physical activity. This is important because the symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest can be blamed on dehydration, malnourishment, exhaustion, and quite simply some of these students may not be getting the timely help they need if they're in cardiac arrest. We have to be aware.

An important and distinguishing feature of this disease is that most patients are otherwise healthy and show no outwards signs of the potentially lethal disease. For more than half of the young people that IHRD kills, death is the first expression of this disease. This is one of the leading causes in the death of young people. I have to commend my colleague for standing up for these young people. It can be a silent killer.

If passed, this legislation would be the first of its kind, to my understanding, in North America, which shows that my colleague from Burlington is forward-thinking and has a true sense of caring and compassion for children and their families. I also want to thank the members from Oakville and from Hamilton Mountain for adding your names to this very important bill and showing your support for my colleague and her initiative.

This bill will be leaving a legacy for the young kids who have experienced this particular disease, and it will

improve our ability to recognize early warning signs and take decisive steps to prevent needless tragedies.

Again, I congratulate the member from Burlington, and I applaud you for your initiative, which will no doubt save lives of our young people in the future. Thank you so much.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm pleased to join the debate and to support the measure introduced by my colleague from Burlington. This Legislature has, in the past, passed similar legislation, and I do hope this will pass and be enacted into law.

We've spoken, as members, very eloquently about the effect on young athletes, but there's a part of the bill that, to quote directly from the explanatory note, "requires coaches, referees and other officials associated with sport organizations to call 911, and to inform a child's parent or guardian if the child is suspected of fainting while playing or practising the sport." What I'd like to focus on in this last two and a half minutes of debate from the government side is the impact on organizers of a league.

Many of my friends who have coached minor hockey have said that they have absolutely loved the experience of coaching, were it not for the parents. They've enjoyed working with the kids. But what this gives the organizers and the referees and the coaches is that reminder that something that may otherwise simply be written off: "What happened to Tim?" "He fainted." "Okay. Well, let's get him back on his feet, because his shift is coming up." Or "What happened to this one?" "Well, you know, she just sort of stumbled and fell down after the race. I guess she was just kind of tired out."

Now, you probably wouldn't think a great deal about it as the coach, because you're trying to think in terms of, "What about my next group of kids who are going over the boards, going onto the field or swimming the next heat?"—one of my other sports was swimming. You wouldn't, in the absence of a measure like this, have reason to suspect that anything could be wrong with a young athlete whom you would normally picture as being the picture of health.

What this bill says is, remember something that may happen, think about what to do if a child faints. That little bit of training and that note in your certification procedures, in your league manual, in the things you brief your refs on if you're coordinating referees, in your coaching clinics if you're working with coaches, in dealing with other leagues if you're a league executive, that says, "Now, this is just a short thing that I want to bring you coaches, parents, referees up to date on. The following things happen." And we walk through some of the scenarios so eloquently described by some of the other speakers here, as my colleagues have said very accurately and very poignantly. That little bit of instruction given to a coach, given to a league executive, does make the difference between life and death for a young athlete who may in every other way show no symptoms whatsoever.

I think the first coach or manager or league executive who finds that a child has been diagnosed with this particular condition will say: "In the absence of knowing that, we may not have known what to do to cause that young person to survive. In the absence of knowing that, this person may have died." If there is no other single benefit that the measure brought forth by my colleague from Burlington will do, I think that alone makes it worth supporting, and I'll vote for it.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: I rise to support the member from Burlington, and I'm quite happy to see the members from Hamilton Mountain and Oakville supporting this bill.

There are more than 130 cases a year, and sadly, 10 years ago, in my riding, at St. Joseph's high school in Cornwall, where my wife worked then and still does today, one of the school's top athletes, Bryanne Champagne, collapsed and died without warning.

We can only imagine the shock to her family as their healthy young child with only the brightest of futures was suddenly gone, especially when we know today that there may be a simple warning sign that most times goes unnoticed.

1600

When my brother and closest friend died suddenly in an accident 30 years ago, it severely affected our family. I saw the extreme pain that my parents went through.

If there's any answer to this problem, I think it's up to us to act on it and, with these children who have gone before, not to let them die in vain. Through their deaths, we now see that there is science behind it that tells us that there is a solution. So I encourage everybody to take the step and encourage this bill. I thank the members for bringing it forth.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I am also pleased to rise in support of Bill 81, An Act to raise awareness about inherited heart rhythm disorders, and I truly would like to thank my colleague the member from Burlington for bringing this forward and to thank the members from Oakville and Hamilton Mountain for their considerable support.

I'd also like to thank the guests who are here with us today, particularly Mr. and Mrs. Corrance. I truly hope that this will give you some small measure of comfort, knowing that we're discussing this today in a collegial way. That doesn't always happen here, but we recognize the importance of this issue, and we really want to make sure that other families know about it and can learn from this as well.

I'd like to thank all my colleagues for being here today and being so respectful of each other as we've talked about this issue.

I really have been interested in hearing the stories that other members have recounted. I have two quick stories myself. One is that I also have a heart rhythm disorder. It was discovered many years ago when I was in my early

teens. It's called paroxysmal atrial tachycardia, for the expert who is here today. It was quite frightening; I thought I was having a heart attack. It was when I was at school in grade 9. I was quickly checked out, and it was discovered to be quite benign. I have attacks from time to time, but I know how to control it now. That was something that was quickly checked out and was found to be okay.

On the other hand, we had a young man who was working in our law firm where I was practising law before I came to this place—he was a very talented young man. He was articling with our firm. We had just offered him a full-time job with us when he graduated. He and his wife were celebrating; they had just bought a house, and they were expecting their first child. He went out to play a game of floor hockey with a group of friends and collapsed and died because of an IHRD. It was something that hit all of us very hard at our law firm, especially given the fact that his wife delivered a child a few months later without a dad—all of which points to the need to have greater public awareness of the need to be checked out for these things. In some cases, they can be quite benign, as in my case; in other cases, they can be treated if they're detected very early on.

Bill 81 does do that, in the sense that it requires that in a case where someone is practising a sport at school, if there's a fainting spell, which is often one of the first symptoms, they get that checked out very early on; that the parents are notified. Often some things that happen in the course of sports—and I'm the mother of three sons who played a lot of sports in school; things happen that you just shrug off and you think don't matter. Well, you do need to have these things checked out.

Any public awareness that can come as a result of this bill, I think, is a good thing and probably one of the better things that we do in this Legislature on a daily basis.

Again, I'd like to thank everyone concerned. I think it's safe to say that everyone is going to support this bill. I think that's good for all of us here and for the people of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Burlington, you have two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I'd like to thank everyone—my co-sponsors, the member from Oakville and the member from Hamilton Mountain. I'd also like to thank my colleagues from Whitby–Oshawa, Leeds–Grenville, Huron–Bruce and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

But I'd like to, first and foremost, from the bottom of my heart, thank the passion and the love from Alan and Debbie Corrance for your son Alex. I am a facilitator here for you, but the people sitting over there are the people that need—are the heroes—Blake Hurst, Mary Lewis, Dr. Joel Kirsh; again, because you're the people with the passion and the love who have brought this forward and continue with your passion to bring this to the Legislature so we here can move this forward for you.

We're only as good as our team. We are a wonderful team in here today, and I'm grateful to be part of this House today. This is probably one of my proudest moments. For that, we will move forward with this, and I thank everyone from the bottom of my heart today for all that they've done. Thank you, and God bless.

VISITORS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I beg the indulgence of the House to introduce a very good friend of mine, Hélène Campbell, with her mother Manon, and my legislative assistant, Damien Waddell. I wish them welcome to Queen's Park.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you very much. As the member knows, it's not a point of order, but welcome to the Legislature.

The time for private members' public business has expired.

ONTARIO SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR L'ASSOCIATION DES INGÉNIEURS DE L'ONTARIO

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll deal first with ballot item number 40, standing in the name of Mr. Kwinter.

Mr. Kwinter has moved second reading of Bill 15. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Kwinter?

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Agreed? Agreed.

LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT OF REGULATIONS ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LA SURVEILLANCE LÉGISLATIVE DES RÈGLEMENTS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Nicholls has moved second reading of Bill 62. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a couple of noes.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Speaker, I'd like to refer my bill to finance.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Agreed? Agreed. So referred.

INHERITED HEART RHYTHM DISORDERS AWARENESS ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AUX TROUBLES DU RYTHME CARDIAQUE HÉRÉDITAIRES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mrs. McKenna has moved second reading of Bill 81. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Social policy committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to social policy. Agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: As Steve Clark would like to say, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? Agreed.

This House is now adjourned until Monday, May 28, at 10:30 a.m.

I would like to say to all of you, please have a good week off for constituency week. Thank you.

The House adjourned at 1608.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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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
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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
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